



# Follow-through Inspection Report

## Toryglen Autism Unit

JANUARY 2011

### 1. The Inspection

Toryglen Autism Unit was inspected in November 2008. HMIE's initial report was published on 20.1.09. Working with the education authority, the unit prepared an action plan to address the main points for action identified in the report and continued to improve the quality of the education

### 2. Continuous Improvement

The work of the unit has moved on well and it provides a high quality of education for its pupils. As well as responding to the action points identified by the HMIE inspection, the Unit continued to improve other aspects of its work.

The Unit Coordinator and the acting Principal Teacher had worked well together and had provided clear direction for staff. They had successfully supported and further developed a very strong collegiate ethos, by improving communication, providing well-planned opportunities for collaborative working, with a clear focus on learning and teaching.

Increasingly, staff had taken forward improvement and engaged in all aspects of the unit's life and work. They had continued to develop resources and to provide a stimulating and inclusive learning environment for children. In doing so, achievement and attainment had been consistently promoted.

In line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence, the coordinator and acting PT, in consultation with staff, have developed planners for literacy and numeracy, along with pace of learning records.

Staff had consistently demonstrated their commitment to continuing professional development. They had taken part in various development activities as individuals and in collegiate teams.

The unit had promoted values and citizenship, by encouraging pupils to take an active part in the life of the whole school community. Children had produced a very good unit newsletter which gave parents, and peers an update on what was happening, projects being undertaken, personal stories, cartoons and jokes. They had sought their readers' views and had received positive feedback, including praise from a professional journalist. The unit had established a strong emphasis on enterprise across the curriculum, for all learners. Pupils had taken part in a significant project to enhance their playground, including the creation of raised beds in which they were growing vegetables. As part of a project organised by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) some pupils had taken part in "Big Bird watching" campaign. They also took an active part in 'bring and buy' sales, and took part in the annual whole school art show which raised money for school funds.

Pupils from the unit had taken part in a 'Milap', a multi cultural event celebrating harmony, with other local schools, with all pupils taking an active role in the presentations.

Equality had been promoted through on going staff development in implementing the authority's policy of staged intervention, described in 'Every Child Is Included', the authority's ASL policy.

The unit's improvements focus particularly on continuing improvements to learning and teaching and the achievement of all learners.

Literacy, numeracy, health and well being had been the focus for development and had a very positive effect on the attainment and achievement of pupils, particularly in reading and writing.

Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in January 2009, identified four main points for action:

1. Further extend the curriculum and ensure that the length of the unit day is the same as mainstream schools.
2. Improve planning arrangements for children moving from the unit to the secondary school.
3. Introduce more rigorous monitoring and tracking of children's achievements to improve their performance further.
4. Make sure that planning for improvement has a positive effect on children's education.

### **3. Progress Towards the 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**

*Further extend the curriculum and ensure that the length of the unit day is the same as mainstream schools.*

*The unit had fully met this point for action.*

Staff had reviewed and amended curricular planning in listening and talking, reading and writing and numeracy, in line with Curriculum for Excellence. This had effectively raised expectations of what pupils could achieve and assisted teachers in setting appropriately challenging targets.

They had implemented a structured and progressive Health and Well Being programme, based on authority guidelines. The acting PT had joined the South East ASL Health group who were looking at further developing the sexual health programme and resources, appropriate to the needs of pupils with ASD.

They had introduced, developed and embedded Big Writing, which had impacted positively on pupils' ability to write with increasing independence for a variety of purposes, and had ultimately raised attainment. Staff had begun to develop individual writing folders for assessment, in order to provide cohesive evidence of individual progress.

The unit coordinator had successfully explored the arrangements in place for receiving children into school. In light of changes in support staff and working with support from the authority, the unit had successfully extended the length of the school day in line with mainstream schools.

**Main point for  
action 2**

*Improve planning arrangements for children moving from the unit to the secondary school.*

*The unit had made very good progress towards this point for action.*

Staff in the unit begin preparation for transition to secondary with pupils in P6 through a specific programme, designed to support understanding of their diagnosis of autism and recognition of their own strengths and needs. This programme was supported by the Speech and Language therapist.

Parents and carers and, where appropriate, pupils, along with any other agencies involved, attended review meetings, where their views were sought and taken into account.

