

# **Lanark Primary School and Nursery Class**

## **South Lanarkshire Council**

**21 October 2008**

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### **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Lanark Primary School and Nursery Class in October 2007. The report indicated that HM Inspectors would engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress and would publish a 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 a follow-through visit to the school in June 2008. The team 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**

Since the original inspection of June 2007, the headteacher had been redeployed and the education authority had appointed an acting headteacher with effect from August 2007. The acting headteacher had led the staff in preparing the action plan and in taking forward the immediate priorities identified therein. A new headteacher had been appointed to the substantive post in January 2008. In the relatively short time since then, and building on the work started by the acting headteacher, she had assisted the school in making significant progress across all of the action points in the original report.

In addition to the eight HMIE action points, the school and authority had included a further two action points in the school's action plan. The first of these was to improve aspects of the school's accommodation. In taking forward this action point, staff had created a richer and much more attractive environment for learning, which had met with the approval of pupils and their parents. Redecoration had been completed in some areas, additional information and communications technology (ICT) resources had been installed, and security, access for the disabled and arrangements for lunches had been improved.

The second additional action point concerned behaviour management. Staff had reviewed policies and procedures, improved consistency in dealing with misbehaviour, raised expectations of pupils and provided a system of rewards for good behaviour. A new House system had been introduced and positive attitudes, behaviour and successes were celebrated at weekly assemblies. In planning and reviewing these improvements, staff had consulted and acted upon feedback received from parents and pupils.

As a result of these improvements, and the progress described later in this report, pupils and staff expressed much more positive views about their experiences in school. Pupils reported that they enjoyed learning, felt safe and secure in school and thought that they got on well with each other. Teachers and support staff had responded very well to the challenges facing them and had successfully implemented many initiatives designed to

enhance the learning experiences for pupils and to engage and motivate them in their learning. Early indications were that these developments were already leading to improved attainment.

Teamwork had improved and staff had shown commendable commitment to continuous improvement. They reported that they were now supported better in taking forward developments, were encouraged to take lead roles in these developments and were provided with appropriate training to enable them to continue to improve their practice.

### **3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action**

The initial inspection report published in October 2007 identified eight 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 The quality of learning and teaching.**

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

The school had focused its staff development on the introduction of more active approaches to learning, particularly at the early stages. As a result, teachers had developed greater expertise in sharing the purposes of lessons with pupils and providing them with more focused feedback on their work. Pupils were aware of the use of these strategies and understood their purpose in improving their learning. Teachers gave helpful explanations and instructions and used questioning more effectively to develop pupils' understanding.

The headteacher and senior managers carried out classroom visits to monitor learning and teaching and to help identify and disseminate examples of good practice. Staff had reviewed the resources and programmes for English language and mathematics. They had introduced more systematic approaches to the teaching of writing. New computer software and other materials helped support lessons in interactive mental mathematics. Pupils at P7 were creating an Interactive Year Book, using skills in mathematics, technology and language. Homework tasks were now more varied and provided more appropriate challenges.

Overall, learning activities were better matched to the needs of individual pupils and the pace of learning had increased. Improvements in the quality of learning and teaching were having a positive impact on pupils. They reported that they were more motivated to learn and had a better understanding of what had been taught.

#### **3.2 The quality of children's learning in the nursery in knowledge and understanding of the world and expressive and aesthetic development.**

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

Staff had increased opportunities for children to explore and investigate. Two areas had been created focussing on construction and creative skills. There were more opportunities for children to learn through play. For example, children had studied the lifecycle of the butterfly by observing this first hand. They had counted the length of each of the observed stages of development. In art, children worked independently and confidently with a range of resources exploring different textures.

#### **3.3 Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.**

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

Improvements in the quality of learning and teaching were leading to improved standards of attainment in English language and mathematics. Over the past year, the levels of attainment in reading and writing had both improved significantly. In mathematics, where

levels had been higher, it was likely that the school would maintain these standards this year.

