



# Follow-through Inspection Report

## Richmond Park School

January 2007

### **The Inspection**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, HMIE, published a report on standards and quality in Richmond Park School in February 2005 following their inspection in October 2004. Working with the school, 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 HMIE in February 2005, the education authority has been responsible for producing this follow-through report. The authority has assessed the extent to which the school has continued to improve the quality of its work and has evaluated the progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

### **Continuous Improvement**

The school continues to provide a very high quality education for its pupils. The pupils have continued to register a wide range of achievements. As well as responding to the action points identified by the HMIE inspection, Richmond Park has continued to improve other aspects of its work.

The school has taken forward National Priorities in education and has worked hard to promote achievement and attainment. The school's planning format has been revised to include a pupil profile to which staff from education, medical, nursing, therapy and psychological services have contributed. This profile has produced a clear picture of each child's needs and resulted in a detailed individualised educational programme [IEP] incorporating long and short-term targets, success criteria and evaluation. The planning format for the Environmental Studies programme has been re-designed so that, for each distinct class group, units are planned in relation to the identified long-term targets and are supported by practical experiences which demonstrate progression in pupil's learning.

To promote values and citizenship, the school has continued to develop pupil experiences in the local and wider community.

Two groups of children enjoyed specialist residential placements at Calvert Trust Outdoor Centres in Keilder and Keswick. During these placements, the children accepted broader responsibility for their daily routines and self-care and furthered

their personal independence by overcoming new challenges. In undertaking activities they had previously thought beyond their capabilities - such as abseiling, rock climbing, horse riding and orienteering - they exceeded their own personal expectations [as well as those of the adults involved]. The impact of these experiences has proved so beneficial, particularly in terms of team building and promoting self-esteem and confidence, that these placements are now planned to include all children in the upper primary stages.

Through enterprise projects that culminated in selling products in the local community, children developed a basic understanding of some aspects of financial competence. They learned how to organise an enterprise venture, that people have different roles and responsibilities within any organisation and that collective planning is an effective strategy for achieving common aims.

Video conferencing with an island school allowed pupils to gain insight into rural school life and to compare and contrast some of the life differences between that community and Glasgow.

Inclusion and equality has continued to be promoted through pupil participation in physical education with an increased time allocation for swimming. Pupils have represented the school at national swimming galas, most winning medals and some achieving National Champion Status. The introduction of tennis through the “Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation” gave pupils the opportunity to develop new skills and participate in inter-school competition. The evolving range of physical activities and experiences for pupils has allowed them to extend their contact with the community and develop leisure time prospects. This has resulted in some children from the school joining tennis groups for the disabled at a local sports centre.

Through all of these experiences pupils have developed increased self-esteem, confidence and awareness of new life opportunities they can access.

The staff group, both teachers and pupil support assistants, have continued to extend their expertise through an extensive programme of continuing professional development [CPD] informed by the process of professional review. This programme has taken advantage of the recognised in-house skills that staff have to offer. The CPD programme has included the use of symbols and signing to support oral and written language, music as a vehicle for developing communication and video editing to produce concise assessment footage which supports the pupil review programme. This programme has been enhanced by input from a range of services outwith the school. Psychological Services have advised on supporting children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders; a Glasgow based company, ‘Media Consultancy’, has given support for DVD digital editing and the ‘Call Centre’ has provided guidance on the development of pupil passports. The passports, for users of alternative augmentative communication, summarise critical information regarding children’s likes and dislikes and any crucial medical information to which adults involved with them need to be alerted.

In summary, the school has continued to demonstrate its ability to improve the quality of its work and is currently focussing on the further development of strategies to support language and communication.

## **Progress Towards the Main Points for Action**

The initial inspection report identified four 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 school should keep under review the length of the school week to ensure that pupils have sufficient education in line with that experienced in mainstream primary school.**

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

The school has continued to provide a full educational day for all pupils. However, further benefit was gained from the school's response to other points for action. For example, the reorganisation of pupils into class groups with similar learning styles has resulted in the various therapy staff who support these groups providing a much more focussed service. The Occupational Therapy service has been able to offer small group activities within a single class. Placing children who require the use of communication devices together has allowed Speech and Language Therapy to provide single class based input. As a consequence, pupil time away from the class environment to participate in therapy activities on an individual basis has been reduced. This has had a positive impact on what can be achieved in general class work. In delivering their services therapists are required to state what the care aims are for the children with whom they work. Managers of the therapy services confirm that they are now able to meet their stated care aims more productively and less intrusively within the school day.

### **Main point for action 2**

**The school should put in place a clearer curriculum structure to help staff to build more consistently on prior learning.**

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

For some time the school has recognised the need to develop curricular resources to meet the range of additional support needs of its pupil population. In recent years this range has widened to include not only pupils having a physical disability or medical condition requiring educational and therapy support, but also complex educational needs, autistic spectrum disorders, hearing and visual impairment and significant language and communication difficulties. At the time of the inspection the diverse

range of needs within some class groupings posed challenges in terms of planning and teaching to address pupils' needs. Following whole staff discussion and drawing on advice from a range of therapy staff, new pupil groupings - where the predominant learning style was clearly evident – were established. This resulted in the provision of an elaborated and differentiated curriculum for some pupils; a total communication environment based on symbol and signing for others; and the formation of another group who would bridge both the elaborated and 5-14 curricular frameworks.

This process has been viewed as the first step to redefining an appropriate overarching curricular framework for the school.

