

**Charleston Primary School  
Dundee City Council  
24 June 2008**

## **Contents**

## **Page**

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

## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Charleston Primary School in August 2006. 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 inspection visit in May 2007 and published an interim inspection report in September 2007. HM Inspectors revisited the school in April 2008 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

## **2. Continuous improvement**

Charleston Primary School was successfully improving the quality of education it provided for its pupils. The school, with a well-judged range of support from the education authority, had demonstrated a very good capacity for improvement in its response to the main points for action in the 2006 inspection. Under the leadership of the headteacher, staff had worked well as a team to improve pupils' attainment, the quality of learning and teaching and the extent to which parents were involved in supporting their children's learning. Attainment levels in English language and mathematics had improved since the original inspection and most pupils were performing well in their coursework. Teachers had improved the use of assessment and were involving pupils more actively in their learning. In addition, regular six-weekly visits by the Primary Education Manager and the link Quality Improvement Officer ensured that the school improvement plan was embedded in the day-to-day work of the school.

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

The initial inspection report published in August 2006 identified four 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 Continue to improve attainment in English language and in mathematics.**

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

Attainment levels in English language and mathematics had continued to improve since August 2006. The school predictions for June 2008 indicated that the majority of pupils would achieve appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and writing whilst most would achieve these levels in mathematics. Overall, most pupils were performing well.

Staff working parties had reviewed and improved programmes of work in English language and mathematics. Staff, working with the deputy headteacher, had reviewed the mathematics programme and purchased new resources to support its effective delivery. Teachers continued to benefit from regular information and communications technology (ICT) training

from the staff tutor. There was now a much greater whole-school emphasis on the use of ICT to support and extend learning. Pupils were able to identify personal learning targets and were knowledgeable about their attainment levels.

The English language working group had reviewed the 5-14 programme and school planners. Teachers were using year planners consistently and effectively at all stages to ensure balance and progression in learning for all pupils. In writing there was evidence across the stages that pupils were writing at a greater length and at an appropriate standard. Individual folders, jotters and wall displays provided clear evidence of good quality imaginative, personal and functional writing. The range of learning activities in English language was now more varied and provided pupils with more stimulation and challenge.

### **3.2 Further improve the quality of learning and teaching, including use of ICT, and develop strategies to ensure that all pupils focus on their work and listen more attentively to their teachers.**

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

The atmosphere in classes was now much more settled and purposeful than at the time of the initial inspection. Classroom observations during the inspection visit supported the staff view that pupils' approach to learning had improved. Teachers explained clearly to pupils what they were expected to learn and made good use of questioning to extend pupils' learning. They also provided constructive advice to pupils on how to improve the quality of their work. Teachers made good use of assessment strategies such as getting pupils to talk to their peers about their progress so as to involve pupils more actively in their learning experiences. At all stages pupils made very effective use of ICT. Pupils successfully used spreadsheets and databases in a range of cross-curricular topics involving environmental studies, citizenship and health education. They were benefiting from their involvement in the use of interactive whiteboards and other equipment as part of their normal classroom activities. Selected pupils were now taking part in an initiative which involved them in using hand-held games machines with puzzle and mathematics software for 20 minutes each morning to improve their attendance, concentration and motivation.

### **3.3 Involve all staff in evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and time allocations to further improve pupil attainment.**

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

Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, staff had worked well together to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and implement a calendar of quality assurance activities. The headteacher, working closely with her depute, had drawn up a timetable of classroom observations with a clear focus on learning and teaching. Senior managers now regularly observed lessons and gave staff helpful verbal and written feedback. All staff were now fully involved in reviewing the breadth and quality of pupils' learning experiences across the curriculum. Regular meetings between the headteacher and the depute headteacher and individual members of staff ensured that plans were in place to maintain an appropriate pace of learning for all pupils. Teacher planning had been extensively revised to ensure a clear focus on what was to be taught across all aspects of the curriculum. Consultation, with both staff and pupils, was a regular feature in the planning process and information gathered was

used successfully to inform the deployment of support for learning staff and meet the needs of all pupils.

### **3.4 Develop better links with parents and carers and more involvement in their children's learning.**

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

The headteacher had continued with her efforts to involve parents and carers in the life and work of the school. She had supported a very active group of parents who had developed and distributed a parental survey. The survey successfully identified areas where parents felt communications could be improved and how parents could be more involved in the education of their children. As a result she had further developed informative and helpful newsletters which helped to keep parents fully informed about ongoing activities within the school. The newly formed Parent Council was working with the school to involve as many parents and carers as possible and had taken full account of the results of the parental survey. They had already organised a highly successful Easter Egg hunt which had involved over 100 pupils and parents. Plans were being made to set up curriculum information evenings and to further develop a scheme which encouraged pupils to read more widely at home.

## **4. Conclusion**

The school and the education authority had taken effective steps to bring about a range of improvements. The headteacher provided a very effective lead to which staff responded very positively. The staff had been well supported by the education authority. The school had responded well to the main points for action in the original report. The headteacher and staff demonstrated a clear capacity to make further improvements and provide pupils with a high quality of education. As a result of the significant progress made, HM Inspectors will make no more visits to the school in connection with the 2006 report.

David M Martin  
HM Inspector

24 June 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 Director of Education, 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee DD1 4QB or by telephoning 01382 576700. Copies are also available on our website: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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

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