

# Howwood Primary School

23 March 2006

building   
a learning   
renfrewshire





# Follow-through report on HMle inspection of Howwood Primary School, Howwood

## A Report by Renfrewshire Council: Education and Leisure Services

23 March 2006

### 1 The inspection

In March 2004, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) published a report on standards and quality in Howwood Primary School following their earlier inspection in November 2003. Working with the education authority, the school prepared, and made public an action plan in May 2004, indicating how it would address the main points for action identified in the original HMle inspection report. The local authority supported the school in addressing the points for action and in monitoring the progress made. HMle asked the authority to provide a progress report for parents and carers on the progress identified. This report, prepared by the authority, reflects our evaluation of the progress made in relation to the action plan.

### 2 Continuous improvement

Since the inspection report was published in March 2004, the school had demonstrated its capacity to make further improvements in key aspects of its provision.

In the period since the publication of the original report, there had been changes in the school's senior management team. The previous head teacher and, subsequently, the temporary acting head teacher, her principal teacher and staff in conjunction with the education authority had demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and commitment in addressing the main points for action. The newly appointed head teacher and her staff had worked very hard to make improvements in the curricular areas of health and technology. They had also successfully identified common strategies to develop learning and teaching and to further improve the pace of learning and challenge across the school. Whole school approaches to staff development had led to a common understanding of self-evaluation and the monitoring of forward planning. In turn this had led to improved consistency in teachers' planning. The head teacher and her staff had succeeded in establishing a culture of continuous improvement in the school.

### 3 Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in March 2004 identified three main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made in addressing each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and others associated with the school.

#### 3.1 To continue to develop the curriculum, especially in the areas of health and technology.

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action. Staff had participated in a number of training activities which had equipped them to take forward a range of new curricular health initiatives. These had included setting up a 'fitness fortnight' and piloting a 'Jogscotland' initiative.

Primary 7 pupils gave up their lunchtimes to teach playground games to younger pupils. Together, these activities had contributed to pupils improving their levels of physical activity and developing social skills, particularly at intervals and lunchtime.

All pupils had participated in the 'walk to school' project and, in addition, primary 4 pupils had been involved in the authority organised swimming initiative. A variety of after-school activities had been arranged with the active schools coordinator which had resulted in increased numbers of pupils taking part in extra-curricular activities. These included athletics and fitness clubs. This had contributed to the schools intention of becoming a 'health promoting school'.

The school had begun a number of enterprise initiatives which helped pupils learn more about healthy eating. This included organising a healthy eating tuck shop. This had also contributed to the school gaining an eco-school bronze award. As part of its bid for silver status in this award, pupils had been studying the principles behind fair trade and ethical enterprise. All staff had been involved in training in the Renfrewshire technology programme and had made use of these new skills and techniques. The technology programme now incorporated the use of technology kits which pupils had enjoyed using.

Considerable investment had been made by Renfrewshire Council in creating a new information and communications technology suite (ICT). Staff had participated in training activities provided by both the authority and the school's ICT coordinator. The ICT coordinator had worked hard to ensure that ICT was appropriately integrated into the curriculum. When monitoring forward plans, opportunities were identified to ensure that ICT was appropriately integrated into the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum had been enhanced with pupils at all stages becoming increasingly skilled in their use of ICT. For example, P6 and P7 classes had contacted the War Museum website for information on a project assessing the impact of the Clydebank blitz on the community during World War II.

The ICT programme was regularly monitored by the head teacher and ICT coordinator through direct class observation and through the scrutiny of teachers' forward plans.

### 3.2 To develop further aspects of learning and teaching and increase the pace and challenge of some learning

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action. Building on existing good practice, teaching staff attended training in Assessment is for Learning (AifL) and had demonstrated confidence in using a variety of strategies to promote effective learning. These included peer and self-assessment, a statement of 'learning intentions' and time to reflect on learning. The school had focused on raising pupil attainment through supported study for boys and had purchased and implemented a variety of new resources to support this. These included maths challenge cards and new ICT software. Pupils in the upper stages had demonstrated much more confidence in working independently, particularly with ICT.

