



Follow-through Inspection Report

St Gregory's Primary School

August 2007

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published a report on standards and quality in St Gregory's Primary School in December 2005 following their inspection of the school in September 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 school had continued to develop opportunities for children to be involved more actively in their learning. They had continued their enterprise activities and their links with local businesses. The school had gained a diamond award for enterprise. They had also established an eco-schools committee and were well on their way to meeting the criteria to become a Health Promoting School.

The school had further developed its charity work and in celebration of its 40th anniversary had undertaken an ambitious project to support 40 children in a developing country to access school. The pupils had been thoroughly involved in planning and organising many of these events and with support from parents and the community had achieved their goal.

To promote further aspects of equality and fairness, anti-racist resources from Glasgow City Council had been successfully incorporated into the school's Personal and Social Development programme. The school continued to work in close harmony with its neighbouring non-denominational school to undertake joint projects to raise awareness of anti-sectarian issues.

Further opportunities had been sought to ensure that children's learning experiences were broad and relevant with an increase in excursions, competitions and opportunities to develop children's awareness of learning in its widest sense. The involvement of the school in the New Learning Community Social Emotional Learning Framework project was benefiting primary 7 pupils in preparation for transition to secondary school.

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 becoming more reflective about their work and motivated to continually improve their own contribution to the school. Questionnaires on many aspects of the work of the school were distributed to pupils and parents. These results informed discussions and decisions eg the homework policy

and outings by children. Teachers were now engaged in visits to the classes of other colleagues to provide peer evaluation of teaching and learning. This was supported by regular opportunities to share whole school practice and was resulting in more consistent good practice across the school and a shared sense of teamwork.

This enhanced teamwork and growing confidence of staff had encouraged a more distributed leadership in the school with teachers taking responsibility for some aspects of the work of the school. ICT, eco-schools, personal, social and health education and promoting partnership with parents were being taken forward in the school by teacher leaders. A member of the support staff was taking responsibility for coordinating playground activities and peer support for pupils.

Pupils' attendance had continued to improve and was now consistently above the Glasgow average for attendance in primary schools. However the overall school attendance still remained below the national average.

Some improvements to school accommodation had been carried out with permanent access for disabled people now provided. Some re-surfacing of the playground had been carried out and previous difficulties with heating in the classrooms had been addressed.

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

The school should take action to improve attainment in mathematics, and continue to improve attainment in other aspects of the curriculum. In doing so they should take account of the need to improve pupils' skills in mental mathematics

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

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

At the beginning of each lesson learning intentions were shared with children and formative assessment strategies were regularly used to ensure that children were fully engaged in their learning and confident in their understanding of the concepts being taught.

In mental mathematics lessons teachers used effective questioning to ascertain the strategies used by the children and encouraged them to share with each other the variety of ways they had achieved an answer. This practice was increasing the mathematical confidence and ability of the children.

A range of practical mathematics resources had been purchased and implemented with support from a mathematics consultant.

Information and communication technology (ICT) had been introduced to further support the teaching of mental mathematics. Training for teachers in the use of the Smartboard had been undertaken and additional smartboards had been purchased for the school. The children were very enthusiastic about the use of this resource in their classrooms. They enjoyed the interactive and challenging nature of the lessons and the timed activities had helped to increase their mental agility.

The headteacher had monitored the consistent implementation of these approaches using focused classroom visits and review of pupils' work. The teachers were also more involved in evaluating their learning plans and considering more effective resources and teaching methods to meet their intentions. This shared approach to self evaluation was having a positive effect on improvements in mathematics and in other areas of the curriculum.

Within two years the overall mathematics attainment in the school had risen by 12.8%. In addition the school had increased the pace of learning with more children achieving national assessment levels earlier than expected.

Main point for action 2

The school should take action to improve attainment in mathematics, and continue to improve attainment in other aspects of the curriculum. In doing so they should continue to increase the pace and challenge in pupils' learning and involve pupils more meaningfully in setting their learning targets

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

Teachers had participated in training in the use of Glasgow City Council's problem solving pack. This resource had provided a clear focus on strategies used and enabled children to work cooperatively in groups. The lessons were structured to provide feedback sessions and helped children to explore strategies employed and discuss alternative ways to seek solutions. This approach regularly involved children in reflecting upon their learning and encouraged them to consider their own learning styles and wider opportunities for learning.

Formative assessment strategies had been further developed across the school. Teachers regularly shared the intended outcome of lessons with their pupils. They used effective questioning to focus the children's understanding. The teachers provided feedback to

children on their learning which helped them to focus on what they had achieved and what they had to do next to improve. This approach had been complemented with inservice training to staff by the principal teacher in self and peer assessment. It was now common practice in many classrooms for the children themselves to be given regular opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. This increased involvement of the children as partners in their own learning had been very successful in improving writing attainment and there had been an increase of 7% in attainment in national assessments in the last two years.

The introduction of Glasgow City Council mathematics planners with their focus on evaluation of learning and teaching and identifying next steps in learning had helped teachers to focus more clearly on what their pupils needed to learn next and what they needed to do to achieve success. As a result teachers planning had become more refined and this now provided detailed information to enable more focused target setting to be undertaken. A new tracking system had been introduced and learning targets for each child were set annually and reviewed each term in discussion with the class teacher and the headteacher. This was helping staff to focus on a brisk pace of learning and was resulting in accurate predictions of attainment in the school. In addition, there was an increase in the number of pupils achieving national assessments sooner than expected.

