

Follow-through Inspection Report

St Benedict's Primary School

June 2009

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published a report on standards and quality in St Benedict's Primary School in June 2007 following their inspection of the school in March 2007.

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 has made very good progress in overtaking and enhancing the main points for action in the report. In January 2008, an acting headteacher took up post as the headteacher was seconded to a senior management position in the authority. The head teacher, acting head teacher and staff had moved quickly to take forward the main points for action from the HMIE inspection report on the school. The action plan identified appropriate tasks and timescales as well as the criteria for monitoring and evaluating progress. Teaching staff had received training and advice from the authority's Education Improvement Service and the head teachers to support the implementation of the action plan.

The high standards of attainment have been maintained and a growing number of children were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment earlier than might normally be expected. Teachers' involvement in an extensive range of development work, especially in active and collaborative learning, had improved further the quality of learning and teaching in classrooms. There was evidence of a more challenging and ambitious pace of learning at early stages in the school and children were enjoying the learning experiences on offer to them.

At all stages of the school children's achievements were commendable. They were clearly focused on the principles of Curriculum for Excellence and demonstrated their confidence, sense of responsibility and successful learning through participation in a wide range of activities.

The introduction of more active learning has enhanced the quality of the learning experiences of children across the curriculum. For example, Primary 4 to 7 children have used the local authority Challenge Glasgow interactive materials on 'Oceans' 'Scotland' and 'The Swinging Sixties' to enrich collaborative work in their environmental education studies. Teachers should also be commended for the development of a significant number of new interactive topics which have added challenge and enjoyment across the school, for example, 'Fair Trade,' 'The Health Centre' and 'Pets.'

The school was awarded a second Platinum Award for Enterprise in 2009 following the very successful development of links with the local and wider community and local businesses, notably, through local citizenship initiatives in health and drug and alcohol awareness, and social occasions involving the community. Children were encouraged to become responsible citizens through the Sense Over Sectarianism project, where P7 children were able to present to local councillors and ministers their message of tolerance and acceptance. The school was awarded Best Film and Best Actress in the Determined to Make Movies project in 2008.

The school is now providing two hours of quality physical education a week through class teaching and links with the community. The school has been extremely effective in further developing community links with FARE, the Auld Firm Alliance and the Active Schools co-ordinators to extend sports opportunities for children at lunch time and after school, notably in basketball, football, hip-hop and boxercise. The school has won the Greater Easterhouse Mini Basketball Championship for the last 3 sessions and was awarded Health Promoting School status in March 2008.

Attendance is below average for the city and the school continues to monitor attendance closely and adopt strategies to encourage improvement. Links with parents and the community are very good through an open doors approach and there are many positive examples of partnership working.

Progress Towards the Main Points for Action

The initial inspection report identified two 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

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to take forward plans to develop learning through play.

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

Teachers had introduced a wide range of opportunities for children to learn through play. They used the 'Storyline' approach topics and developed their own themes, for example, "The Enchanted Forest" and "The Toy Shop" in Primary 1 and "Shopping with Nettie," developed for Primary 1/2. Children showed high levels of motivation and participated eagerly in their learning.

This session, teachers at the early stages and the principal teacher have developed environmental topics for all terms in the school year and have participated in new Storyline topics, for example, "There was a Princess."

The school has worked very effectively to inform and involve parents. For example, teachers at the early stages shared good practice with parents through school time and evening workshops. An information leaflet was produced for parents who were unable to attend. Parents of nursery children were shown how their children would be learning through play when they visited the school.

Home school links have been further enhanced through the introduction of a literacy based programme, 'Play Along Maths' to P1 pupils and parents where children take home highly interactive games and toys that have support cards and instructions for parents on how to engage in play with their child. Parents have attended meetings in school to offer feedback and gain support on the games and interactions with their child.

Main point for action 2

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to increase further the pace of learning to maintain high standards of attainment.

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

The very good tracking of pupil performance has been maintained. The acting head teacher met with each teacher to set targets through the use of the Glasgow City Council tracking process. This has been diligently monitored throughout the year by senior staff and the school is on track to achieve the attainment targets it set this year. The monitoring of learning and teaching by the acting head teacher and depute has been thorough, providing very good developmental feedback to teachers in improving the pace of learning. Teachers monitoring of children's work was also effective with good feedback given verbally and in written form.

The pace of learning in Early Years has been improved through the successful introduction of learning through play. Through the school's developments of Curriculum for Excellence, around a third of children at the early stages were now achieving levels earlier than expected.

Active Maths has benefited children in the early stages and this practice has been extended into P3, P3/4, P4 and P4/5 where teachers were using more active approaches to learning. This has ensured that children enjoy and are more challenged in their learning with an accelerated pace in the teaching of Maths.

Teachers were developing children's literacy skills across the curriculum. More active approaches were introduced. Additional support was provided for children who were experiencing difficulties with reading. At P6 and P7, children were taught reading and writing through reading 'real books'. This approach challenged children's reading and comprehension skills, developed their critical thinking skills in reading and encouraged greater engagement in learning.

Children's skills in listening and talking had improved through well planned learning experiences across the school. Children had opportunities to develop their presentation skills through leading assemblies. .

Teachers were using more interactive activities that encourage independent learning and increased pace and challenge through more active engagement for learners.

Conclusion and Next Steps

St Benedict's Primary School has built on the considerable strengths reported by HMIe in 2007 and it continues to be a lively and welcoming school. Staff and pupil morale is high and children's behaviour is commendable. Parents are very supportive of the school and it continues to be very well regarded by the local community. The school has made very good progress towards meeting the two main points for action identified in the inspection report.

The head teacher, the acting head teacher and all staff have worked very effectively to take forward a range of important developments in the school. With the support provided by the education authority the school has been successful in developing approaches to learning through play that are enhancing experiences for children in early years and impacting positively on active learning practice throughout the school. The school has successfully introduced and implemented a range of strategies and teaching programmes that encourage independent learning and an increase in pace and challenge through more active engagement for learners.

The leadership of the head teacher and the acting head teacher, supported by the depute head teacher and the extremely hard working staff, demonstrate a capacity for continued school improvement and the school remains very well placed to provide a very good educational provision within the community.

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