



Follow-through Inspection Report

St Joseph's Primary School

October 2007

The Inspection

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education published a report on standards and quality in St Joseph's Primary School in January 2006 following their inspection of the school in October 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 a breadth of opportunity to support children's learning. Pupils' confidence and self esteem had grown as a result of their involvement in a wide range of experiences which aimed to develop their skills. They were regularly involved in enterprise activities and the school had received a platinum award from Glasgow City Council for their endeavours in this area. A special recognition for entrepreneurial skills had been awarded for their enterprise in selling homework packs to local primary schools.

The children were encouraged to be actively involved in their local community. Primary 6 pupils took part in a canal project to celebrate the opening of 'Speaker Martin's Lock' and primary 3 and 4 participated in a waterways safety project in conjunction with the Waterways Trust and Impact Arts. Primary 7 undertook an anti-sectarianism project culminating in a joint performance with other primaries in the Easterhouse Bridge venue. The school provided many opportunities for children to take part in expressive arts activities and regularly hosted events to showcase the children's talents.

The school had celebrated its 40th anniversary and in partnership with the hearing unit had undertaken a full programme of events to mark this occasion. A display of memorabilia was well received by the local community. A research project into rocks in the playground ultimately led to a plaque being dedicated in the school to the men from a local street who lost their lives in the First World War. These broad opportunities for learning and recognition of past events helped to build a strong sense of community.

Pupils were becoming more involved in decision making within the school. The pupil council had been further developed and circle time opportunities were used by the

headteacher to ascertain children's views on school matters. The Pupil Council in partnership with staff and parents had devised a school travel plan. Children had been trained as playground buddies and provided peer support in the playground. They had designed a mural to be painted in a playground shelter.

The strong inclusive nature of the school continued to flourish. The school and the hearing unit worked together successfully on shared projects and staff development opportunities. The children from the school and the unit had taken part in a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre.

The school had begun to reconsider its curriculum. Awareness-raising sessions had been provided for staff and they were now engaged in reviewing the learning experiences they provided for their pupils to enable them to become successful learners and effective contributors. Teachers were now more systematically tracking these opportunities and building a whole school approach to developing the four capacities as outlined in the Curriculum for Excellence.

Children were being encouraged to be more independent in their learning and celebrate their successes. All classes had digital cameras and the children used these effectively to capture their achievements and share these across the school.

A member of staff had led staff development on reflective practices as part of a project leadership course and this had impacted on teachers' continuing professional development. They were now more confident in sharing practices across the school and learning from each other. This had positively enhanced whole school approaches to improvement and encouraged consistency of practice.

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

Match tasks more closely to pupils' needs to ensure an appropriate level of support and challenge and a suitably brisk pace of learning.

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

The school had successfully implemented new literacy resources with an emphasis on an integrated approach to teaching language skills. Teachers had received training

in developing pupils' skills in reading and talking and listening to help them fully implement these new resources in their classrooms. Children were now more engaged in the learning activities of the classroom. More children could employ a variety of reading skills to interpret unseen texts and confidently share their understanding with others and justify their opinions.

Mathematics resources had also been enhanced to provide more challenging tasks for higher achieving pupils. Practical mathematics resources had been improved in each classroom and smartboards to assist with more interactive learning were now more commonly used. Some children demonstrated increased mental mathematics skills although further improvement in this area was planned.

Across the school, teaching and formative assessment strategies had been further developed to ensure that lessons were more interactive for the children. Learning intentions and feedback to pupils were fully incorporated into each lesson. The headteacher carefully monitored the consistency of these approaches and the well matched use of resources in each class. School policy had been revised to take into account the changes in practice now consistently in place across the school. Children were now more confident in reviewing their own learning and recognising what they needed to do to improve.

Staff had developed their skills in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their classes and had worked together to share good practice across the school. The school had reviewed and amended its programme of study for ICT to fully develop children's skills. Children now had more opportunities to use ICT in the classes, such as planning and presenting stories and planning, carrying out and recording an enquiry approach to support environmental studies topics.

