

# High Mill Primary School Carlisle South Lanarkshire Council

21 June 2011

We published a report on High Mill Primary School in April 2010. That report set out key strengths of the school and areas for improvement.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in March 2011. It tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action. First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents<sup>1</sup>. Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well children are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

A copy of this report has been placed on the HMIE website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Where applicable, you will also find analyses of questionnaire returns.

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### 1. The school

High Mill Primary School serves the central area of Carlisle.

An acting headteacher took up post in August 2010.

### 2. Particular strengths of the school

- Improved quality of learning experiences.
- Increasing responsibility of children in the life of the school.
- Leadership of the acting headteacher in securing school improvement.

### **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

Children's learning experiences are improving. Across the school, children are now learning enthusiastically through better-planned activities. Children are now more actively engaged in their learning and work well in pairs and in groups. Children now have a better understanding about the purpose of their learning in most classes. Staff need to provide children with better feedback on how to improve their work. This will enable children to review their own progress and set personal targets. Children are more confident and achieve well across the curriculum. Staff have improved their approaches to the teaching of English language and mathematics. In English language, children are developing their writing skills better. These new approaches have not yet had time to have a significant impact on children's attainment.

Staff have made significant improvements to the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. The acting headteacher has guided staff to plan more effectively for children's learning experiences. Staff no longer over-rely on textbooks to support learning. They now provide children with more stimulating learning activities across all areas of the curriculum, including opportunities to use their information and communications technology skills. There are now better approaches to supporting children who require help with their learning. Almost all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Children, in the majority of classes, are now being suitably challenged in their learning. Those who require support plans to help them with their learning are actively involved, with their parents, in setting their own targets. These targets, which help children progress in their learning, are meaningful to children. Children now benefit from a more varied programme of homework.

### **4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

The school's communication with parents is now better and there are now more ways for parents to be involved in their children's learning. Children are now showcasing their topic work and using the new homework diaries. The re-established school website helps parents find out what their children have been learning and provides opportunities for shared learning. The school continues to work well with a range of professionals to support children in their learning. The Parent Council is now more involved in school life and is actively engaged in promoting the wearing of school uniform.

### **5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

Staff are committed to improving the school. They are developing their skills in self-evaluation and are beginning to reflect on learning and teaching approaches. The acting headteacher has significantly improved the school's quality assurance approaches. She carries out focused monitoring, with a clear purpose of improving children's learning experiences. She makes effective use of planned observations, samples children's work and examines written plans. These processes are still evolving and have not yet had time to fully make an impact on school improvement. Children now have a greater say in improving the work of the school. Every child in the school is on a committee, including the pupil and eco councils, the health promoting committee and the website committee.

### **6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

Staff now have higher expectations for children's attendance, time keeping, behaviour and achievement. Children are responding well to these higher expectations and are polite, respectful and well motivated. They now take pride in their work and standards of

presentation have improved. All staff now successfully promote positive behaviour through *Going for Green*. Children are responding well to this initiative and there is continued mutual respect between children and staff. Staff are very committed to children's care and welfare. They acknowledge and celebrate children's achievements effectively.

## **7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

The acting headteacher has a very clear vision for the school which she is establishing with the whole-school community. She provides very good direction and leadership for learning across the school. Staff have shown considerable commitment to improving the quality of children's experiences. The school has benefited from significant support from a range of education authority staff. The school's work in improving attainment and self-evaluation has not yet had time to be fully embedded. Staff should now build on the improvements made to ensure consistently high-quality experiences across the school.

## **8. What happens next?**

There is clear evidence of improvement since the original inspection. The acting headteacher and her staff are making promising progress in enhancing the school's provision. They are committed to improving the school and have established effective teamwork to enable them to do so. With the strong lead from the acting headteacher and support from the education authority, the school is well placed to further improve the quality of its work. We will continue to monitor progress and will carry out a second follow-through inspection within one year of the publication of this report. We will report to parents on the extent of the improvement that has been achieved.

**HM Inspector:** Peter Gollogly

21 June 2011

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

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## **Footnote**

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