Across the school there was a general raising of expectations and increased pace of learning in reading and writing as well as mathematics. There had been improvements in attainment in all areas of national assessment since June 2005 with increases of 6.24% in reading attainment, 7.4% in writing attainment and 12.8% in mathematics attainment.

Parents of all children with individualised education programmes were now more closely involved in setting and reviewing the learning targets for their children. In addition primary 6 and 7 pupils with individualised education programmes (IEPS) were involved in setting and reviewing their own learning targets to encourage them to focus their efforts and celebrate their success.

The school was beginning to help all children to set their own targets and had begun to formalise this through the setting of individual targets in the Home/School agreement. Formative assessment strategies were well employed by teachers to help children better understand the next steps in their learning and what they had to do to achieve success. Children were then supported in translating this information into individual targets. The learning intentions for each primary stage were well communicated to parents through each Home/School agreement. In addition to this general information every child at each primary stage annually set themselves two individual targets to work towards over the session. Termly updates of progress were providing support and encouragement to parents to interact more consistently and constructively in helping their children achieve the identified targets. Parental feedback on this process indicated a growing level of involvement and satisfaction.

Main point for action 3

The school should take action to improve attainment in mathematics, and continue to improve attainment in other aspects of the curriculum. In doing so they should involve parents more effectively in their children's learning and in the wider work of the school.

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

The School Board had been fully involved and consulted in drawing up the school's response to this action point with support from Glasgow City Council's Parent Officer. The wider parent body had been kept informed of developments in the school through receipt of regular summary reports of progress in the action points.

The quality of communication and opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning had been substantially improved. 'Keeping You Posted' curriculum newsletters had been introduced. There had been increased opportunities for parents to visit their children's classes and take part in practical learning sessions with their children. 'Drop In' activities had been provided by the headteacher, principal teacher and some class teachers on a variety of curriculum themes eg formative assessment, smartboard lessons and homework.

Parents' views had been sought on a number of matters concerning their children's education and the work of the school. The Home/School Agreement had been drawn up in partnership with the staff of the school, the School Board and the Pupil Council. All parents had been consulted on the revised homework policy and the homework diaries introduced to the upper stages were providing a good platform for shared communication between the school and home. Consultation on school trips had resulted in an increase in opportunities for pupils.

Samples of children's work were sent home on a termly basis and parents were asked to comment on what the child had done well and what they would like to see improved. This was proving very popular and there was strong evidential comment from parents and teachers working in partnership to support the children.

There had been many opportunities for parents to visit the school on a more informal basis such as an art exhibition, a physical education evening for parents, attending worship and celebration of achievements. Parents were regularly invited to class prayer services. The parish priest had also welcomed this opportunity to meet with the families of the school.

One teacher now taught art and design and physical education to all the pupils. This approach had improved the consistency of the teaching and the continuity of pupils' learning. The quality of the learning experiences had improved and the children had been given more opportunities to be involved in local competitions and events.

Training had been undertaken by all staff on customer care and this was having a positive impact on frontline services in the school with the provision of a welcoming and helpful first contact for visitors to the school.

The School Board had been involved in evaluating some of the work of the school for a recent authority self evaluation audit. They had considered the descriptors for How Good Is Our School and deemed the school to be very good in terms of parent partnerships. A new Parent Group had been set up with an agreed constitution in place.

The school had continued to work in close partnership with the local non-denominational school and together they undertook a joint performance with Scottish Opera to promote anti-sectarianism. This project based on The United Nations Rights of the Child had been included in a Scottish Executive Education Department report based on good practice in this area.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The school overall made very good progress towards meeting the recommendations contained in the HMle report.

The head teacher and the school team had continued to build on the good standards of attainment and achievement in the school and had set high expectations for all children. They were now successfully involving all children in setting some of their own learning targets. All parents were afforded the opportunity to be engaged in this process with their children and more parents were demonstrating a commitment to do so. The increased levels of attainment and confidence of the pupils were being maintained and built upon.

The training opportunities and new resources had improved the learning experiences of children in all classes. The teachers' commitment to evaluation of their teaching was also now more firmly embedded and they were more confident in planning, setting targets and tracking pupil performance. Increased pace of learning was being consistently achieved.

The headteacher had successfully built upon the good practice in self evaluation that had existed in the school. Staff, parents and children were now fully and regularly involved in evaluating their experiences in the school. All parties were growing more confident in this approach and changes to practices were being well supported and implemented. There was evidence of growing distributed leadership across the school with staff taking responsibility for some aspects of the school's work eg ICT developments, health and well being, partnership with parents and the wider community and eco schools.

The new Parent Forum had been established and the regular opportunities for parents to be involved in classes had been welcomed. The Home/School agreement and the solid homework practices were being well supported by parents.

The commitment of all staff to improvement and the able leadership within the school ensures that St Gregory's Primary is well placed to continue to provide a very good provision of education within the community. The growing strength of the partnerships within the school, with parents and children will continue to positively impact on future developments.

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