

Follow-through Inspection Report

St Agnes' Primary School

March 2007

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published a report on standards and quality in St Agnes Primary School in September 2005 following their inspection of the school in May 2005.

Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how the main points for action, identified in the report, would be achieved.

Continuous Improvement

The commitment of the school to the development of the pupils as active citizens had continued. The children regularly participated in learning opportunities beyond the classroom and regularly worked within the wider community and beyond. Enterprise and business links had been further developed and had helped to raise aspirations and ambition for the children.

The school supported events at local and national level with whole classes and groups of children taking part in expressive arts and sporting events across the city. The recently established school choir continue to be involved in Sunday worship in the local parish and had performed to the local hospice, in a central shopping centre at Christmas and at the Royal Concert Hall. Primary six pupils had the opportunity to be involved with a theatre group on an anti bullying programme. This was in partnership with the BBC.

There is a strong Pupil Council with representatives from all stages in the school. The pupils had taken responsibility for improving their school grounds and had painted murals to enhance the school environment. The school was continuing with the Eco schools programme and had also produced a school travel plan to encourage less car journeys to and from school and to promote walking or cycling to school. In addition they had become involved in ecological projects such as raising trout eggs for the Clyde Watch project.

Pupils in primary six and seven had taken part in a buddy training programme run by the Active Schools coordinator. This had been established to support pupils in the playground. It had recently been extended to the local nursery where the primary seven pupils took part in paired reading and games with the nursery children.

The school had continued to work in partnership with its local community to showcase the skills of its pupils and their concern for the environment. The pupils are involved in many local and national competitions such as the Young Inventors Challenge, the K'nex Challenge and the local Maths Challenge.

The development of talking and listening had remained a focus for the school. The expertise of a teacher seconded from the New Learning Community had been directed to improve the children's skills and confidence in talking and listening. The self assurance of the pupils had increased and groups of children regularly took part in events where they made presentations to wider audiences for example at the Scottish Education and Teaching with Technology conference where they made a PowerPoint presentation and took part in a live video conferencing quiz with an astronaut.

Science and technology had been another area for improvement with the skills and experience of a member of staff having a positive impact here. The use of teaching for effective learning and formative assessment strategies had also been developed in this area. As a consequence pupils' skills and confidence had grown and their involvement with external science and technology programmes such as BAE systems science and technology programme and Generation Science workshops providing enhanced opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their science and technology skills as well as highlighting sound career related learning opportunities.

The school with support from the New Learning Community had focused on health and emotional wellbeing and this was having positive impacts on children's social skills and relationships. They had been involved with piloting the Social Emotional Learning Framework and the Happiness Project in conjunction with Glasgow's Educational Psychologist Service. A member of staff had completed a post-graduate certificate in Physical Education and all pupils in the school now

experienced two hours of physical education each week. A new skills based programme of study for PE had been developed in the school to support this initiative.

After school and lunchtime clubs were flourishing in St Agnes Primary. The children had a wealth of opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities to cater for the individual needs of pupils. The school was continuing to develop these practices and provide strong support to build pupils' self esteem, ambition and resilience.

Progress Towards the Main Points for Action

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

Main point for action 1

Main point for Action 1 The school should build on existing good practice to ensure that pupils are set consistently challenging tasks and a suitably brisk pace of learning.

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this point for action.

Teachers had been involved in a comprehensive training programme to review and extend the strategies they used in class to support children's learning. As a consequence of this staff development, teaching for effective learning strategies had become firmly embedded across the school and pupils were consistently experiencing high quality interactive lessons in every classroom.

Additional training for teachers had been provided by the school in conjunction with the Educational Improvement Service (EDIS) on the use of formative assessment strategies. This development had enabled teachers to more closely focus on what pupils were actually learning during the course of a lesson and what they needed to do to help them achieve success. As teachers' awareness of this way of working increased pupils were able to apply the strategies for themselves and assess their own learning with more confidence.

