

Report

Report to:	Clydesdale Area Committee
Date of Meeting:	9 September 2008
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	HMle Report - St Athanasius' Primary School and Nursery Class
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ advise of the outcome of the inspection of St Athanasius' Primary School and Nursery Class by HM Inspectors.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) to note the HMle Report on St Athanasius' Primary School and Nursery Class.

3. Background

3.1. St Athanasius' Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in March 2008 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education.

3.2. HM Inspectors evaluated nursery children's progress, pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

3.3. HM Inspectors examined the quality of children's experiences in the nursery, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, staff, a group of parents, the chairperson of the Parent Council, representatives of the Parent Teacher Association and a group of parents. They analysed questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils and to all staff. The inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of school meals provision.

4. Findings of HM Inspectors

4.1. HMle made comment under the following headings:

- Key strengths.
- Views of parents, pupils and staff.
- How good are learning, teaching and achievement?
- How well are pupils learning needs met?
- How good is the environment for learning?
- Leading and improving the school.

4.2. HM Inspectors reported that the following were key strengths:

- The clear rationale and design of the nursery curriculum.
- The quality of children's progress in communication and language in the nursery and pupils' attainment in English language.
- The staff's commitment to the care and welfare of pupils and to the wider life of the school.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop leadership qualities and skills.

4.3. Overall, parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the work of the school. All felt welcome in the school and reported that they received helpful information about their children's progress and almost all thought that their children were happy at school. Parents of nursery children were satisfied with the quality of education and care provided for children. They felt staff knew their children well and responded appropriately to their individual needs.

4.4. HM Inspectors found that almost all pupils were satisfied with all aspects of the school. All liked that they were told when they had done something well. All pupils reported that the school helped them to stay safe and healthy and they thought teachers helped them with their work and explained things clearly.

4.5. Staff were satisfied with all aspects of the school, in particular the school's effectiveness in dealing with bullying, the celebration of pupils' successes and the care and welfare of pupils.

4.6. HM Inspectors found that the quality of the curriculum in the school was good and in the nursery class it was very good. Staff provided a suitably broad and balanced curriculum across all aspects of learning and were developing work to take forward enterprise, health promotion and Eco-Schools Scotland status.

4.7. The quality of teaching across the school was good, with some examples of very good teaching where pupils were involved in active learning. Almost all teachers were well organised, gave clear explanations and used questioning effectively.

4.8. The quality of pupils' learning experiences was satisfactory and pupils were confident, attentive most of the time and related well to each other. There were examples of successful collaborative learning and use of personal planners but this was not yet established throughout the school. Children in the nursery class were confident and enthusiastic and were making good progress across the curriculum.

4.9. Since his appointment, the headteacher had introduced a number of opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and leadership. These included the formation of an active pupil council, the creation of houses with house captains and the formation of an eco committee with pupil and staff members. Pupils' successes in class were marked by star awards and were involved in a wide range of sporting activities and took advantage of in-school and after-school clubs. Staff in the nursery class had developed good relationships with children and used praise well to celebrate their achievements and raise their self-esteem.

- 4.10. HM Inspectors found that the quality of care, welfare and development was very good. Staff knew pupils well and there was a caring, positive atmosphere in the school. A suggestion box for the pupil council in each classroom was well used by pupils. The school had prioritised achieving Health Promoting School status and pupils were very aware of good practice in healthy living.
- 4.11. The Inspectors found that at the time of the inspection, the school was in temporary accommodation while a new school was being built. Staff, with the support of the authority, were managing the situation well. The quality of the temporary accommodation was good.
- 4.12. Staff had created a positive atmosphere for learning and relationships between staff and pupils were very good. Almost all staff had suitably high expectations of pupils' wider achievements. Most had similarly high expectations of work rate and attainment. Throughout the school, pupils developed their awareness of good citizenship through their involvement in a range of charities. There were regular assemblies and appropriate opportunities for religious observance through assemblies and special masses which promoted a community of faith.
- 4.13. The school had succeeded in involving parents, carers and families in the life of the school. Parents received regular reports and were given information about the curriculum both in written form and by workshops. The school enjoyed positive links with the parish priest, community police and the Carlisle Gala Day committee.
- 4.14. HM Inspectors found that at the time of the inspection, the new headteacher was providing effective leadership to the school. He had a clear vision upon which to base improvements and had successfully gained the respect of staff, pupils and parents. The acting deputy headteacher and acting principal teacher provided strong support for the headteacher.

The school's procedures for evaluating the quality of its work were satisfactory and teachers regularly evaluated their planning and teaching but needed to be more focused in their evaluations. Overall, the new headteacher and his staff, working with the support of the education authority, demonstrated a capacity to improve the school.

- 4.15. HMI identified the following as the main points for action to ensure improvement:
- improve the quality of pupils' learning experiences by making greater use of meaningful contexts and active learning approaches;
 - involve pupils more fully in reviewing their own progress and setting targets for improvement;
 - meet the needs of all learners more effectively by addressing issues of challenge in tasks and activities; and
 - develop further approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school with a clear focus on learning, teaching and achievement.
- 4.16. An action plan to take forward these points has been prepared to address the main findings of the report and this will be or has been shared with parents.

5. Employee Implications

5.1. None

6. Financial Implications

6.1 None

7. Other Implications

7.1 None

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

8.1. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the proposals contained within this report.

Larry Forde

Executive Director (Education Resources)

25 August 2008

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- Raise educational attainment for all
- Increase involvement in lifelong learning
- Improve the lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults.
- Improve health and increase physical activity

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- HMle Report of 24 June 2008

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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