

1 THE INSPECTION

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in Gracemount Primary School in October 2006. Subsequently the education authority in collaboration with the school prepared and published an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action in the HMIE report.

An education authority officer assessed the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and evaluated progress made in responding to the main points for action in the original report.

2 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The headteacher had established strong leadership and was well supported by the senior management team. She had encouraged all staff to participate in identifying appropriate improvement priorities and had led the implementation of these successfully

Teaching staff had worked well together to ensure that they were fully aware of new developments in learning and teaching. The improvement plan was used by staff as a working document, with continuous discussion on the success of priorities to date and action still required to achieve agreed outcomes. Improvements already in place were having a significant impact on the work of the school.

Performance in reading had been steady for three years. In writing and mathematics performance had improved significantly and the targets for 2009 had already been met.

The teaching of information and communications technology (ICT) had improved greatly with investment in time and resources. Pupils had been able to develop their ICT skills and had been commended at a city-wide event for their enthusiasm in this area.

The school's other achievements included accreditation as a healthy promoting school and an eco school silver award.

3 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE MAIN POINTS FOR ACTION

The initial inspection report published in October 2006 identified three points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

3.1 To improve attainment in English language and mathematics.

The school had made very good progress with this recommendation.

The school was working well towards achieving challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics. There had been particular

improvement in performance in the upper school. A support for learning teacher had been released to support writing and mathematics at this stage, and to teach beside newly qualified teachers to secure pace and realise expectations.

At P7, pupils were grouped for mathematics. These sets were very well organised, providing pupils with the best opportunity for being stretched where appropriate and supported where required. Tasks and activities were well selected to maximise pupils' progress. The pupils had responded positively to the approaches and to the learning environment. A mathematics teacher from the secondary school liaised regularly with P7 teachers and was working on extending skills with a group of more able pupils. Secondary school staff were also involved in teaching English, French and science. Pupils had responded well and enthusiastically to this.

Pupils had been supported in the development of advanced reading skills through improved teaching approaches and the purchase of new resources. Almost all pupils were aware of what level they had achieved and of how they could improve their work. They were encouraged to comment on the quality of their own work and to discuss this with a partner.

The homework policy had been reviewed and shared with pupils and parents. This was being implemented across the school but had not yet been evaluated.

In the nursery class, specific programmes for promoting literacy and numeracy had been introduced. In P1 focus groups for high achievers had been identified and appropriate provision put in place. There was commendable practice in providing enhanced experiences for non-native English speakers. Some were making significant progress in reading towards achieving in line with national levels of attainment.

3.2 To ensure that teachers plan and deliver lessons of a consistently high quality and take more account of information from assessment to meet more effectively the needs of all pupils.

Overall, very good progress had been made with this recommendation.

The annual programme of shared class visits had included a focus on planning and on meeting pupils' needs. In most lessons the pace of learning was brisk and pupils were on task. In a few lessons teachers were less well prepared and this affected the pace of learning. Clear routines had been established in most classes, allowing pupils to work confidently on their own or in groups.

Overall, the quality of learning and teaching was very good. Lessons were well structured and instructions for completing tasks were presented clearly. Pupils' skills as independent learners were being developed effectively. Some pupils demonstrated very good leadership skills when working in groups.

Support for learning in the lower school was very good. There was appropriate liaison between staff, with opportunities for team teaching and sharing good practice in the teaching of mathematics and writing. The programme to develop thinking skills had been extended and discussions were taking place for further implementation.

3.3 To ensure that self-evaluation leads consistently to action to improve provision where necessary.

The school had made very good progress with this recommendation.

Staff shared and discussed their practice and most were able to adapt their teaching approaches so that all pupils made progress.

A small group of staff had taken a closer look at how well pupils' needs were being met across the school. As a result, procedures had been revised and pupils had benefited from consistently better practice. They had engaged well with the improved programme for personal and social development.

Pupils' views on learning and on how to improve the school had been put forward through the active pupil council and incorporated into planning future priorities.

A very successful open day had been held for parents who commented favourably on the opportunity to experience the life and work of the school during a normal school day. A recent survey of parents had been very positive. Most felt that their children were making good progress, particularly with literacy and numeracy in the early years, and that they were more aware of environmental and health issues. The parents were confident that pupils' needs were being met and that staff were skilled at helping pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

3 CONCLUSION

With support from the education authority, Gracemount Primary School provided a very good standard of education for all its pupils. The school had responded well to the recommendations of HMIE and improved other aspects of provision. The current improvement plan had strong support from staff, pupils and parents. The developing teamwork and distributive leadership in the school provided a very good basis for continued improvement.

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GRACEMOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Follow through report on the HMle inspection

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