

# Follow-through Inspection Report

## Balornock Primary School

November 2009

### **The Inspection**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) published a report on standards and quality in Balornock Primary School in October 2007 following an inspection of the school in June 2007. Working with the education authority, the school prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original report.

### **Continuous Improvement**

The Headteacher and staff moved quickly to establish an action plan to take forward the main points for action from the HMIe inspection report on the school. Staff received a broad range of training and advice from the authority's Education Improvement Service to support the implementation of the action plan.

The headteacher continued to provide effective leadership to ensure high expectations for all children and improve attainment. The staff have taken on responsibilities and contributed well to the improvements. Many of them have taken lead roles in key developments through the project leadership programme.

The school has increased its attainment in reading by 15%, writing by 17% and in mathematics by 5% since 2007. Staff are committed to raising attainment and have set suitably challenging targets for this session.

The school has continued to develop children's personal and social skills including citizenship through achieving health promoting schools status and all children have benefited from the activities involved in this. The pupil council has been active within the school, which has continued to develop the children as responsible citizens and effective contributors. The school has applied for its green flag status under the Eco scheme and hosts a range of after school clubs opportunities to enhance children's sense of achievement. Most children participate in at least one club within the upper school and choirs have been set up for the middle school.

All children are able to develop enterprise skills across the curriculum and the school has achieved a platinum enterprise award. The school has built on its success in developing and extending international education and this has developed further children's communication skills and citizenship skills. The school has also gained an International school award and a British Council award for International Education. The school has continued to develop the children's understanding of race equality, cultural diversity through extending their links with schools in other countries and have gained valuable experiences of other cultures through residential trips to Spain and France. The school also gained a sense over sectarian award for anti sectarian work carried out with a school in Sligo. As part of this project, children from P6 and P7 visited a school in Sligo.

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

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

### **Main point for action 1**

#### **Develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in supporting pupils' learning across the curriculum**

*The school, with the support of the education authority, has made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

The staff received training from within and outwith the school to improve teachers' skills with ICT. The staff were trained in using a wide range of ICT, including digital cameras and interactive whiteboards. Teachers are now making more use of ICT to enhance children's learning.

The school has bought some additional resources to support the development of ICT. This is widening the type and amount of ICT available to class teachers and is being used in all curricular areas by most teachers. The school is also buying Nintendo DS's to engage children in mental maths and to promote the use of different types of ICT to support children's learning across the curriculum.

An ICT working party has worked on developing new ICT planners, which have recently been introduced. These planners are designed for each curricular area and encourage and highlight the use of ICT across the curriculum. The school has also developed pupil self assessment sheets to encourage the use of ICT to support learning and identify where children are finding it most useful and allow children to track their own progress

The school has now improved teachers' skills and resources available but should continue to monitor and encourage the use of ICT across the curriculum further to ensure that every classroom is utilising ICT to the maximum benefit.

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

#### **Ensure consistently high expectations for all pupils**

*The school with the support of the education authority has made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

The school management team has regularly challenged the expectations of staff through the monitoring of forward plans. They ensured that the targets set for children were high and that they were on track to achieve these targets. Planning had been improved to make the pace of learning more challenging.

The staff responded well to the challenges made by the management team and have raised their expectations of what children can achieve. Children are now grouped by prior attainment for English language and mathematics to provide an increased level of challenge for all children. The impact of this can be seen in the improvement in attainment.

In environmental studies, more opportunities are being taken to link children's learning and to provide more opportunities for extended writing.

Overall, there has been a year on year improvement in attainment and more children are achieving levels earlier than might normally be expected.

**Main point for action 3**

**Improve the quality of learning and teaching and pupils' attainment in English language and maths.**

*The school, with the support of the education authority, has made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.*

In the last two years, the school has significantly increased its expectations for P7 children. In 2006/07, less than half were achieving appropriate national levels in writing. In 2008/09, most children were achieving these levels. Similarly, in reading, almost all P7 children are now achieving appropriate national levels. At P4, there are similar improvements evident.

The staff had received training from the literacy and numeracy tutors who worked in the classroom with the teachers to demonstrate active learning strategies and supported the teachers to develop these strategies in class. The staff also received in service training on formative assessment. Most teachers are now using a variety of teaching approaches in the classroom and most are providing more stimulating and interesting tasks.

In some classes the storyline approach has been adopted for some topics this has enhanced the quality of learning in some classrooms.

Teachers should continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

**Main point for action 4**

**Develop more effective approaches to monitoring and tracking pupils' progress to ensure tasks better meet the needs of all pupils.**

*The school with the support of the education authority has made satisfactory progress towards this action point.*

Staff have been given a termly timetable indicating classroom visits and forward planning submissions. In session 2009/10, the staff will receive an annual calendar of monitoring which will give a clearer picture of when and what is being monitored. Classroom monitoring is taking place more regularly and now all staff are receiving written and oral feedback which is impacting on improving meeting the needs of all children.

Staff now receive written and oral feedback of their planning. However, this has only recently been extended to all staff. Extending it to all staff has allowed for professional dialogue to impact more fully on all teachers which allows them to alter their planning to more fully meet the needs of children.

Through the monitoring of classrooms and forward plans the children now move groups as the need arises, which is helping with pace and challenge. Teachers are now planning more effectively to meet children's learning needs.

The senior management team regularly monitor the national attainment data and this contributes to children progressing at an appropriate pace. The staff have received training on tracking and raising attainment and are now using attainment data to set higher targets for pupils. They also had training in self evaluation strategies and are now self evaluating their practice within their classroom more formally to ensure that children's needs are being met.

Teachers and senior managers should continue to improve their approaches to quality assurance to better meet children's learning needs.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The headteacher, depute head and principal teachers have worked effectively as a team to provide guidance and support to staff in taking forward the main points for action. In doing so they had sought and made use of appropriate advice and support from Education Services and partner agencies.

Overall the school has made good progress towards meeting all the main points for action and is well placed to continue to improve.

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