

◆ EDINBURGH ◆

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

ST MARY'S RC (LEITH) PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

1. The inspection

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in St Mary's RC (Leith) Primary School in June 2010. Subsequently the school with support from the education authority produced an action 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.

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*

Across the school pupils were making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There was a more systematic approach to recording and tracking pupils' progress, this was discussed at forward planning times and included using standardised assessments and national guidance from *Curriculum for Excellence*. The more effective tracking information was contributing to ensure progression, form pupil groups and identify individual support needs.

Writing was being taught more consistently and was more effectively implemented in all classes; this more structured approach was contributing to progression and continuity in learning. Pupils were motivated by writing tasks and were enthusiastic in writing lessons; they discussed their writing confidently and knew how it could be improved. The pupil council had been involved in evaluating the success of the writing programme and responses confirmed pupil's enjoyment and engagement in their writing activities.

The new reading approaches encouraged more active learning tasks for pupils who worked well and in cooperation with each other. They were motivated in their reading and enjoyed the wider range of activities offered with the opportunity to choose their own home reading books.

Pupils were positive about the new approaches to reading. The school had introduced a standardised reading assessment administered in January 2012 P2-P7. The information from this assessment was being used as a benchmark to enable more effective tracking of reading progress.

In mathematics some pupils were confident and accurate with mental calculation and written work. There was a very good example of pupils explaining how they had solved a problem

but there were not consistent opportunities for pupils to be involved in explaining their mental calculations and the way they arrived at answers. There had been strong commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) in teaching mathematics and ensuring there was a range of resources to support learning. It was not yet possible to measure the impact in terms of improved attainment.

In most classes teachers encouraged pupils' reflection and review of their learning at the end of lessons. Teaching staff were beginning to integrate assessment approaches in learning and further development and use of clearer learning intentions and success criteria will help pupils to more fully understand the purpose and evaluate the success of their learning.

Teachers were using interactive whiteboards to demonstrate lessons and enhance learners' experiences and this technology would further increase pupils' learning if used more interactively to help them to contribute to and explore concepts.

In the nursery there was a more focused approach to developing learning from *Curriculum for Excellence*. Weekly planning was clearly based on supporting children's skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff made regular assessments to identify next steps in learning which contributed to personal learning planning. Children were able to talk confidently about their learning experiences and had regular access to their folders.

The nursery provided a very good range of learning experiences in a stimulating environment with good opportunities to develop skills in literacy and numeracy. An example of very good use was made of the Smartboard to support storytelling and children enjoyed and participated in this activity recalling information and sharing ideas enthusiastically.

2.2 *Meeting pupils' learning needs*

Teachers were planning more consistently using experiences and outcomes from *Curriculum for Excellence*. Continuing to improve learning intentions and use of success criteria will further support pupils learning experiences and their involvement in lessons.

Children were motivated and eager to learn. They contributed confidently to activities and worked well independently and in pairs and groups. Examples of pupils contributing to their learning in new topics had been well developed and encouraged their learning through finding prior knowledge and identifying what and how they wanted to learn.

In some classes there was still scope for raising expectations and in particular challenging some more able pupils. Continuing to develop and increase the range of differentiation in learning activities will help to improve pace of lessons and provide more appropriately for all ability levels.

The school identified and delivered appropriate support for pupils with additional needs. The support for learning teacher and learning assistants gave identified help to individuals and the support for learning teacher now worked cooperatively with pupils in the class setting. Targets within additional support plans were being updated more frequently by staff and were beginning to become more child friendly. Staff had enhanced their understanding through CPD about the requirements in the Additional Support for Learning legislation and could discuss this confidently.

Personal learning planning was at an early stage and pupils were proud of their work and they could discuss their success and achievements in learning confidently. Some pupils were unsure about the purpose of their personal learning folders. Consideration to improving personal planning by setting clearer targets and reviews with pupils more involved will provide stronger focus on learning.

Children were more challenged in the nursery through differentiated and creative activities and there were good opportunities provided through outdoor physical play, clay and junk

modelling free painting and writing for a variety of purposes. Staff were engaging children well in these opportunities and pupils were motivated in their learning experiences.

2.3 *Leadership and direction*

The headteacher had provided more strategic leadership for curriculum development and he had implemented more robust approaches to evaluating the life and work of the school. A calendar of monitoring activities was well organised and helped to evaluate progress in planning for learning, attainment and the curriculum across school.

Pupils and staff had contributed to evaluations of new approaches and their contributions had been used positively to evaluate progress however, more regular opportunities to evaluate with all staff required to be planned to ensure systematic steps to achieving success.

The school improvement plan could be used strategically and shared more fully with staff as a tool to support planning priorities with actions and outcomes for developments. This would help to give more focused direction and lead to more evidence based evaluation of impact of initiatives.

The headteacher and depute headteacher worked together as an effective team and both were highly committed to continuing to improve the school and nursery.

The depute headteacher had led the nursery through some developments and with staff involved she had systematically monitored the impact of these new improvements in planning, curriculum and improving outdoor learning.

There had been good shared leadership throughout school. Chartered teachers were actively involved in working groups and in piloting new materials. Teachers had been encouraged to share practice through visits to classes and there had been opportunities to share standards in school and in the cluster as part of moderation.

Teachers worked effectively in teams and they were committed to the school. They were willing to undertake new initiatives and were able to evaluate and discuss practice and progress accurately and confidently.

3 Conclusion

With support from the education authority, St Mary's RC (Leith) Primary School provided a 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 June 2010 HMIE report.

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