The tracking of pupil progress had improved. Teachers clearly identified and evaluated the ongoing progress of their pupils. Monitoring procedures undertaken by the headteacher complemented this revised approach. The teachers were becoming more confident in adapting resources and programmes of study to meet the needs of all learners. These practices had resulted in more focused shared planning and attention to next steps in pupils' learning. The resultant increase in pace of learning was positively influencing whole school attainment. Most children were now attaining the expected levels of national attainment with many achieving this earlier than expected.

Main point for action 2**Continue to improve approaches to promoting the school's ethnic, religious and cultural diversity**

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

The school had enhanced its environment to more actively promote the cultural diversity of its community. School signs appeared in a variety of languages and displays around the school celebrated the different religious festivals celebrated by the school and its community.

Parent information had been translated to some of the community languages. In addition parent booklets to support the teaching of reading at the early stages had been translated and were now available. The school had received a reading grant and was developing the use of 'Take Home Bags' containing dual language books, games and activities to promote children's reading and their understanding of their mother tongue. There had been good parental support of this project.

Teachers had received training in supporting bi-lingual pupils and were now more confidently applying the suggested strategies. Lessons were broken down to smaller steps and visual aids used to support children as necessary. The use of different languages had been extended to other areas of the curriculum and topic work was regularly enhanced with bi-lingual signs.

The school was also promoting the celebration of its cultural diversity by having a focus on a different language each month. This was a whole school approach whereby displays around the school were enhanced with this language and children learned to greet each other, say social phrases and count in the selected language.

Assemblies in the school were marked by a multi-cultural approach where languages other than English were used. There was now more emphasis on the whole school celebrating different festivals throughout the year with classes taking responsibility for leading on these celebrations. The children were enthusiastic about these opportunities and recognised the equality promoted by the school.

Anti-racist resources provided by the authority had been successfully implemented and the Education Resource Service had provided guidance on resources to enhance English as an Additional Language. Older children had been involved in shared reading opportunities with younger children and all enjoyed reading these dual language books. The older pupils had expressed an interest in the provision of such books at their own level.

Main point for action 3**Raise further pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics**

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

There had been an increase in attainment in national assessments of reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment of the school was very good when compared with other similar schools.

The school had revised its language planners to ensure a more holistic approach to language development and these had been successfully used by teachers. In addition the introduction of Literacy World in the upper stages and Star Quest and Thinking about Reading resources at the early stages of the school ensured that children now experienced more collaborative and independent learning opportunities. These focused learning tasks to develop language and reading comprehension had helped to accelerate pace and provided more challenging activities for pupils. Older children were more aware of genre and could more confidently discuss author's purpose when responding to texts. Younger children were becoming independent in applying reading skills in a variety of contexts within the classroom. Children now had greater opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills across the curriculum. These improvements to classroom practice had resulted in an increase in children at all stages attaining national assessment levels earlier than expected.

A teacher seconded by the New Learning Community was developing talking and listening skills across the school using a 'coaching in context' approach. This had provided staff with an opportunity to develop their own teaching skills in this area and had provided children with consistent experiences to support their language development. All children were more confident in asking questions and sharing their understanding. Pupils had improved in their ability to work collaboratively.

Glasgow City Council mathematics planners had been introduced and teachers were using these effectively to ensure a brisk pace of learning. They regularly evaluated the progress of their pupils and were becoming more confident in adapting the planners to suit the needs of the children in their class. Staff development in improving mental agility and the introduction of an interactive 100 board in each class had enhanced the teaching of numeracy in the school and improved the children's confidence and understanding resulting in earlier and more consistent gains in attainment.

Although most pupils were now achieving appropriate national levels of attainment the school should continue to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding and ensure that pupils' skills were well developed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The headteacher and all staff had worked well as a team to enhance the provision of education across the school. They had set themselves challenging targets for improvement and had consistently met these ambitious targets.

There had been considerable developments in self evaluation by all staff and they were fully involved in taking forward developments within the school through involvement in working parties and in shared leadership projects.

The school had begun to review its practices to ensure that the development of the four capacities for A Curriculum for Excellence were being systematically addressed across the school and had made this the focus for future school improvement.

Pupils continued to benefit from a wide variety of learning experiences within and beyond the classroom. Parental involvement was valued and the school enjoyed a prominent position within the community. It hosted numerous events to promote partnership working.

With the effective and able leadership of the headteacher and the strong commitment of all staff the school was very well placed to provide a quality educational experience for all its pupils.



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