

Praise for West Lothian school in national maths survey

A West Lothian school providing specialist education for children with complex needs has been praised for its innovative approach to teaching mathematics.

A national study into how maths is taught in Scotland said the Beatlie School campus was showing the way to other ASN schools positive ways to engage an often-tricky subject.

Staff and pupils were congratulated by councillors for the enthusiasm they displayed when they gave a presentation on the inspection to a meeting of the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel this month.

Beatlie provides specialist education for pupils aged 3 to 18 with severe and complex support and profound medical needs. It moved to a new purpose-built campus in Livingston a year ago.

The maths study is the first opportunity for Education Scotland inspectors to visit the new campus. Beatlie is one of 50 schools in the country which is being visited as part of the national study into the teaching of maths across all ages groups in Scotland.

Head teacher Debbie Green said: "The inspection allowed the school to share its bespoke and innovative approaches to

teaching and learning to engage our most severe and complex pupils in West Lothian.”

In their presentation staff and pupils talked about the different ways they learn numeracy and maths related subjects, the use of hi-tech, and everyday teaching aids – a favourite of the youngsters is the iPad.

There’s also specialist teaching aids such as the drive deck, a mechanical platform which pupils control and move through switch technology, which gives youngsters interactive experience as well as functional control.

In a report to committee the headteacher said that strengths identified that: “learning was based on interests, individualised and as a result, learners were very happy. The use of digital technology motivates children and helps engage with the learning process.

“Real life contexts also form part of the teaching of how maths and numeracy are used every day.”

The report added: “The inspection noted that very good relationships between staff and pupils meant that staff knew them well and how to motivate them to learn. The skills of staff in supporting pupils to communicate was excellent.”

Council leader Lawrence Fitzpatrick told the meeting after the presentation: “A very high commendation to teaching staff, parents carers and children,.You’re all doing a marvellous job. Well done.”

Councillor Moira McKee-Shemilt said: “I just want to say you have brightened up a dreich afternoon. One of the takeaways for me is just how happy the children are. So 100% well done.”

Chairing the meeting, Councillor Andrew McGuire echoed that and said: “Beatlie is a fantastic resource, and we are so

proud of it, and everyone there so thank you so much.”

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter