

St Fergus' Primary School

December 2008

building 
a learning 
renfrewshire 







Follow-through report to the HMIE inspection of St Fergus' Primary School, Paisley.

A Report by Renfrewshire Council: Education and Leisure Services

December 2008

1 The inspection

In March 2007, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in St Fergus' Primary School, following their earlier inspection in December 2006. Working with the education authority, the school prepared, and made public an action plan in June 2007, 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 publication of the inspection report in March 2007, the head teacher and her staff had demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and commitment in addressing the main points for action.

Staff had introduced procedures to help pupils to critically review their own learning, leading to improvements in performance. Senior managers and staff monitored the progress of programmes of study and identified key issues to be included in the school's improvement plan. These measures had enabled teachers to provide more challenging activities and a more appropriate pace of learning for all pupils.

The school had made a significant investment in information and communications technology (ICT) hardware and software resources. This had been supported by very effective training activities which had increased the confidence and skills of staff, in integrating ICT within curricular areas. This had impacted positively on target setting at the upper stages, resulting in overall improvements in pupils' attainment.

All staff had been involved in the development of increased opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. This had been particularly effective at the early stages, with the introduction of better integrated and more active approaches to learning.

Teachers' expectations of pupil attainment had been raised. This had led to overall improvements in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at key stages.

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 March 2007, 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. The school should improve further the quality of attainment in English language and mathematics.

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

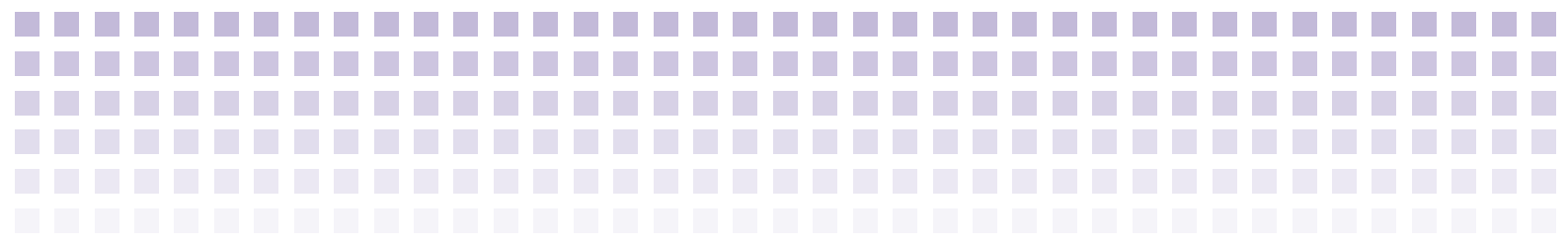
The staff had developed whole school cross-curricular policies on the teaching of writing, listening and talking. These policies were supported by revised curriculum planners and the provision of new resources. Staff had re-arranged the layout of some classrooms to support the development of group activities. They shared clear sets of learning aims and success criteria with pupils, providing more opportunities for pupils to receive feedback on their progress. This had resulted in higher quality of pupil presentations in their written work, and improved attainment in reading and writing.

The school had purchased new core mathematics resources, additional laptops and a wide range of mathematics software. In addition, all classrooms had been fitted with interactive Smart boards. Staff confidence and skills in the use of ICT had improved through their effective participation in a range of continuing professional development activities. These activities included work-shadowing and team teaching opportunities.

Following appropriate training, staff now placed additional emphasis on providing more opportunities for pupils to practice a range of mathematical skills, including mental calculations and a variety of problem solving strategies. This had resulted in increased pupil motivation and improved attainment in mathematics at key stages.

The head teacher had, successfully, further developed strategies in the national Assessment is for Learning (AifL) initiative. All staff now routinely shared learning intentions and success criteria with pupils. All staff were successfully using AifL strategies in language and mathematics, leading to positive outcomes for pupils at all stages.

Collectively these measures had resulted in an overall improvement in pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, across the school.



3.2 The school should develop more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and involve pupils at the early stages in active learning through play.

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

An active learning working party was established to research practice and advise the staff. The members of the working party visited other schools, both within and outwith the council, to identify and review practice in active learning approaches. Following consultation and feedback from staff and pupils, more opportunities for children to be more active in their learning tasks were introduced.

All staff participated in continuing professional development activities which improved their motivation and skills. All classrooms had been re-organised to encourage more independent learning opportunities. Shared learning opportunities were introduced for pre-five and primary one children. Staff provided more contextualised learning through play in mathematics and language. This has resulted in more opportunities for independent learning for children at the early stages.

An innovative collaborative skills programme had been established at early, middle and upper stages. This enabled pupils to learn the social and functional skills needed for group members to work effectively together, so that the group could accomplish its task. These active learning approaches had increased both pupil motivation and skills development.

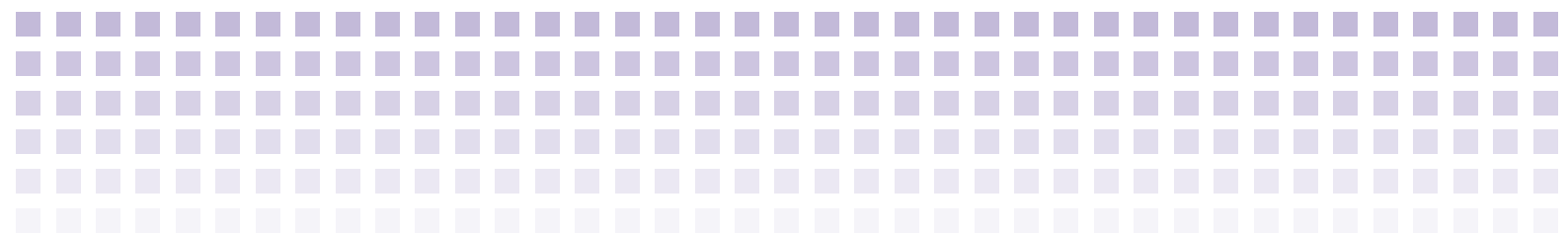
3.3 The school should make more effective use of the outcomes of classroom monitoring activities to identify key areas for school improvement

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

All staff had undertaken appropriate training to improve their understanding and use of national quality indicators in self-evaluation of learning and teaching. These activities had resulted in increased staff confidence and skill in reflecting upon the effectiveness of learning and teaching. This had enabled staff to conduct a thorough evaluation of key aspects of the work of the school, and the outcomes were used to identify priorities for the school improvement plan.

A programme of peer work shadowing had been introduced. This had been very successful and had enabled staff to gain a better understanding of how pupils progressed in their learning. This had impacted positively upon the pace and challenge of lessons. Teachers had responded very positively to the peer observation programme. They welcomed the opportunity to observe colleagues' teaching at different stages. As a result, teachers' expectations of pupils' achievements had been raised, across the school.

All staff had agreed a range of AifL strategies which had been integrated into their approaches to learning and teaching. There had been more opportunities



for staff to collaborate on developing programmes of study, resulting in more effective continuity and progression, for individual pupils, across the whole school.

An innovative programme, in which focus groups of pupils at different stages had helped to identify key areas for school improvement, had been introduced.

The senior management team monitored learning and teaching systematically through an agreed schedule of classroom observations and the sampling of pupils' work. The outcomes of these observations were discussed with teachers. In addition, senior managers evaluated teachers' forward plans and pupil assessment profiles, to ensure consistency in learning and teaching, and to identify key areas for school improvement.

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 even further.



How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the head teacher and school staff, the parent council, 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,
Renfrewshire House,
Cotton Street,
Paisley PA11LE

