



Follow-through Inspection Report

St. Joseph's Unit for Hearing Impairment

January 2008

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education [HMIE] published a report on standards and quality in St. Joseph's Unit for Hearing Impairment in January 2006, following their inspection of the unit in September 2005. Working with the education authority, the co-ordinator and staff of the unit prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action and ensure the continuation of the high quality education identified in the original report.

As advised by HMIE in January 2006, the education authority has been responsible for producing this follow-through report. The authority assessed the extent to which the unit was continuing to improve the quality of its work and evaluated progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

Continuous Improvement

The unit had continued to provide a very high quality of education for its pupils. As well as responding to the action points identified by the HMIE inspection, the unit had continued to improve other aspects of its work. Pupils in the unit had continued to register a wide range of achievements.

The work of the unit had taken account of National Priorities in education, the four capacities described in the Curriculum for Excellence and the aims of the authority. In doing so, the unit had continued to develop an inclusive learning environment that promoted pupil achievement and attainment.

There had been improvements in several areas of the curriculum. Programmes in Health, ICT, Mathematics and Language had been audited and further developed. The revised programmes had provided more clearly defined learning outcomes for pupils and clearer pathways for their progress. Resources for these areas had also been enhanced.

The unit had promoted values and citizenship, by encouraging pupils to take an active part in the life of the mainstream school. Pupils had attended a range of after-school clubs focussed on homework, playground games, cheerleading, badminton, football, netball and gardening. Primary 7 pupils had taken part in primary/ secondary transition programmes and outward-bound activities, the latter including a residential week. All pupils had taken part in school shows, including a special 40th Anniversary summer concert in November 2005.

Pupils had been involved in fundraising events, including SCIAF and the UNICEF 'Day for Change'. In an initiative led by pupils the unit had established links with the Gatoto school in Kenya and throughout the year had raised funds which were forwarded for the purchase of essential supplies.

The unit staff and pupils had led the preparation for four whole school assemblies (Eid, Divali, Chinese New Year and Easter) to celebrate cultural diversity.

All these activities had developed unit pupils' confidence, had encouraged them to become more independent and had promoted equality in their relationships with their mainstream peers.

The unit co-ordinator had introduced a weekly CHAT [Citizenship, Health and Talk] assembly to extend pastoral support for pupils. This had provided the opportunity to reinforce salient aspects of whole school assemblies and for pupils to raise any concerns that they had. Pupils were also able to discuss any concerns individually with the co-ordinator.

Unit staff had a continuing commitment to professional development. They had contributed to improvement through development work undertaken by individuals and by collegiate teams involving both the unit and mainstream school staff. For example, along with mainstream colleagues, they had taken part in 'Coaching in Context' in-service delivered by an authority tutor. As a result staff were now implementing, with older pupils, approaches to learning and teaching demonstrated by the tutor.

In addition, another two members of staff had embarked upon the specific training required for teachers of hearing impairment.

In June 2006, the unit had gained the 'Investors in People' award.

All staff had become familiar with the authority's code of practice relating to the Additional Support for Learning Act and the processes involved in drawing up Co-ordinated Support Plans and Additional Support Plans. Under the transitional arrangements for implementing this legislation all Record of Needs had been reviewed. Eight pupils now had an additional support plan (at level 4); one had a co-ordinated support plan and a co-ordinated support plan was being considered for the remaining pupil.

The unit had extended its range of approaches to self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement. New developments and initiatives had been reviewed and their impact on pupils' learning, attainment and achievement evaluated. Staff had become more assured in identifying strengths in the work of the unit and areas for improvement. They had routinely shared good practice. Quality indicators from 'How Good is Our School – Part 3' had been used to audit provision and practice in a number of curricular areas. The recent audit of Health Education had been conducted with the aim in view of achieving 'Health Promoting School' status.

Progress Towards the Main Points for Action

Main point for action 1

The initial inspection report identified 2 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.

The unit should review pupils' learning experiences, in particular the pace of learning in some classes.

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

The unit aimed to provide motivating and challenging learning environments that fostered continuity and progression. To improve pupils' learning experiences staff had paid closer attention to the pace and challenge of curricular programmes.

Greater flexibility in timetabling had allowed unit staff to offer more focussed support for pupils in collaboration with the mainstream school staff. Overall, collaborative working between mainstream and unit staff had become more firmly established.

Over the past two sessions staff had continued to audit, develop and evaluate many areas of the curriculum to bring about improvement.

Listening and talking materials for Primary 1 learners had been developed.

The unit had enhanced the reading programme for pupils who required additional support with literacy by purchasing a series of differentiated reading materials. These had improved pupils' motivation and progress and had elicited positive feedback from both pupils and parents. In session 2006 – 07 pupils had achieved 100% of national assessment attainment targets in reading set within additional support plans.

Following review of the mathematics programme and planners, a range of updated resources had been purchased. Staff were now better able to gauge that pupils were progressing at an optimum pace.

In addition, staff had undertaken professional development, organised by the New Learning Community, on interactive lessons and equipment for mathematics. Interactive approaches to teaching mathematics had been introduced. As a consequence staff had been able to gain more insight into the strategies that pupils used, for example, in solving problems or calculating mentally, and to adjust their teaching accordingly. Additional resources, including on-line activities and big number boards had been incorporated into class lessons. These had been used to good effect in engaging pupils and making learning more meaningful.