Learning support staff had worked with more able pupils using individual programmes of study. This had impacted positively on attainment, in particular, at Levels E and F in reading, writing and mathematics. Setting in groups or as a year group had been introduced in religious and moral education, mathematics, science, physical education and French. This enabled support to be better directed towards individual needs. Parents had commented favourably on these developments at parents' evenings.

The school had undertaken much good work in developing problem solving skills across the school. This work had been recognised as 'best practice' and had been included in Learning and Teaching Scotland's website.

The head teacher had introduced a data-handling system which enabled staff to track and monitor pupil progress more effectively. In addition, the pace of learning was more closely monitored through the monitoring of forward plans, target-setting, formal classroom monitoring and team teaching.

A new library resource, which included access to the Internet, had been established. Boys from the upper stages of the school had been involved in the selection of new non-fiction and resource books. This initiative had been very successful and had resulted in boys borrowing more books from the library. Discussions with pupils indicated that they appreciated and enjoyed these new resources. A book club had been set up and was well supported by all pupils. Pupils from P1 to P7 had published their own newspaper, the '*Howwood Herald*', as a direct result of the school's involvement in the Renfrewshire Book Festival. All pupils had been encouraged to submit articles to this newspaper.

The new ICT suite had successfully enabled pupils to increase their involvement in personal learning and research. This had resulted in increased confidence among pupils using ICT, as well as enhanced learning. Additional teaching aids, such as a digital projector and digital cameras, had been purchased. These had also led to enriched learning experiences for pupils.

### 3.3 To build upon the school's good approaches to assuring quality by developing further the evaluation of learning and teaching and pupils' work

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action. The range of formative assessment strategies used to evaluate pupils' progress had been increased. Pupils now had a wider range of opportunities to work collaboratively with other pupils using peer and self-assessment techniques. This had provided clearer feedback to pupils and they were now more aware of the learning outcomes associated with each task. Staff had used the performance indicators in primary schools (PIPS) standardised testing system to assess the learning needs of P1 pupils. This, in addition to early intervention strategies, had provided further information on pupils' individual needs and requirements. This led to a revised support timetable for P3 pupils and better informed short and long-term planning to address pupils' needs and requirements.

Personal learning planning (PLP) had been further developed across the school. Pupils had commented favourably on these developments indicating that they felt more involved in their learning.

The head teacher regularly monitored and evaluated teachers' forward plans. Staff now completed self-evaluation schedules for their forward plans and programmes of work. This had ensured they were of a consistently high standard and had helped identify areas for continuing professional development for staff members.

Programmed classroom visits by the head teacher had focused on pre-agreed aspects of learning and teaching and had resulted in informed feedback to class teachers at follow-up sessions. Staff were now sharing good practice willingly. Through this professionally reflective process, staff had become more aware of whole-school curriculum issues. Curriculum working groups had been established in 'Enterprise' and 'Assessment is for Learning'. This had enabled the school to focus on areas requiring development, including the selection and purchase of resources and the writing of whole-school policies. Staff were pleased with these arrangements and felt that they were more involved with the development of whole-school issues.

## 4 Conclusion

The head teacher and her staff had responded positively to the main points for action contained in the original inspection report and in so doing had made considerable improvements to key areas of the school's work. The school had made very good progress and was well placed to further improve pupils' learning experiences and to improve standards even further.

Gordon Morton  
Senior Adviser (Performance Management)  
23 March 2006



## How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the head teacher and school staff, the school board, the Director of Education and Leisure Services, and local councillors. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from the address below or by telephoning **0141 842 5882**. Copies are also available on our web site: [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk).

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of this report, you should write in the first instance to John Rooney, Director of Education and Leisure Services at:

**Renfrewshire Council**  
Education and Leisure Services,  
South Building,  
Cotton Street,  
Paisley PA11LE

