
| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------|
| Report To: | Education & Lifelong Learning Committee | Date: | 19 January 2010 |
| Report By: | Acting Director of Education | Report No: | EDUC/03/10/AH |
| Contact Officer: | Albert Henderson | Contact No: | 01475 712761 |
| Subject: | HMIe Report on St Kenneth's Primary School | | |

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of a HMIe external evaluation of St Kenneth's Primary School.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 St Kenneth's Primary School have received a very good report from the HMIe. The report was produced on 3 November 2009. Members should note that the indicators of quality reflect very well on the school with three indicators of quality evaluated as 'very good' and two as 'good'.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on St Kenneth's Primary School.

Albert Henderson
Acting Director of Education

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 St Kenneth's Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in September 2009. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages, identified key strengths and main points for action using the following six-point scale:

- 6 - Excellent – excellent
- 5 - Very Good – major strengths
- 4 - Good – important strengths with some areas for improvement
- 3 - Satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- 2 - Weak – important weaknesses
- 1 - Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses

4.2 HMIE assessed and reported on the views of parents, pupils and staff, the quality of learning in teaching, how well the school was raising achievement for all pupils, achievement in national examinations, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, the school's capacity for improvement.

4.3 The report was published on the 3 November 2009 and will be circulated at the meeting. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.

4.4 St Kenneth's Primary School is inspected under the evaluation framework "How Good Is Our School 3?"

4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIE found three aspects of the work of the school to be 'very good' and two to be 'good'. The evaluations of the indicators for quality can be found on page 8 of the report.

4.6 Members should note that HMIE comment on examples of good practice. The report indicated that two examples of good practice were:

- Approaches to developing healthy lifestyles among children and their families
- Children's action to improve local play areas

4.7 The reports lists two areas for improvement:

- Increase the pace of learning for higher achieving children
- Continue to improve approaches to self-evaluation

4.8 The report on St Kenneth's Primary School should be set in the context of Inverclyde. This is a very good report in the context of reports on Inverclyde schools.



**St Kenneth's
Primary School
Greenock
Inverclyde Council
3 November 2009**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. Examples of good practice
4. How well do children learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

1. The school

St Kenneth's Primary School is a denominational school. It serves an area in the east end of Greenock. The roll was 144 when the inspection was carried out in September 2009. Children's attendance was below the national average in 2007/2008. The school has amalgamated with St Mungo's Primary School and is preparing to merge with St Laurence's Primary School in 2010. At the time of the inspection, St Kenneth's Primary School was in temporary accommodation.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Polite and well-behaved children who contribute actively to improving the school.
- Children's achievements across a wide range of activities, including music, sports and enterprise.
- The productive use of the local environment and partnerships with senior citizens and other community groups, to enhance children's learning.
- The positive and welcoming learning environment and support for children's emotional, social and health needs.
- The acting headteacher's vision and action to improve the life chances of children.

3. Examples of good practice

- Approaches to developing healthy lifestyles among children and their families.
- Children's action to improve local play areas.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are highly motivated by a wide range of active learning experiences. Through the school's continuing work as a Rights Respecting School children have gained a greater understanding of their own rights and associated responsibilities. They can empathise with others in less fortunate circumstances and feel empowered to influence improvements in their own community. They are developing as responsible citizens through work in the community such as for the Riverside Inverclyde regeneration group. At all stages children learn to respect and care for others through being 'buddies' to senior citizens in local nursing homes and day centres. By the upper stages, they are confident when making presentations at assembly and whole school events. They are developing independence through purposeful enterprise activities and successfully work in teams to organise tasks. They are aware of their strengths and are developing their understanding about how to improve their work.

Children are developing effectively their physical coordination, fitness and sporting skills. They benefit from weekly running and athletics lessons and have been successful in achieving local and national recognition for sports. Their involvement in activities outwith school helps them to develop a wide range of skills and interests. Examples include bowling, golf, cross country running, science and information and communications technology (ICT). Children are progressing well in choral singing and are learning to play musical instruments. At P6 and P7 they are enthusiastic about learning Spanish and are making good progress in their oral skills.

Most children attain appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last three years levels of attainment in English language have been variable. Standards in mathematics are high and there has been an improving trend. Children listen attentively to instructions and are developing effective skills in group discussion. At all stages, most children are making

good progress in developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics. From P5 to P7, most children read fluently and with expression. A few need continued encouragement to read for pleasure. At all stages, children present their written work neatly and write well for different purposes. In mathematics, they are speedy and accurate in their calculations and confident when using money. They are effective in using their numeracy skills in real-life situations. For example, children at P6 are able to use grid references to find and plot locations on a map. Across the school, children know different strategies to solve problems and can use them well.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum is broad and provides children with high quality learning experiences. Staff work effectively to encourage and develop children's talents and skills across the curriculum. They take good account of local circumstances, for example, in relation to health and wellbeing. They provide interesting and relevant activities about the importance of healthy lifestyles. The school has attained local and national recognition for its work. At all stages, children's personal and social skills are developing systematically. Staff have taken positive steps to take account of new learning approaches in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. Cross-curricular approaches help children learn about Scotland and other countries and develop their literacy skills. For example, while studying shipbuilding on the Clyde, children produced informative leaflets which are available in the local museum. A wide range of activities in drama, music and art extend children's creative and imaginative skills. At the upper stages, staff provide children with useful lessons in cookery. Children experience two hours of good quality physical education each week.

