

GILMERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

1. The inspection

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in Gilmerton Primary School in 2013. Subsequently the school with support from the education authority ensured the school improvement plan took account of the findings of the inspection.

The education authority recently visited the school to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to develop the quality of its education including the areas identified for improvement and produced a progress report for parents.

This report tells you about the quality of education provided by the school since the original inspection. It also comments on the progress made in the agreed areas for improvement.

The main areas of focus are on learning and achievement, meeting the learning needs of the pupils and leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

2. Improvements in the quality of education provided

2.1 *Learning and achievement*

The school's action plan planned for improvements to listening and talking, numeracy and literacy across the school.

Significant improvement had been made to the learning culture following a programme of interventions to support listening and talking by the deputy head teacher. Pupils were observed working well in pairs or groups and on independent tasks using active listening approaches. They collaborated well when discussing learning activities and were articulate when describing their involvement in the wider life of the school. Staff encouraged good use of listening skills in reading groups and collaborative group work and were in the early stages for planning for these in other curricular areas. Staff need to further make more use of small groups to encourage children to work together and become more aware of each other's needs while remaining on task.

The use of stages of early arithmetical learning (SEAL) as a focus for numeracy development was beginning to take effect with mental agility guidelines being used well in most classes across the school. In P1 pupils were actively engaged in appropriate and challenging activity and demonstrated good use forward and backward number sequencing and solving problems skills.

A focus on reading across the school was engaging learners in a rich variety of texts and activities. Pupils were benefiting from interdisciplinary learning activities and clearly enjoyed inviting parents in to see the work they had done recently on *The Titanic*. The adoption of the Literacy Rich Edinburgh programme was having a positive effect on early phonics teaching where

improved teacher confidence and the embedding of group rotation, good levels of resourcing and classroom support had raised attainment. Staff were leading the development of a literacy circles approach to reading and in a few classes are taking forward higher order questioning skills. This remains a priority action area for development as staff were not making full use of the authorities support materials to help children engage more in a wider range of questioning and problem solving activities. A wider range of questioning which would support the learning styles of different learners within the classroom should be developed consistently across the school.

Staff should ensure that learners were clear about what is expected of them when working independently and formative assessment should be used more frequently to inform appropriateness of tasks and level of challenge.

Very good steps had been taken to implement the 1+2 programme in all classes. This initiative had been well received by the pupils, staff and parents of the school. Simple activities such as registration, telling the date and good morning routines have helped embrace language acquisition.

Opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting and social activities continued to be promoted well within the school and community. Achievement in a number of areas was celebrated at assembly and at 'Show your Talent' and concert time events where pupils talked about gaining in confidence and making the school a nicer place to be.

The pupils were well behaved and respectful of one another and gained house points for displaying nice manners. Older pupils were eagerly accepting a range of responsibilities from budding younger pupils to running clubs and societies and raising funds for global citizenship initiatives.

2.2 Meeting pupils' learning needs

Tracking attainment over time was beginning to have a positive effect on targeting support for pupils. A curriculum progression was being developed by the head teacher along with staff through working groups which ensured pupils entitlement to a broad general education. Tracking of experiences and outcomes remains in the early stages of implementation while appropriate paper or electronic formats were being explored.

Teachers were growing in confidence in delivering differentiated tasks and activities to meet the needs of most learners and pupil support assistants were supporting individuals and groups well. However the majority of lessons observed focused too much on whole class teaching with differentiation mainly by task to reflect summative assessments. In a few classes, learning activities were further being differentiated using a limited range of formative assessment strategies but as yet information collected was not being used well to support children during the learning process or as a response to learning.

While learning intentions were being set and shared success criteria were not yet co-constructed with pupils and therefore learners were unsure of their next steps in learning or in their ability to self and peer assess.

Pupils experienced two hours of physical education and a programme of work was being implemented across the cluster. Pupils had the opportunity to engage in physical activity outwith the school day through cycle training and links with Lismore Rugby Club. Outdoor learning initiatives such as developing the playground, ECO schools and the popular gardening club were enhancing the school environment.

Good home school links were being developed with regular newsletters and homework tasks related to curricular developments, target setting in the early years and personal projects in the upper school.

A number of learners across the school required individual work stations and the depute head teacher is supporting the support for learning (SfL) teacher and class teachers in planning for this. However, child friendly additional support plans and individualised educational programmes have still to be developed.

In some classes, pupils were able to discuss personal learning targets based on big writing criteria but would benefit from being able to discuss next steps in learning more widely across the curriculum. The school remains in the early stages of profiling and in the collection of learners latest and best work. A working party led by the depute head teacher is reviewing existing processes and best practice across the authority.

2.3 Leadership and direction

Gilmerton Primary School continued to support pupils and families well through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) model. Clear remits and responsibilities have been written for members of the senior management team (SMT) with responsibility for the care and welfare of pupils within their area of the school. Time has been allocated from within the management time available to the school for a depute head teacher to support learning and assist the SfL teacher in timetabling interventions and plan appropriate programmes of work. This is beginning to have a positive effect on learners being better supported within the classroom setting.

Further consideration of the management of support staff and other adults working in the school would benefit more learners within the classroom setting. A clearer understanding of the five roles of the SfL teacher would also support teaching staff in meeting learners needs better.

With the inclusion of the nursery provision within the management structures of the school now embedded, significant progress had been made in supporting transitions across the early years settings. Supporting and liaising with partner providers had also been strengthened by this remit and was having a positive impact on P1 progress and attainment.

A numeracy champion, working alongside each other in classrooms and the opportunity to shadow colleagues had led to renewed focus on early numeracy. Staff were committed to increasing their own skills and knowledge in this area but should be included in more formal learning rounds and monitoring by SMT.

Staff spoke highly of the reinstatement of short life working groups and the positive affect this was having on engagement with curriculum planning. Collectively they expressed a confidence in a clearer shared understanding and ownership of the change agenda and valued the support and guidance from SMT.

Staff are participating in a wider selection of distributive leadership opportunities with 1+2, SEAL, ECO or literacy and numeracy moderation and from sharing practice through informal shadowing opportunities such as literacy circles at learning and teaching meetings.

3. Conclusion

With support from the education authority, Gilmerton Primary School provided a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The school had made good progress in some aspects of its action plan since the inspection. The strengthened leadership team with appropriate remits and enhanced teamwork across the school provided a good basis for continued improvement.

The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the 2013 HMIE report but will continue to work with the head teacher to ensure the school's self evaluation and monitoring approaches focus more clearly on continuous improvement.

The school and early years Quality Improvement Officers will continue to work with the school in developing an appropriate improvement plan with a further follow through inspection carried out next session.

Michael Urquhart
Quality Improvement Officer
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