Pupils had responded very well to the improved learning experiences and resources. In particular, many at the upper stages were much more interested in reading. Pupils enjoyed the greater focus on interactive approaches to mental mathematics and were becoming more proficient.

### **3.4 Assessment procedures and meeting children's learning needs in the nursery.**

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

Staff remits had been reviewed to ensure efficient deployment of staff and to allow children to interact more effectively with staff. New resources had been introduced to develop talking and listening skills. Children were now listening attentively to members of staff and confidently discussing their stories without being distracted by others engaged in different activities around them. Nursery children now attended whole school assemblies.

Teaching strategies and resources had been developed to improve writing and phonics skills. Children were actively engaged at writing tables and were proud of their written work on display. They were involved in discussing their own progress and setting learning targets. Staff were taking children's ideas into consideration when planning activities. Staff needed to develop further the range of resources and teaching strategies to continue the progress already made in this area.

### **3.5 Approaches for monitoring learning and teaching and tracking pupils' progress.**

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

With the close cooperation of all staff, the headteacher had developed more systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring the work of the school and tracking the progress of pupils. In particular, they were using a variety of approaches to identify promptly pupils' learning including those with additional support needs. As a result, such needs were identified and met at an earlier stage and were met more appropriately. Observations of lessons, systematic monitoring of pupils' work, recording and tracking of attainments in national tests and regular monitoring of progress ensured that senior managers had a comprehensive view of how pupils' learning needs were being met. The headteacher had developed a database to enable staff to track the progress of individual pupils across the stages and to alert them if pupils did not achieve in line with expectations.

### **3.6 Communications with nursery children's parents on children's progress and the work of the nursery.**

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

Learning targets were now set for children in partnership with parents. Parents received annual written reports on their children's progress. Curriculum development news and other useful information was prominently displayed on notice boards. There were monthly newsletters and parent forum meetings. Parents' suggestions were encouraged and had informed decisions about a number of matters. Social events were well publicised and well attended. Parent helpers were increasingly involved in helping on educational visits.

### **3.7 Involving staff in evaluating the work of the school and contributing to the school improvement plan.**

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

All staff had made significant contributions to the school's action plan following the inspection of June 2007 and many improvements were now under way. The remits of

senior staff had been reviewed and revised to make more effective use of their skills. All staff now met regularly and were consulted on developments and initiatives. All staff were members of at least one of the school's working groups to take forward key initiatives. Senior managers used feedback from staff to shape developments and ensure effective implementation. Teachers and support staff now felt much more involved in decision making and had a more positive attitude to the school. They described a much improved ethos and a culture of inclusion and support. Procedures for professional review had been improved and were now much more rigorous and effective. Appropriate training had been offered and taken up. Staff had begun to use national quality indicators more effectively to help evaluate the work of the school.

### **3.8 Leadership.**

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

The headteacher and the former acting headteacher had been responsible for leading significant improvements to the work of the school since the inspection of June 2007. Following the review and revision of their remits, the deputy headteacher and principal teacher had made increasingly effective contributions to these improvements and there was now a strong sense of teamwork amongst all staff. Staff continued to show strong commitment to the school, shared the new vision for the school and were more actively involved in taking forward the work of the school.

## **4. Conclusion**

The headteacher and her staff had made good or very good progress in addressing the main points for action in the initial inspection report of October 2007. They had demonstrated high levels of commitment and much greater teamwork in taking forward key initiatives to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The school now provided pupils with a wider range of suitably challenging experiences in an enhanced environment for learning to help them make appropriate progress. Staff made effective use of improved arrangements to record and track pupils' progress and monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's work. With continued support from the education authority, the school was now well placed to continue to improve the quality of its work. In view of the very significant progress made HMIE will make no further visits in connection with the inspection of June 2007.

Jim Bruce  
HM Inspector

21 October 2008

### **How can you contact us?**

#### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Executive Director (Education Resources), local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our website: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

#### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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](mailto: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](http://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@spsos.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsos.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsos.org.uk](http://www.spsos.org.uk).

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