



**Gowriehill Primary School
Dundee City Council
27 January 2009**

We published a report on Gowriehill Primary School in December 2006. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action. We carried out a follow-through inspection in September 2007 and published a report on that visit in January 2008.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in November 2008. 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 parents¹. 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. Where applicable, you will also find descriptions of good practice in the school and analyses of questionnaire returns.

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

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

1. The school

Gowriehill Primary School serves the Gowriehill area of Dundee.

Since the original inspection, the school roll has fallen and there has been a significant number of staffing changes. At the time of the follow-through inspection, there was a vacancy for the post of principal teacher in the Enhanced Provision facility.

The education authority has provided a very good level of support to the school. The primary education manager and quality improvement officer have made regular visits to the school and have worked closely with staff to ensure that the main points for action in the original report have been addressed fully.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Improvements in the standard of children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- High quality teaching across the school and children's active involvement in the learning process.
- Ongoing improvements in the assessment, recording and tracking of children's progress.
- Staff teamwork and higher expectations for children's achievements.
- Clear direction and leadership of the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

The quality of children's learning experiences has improved across the school. Teachers now provide a broader range of well-planned and purposeful learning activities. Children work well together and have many opportunities to work together and learn from each other. They are able to apply their skills in a variety of relevant contexts such as practical learning activities. From P1 to P3, children are active and enthusiastic learners who enjoy learning through play. Across the school, children's attitudes to learning are very positive. Most children are able to take work independently with the minimum of teacher supervision when working in groups or on individual tasks. Children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved significantly. The school has developed a number of successful ways to increase and reward children's achievements. Children take part in an increased range of educational outings to extend their learning. Almost all children in P7 took part in the residential trip to Dalguise

where they were able to develop their team working and social skills. School staff have involved children in clubs, sports events, competitions and fundraising for charity.

Staff have made good progress in improving the teaching programmes in areas such as science, technology, English language and mathematics. Children are confident learners who are now making good progress in their learning. Teachers make improved use of assessment information to meet children's learning needs more effectively. They have improved the extent to which tasks and activities present sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all children. The education authority has provided additional staff to support children in the Enhanced Provision classes. The school recognised that additional work was still required to achieve a consistently high quality of learning for children in both classes.

4. How well do staff work with others to improve children's learning?

The school is making very creative use of additional teaching time to improve the quality of children's learning in all classes. Class teachers work closely with support for learning staff and school staff in a variety of team teaching situations. From P1 to P7, teachers make effective use of class, group and individual teaching to ensure that children's needs are met fully. The school works in close partnership with parents and external support agencies to identify and meet the needs of individual children with additional support needs. Teachers have developed individualised learning plans for a number of children who are experiencing difficulties with aspects of their learning. They involve parents in meetings to discuss and review their children's progress. The recently formed Parent Council is active in supporting the work of the school through a variety of fundraising activities.

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

The school has successfully improved the approaches used to monitor and evaluate the quality of its work. The headteacher and depute headteacher have worked closely with staff to ensure ongoing improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. With the support of the education authority, they have worked closely with staff to raise expectations and improve attainment. Senior staff work closely with teachers to review children's attainment in English language and mathematics and to discuss their progress. They continue to provide feedback on the teachers' plans and the quality of learning and teaching during lessons. Teachers work very well as a team. They display a high level of commitment to the school and contribute to the successful implementation of the school's improvement plan. Staff have introduced a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Children have very good opportunities to express their views on the life of the school. They take part in a range of school committees such as the Pupil Council, the Eco-Committee and the Junior Road Safety Group.

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

Staff expectations for children's attainment and behaviour have improved significantly since the original inspection. The length of the school day for children in the Enhanced Provision classes is now in line with the rest of the school. Children are proud of their school and talk with confidence about recent improvements. Children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved considerably and a number of children at each stage are now reaching national levels of attainment at an earlier stage than would normally be expected. The working atmosphere and the standard of behaviour in the school have steadily improved. Staff make very good use of praise to motivate and encourage children at class and school level using a variety of strategies such as reward certificates and stickers.

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

The school has a clear sense of direction. Staff have developed as a team and display a high level of commitment to the school. The education authority has provided well-judged support to enable staff to carry out a wide range of successful school improvements. The headteacher and depute headteacher have provided staff, children and parents with strong and purposeful leadership. Staff are positive about the support and guidance provided by the management team. Staff have worked well together to improve the quality of learning and teaching, raise attainment and identify areas for further improvement.

8. What happens next?

The school has made very good progress since the original inspection and follow-through visit. There is clear evidence of ongoing improvements in the school since the follow-through visit of September 2007. The quality of improvements in learning and teaching, attainment and in meeting the range of children's learning needs is evident. The school has made consistently good progress in meeting the main points for action and is well placed to make continued improvements. The school demonstrates the clear capacity for improvement and HMIE will make no further visits in connection with the original inspection report of December 2006.

HM District Inspector: Michael Wood

27 January 2009

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