

**Charleston Primary School
Interim follow-through
Dundee City Council
4 September 2007**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Charleston Primary School in August 2006. The report indicated that HM Inspectors would engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress and would publish an interim 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 an interim follow-through visit to the school in May 2007. 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

Staff in Charleston Primary School were working hard and with some success to improve the quality of education provided for its pupils. The school, with a well-judged range of support from the education authority, had demonstrated good capacity for improvement in its response to the main points for action in the inspection report. The headteacher and staff had worked well together to further develop links with parents and carers and to improve important aspects of learning and teaching. They realised that further work was needed to improve levels of attainment in mathematics and English language.

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 headteacher and staff had made a sound start to addressing this main point for action.

Attainment levels in English language and mathematics had shown some improvement since August 2006. Staff, working with the depute headteacher, had reviewed the mathematics programme and purchased new resources to support its effective delivery. Teachers had benefited from regular information and communications technology (ICT) training from the staff tutor and the ICT working group. There was now a much greater whole school emphasis on the use of ICT to support and extend learning within mathematics. Pupils were now more knowledgeable about their progress and were able to identify improvement targets. Pupils at all stages engaged in mental calculations on a daily basis to further improve mental agility.

The headteacher had set up an English language working group to review the 5-14 programme and school planners. Teachers were using year planners consistently and

effectively at all stages to help ensure balance and progression in learning for all pupils. At all stages pupils were writing at a greater length and at a more appropriate standard. Individual folders provided good evidence of engagement in 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. Pupils' active participation in peer assessment, talking partners, book handling in the early years, story telling and reading for pleasure had impacted on their motivation, confidence and self-esteem.

3.2 Further improve the quality of learning and teaching, including use of information and communications technology (ICT), and develop strategies to ensure all pupils focus on their work and listen more attentively to their teachers.

Positive steps were being taken to address this main point for action.

Teachers had made good use of their professional development activities to improve teaching approaches and the quality of pupils' learning. They now explained more clearly to pupils what they were expected to learn and used open questioning very well to develop pupils' thinking. They also provided constructive advice to pupils on how to improve the quality of their work. Across the school, they gave a high priority to involving pupils in active and interactive learning. As part of this, they made very effective use of ICT. Pupils were benefiting from the improvements made to learning and teaching by the use of interactive whiteboards and other equipment. Teachers provided pupils with regular opportunities to work in pairs or small groups on appropriately stimulating and challenging tasks. Participation in an education authority pilot scheme provided pupils in P1 with a 'soft start' to their day in which they learned through active play. This had benefited pupils by improving their skills in interacting with others. At all stages, teachers and pupils set high expectations of the amount and quality of work to be produced. Pupils had begun to assess their own and each other's work, which was helping them to take more responsibility for their learning and progress.

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

The school had made some progress in this main point for action but was aware that more needed to be done.

All staff had cooperated in establishing systems for regular monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. They had responded positively to the action plan arising from the inspection report. They had worked well together in a collegiate manner to develop and implement improvements in key areas. Remits of senior management had been reviewed and shared with staff. Senior managers now regularly observed lessons and gave staff helpful verbal and written feedback. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher had made a promising start to monitoring and tracking pupil progress and this was beginning to help teachers accelerate pupils' progress in English language and mathematics. Regular meetings between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and individual members of staff ensured that plans were in place to maintain an appropriate pace of learning for all pupils. Consultation was a regular feature in the planning process and information gathered was used successfully to inform the deployment of support for learning staff, to meet the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils.

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

The school was implementing a range of positive initiatives to address this main point for action.

The headteacher had worked successfully with a group of parents who had been involved in identifying possible home school links, including ways of improving communication and parental involvement. The parent group carried out a survey of parents' views and had made home visits and supported other parents to complete the questionnaire. As a result of their involvement, there had been a high level of response and good feedback which helped to identify necessary future action. With the support of the link quality improvement officer, the school had been successful in obtaining a grant from the national support body Learning and Teaching Scotland to support the development of good practice and innovative ideas for parental involvement. A home reading initiative which involved the purchase of a wide range of contemporary fiction and non-fiction texts and supporting media had been organised.

4. Conclusion

The school and the education authority had taken positive steps to bring about improvement. The headteacher was now providing clearer direction and more positive leadership. Staff, well supported by the education authority, had demonstrated a good capacity for improvement in their response to the main points for action in the inspection report. Within two years of the publication of the original report, parents and carers will receive a further report from HMIE on the progress made by the school.

David M Martin
HM Inspector

4 September 2007

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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 Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail 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.

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