

Report

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Report to:	Hamilton Area Committee
Date of Meeting:	19 November 2008
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	HMle Report - St Peter's Primary School
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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 Peter's Primary School.

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) to note the HMle Report on St Peter's Primary School.

3. Background

- 3.1. St Peter's Primary School was inspected in May 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education.
- 3.2. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated 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 pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, and a group of parents.

4. Findings of HM Inspectors

4.1. The Inspectors 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 school's success in promoting equality and fairness and international understanding.
- Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Involvement of pupils in their own learning and the school's approaches to meeting their learning needs.
- The quality of care and welfare and the school's success in promoting healthy living amongst pupils.
- Leadership of the Head Teacher and the commitment of staff in improving experiences for pupils.

4.3. Parents, pupils and staff were very positive about the school. Overall, parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school. They felt welcome in the school and reported that they received helpful information about their children's progress. They thought that their children enjoyed being at school.

4.4. Pupils were pleased with almost all aspects of the school. They liked that they were told when they had done something well. They reported that the school helped them to stay safe and healthy. They thought teachers helped them with their work and explained things clearly.

4.5. Staff were satisfied with all aspects of the school. They highlighted the school's efforts to promote good relationships with the community, the concern shown for the care and welfare of pupils, and the leadership of the Head Teacher.

4.6. HM Inspectors found that pupils experienced a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers used additional time flexibly to develop pupils' learning across the curriculum and to help develop approaches in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. They were establishing productive links between curriculum areas to ensure learning was relevant and based on meaningful contexts. A notable strength was the attention paid to promoting awareness of the environment, equality, international understanding and healthy living.

4.7. At the time of the inspection the school was not able to deliver two hours of good quality physical education each week and pupils' information and communications technology (ICT) skills were not yet developed systematically across the curriculum. This was mainly due to shared accommodation and restricted access to facilities.

4.8. The quality of teaching was good overall with some examples of very good practice. Teachers had created a stimulating and positive learning environment in their classes. They used a variety of teaching approaches effectively to motivate pupils and engage them in their learning. Homework was used well to support and consolidate class work. In most lessons, teachers actively involved pupils in discussing what was to be learned, how success would be recognised and in summarising key points at the end.

- 4.9. HM Inspectors found that learners' experiences were very good overall. Pupils were exceptionally well behaved, attentive and completed tasks diligently. Throughout the school, they benefited from good opportunities to work together and discuss and develop their ideas as part of group activities. Pupils were increasingly aware of their own strengths as learners and how to improve aspects of their work. They were able to comment constructively on each other's work in areas of the curriculum such as English language and science. Almost all were making good progress.
- 4.10. HM Inspectors found that the overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was very good. The school consistently achieved results above the average for schools with a similar background. A significant number of pupils at different stages of the school achieved national levels earlier than might normally be expected.
- 4.11. The school took very good steps to promote and celebrate pupils' wider achievements. Pupils enjoyed considerable success as individuals and as a school in competitions and award schemes. The school had been successful, for example, in achieving a gold award as a Health Promoting School and two green flags from Eco-Schools Scotland. Pupils were also very actively involved in enterprise and Fairtrade activities and had played a prominent part in organising annual conferences for pupil councils in the Hamilton area. These and other similarly rich experiences allowed pupils to develop successfully their confidence and sense of citizenship. All pupils and staff were involved in extensive fundraising for local, national and international charities.
- 4.12. The school's arrangements for meeting pupils' learning needs were very good. Teachers knew pupils very well. They ensured that activities and teaching approaches were closely matched to pupils' learning needs and abilities. The school's well-organised systems assisted teachers in identifying pupils' needs and monitoring their progress. The school had in place a number of stimulating activities which offered good opportunities to challenge higher-achieving pupils.
- 4.13. The school had in place very effective arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. Staff were sensitive to individual pupils' social, emotional and physical needs. They had a clear understanding of child protection and anti-bullying procedures and knew what to do in the event of concerns. The school had a very successful commitment to health promotion.
- 4.14. HM Inspectors found that the atmosphere, climate for learning and quality of relationships in the school were very good. Morale was high and staff worked very well together. Pupils, parents and staff were proud of the school. The local parish priest supported the school very well. The school had highly-developed approaches to promoting equality and fairness at home and abroad through, for example, its engagement with the Fairtrade movement. There were regular appropriate opportunities for religious observance through assemblies and special masses which promoted a community of faith.

- 4.15. The school placed considerable emphasis on involving parents, carers and families in their children's learning and the life of the school. Parents were supportive of the school. They received regular, helpful information about the work of the school and about their children's progress. The Parent Council was actively involved in the life of the school. The school had strong links with the wider community and the local parish.
- 4.16. The Inspectors found that the Head Teacher provided very effective leadership. She had a clear vision for the school and was highly regarded by pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. She was highly committed to improving the quality of pupils' learning experiences and achievements. She had initiated many improvements and successfully engaged staff in taking leading roles in a number of key developments. The school had well-established approaches to ensuring continuous improvement.
- 4.17. HMle identified the following as the main points for action to ensure improvement:
- develop further the opportunities for pupils at P1 to P2 to learn through play
 - extend the use of information and communications technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum
 - continue to promote reading for pleasure among pupils at all stages
- 4.18. An action plan to take forward this point 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.

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Executive Director (Education Resources)

27 October 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 2 September 2008

Contact for Further Information

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

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