Staff in the unit had begun to streamline their recording for transition meetings. They had brought together key information about individual children into additional support plans in order to provide clear evidence of progress and identified next steps, in order to inform discussion re appropriate placement for secondary education. They had ensured that the cohesive observational and curricular profiles and communication passports which they had developed for every pupil were embedded in practice. They had very good arrangements for transition to specialist ASD secondary provision.

The unit coordinator, in consultation with staff, had identified the completion of the Planning and Reporting Framework (PRF) document, with specific focus on ASD as an appropriate next step.

The authority had continued to work with staff in the unit to address placement requirements to ensure that pupils, their parents and carers are fully involved in the transition process and feel that they have been able to make an informed choice, timeously. The recently updated authority procedures for specialist placement within language and communication will continue to support this process.

**Main point for  
action 3**

*Introduce more rigorous monitoring and tracking of children's achievements to improve their performance further.*

*The unit had made very good progress towards this action point.*

Staff had adopted a more consistent approach to the implementation of Teaching for Effective Learning strategies, including peer and self assessment. They had ensured pupils' active involvement in learning across the curriculum. As a result, children had begun to develop a better understanding of their own needs, their targets and how to improve. They were better able to take responsibility for their learning and in some cases for their behaviour, leading to greater confidence, independence and improvement.

The unit coordinator and acting PT had produced cohesive planners and pace of learning records, in literacy and numeracy, which took account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. These had been designed to incorporate sequential developmental literacy and numeracy skills, which enabled staff to track individual progress both discretely and across the curriculum. As a result, literacy and numeracy outcomes were clearly articulated and enabled pupils' progress to be more effectively tracked over time.

The coordinator, in consultation with staff, had reviewed processes for identifying and recording pupils' additional support needs. They had continued to work collaboratively with colleagues and had made use of a range of appropriate assessment strategies to ensure that pupils' needs were holistically assessed. Appropriate long term, autism specific outcomes, based on an ASD observation and assessments framework, were set within health and wellbeing for individual pupils.

**Main point for  
action 4**

*Make sure that planning for improvement has a positive effect on children's education.*

*The unit had made very good progress in meeting this main point for action.*

Staff had worked together to review the unit's vision, values and aims. They had involved children, parents and other stakeholders in this process informally and formally and as a result, had arrived at a clear and agreed view. Staff had taken great care to ensure that pupils understood what the priorities for school improvement were.

There was a strong sense of purpose and direction amongst staff. They had continued to develop as reflective practitioners. All were clear about the priorities for improvement and their role in securing this.

In a series of planned staff meetings and CAT sessions, staff had worked enthusiastically to develop approaches to self-evaluation, acknowledging when things went wrong and working to develop their understanding.

As a result, they were more committed to ensuring that their evaluation of the improvement plan priorities and the evaluation of their practice became more systematic and rigorous. They had agreed together which processes and approaches were likely to yield positive results. Based on their agreements, the unit coordinator had put a quality assurance calendar in place, with a clearer focus on the observation of learning and teaching, which took account of authority guidance.

The unit coordinator had worked with staff to agree the development and purposes of classroom observation and to draw up appropriate recording procedures. Staff had responded positively to the piloting of the agreed approach. They had chosen the focus for shared evaluation and agreed to work together to evaluate their own and each other's practice. The unit coordinator and acting PT were planning together, to ensure that this led to improvement for individual teachers and to a clear sense of the unit's priorities.

All ongoing work had been subject to self-evaluation and review. Staff were regularly involved in the evaluation of the improvement plan priorities using How Good Is Our School 3 (HGIOS), the authority's own self evaluation tool, 'Taking a Closer Look at Excellence' (TACLE) and various websites including those of HMIE and LTS.

As a result staff had an increased confidence and understanding of how improvement in their practice would improve outcomes for pupils. The staff in the unit, were very well placed to secure continuous improvement through their improved self evaluation processes.

#### **4. Conclusion and Next Steps**

The unit had made very good progress in addressing the main points for action in the original report. In particular, the unit coordinator and acting PT, together with staff, had worked very well as a team of reflective practitioners, in taking forward their priorities for improvement.

The unit had become more focused on improving learning and teaching and tracking progress, resulting in improved attainment and achievement.

With continued support from the education authority, the unit will build on the improvement it has made and ensure that the developments they are taking forward, continue to have a positive impact on children's learning and experiences.

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