Teachers' planning had become more focused on developing pupils' skills. They were now planning more effectively for pupils' next steps in learning. In class lessons teachers regularly shared with pupils what they were expected to learn. At all stages the learning intentions and the success criteria associated with the lesson were shared and displayed in the classroom. This practice was further developed in the upper stages of the school where older pupils were encouraged to identify and describe how they would know they had been successful in completing a task well.

These consistent whole school approaches were helping the children to become more focussed and successful in participating in the tasks set for them. The children were becoming more confident in identifying the next steps in their learning and focusing on what they had to do to achieve these goals.

Across the school self and peer assessment was common practice in all classes. Thinking time, thumbs up, question time, partner and group work were teaching and learning strategies used to support the pupils. These practices had increased pupil responsibility and at all stages pupils were fully engaged in their class work.

Homework activities had been reviewed and teachers now set a variety of activities for children to undertake at home. Due attention and balance was given to ensure a mixture of consolidation and creative activities were being undertaken by the children. This was closely monitored by the head teacher. These improvements directed to improving the quality of the homework opportunities were encouraging children to become more motivated in their learning and aware of what was required to improve their learning.

A review of resources had been undertaken to ensure that the materials used were relevant and of interest to the children. Resources to develop the children's reading skills had been put in place. More novels and interactive resources had been purchased and were now in use. Resources and interactive smart boards were commonly used in each classroom to promote active learning by the pupils. Teachers clearly identified the skills they wished the pupils to develop and selected appropriate resources from a variety of sources to meet these planned objectives. This had increased both the children's motivation and interest in their learning.

Teachers were also growing in confidence to closely match these resources to the children's learning and ensure that children were challenged in their learning and not over-practising skills they had already overtaken. This was ensuring a brisk pace of learning and more pupils were overtaking national levels of attainment sooner than expected.

Well structured and rigorous monitoring by the head teacher had increased the pace of learning. Programmes of study were reviewed and teachers' forward plans scrutinised and discussed to ensure that an appropriate and challenging pace of learning was set for all pupils. Assessment information was monitored and pupil progress carefully tracked to ensure that skills and abilities were being introduced to stretch the pupils. Regular feedback to staff and focussed tracking and monitoring enabled more pupils to achieve national assessment levels earlier than expected. Overall attainment within the school had continued to improve.

**Main point
for action 2**

The school should provide more opportunities for pupils to work actively together and to take more responsibility for their work

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

The school's participation in the staff development programme in collaborative learning provided by EDIS had increased the opportunities provided for the children to work together in the class. Teachers had developed their own classroom practice and were now more confident in helping the children to adopt this participative and co-operative style of learning. They had reviewed their teaching plans and identified opportunities within existing programmes of study where more collaborative and active learning approaches could be used.

These collaborative approaches had been developed in all classes across the school and pupils were now well used to working with partners or in groups to complete shared tasks. A teacher, working as a coach in classes, had modelled good practice in group work and strategies to engage the children in their learning. This had a very positive influence across the school. All staff and pupils had benefited from this support. Clear expectations were consistently demonstrated and these methods were inspiring and encouraging other teachers within the school.

The pupil council had worked together to make a DVD about their learning experiences in St Agnes Primary. This DVD had been compiled to help explain to parents what the improved teaching practices in the school were and how they were used at each stage to support the pupils' learning and raise attainment and achievement.

Teaching and learning was regularly discussed in every class with pupils encouraged to reflect upon their learning and consider the next steps they would need to improve. The teachers also spent time to encourage the children to consider how they could help themselves in tackling their class work and discuss learning strategies they might employ to help them. These approaches could include 'ask a friend', 'use a number line' or 'chunk the problem'.

The pupils were able to talk knowledgably about their learning experiences in the classroom. They could recognise and name the strategies they would use to help them learn. This had resulted in children becoming more independent in their learning as they became more aware of what they could do to help themselves should they encounter a difficulty with their work. Another benefit was that the children were more inquisitive and resilient about their learning.

