

Follow-through Inspection Report

Darnley Visual Impairment Unit

December 2005

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education HMIe published a report on standards and quality in Darnley Visual Impairment Unit in December 2003 following their inspection of Darnley Primary School and Darnley Visual Impairment Unit in September 2003. Working with the Unit, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action and ensure the continuation of the high quality and improving education identified in the original report.

As advised by HIME in December 2003, the education authority has been responsible for producing this follow-through report. Staff from the Education Improvement Service consulted with the Unit over the period from December 2003 until December 2005 to assess the extent to which it was continuing to improve the quality of its work and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

Continuous Improvement

The work of the unit has moved on well and it continues to provide a very high quality education for its pupils. As well as responding to the action points identified by the HMIe inspection, the unit has continued to improve other aspects of its work.

The unit has taken forward the National Priorities in education as well as the education authority's priorities. It has worked to promote inclusion by further developing not only its close association with Darnley Primary School but also its links with St Angela's Primary and Hillpark Secondary schools and the local community.

Attainment and achievement have been promoted through the continuing development of specialist teaching approaches and resources. A range of assessment strategies has been used by teaching staff to monitor pupils' progress.

The unit has promoted values and citizenship by putting in place guidelines and a programme of study to support the personal and social development of visually impaired pupils. The mobility education specialist has contributed to this programme and has worked with pupils to develop their independence and life skills.

Equality has been promoted by encouraging pupils' continuing participation in physical education, swimming and sports activities and additional funding has allowed a group to take part in an aerobics programme in the local community centre. P7 pupils have attended a residential stay at an outdoor activity centre.

Pupils have progressed through an updated programme of study in specialist information and communications technology. They have taken

part in training that enables them to access the internet and to send and receive e-mail using specialist screen reading software. All pupils have followed a touch-typing course. The unit has purchased a tactile perception programme to support the development of tracking and scanning skills for Braille users. These aspects of their education will be of great benefit to pupils in terms of lifelong learning.

Progress Towards the Main Points For Action

The initial inspection report identified 3 main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made on each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

Main point for action 1

The Unit should continue to develop resources to support pupils' learning.

The unit has made very good progress towards meeting this recommendation.

To promote pupils' language skills, the unit has continued to develop its links with the Alternative Media Production Unit [AMPU] at Rosshall Academy and has built up a comprehensive library of Braille resources. A range of audio equipment and resources has also been acquired for this purpose. The unit has purchased a Braille reading scheme to develop skills at the early stages through shared and paired reading.

The range of mathematical resources has been improved to better meet the needs of pupils within the unit. These resources include a bank of tactile diagrams and materials. An inventory has been produced to aid teachers' planning. In collaboration with AMPU, Heinemann mathematics materials have been produced in Braille format.

The acquisition of artefacts and other tactile materials has improved the quality of work in environmental studies. Resources and artefacts have also been purchased to support pupils' learning in Religious and Moral Education.

A range of playground games has been bought to support the participation of all children from both the unit and the mainstream primary school.

Overall, staff were using the resources well to help motivate pupils and support and extend their learning.

Main point for action 2

The unit should continue to develop approaches to planning and the monitoring of provision.

The unit has made very good progress towards meeting this recommendation.

Teachers forward planning procedures have been developed to provide clearer information on pupils' learning and how their learning is assessed.

The unit has developed its approach to monitoring teachers' plans and pupils' work and has introduced a system for monitoring class lessons.

Parents and pupils have been consulted about the work of the unit through questionnaires and discussion. Pupils' progress has been tracked through their achievement of targets set for them within their individualised educational programmes. The quality of education in the unit has been a regular topic for discussion at staff meetings.

Progress towards meeting priorities identified in the unit's improvement plan has been constantly monitored. The Unit coordinator and staff were making effective use of the information gained from the revised planning and monitoring procedures to improve the quality of pupils' learning.??

To plan for further improvement, the national quality indicators set out in 'How Good is Our School' were being used to audit the unit's current stage of progress.

Main point for action 3

The Unit should provide more time for teachers and specialist staff to consult with each other.

The unit has made very good progress towards meeting this recommendation.

The need for more formal consultation time has been recognised. Regular consultation meetings have been scheduled to permit the Unit Co-ordinator to discuss forward plans. Regular meetings between the co-ordinator and the headteacher of the mainstream primary school are also held.

The Unit Co-ordinator has regularly attended meetings of the mainstream school management team.

A timetable has been drawn up that enables consultation between class and unit teachers. The time for consultation has ensured that activities planned by class teachers have been carefully adapted to take account of the needs of visually impaired pupils. Times have also been scheduled for unit teachers to meet with the teacher of English as an additional language and to consult with staff from the Alternative Media Production Unit. Unit teachers and the mobility specialist have been timetabled out of class to work collaboratively with the visiting physiotherapist in order that they are able to continue exercise programmes on a daily basis. These programmes have been discussed with auxiliary support staff. The mobility specialist has also attended unit meetings.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Overall the unit has made very good progress in addressing the three main points for action.

At the same time the unit has continued to provide a stimulating environment that meets the needs of visually impaired pupils in a mainstream setting.

It plans to continue to develop its partnership with parents and promote the educational and social inclusion of its pupils within Darnley Primary School and the local community. It will also continue to develop the specialist teaching approaches and resources required to ensure high quality education for its pupils.

As a result, HMIE will make no further visit in connection with the September 2003 inspection.



Ronnie O'Connor
Executive Director (Education, Training & Young People)
Glasgow City Council