

1. The Inspection

HM Inspectors (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in St Mary's Primary School in June 2010. In October 2010 West Dunbartonshire Council 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 within a two-year period.

West Dunbartonshire Council Quality Improvement Service 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 and staff had worked very effectively to take forward the recommendations contained in the report. The school had improved the breadth and balance of the curriculum, increased the challenge to pupils and improved the learning experiences. The staff had used national guidance to support the developments and had embedded 'Assessment for Learning' strategies in all stages across the curriculum. There had been improvement in active learning. The learning opportunities in classes increased the challenge and enjoyment for all pupils. All pupils received 2 hours Physical Education in line with national recommendations. Monitoring and tracking of attainment by all teachers had developed in a rigorous manner and was informing planning for individuals, for classes and at a strategic level across the school. The staff worked in a collegiate way to ensure that they supported each other and shared standards. Staff and children have high expectations and work hard to ensure that they meet these expectations. Parents were fully involved at all stages of development and were fully committed to the improvement agenda.

The school was now well placed to sustain and build on the effective developments achieved.

3. Progress towards the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in June 2010 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.

The following areas for improvement were agreed:

3.1 *Continue to take forward Curriculum for Excellence.*

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this point for action.

Teachers displayed a very good knowledge and understanding of the experiences and outcomes of a Curriculum for Excellence. They were using these in their planning and in recording and reporting children's progress.

Staff had a clear understanding of the purpose and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and these were influencing their work.

There was clear evidence that learning experiences were closing the gap, raising attainment and achievement and preparing young people for the future. Achievements of young people were widely celebrated within the school, with parents and the local community.

Staff had a clear understanding of Interdisciplinary Learning and how to apply learning in a new context. Children were being given a broad range of learning experiences within a real life context, this was evident in the work done on financial education in the school. Activities in mathematics were relevant and challenging. Staff were using technology to deliver learning and children were confident using a wide range of technology.

3.2 Build on examples of successful learning and teaching to ensure children's learning needs are being met fully.

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this action point.

As a result of the work undertaken in the school all teachers were confident, reflective, informed practitioners. Learning was of a high standard and met the needs of pupils. All pupils, including more able pupils, were appropriately challenged by learning activities in the class. There was some good learning outdoors taking place and the school has plans to extend these opportunities. Support for learning was good, well planned and effectively monitored. The learning assistants were an important part of the school team working alongside teachers to deliver an appropriate curriculum to all children. There was a good pace of learning across the school; lessons are brisk but appropriately paced. Assessment for Learning was embedded and many examples of good practice can be seen in the school as a result of the strong consistency of approach to learning and planning. Staff discussion and development work has led to more focussed planning of learning and improved pupil-teacher dialogue. Targets were set with all children and were regularly reviewed to ensure progress and, where necessary, support. The school has used the authority tracking tool effectively to track, plan and evaluate learning. Staff have taken part in the authority 'Sharing the Standard' activities, allowing them to look at progress across curriculum and measure the impact of the improvements across the school. The school has reviewed many curricular areas including, literacy, numeracy and art. The improvements made have led to more motivating, high quality experiences for children and have increased the confidence of staff.

3.3 Extend approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in order to raise attainment.

The school had made very good progress towards meeting this action point. A strong emphasis had been put on dialogue with children about their learning. This had been very effective in monitoring progress and for identifying the improvement agenda for the school. Staff were clear about their responsibilities. Effective self-evaluation procedures had been put in place and had resulted in raising attainment. Feedback to staff on classroom observation focussed on learning and teaching.

Robust tracking and monitoring of progress was used to improve planning. Reporting to parents had improved as a result of the improvements in monitoring and evaluation.

Teachers understood the use that they could make of self-evaluation to support further improvements. The school had a joined-up approach to improvement that was consistent and effective. Staff were committed to acting on the results of self-evaluation. All staff reflected on current practice and evaluated new developments. They had leadership roles and they used appropriate and effective self-evaluation procedures to gather evidence and plan for improvements in their areas of responsibility. Self-evaluation for improvement was embedded in the practice of all staff.

Capacity for Improvement.

The school had made very good progress across the points for action as outlined in this report. They had developed the curricular areas of a Curriculum for Excellence and ensured that the young people have opportunities to build confidence through their many achievements. Attainment has been raised across the school and an ethos of high expectations and support was moving the school forward in its 'Journey to Excellence'. Self evaluation and reflection on the quality of work was embedded in the practice of all staff. Parents, pupils and staff had a strong commitment to the school. The strong involvement of staff in curricular developments in the school had ensured continuous improvement in learning and teaching based securely in meeting the needs of the child. The school is well placed to continue this work.

4. Conclusion

With effective support from West Dunbartonshire Council Quality Improvement Service, St Mary's Primary School had responded well to the recommendations of the HMIE report. Staff had improved pupils' attainment. All staff had been fully involved in the development of the action plan and had worked hard to support the headteacher to undertake the recommendations within the agreed timescale. The school was well placed to continue the improvements achieved to date.

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