Teachers organise children's learning effectively and provide well-structured lessons. They interact well with children. Tasks and activities are at the right level of difficulty for most children. At times, the pace of learning is too slow for higher achieving children, particularly in English language and mathematics. Cross-curricular work does not yet build enough on children's prior learning and skills.

Staff have established effective systems to identify and assist children who require additional support. Teachers and support staff work well with other agencies such as psychological services to support children. They share information effectively about children's progress. The school regularly organises and reviews additional support plans for children who require them, in consultation with parents. Staff provide regular 'home learning challenges' for children to make homework more interesting.

5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

The school works positively with the Parent Council, parents and the local parish. There is scope for the Parent Council to provide parents with more information about its work. Staff invite parents to take part in special events for example, specific health or eco activities such as 'Impact Days'. Parent volunteers support the school by running the tuck shop and organising the school library. The school provides parents with regular newsletters keeping them up-to-date with school life. Staff inform parents about the programme for teaching about sensitive health issues. A few parents would like more regular information about school events and their children's progress. There are effective arrangements for children to move on from nursery to P1. The local secondary school works productively with the school to build on children's learning, for example in Spanish, English language and science. The school has extensive and productive links with the community including museums, James Watt College, the community police, nursing homes and business links. Overall, the school responds promptly and effectively to any concerns or complaints it receives.

6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Across the school, staff consult children about their views on aspects of school life. Children have actively contributed to developing the school's values. They respond very positively to their responsibilities as junior road safety officers, pupil council members, 'buddies' and monitors. From P5 to P7, the majority of children are in committees. For example, they organise events including outings to a theatre or a meal in a restaurant. Children make good use of the local media to increase awareness of the work they are doing. Teachers and support staff use their expertise well to enhance children's learning. Staff discuss their work and help to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Senior staff visit classes to observe learning and teaching and track the progress of children. They should now use their findings more effectively to collate and report the school's progress. Teachers respond well to suggestions for improvement and should continue to share good practice by visiting each other's classrooms.

7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

The school encourages very positive and supportive relationships. Staff have worked hard to improve the temporary accommodation and provide a stimulating learning environment where everyone is valued and respected. Children are well-behaved and courteous. They feel safe and believe that any issues of bullying are addressed and that they are treated fairly. All staff know their role in relation to child protection. They encourage children's talents and skills. Children are developing their confidence and self-esteem through experiencing success in their achievements. At all stages, children show respect and care for others. They learn about other cultures through their study of different countries and other world religions. Children have regular opportunities to come together to worship. School assemblies enable staff and children to celebrate their faith.

8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The acting headteacher provides the school with clear direction. She has been successful in sharing her vision with staff, children, parents and the community. Over the last three years, she has managed the process of change very well, including the move to temporary accommodation, and the preparation for future amalgamation. She ensures continuous improvement and raises the profile of the school locally and nationally. She has encouraged an ethos where staff and children are able to take on lead roles and responsibilities. The deputy headteacher supports her well and has provided a strong lead in the school's developments in expressive arts and health and wellbeing. The high morale of staff and children and the quality of teamwork contribute significantly to the inclusive and welcoming environment. The school is well placed in its preparation for amalgamation.

9. What happens next?

The school provides a very good quality of education. Therefore, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. In most circumstances the education authority would be asked to report to parents within a year of publication of this report. However, the school is due to amalgamate with another school in February 2010. In these circumstances we would expect the authority and school to take steps to continue to improve until the amalgamation.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Increase the pace of learning for higher achieving children.
- Continue to improve approaches to self-evaluation.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for St Kenneth's Primary School.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Improvements in performance | very good |
| Learners' experiences | very good |
| Meeting learning needs | good |

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| The curriculum | very good |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | good |

HM Inspector: Noreen Connaughton
3 November 2009

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

| | | |
|----------------|-------|---|
| excellent | means | outstanding, sector leading |
| very good | means | major strengths |
| good | means | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| satisfactory | means | strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| weak | means | important weaknesses |
| unsatisfactory | means | major weaknesses |

If you would like to find out more about our inspections or get an electronic copy of this report, please go to www.hmie.gov.uk.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation, or if you wish to comment about any aspect of our inspections. You can contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

Crown Copyright 2009
HM Inspectorate of Education.