

# ST FRANCIS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Follow through report on the HMIE inspection

JUNE 2010

## 1 THE INSPECTION

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in St Francis RC Primary School in September 2008. Subsequently the school with support from the education authority amended the school improvement plan to take account of the findings of the inspection.

An education authority team 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. This report does not make reference to the school nursery class as the nursery children were transferred to Moffat Early Years Centre when the new campus was opened in August 2008.

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

Children across the school were more successful learners and were achieving across a wide range of areas. Overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics had improved significantly over the last two years. The majority of children achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and writing while most children now did so in mathematics. Almost all children, including those at risk of missing out and those who are vulnerable, have made good progress from their prior levels of attainment and wider achievement.

The calm, purposeful atmosphere in the new school building has provided a very stimulating learning environment and allowed children to engage more fully in their learning. Children clearly enjoyed their learning experiences and were very proud of their new school.

At all stages staff had taken positive steps to increase the opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning and their skills as learners had been developed. In almost all classes tasks and activities were well-planned and involved pupils as effective contributors, working independently

and cooperatively with others in solving problems. As a result children's skills in listening and talking had improved in almost all cases.

Staff were at the early stages of improving the curriculum to take appropriate account of Curriculum for Excellence. Across the school staff had provided a broad range of learning experiences for children. They were increasingly helping children to extend their learning, for example about literacy, across the different areas of the curriculum. The curriculum was further enhanced by numerous well-planned opportunities for out-of-class learning and opportunities for pupils to achieve more widely, for example, through clubs, various sports, performances and trips. Very good attention had been paid to ensure everyone was included in these wider opportunities. The efforts to develop children's confidence and self-esteem were making a positive difference.

School focus weeks on Africa, anti-bullying, anti-racism and health promotion had helped children gain a sense of responsibility and citizenship. The school had recently achieved stage 2 accreditation for health promotion and all children were actively encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. Progress had been made towards providing two hours of high quality physical education for all children each week.

## **2.2 Meeting pupils' learning needs**

Almost all children were motivated and eager participants in their learning.

They experienced tasks and activities to suit a range of learning styles and had opportunities to learn independently, with partners and in groups. Staff knew the children very well and the pace of learning was now well matched to the needs of most children and provided sufficient and appropriate challenge. The school's approach to meeting children's emotional needs was outstanding.

The support for learning teacher displayed a clear understanding of the needs of identified children and provided well-judged support. The reading recovery programme had improved the reading and literacy skills of individual children and enabled them to be successful learners and effective contributors when they returned to class. Learning assistants were also supporting children effectively in classes and in smaller groups. Almost all children with additional support needs were making good progress with their individual targets.

Staff had worked very closely with a wide range of other professionals and parents to provide outstanding support to some very vulnerable children and also to those who needed additional support with their learning.

Staff had created a very caring and supportive ethos in the school. There was a very strong sense of equality and fairness throughout the school curriculum and across all aspects of its work. All pupils were fully included in the life of the school and parents felt most welcome.

## 2.3 Leadership and direction

The headteacher provided very strong leadership. She had succeeded in giving the school a very clear sense of direction which focused on improving the children's experiences in a very welcoming and inclusive learning environment. She had instilled confidence in staff, parents and pupils alike. She was very well supported by the principal teacher.

Leadership was evident across the school and staff had developed a shared leadership policy. Senior managers had established an effective collegiate approach to school development and had involved all staff positively in the decision-making process. As a result all staff, including support staff, were fully committed to improving the school and they took on leadership responsibilities for developing new initiatives and/or curriculum areas.

Opportunities had also increased for staff to discuss children's progress in their class and evaluate the effectiveness of their work. Staff now shared classroom visits with colleagues as professional partners to look at good practice and improve learning and teaching approaches on a more consistent basis.

Pupils throughout the school were benefiting positively from the

many opportunities to accept the responsibility offered to them. In particular pupils from the upper stages supported younger pupils very well as playground buddies and successfully led enterprise activities across the school.

## 3 CONCLUSION

With support from the education authority, St Francis RC Primary School provided a very good standard of education for its pupils. The school had progressed well since the inspection and had made the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. The current improvement plan had had a positive impact on the work of the school. The teamwork in the school provided a very good basis for continued improvement. The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the 2008 HMIE report.

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