

Thorn Primary School

March 2007

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Follow-through report to the HMIE inspection of Thorn Primary School, Johnstone

A Report by Renfrewshire Council: Education and Leisure Services

March 2007

1 The inspection

In September 2005, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in Thorn Primary School following their earlier inspection in May 2005. Working with the education authority, the school prepared, and made public an action plan in October 2005, indicating how it would address the main points for action identified in the

original HMIE inspection report. The education authority supported the school in addressing the points for action and in monitoring the progress made. HMIE asked the education authority to provide a progress report for parents and carers on the progress identified. This report, prepared by the education authority, evaluates the progress made in relation to the action plan.

2 Continuous improvement

Since the inspection report was published in September 2005, 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, the head teacher and her staff had demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and commitment in addressing the main points for action.

The majority of staff had participated in the professional development opportunity of sharing best practice in teaching with colleagues within the school. Further opportunities had been made available to staff through class visits and planned collegiate time. Staff had also successfully identified common strategies to ensure that learning outcomes and criteria for success were used consistently in all classes to support pupils' understanding of the learning intentions of lessons. This had been supported successfully by the use of strategies in the Assessment is for Learning (AifL) initiative.

Personal learning planning had been implemented from P1 to P7. This had ensured that pupils were set challenging but realistic learning targets in all aspects of the curriculum, as well as in their personal and social development.

The head teacher had worked closely with relevant council departments, including housing and property services, to address the accommodation issues identified in the original HMIE report. The head teacher and her staff had succeeded in maintaining a culture of continuous improvement in the school.

3 Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in September 2005 identified two 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. The education authority should improve aspects of accommodation as identified in the report.

The school and education authority had made very good progress in addressing this point for action.

The school, working closely with the education authority had successfully addressed the issues identified in the HMIE report. A full architectural survey had been carried out and had been forwarded to education and leisure services for consideration. The start date for the necessary remedial work was planned for early 2007 and would include a new roof and internal refurbishment.

3.2 Teachers should share more widely current best practice in teaching within the school to ensure all pupils understand learning intentions of lessons and are consistently challenged.

The school had made very good progress in addressing this point for action.

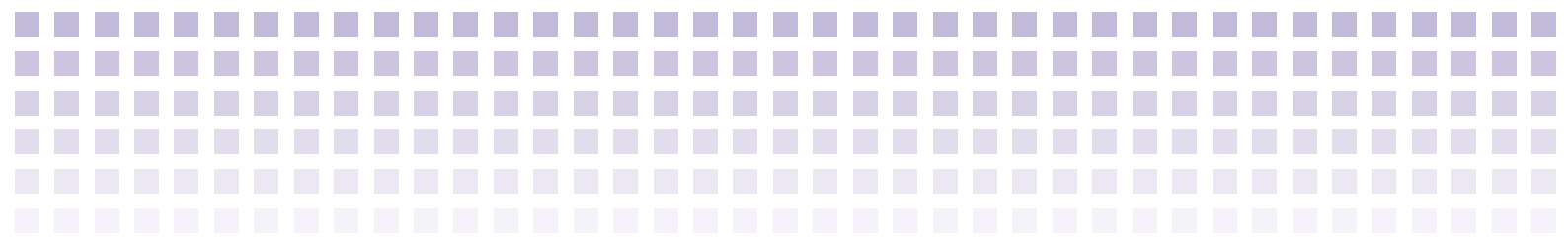
All teaching staff had participated in a programme of peer work shadowing. Teachers at P3 and P4 had worked with colleagues at P1 and P2 and had observed the mental maths programme of work being taught. Similar arrangements had allowed P1 and P2 teachers to observe colleagues at P3 and P4. These arrangements had been extended to allow peer observation at all

stages. Evaluation of this peer observation programme had been very positive with teachers welcoming the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching at different stages. This had been very successful and had led to staff having a better understanding of how pupils progressed in their learning. Staff now had a firmer and clearer grasp of continuity in learning and this had a positive impact upon the pace and challenge of lessons. Across the school, teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement had been raised.

The head teacher, with the agreement of staff, had developed a programme of staff discussion opportunities on agreed themes during collegiate time. Stage meetings had also been organised to allow discussion of pupils' progress in their learning and teaching strategies that had been used in particular lessons. There had also been time allocated to mentoring and supporting colleagues new to a particular stage. This mentoring programme had now been built into the school calendar. This practice had also provided the opportunity for more experienced members of staff to share good practice in learning and teaching with their colleagues.

The head teacher had successfully introduced AifL strategies. The majority of staff now effectively shared learning intentions and success criteria with pupils. Further work on peer and self-assessment had been planned for the forthcoming session during collegiate time and in-service days.

The majority of staff were successfully using AifL strategies in language, maths and environmental studies with positive outcomes for pupils at all stages. To further



support pupils, the 'criteria for success' for maths had been clearly inserted into their jotters for easy reference. In environmental studies, the criteria for success for specific tasks were given both orally by the class teacher and in written form so that pupils were clear as to what was expected of them.

As a matter of policy, learning intentions and criteria for success had been displayed prominently in all classes to underpin good practice and support pupils in their learning.

The use of personal learning planning had been extended to all classes across the school. All pupils had been involved in setting their own personal targets and these provided a record of their achievement across each stage. This had been developed innovatively in P1 where photographs of pupils, along with their targets, were displayed prominently on walls around the classroom. This good practice had now been extended across the whole school and was contributing to the promotion of pupil self-confidence and self-esteem.

The majority of pupils used 'circle time' and personal and social development activities to set their own targets and review their progress. This had been very successful for both staff and pupils when reviewing progress and setting further tasks. This was carried out in the majority of classes and was being extended across the whole school.

Building upon existing good practice staff, working effectively as a team, had developed a wide range of opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively across the curriculum. The introduction of critical skills into the middle and upper-school had further increased opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and, had raised the awareness of the whole staff to the benefits of collaborative working.

This approach to learning and teaching

had been used to set learning challenges across the curriculum, particularly in P3 to P7, and included science, religious and moral education, environmental studies, language, personal and social development and citizenship. This had enabled pupils to be involved in creative problem solving in collaborative mixed ability working groups. Pupils were more motivated and enjoyed using the critical skills approach to develop their own skills and support each other.

The senior management team regularly monitored learning and teaching through an agreed schedule of classroom observations. The outcomes of these observations were discussed with teachers. In addition, senior managers evaluated teachers' forward plans to ensure consistency in learning and teaching.

The school had successfully improved its approach to embedding information and communication technology (ICT) into the curriculum. A wireless computer system had been purchased and, consequently, pupils had benefited from increased access to computers. Additionally, this computer system had facilitated the improved teaching of computer skills. Pupils now had more opportunities to engage in independent learning with much more personal research being undertaken using ICT. To further support learning the school had purchased four 'smartboards' and these had been distributed around the school.

At P6 and P7 staff had used new materials effectively to develop pupils' comprehension skills. These materials had also assisted pupils in develop their higher order reading and inferential questioning skills. A new spelling resource had provided further challenges for the more able pupils through extension activities. This had also provided additional materials to reinforce learning for pupils who required additional support.



4 Conclusion

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

Gordon Morton
Senior Adviser (Performance Management)
March 2007



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.

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

