

TOWERBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

1. The inspection

HM Inspectors of Education (HMIE) published a report on the quality of education in Towerbank Primary School in February 2012. 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. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Towerbank Primary School has recently benefitted from a new extension and whole school refurbishment. The extension includes eight classrooms and a custom built nursery. These new facilities provide a high quality learning environment for all. The school has also developed an outdoor learning classroom which is providing children with meaningful learning experiences. An enthusiastic group of talented parents who have consulted staff, pupils, parents and the local community have been key in taking forward playground developments and have a detailed plan in place for further exciting improvements to the outdoor space of Towerbank Primary School.

There was a calm, purposeful, positive ethos throughout the school from Nursery to P7. Pupils were articulate and were able to talk about the many positive and exciting learning experiences at Towerbank Primary School. They were well mannered, polite, engaged, motivated and eager to share their learning.

The recent Care Commission found that children in the nursery were receiving high quality learning experiences. Learners in the nursery were motivated and eager participants in their learning and play and the effective use of 'I Can' statements were helping staff, pupils and parents understand children's skills as learners.

All pupils at Towerbank Primary School continued to make good progress in their learning and had achieved good standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff make consistent and systematic use of staged assessment information to provide a clear overview of children's

performance. The school is well placed to further develop a wider range of assessment approaches across the broad general education to support teachers' professional judgement. Staff have devised a whole school approach to tracking and monitoring children's progress in writing, reading, spelling and mathematics. This is in the early stages and the quality improvement officer will continue to monitor its impact.

Pupils throughout the school felt that all staff treated them with equality, fairness and respect.

Pupils at Towerbank Primary School continued to receive a very good range of quality learning experiences, including the effective use of information communications technology (ICT). Cooperative learning is embedded within the school and pupils spoke positively about the opportunities they had to work independently, in pairs and in groups. Children at all stages had opportunities to plan and have ownership of their learning. Continued use of learning walls throughout the school was helping learners take account of previous learning, evaluate their learning and plan their next steps. Class learning journals were evident in all classes and were helping pupils discuss and reflect on their learning, independently, in groups or with visitors to their classrooms. The school is now well placed to further involve children in setting individual targets and sharing these with parents.

The active involvement of pupils in developing their targets in writing is helping to develop their skills as writers. Pupils in P2 worked with an author and illustrator and an art college student to produce a high quality illustrated storybook entitled, "The Tale of the Towerbank Sea Monster." The children worked collaboratively to write the story and provided high quality drawings to illustrate the book.

The focus on the use of Bloom's Taxonomy and higher order questioning from nursery to P7 was ensuring a more consistent approach where children were challenged in their learning and were able to create their own quality questions.

There is a strong pupil voice in the school. There was a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within the school and express their ideas on a wide range of school issues. Pupils talked positively about their involvement in the Pupil Council, Eco Group, Health Group, Fair Trade, Wildlife Rangers, I Bike, Road Safety and as Monitors and Prefects.

A range of extra-curricular clubs provided by staff and external providers included chess, fencing, running, samba, basketball, football, cheerleading, drama, knitting, computing and choir. The choir regularly perform in the community and wider afield.

Displays throughout the school were of a very high standard and support pupils' ownership of the learning process.

3. How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

Staff had a clearer plan of how they were moving forward with *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school has continued to develop the curriculum, taking account of the increased expectations. All staff continue to be involved in working groups to create progressive programmes ensuring depth, breadth and challenge in all curriculum areas. All staff have taken part in moderation activities in their own school and as a cluster. Cluster development work from last session has led to a well planned programme of science from nursery to P7. Pupils in P7 were able to discuss kinetic and potential energy and worked in groups to create and present their own villages which showed their excellent understanding of renewable energy.

The school should now continue with its plans to further develop the four contexts for learning, including inter disciplinary learning which takes account of the local context of Towerbank Primary School.

Towerbank Primary School has a well established link with Tanzania which is used as a context for learning across the whole school. The school has achieved international school award, Fair Trade Status, Health Accreditation Stage 3 and has four Green flags.

The school has identified numeracy as a focus for improving attainment. The focussed teaching approaches in numeracy and mathematics were ensuring children were developing their problem solving skills and their mathematics experiences were more real and relevant. The whole school from nursery to P7 took part in financial education week. The pupils in P4 gathered information from interviews with local businesses and created their own board game based on Monopoly, entitled 'Portopoly'. This provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to experience mathematics across the curriculum. By creating and playing this game the children demonstrated a very good understanding of money, change and cost.

The school is working extremely hard with the authority to provide two hours of high quality physical education.

Nursery and the P1 transition is well established and leaflets have been produced for parents on literacy and numeracy which supports the transition very well. Workshops in nursery and in P1 were well received by parents and were having a positive effect on Transition. Transition across all stages is a key focus.

Towerbank Primary School is a well resourced school and has a very good range of materials to support pupils in their learning. Differentiation was evident in almost all classes. The school has developed a comprehensive and robust additional support for learning structure to ensure the needs of pupils with additional support needs are supported and challenged. Individualised educational plan targets are becoming more child friendly and pupil support assistants are involved in the planning stages and attend child planning meetings. In all classes, additional needs were promptly identified and addressed and the pace of learning in the majority of classes was appropriate for most/least able pupils. The school has high aspirations for all its learners.

4. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Since the HMIE report in February 2012 there have been significant changes within the management team. However, the school has continued with the very strong culture of school improvement and career long professional learning. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the needs of Towerbank Primary School and was well respected by parents, pupils, and staff. The headteacher remained highly committed to school improvement and provided very good leadership.

The recently appointed depute headteacher and the newly appointed four acting principal teachers with their focused and clear remits were creating a culture of collective responsibility and distributed leadership. Ongoing evaluations from parents are leading to improvements. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to share their learning with parents. Pupils are encouraged to present the learning at curriculum evenings, open days and workshops. The open days in November and May were extremely well supported. P7 acted as tour guides and over 300 visitors attended the open day in November.

The school is now well placed to ensure the Pupil Council is involved in sharing aspects of their learning and whole school improvements.

The school has strong links with the community through its many open days, carol singing, Neighbours Near and Far, Fairtrade tuck shop, health workshops, Scotmid and local shops. Creative projects have resulted from effective partnerships with Edinburgh University,

Edinburgh College of Art, Queen Margaret University, Heriot Watt University and Earth Calling. Some of these opportunities have included research projects which have had many benefits for the children.

Now that the extension is fully functional, the school has identified an opportunity to revisit its Vision, Values and Aims and is working in partnership with pupils, parents and students from Edinburgh Art College to make this happen. This will also see the introduction of a new website and school logo.

3 Conclusion

With support from the education authority, Towerbank Primary provided a very good standard of education for its young people. The school had made good progress since the inspection and had made most of the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the 2012 HMIE report.

Therese Laing
Quality Improvement Officer
June 2014