A planning framework for ICT had been produced. This framework would help to embed ICT into all curricular areas. Staff had logged ICT activities over a two-week period to ensure that the use of ICT was permeating practice across the curriculum.

An overview planning framework linking citizenship, health education, religious and moral education and physical education had been developed by a joint working party involving unit and mainstream colleagues. This framework would help to maintain appropriate breadth in the curriculum.

Health education assessments had been developed by a joint working party of unit and mainstream staff and feedback had been positive from staff who had been using these.

The unit had developed a series of differentiated lessons for sexual health education for pupils at the primary 6 and 7 stages.

Along with mainstream colleagues staff from the unit had been involved in looking at contextualised learning through structured play for pupils in stages primary 1 - 3. The unit had jointly funded resources to set up a structured play area in the general-purpose room. Staff had conducted some research into how other schools had implemented structured play. The introduction of structured play was intended to enhance interactive learning and language development and to cater for a variety of learning styles at the infant stages.

Next steps will be to review specific aspects of the curriculum to reflect the four capacities of 'A Curriculum for Excellence'. These aspects will include Social Subjects and ICT and the themes of contextualised learning and structured play,

The unit had extended its practice in teaching for effective learning. In evaluating this staff had identified a number of positive features. For example, through the process of teachers sharing learning outcomes with pupils, lessons had become more focussed. Teachers had become more confident in assessing and meeting the needs of their pupils. They had become more creative in trying out new ideas and approaches to engage their pupils in their learning. Pupils support assistants had become more confident in providing a greater range of support in the classroom. As a result programmes of work for both unit and mainstream pupils supported by unit staff had been further tailored to meet the range of their additional support needs.

Main point for action 2

The unit should raise further pupils' attainment in English Language and Mathematics.

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

A range of developments had been undertaken to further raise pupils' attainment.

All pupil assessment information, including audiological assessment, was now reviewed at the start of the school session. This information had been used to inform learning outcomes set within pupils' additional support plans.

At the start of the school session the unit co-ordinator, in collaboration with teaching staff, had set pupils' long-term learning outcomes for the year specified, where appropriate, in terms of 5-14 national assessment levels. Teaching staff had then set short-term outcomes that were evaluated termly during the course of the session.

A planning framework for listening and talking preliminary to 5-14 level A had been developed. This framework mapped out incremental learning outcomes that permitted infant staff to more readily identify next steps in learning for pupils and to chart their progress more closely.

Timetabling arrangements had been reviewed to provide more individual support for pupils across the range of attainment. Teaching staff now checked the hearing aids of their own smaller class groups and as a consequence time during the initial part of the school day had been optimised for tutoring pupils and allowing them to practice core ICT skills.

A teacher from the Bilingual Support Service had provided support for pupils with English as an additional language. Advice on suitable resources had also been given to unit staff.

The unit had audited its planning framework for English Language. Areas for development had been identified. An amended framework for planning pupils' writing was issued to staff in October 2006. This had assisted staff in planning for an increase in the pace of pupils' learning.

Joint professional development had been held with the staff of the mainstream school to develop staff expertise in assessing and grading pupils' writing.

English language programmes of study had been reviewed to increase the opportunities for pupils to work both collaboratively and independently. National assessment criteria had also been considered as part of this review process. The use of resources at the primary 4 - 7 stages, in both the unit and the mainstream school, had been reviewed. Teachers continued to provide varied and interesting learning activities for pupils. Some unit pupils had demonstrated an increasing ability to work with a peer partner or independently in the mainstream setting. Pupils' motivation to read had increased.

Staff had benefited from a variety of professional development opportunities focussed on raising attainment and national assessments and had been given the opportunity to share these with colleagues.

Updated guidance notes from the Scottish Executive Education Department [SEED] on the administration of national assessments had been distributed to staff during the in-service day in February 2007. Discussion had affirmed that pupils with additional support needs should be given the support they normally received in the classroom for individual work. This guidance had proved beneficial to staff in ensuring that pupils' attainment levels were accurately assessed.

Unit staff had introduced interactive approaches to the teaching of mathematics. Interactive number boards had been purchased to support these approaches. Interactive activities had been included at all primary stages and positively evaluated.

At a joint meeting with mainstream staff in November 2006 unit staff had shared good practice in the use of formative assessment and 'teaching for effective learning' strategies. Ongoing classroom monitoring and collaborative working amongst staff had ensured that classroom activities were having a positive effect on pupils' progress and that they were actively engaged in learning.

As a result of improvements in the areas of English language and mathematics over the last two sessions pupils' attainment in relation to their national assessment targets had been raised.

In session 2005 – 2006, the percentage of pupils reaching their national assessment attainment targets as described in additional support plans were as follows:

Reading:	85%
Writing:	85%
Mathematics:	81%

In session 2006 – 2007, the percentage of pupils reaching their national assessment attainment targets were as follows:

Reading:	100%
Writing:	80%
Mathematics:	85%.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Overall, the unit had made very good progress in addressing the two main points for action.

At the same time, the unit had continued to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment that met the needs of hearing impaired pupils within a mainstream setting.

It planned to continue developing its partnership with parents and promoting the educational and social inclusion of its pupils within St. Joseph's Primary School and the local community.

It would also continue to develop the specialist teaching approaches and resources required to guide its pupils towards becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.



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