The Acting Depute Head and Principal teacher also introduced a new starting point for curricular development based on a 'Big Picture Profile'. This multi-agency approach identified the principle learning objectives for any given pupil. On this basis teachers prioritised long term targets from which they mapped out progression in agreed areas. In a further stage of development the distinct profile for each class group was used as the foundation to create a rationale for and summary statement of the expected teaching methodology in the classroom.

Curriculum content, methodologies and resources have thus been tailored to the needs of groups and individuals. The new structures introduced have enhanced the existing pupil review process and have provided a more meaningful context for evaluation and planning for improvement.

To support the school's initiative on 'Big Picture' profiling and to extend the process so that parents and pupils have an active role, 'Enquire', the national information and advice service, was invited to deliver training in August 2006. This training was designed to equip staff to promote open and realistic communication with parents and pupils.

Staff have worked collaboratively with speech and language therapists on structured approaches to language development using symbols. This has helped teachers predict more accurately the progress of children who require augmentative and alternative communication [AAC]. This has enhanced staff knowledge of the continuum of 'normal' language development and has highlighted how AAC users progress along that continuum. The success of this collaboration has led to two teachers from the school being seconded to advise colleagues in mainstream primary schools on implementing the use of symbols.

As a next step, during this session the school intends to develop a more comprehensive framework for language and communication. This will help map out children's progress and to formalise the structured approaches being developed alongside speech and language therapists.

**Main point  
for action 3**

**The school should strengthen planning and tracking of pupil's progress to enable pupils to achieve more.**

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

Pupil needs have continued to be reviewed annually. To improve their approaches to planning and tracking the school has implemented an additional process to strengthen the former. At the beginning of the school year and prior to any formal review, multi-agency meetings have been scheduled to consider the main priorities for each child. These meetings have allowed a holistic picture of each individual to emerge. As a consequence, all staff involved have formed a better understanding of each pupil's needs and the factors which impact on their learning. The long-term targets for each pupil have been derived from these meetings.

Individualised educational programmes [IEPs] have evolved to take account of the changing needs of the pupil population. Following consultation with teaching staff it was agreed that the process would be refined further. IEPs now include a statement from the teacher regarding the evidence on which the achievement of learning outcomes has been based. This has proven particularly beneficial for those classes where children have been physically unable to produce any volume of written work.

Senior managers have recognised how the Additional Support Needs Act will impact on planning. The authority's Code of Practice giving guidance on implementation of the act within Glasgow has been issued. The school will now move to introduce a common format for additional support plans, which will incorporate current IEPs, and will continue with the transition from Record of Needs to co-ordinated support plans.

The reorganisation of class groups in accordance with pupils' priority needs has represented a major and positive shift for teaching staff in terms of forward planning, customising the learning environment, developing specific methodologies, monitoring progress and recording achievement.

For example, children with autistic spectrum disorder have benefited from a clearly structured symbol supported environment and have been able to complete tasks more quickly and with less stress. Children requiring alternative and / or augmentative communication have made progress in a total communication environment and have been able to participate more fully in class activities and whole school events. Pupils following the 5-14 curricular framework have benefited from more cohesive aims and approaches in the classroom and have been successful in achieving targets set.

Staff and parental comment on the revised pupils groupings and process for planning and tracking of pupils' progress has been extremely positive. Staff and parents have indicated that the revisions have led to a more productive environment learning and are fully supportive of further development.

**Main point  
for action 4**

**The school should use more comprehensive and rigorous arrangements for evaluation which contribute constructively to improvements by systematically sharing good practice.**

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

At the time of this inspection, HMIe identified a number of features of good practice and the school has continued to build on these. Following initial staff discussion during in-service days, the consensus of opinion held that the development of the use of symbols and signing should be enhanced in order to address the changing needs profile of the school population.

This had been an identified feature of good practice and further development was considered to be of clear benefit to other groups of children.

A teacher and pupil support assistant completed a residential National Course leading to accreditation as ‘Signalong’ Trainers. [‘Signalong’ is a sign supported system developed that helps children and adults develop language and communication skills.] All staff have now been fully trained and have acquired the skills to access these resources. The successful implementation of this training is evidenced through the wide use of signs and symbols. To extend good practice, a working group of staff looking at ‘symbolising the environment’ was established. The work done by this group has been reflected in the creative use of symbols to support all aspects of the curriculum.

Arrangements for evaluation have been extended to cover all areas of development, the emphasis being on tracking pupils’ progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning. The enhanced pupil profile has helped to prioritise long term and termly targets within IEPs. The headteacher and depute head have provided written feedback and suggestions on IEPs to teachers at individual consultation meetings. These meetings have also given a focus, agreed with staff, for the classroom monitoring of learning and teaching.

Parental comment, invited at key points in the school year, has revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the continuing improvement made by the school.

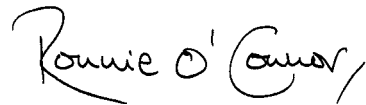
To ensure pupils continue to make progress teachers have evaluated formally each pupil’s learning, in relation to targets set, at the end of each term. Targets have then been reset for the next term.

Teachers and pupil support assistants have continued to contribute to the school improvement cycle and plan through the process of professional review and development, for both groups of staff, and structured discussions on in-service days.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Overall the school has made good progress in addressing the four main points for action.

At the same time the school has continued to provide a stimulating environment that meets the needs of physically disabled pupils in a specialised setting. The school improvement plan sets the agenda for ongoing development of specialist teaching approaches and resources and for assuring high quality education in Richmond Park.



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