Each term class newsletters were sent home detailing what the children would be learning. Using this information, teachers assisted each child to set realistic learning targets for mathematics and language. Children were becoming more self aware in setting their own targets for development of their personal and social skills. All of these targets were regularly reviewed by the teacher. Achievement folders were used to capture the children's success in meeting these targets and in celebrating their participation in other aspects of school life. This structured approach to the introduction of personal learning targets and records of achievement had fostered an ethos of independent learning and thinking skills.

**Main point
for action 3**

The school should continue to raise attainment in English language and mathematics

The school has made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

New class materials had been purchased to supplement the school's existing resources and provide the children with a broad selection of high quality classroom materials. ICT equipment and resources had also been enhanced. Interactive smart boards were being successfully used to provide stimulating learning experiences for pupils. This motivated them to be more engaged in their learning and enjoy challenge.

The school had participated in the authority's city wide development of teaching. This staff development programme had been well supported in school by the deployment of a teacher from the New Learning Community to work with her colleagues and provide coaching in these teaching

methods. This training and staff development on teaching and learning had been systematically implemented across the school and was now positively influencing the pace of learning and the levels of attainment.

The support structures employed in the school to help meet the needs of all pupils were impacting on attainment. The head teacher flexibly deployed teachers and support staff to support the pupils' learning by facilitating the implementation of setting groups, by providing in-class supports and ensuring the needs of the nurture group children were appropriately met.

The head teacher reviewed the deployment of support staff each term to ensure that pupils' needs were consistently being met. Classroom assistants were deployed to support learning in each class and actively worked with pupils throughout the school day. This had resulted in focused support for learning and helped all pupils to be actively engaged their learning. The school had been identified by HMIE as successfully improving the attainment of the lowest 20% of pupils and a visit to describe the strategies used in the school had been made in November 2006.

The progress of every child was carefully monitored and tracked to ensure that the learning intentions set by the teacher and agreed with the head teacher were being met. There was a flexible approach to the attainment groups in the class and setting of children for mathematics and language was put in place only as appropriate. The use of setting groups allowed the teachers to direct more interactive teaching time to the groups in their class. Commendably the arrangement was regularly reviewed to ensure that maximum benefit to the pupils was being maintained.

The school had continued to raise attainment in reading and writing and maintain its high standards in mathematics.

Conclusion and Next Steps

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Overall the school had made very good progress towards meeting the recommendations contained in the HMIE report.

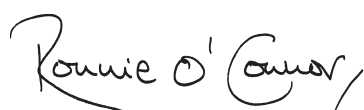
The head teacher and the school team have continued to build an ethos of achievement and set high expectations for all children within the school. The comprehensive training programme and review of teaching strategies employed in the school had significantly improved the learning experiences of children in all classrooms. The children had high expectations of themselves and of their teachers.

Staff had fully implemented the advice and training they had experienced and high quality interactive lessons were a common feature in St Agnes Primary. This had ensured that pupils were fully engaged in their own learning. The sharing of classroom practice and expectations with parents through curriculum newsletters, open evenings and the notification of their child's personal and learning targets ensured that parents were well supported to fully participate in their child's education.

The school had built upon its good practice in self evaluation and this was now firmly in place across the school. Teachers and children were reflective about their work and motivated to continually improve their own contribution to the school. Annual questionnaires were distributed to pupils. Parents were also engaged in this practice. The opinions of all stakeholders were valued and there was an excellent sense of teamwork from all partners.

The head teacher had displayed leadership and vision while ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders. There was a whole school approach to self evaluation with all partners, adults and children, being involved in the process. Such reflective practices for both adults and children had resulted in a truly collegiate approach to improvement. This was complemented by the rigorous monitoring of pupil progress and school developments.

The commitment of all staff to improvement and the very able leadership within the school ensures that St Agnes Primary remains well placed to continue to provide an excellent educational provision within the community. The school has the capacity to constructively build on its strengths and identify and respond to any areas for development.



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