

**Gowriehill Primary School
Interim follow-through
Dundee City Council
15 January 2008**

Contents

Page

1. The inspection	1
2. Continuous improvement	1
3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action	1
4. Conclusion	4
How can you contact us?	5

1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Gowriehill Primary School in December 2006. The report indicated that HM Inspectors would engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress and would publish an interim report within one year of the publication of the original report.

Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report. HM Inspectors carried out an interim follow-through visit to the school in September 2007. They 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 initial report.

2. Continuous improvement

The school had made steady progress towards meeting the main points for action in the original report. Following the inspection, the school had been very well supported by the education department and there had been ongoing monitoring of progress. An education authority Head of Service had attended meetings with the Parent Council and with parents to discuss the report and to set out an improvement strategy. The school had strengthened links with parents and the community through a highly successful open afternoon, parental meetings and the use of questionnaires to seek out the views of parents on a range of school issues. An education authority manager and Quality Improvement Officer had made regular visits to prepare and evaluate the progress made in implementing the school's action plan. Staff tutors had worked closely with teachers to develop their skills in areas such as the effective use of assessment and questioning. The school had installed a new computer suite and teachers were making very good use of the facilities to enhance pupils' learning. The school continued to play an active part in the local community and pupils had been successful in a number of sporting competitions. The school had been awarded Silver status as a Health Promoting School.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in December 2006 identified six main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

3.1 Improve pupils' attainment.

The school was taking purposeful action to address this main point for action.

Teachers were providing pupils with a wider range of appropriate learning experiences and were making effective use of new resources to improve pupils' skills across the curriculum. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing had improved steadily. Teachers worked closely with each other to discuss pupils' work and to ensure continuity and progression in their learning. The quality of pupils' writing had improved and a writer in residence had worked

with senior pupils to develop their skills in imaginative writing. A number of pupils in P1 and P2 were now reaching national levels of attainment at an earlier stage than would normally be expected. Pupils' skills in listening, talking and reading had been developed using a variety of new and stimulating resources. Teachers had made good use of new strategies and resources to develop pupils' skills in areas such as mental calculation and problem solving. They had made well-judged use of assessment to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils were now working at an appropriate level for mathematics. Staff acknowledged the need for, and were committed to achieving improved attainment levels at all stages of the school.

3.2 Improve the quality of learning and teaching.

Effective steps were being taken to address this main point for action.

The school had been well supported by a range of education authority staff. Teachers had reviewed their approaches to learning and teaching using strategies from the Learning Together in Dundee guidance. They had taken part in staff development activities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the need to build on pupils' previous learning experiences. Most teachers gave clear explanations, shared the purpose of learning with pupils and reinforced main points at the end of lessons. In a number of classes, pupils were becoming more actively involved in the learning process and were beginning to share their views on the quality of their learning experiences. They had well-planned opportunities to work together and learn from each other. The school had identified the continued need to develop the use of a broader range of assessment strategies to involve and engage all pupils in evaluating the success of their learning by setting personal targets.

3.3 Improve the quality of learning experiences for pupils with additional support needs.

Although the absence of key members of the Support for Learning team had minimised the pace of improvement, the school had started to make initial progress in addressing this main point for action.

Education officers and promoted staff had worked closely with the principal teacher and her team to carry out an audit of current practice, review remits and identify areas for further improvement. The headteacher and depute headteacher had worked with staff to develop and implement more detailed planning formats to ensure that pupils' learning experiences were relevant to their individual needs. The level and quality of integration had improved and was now a regular feature of pupils' daily experiences. Staff had produced individualised education plans for each pupil and had involved parents in this process.

3.4 Improve the extent to which tasks and activities present sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all learners.

Staff were making progress in addressing this main point for action.

There were clear signs that teachers were taking greater account of pupils' prior learning experiences when planning their work. They were more responsive to the views of pupils and were actively engaging them in discussions about the purpose of specific learning

activities. The headteacher and depute headteacher met with teachers to discuss their plans and to ensure an appropriate focus on continuity and progression in learning. They had introduced a series of classroom visits to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and to ensure that pupils were making appropriate progress in their learning. Teachers were making increased use of information and communications technology to promote individualised learning by making regular use of the refurbished computer suite.

3.5 Improve the approaches to monitor, evaluate and improve the school's work.

The headteacher had introduced a wide range of initiatives to address this main point for action.

She had established a calendar of events to ensure that staff were fully aware of the key dates and activities when self-evaluation activities would take place. She had raised staff awareness of the importance of self-evaluation but recognised the continued need to involve all staff in this process. The headteacher and depute headteacher had implemented a programme of activities to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. They observed teaching, sampled pupils' work, reviewed teachers' plans and provided clear feedback. They had introduced a staff consultative group to enhance communication and take forward staff views on all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher had worked with teachers to develop and introduce an effective system to monitor and track pupils' progress in English language and mathematics.

3.6 Improve the length of the school week for pupils in the resourced location classes.

This main point for action had been fully met.

The length of the school day had been extended for pupils attending the resourced location in line with pupils in mainstream classes.

4. Conclusion

The school was making progress in improving its work. Staff had been given a high level of quality support from the education authority and there were clear signs of ongoing improvements. The headteacher had worked closely with staff, pupils and parents to ensure that improvements were taking place. Teachers were taking good account of pupils' prior learning experiences to ensure continuity and progression in their learning, particularly in English language and mathematics. They were making more effective use of assessment information and had started to involve pupils in setting personal learning targets. They acknowledged the need for further improvements in attainment. HMIE will continue to engage with the school and education authority and will provide another report on progress for parents and carers within one year of the publication of this report.

Michael Wood
HM Inspector

15 January 2008

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: ask@spso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spso.org.uk.

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