

**Park Place Primary School
Dundee City Council
19 February 2008**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Park Place Primary School in March 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 February 2007 and published an interim inspection report in June 2007. HM Inspectors revisited the school in October 2007 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

Since the original inspection, there had been some changes in teaching staff. The headteacher and staff had worked together effectively to improve the work of the school. They had received a range of effective advice and support from the education authority's primary school education manager. A more positive and calmer climate for learning had been established across the school. Teachers were making effective contributions to a range of working parties and were committed to ensuring improvement across the school. There was greater professional discussion and engagement about learning amongst teaching staff. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics had increased. Staff and pupil morale had greatly improved.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in March 2006 identified five 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 Improve attainment in English language and mathematics.

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

The school had reviewed the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics had improved. Across the school, a significant number of pupils were achieving national levels earlier than might normally be expected. A range of new resources and improved programmes of study were impacting positively on pupils' learning. Teachers had worked closely together to develop a common approach to the teaching of writing and the assessment of pupils' strengths and next steps in learning. Pupils were now writing for a broader range of purposes across the curriculum. Teachers were making confident use of new reading resources. In mathematics, pupils had regular opportunities to develop agility in mental calculations. At the upper stages, in mathematics, a significant number of higher-attaining pupils were being given further appropriate challenge in their learning.

3.2 Improve the quality of learning and teaching.

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

Teachers had been involved in a range of training and development activities to help them improve their approaches to learning and teaching. They were all involved in the 'Learning Together in Dundee' initiative. Teachers explained clearly to pupils what they expected them to learn and were giving clear feedback on how to further improve their work. Pupils were more involved in working together in pairs and groups. The quality of teachers' questioning had improved. Homework activities had been reviewed and a parent pack issued. In some classes, very effective use was being made of pupils' learning diaries. Teachers had joined with others in the learning community to develop a range of initiatives including projects on anti-sectarianism. This development had resulted in the school and two neighbouring schools gaining a Dundee City Council Focus of Achievement award, sponsored by the Al-Maktoum Institute, for multi-cultural education.

3.3 Improve arrangements for monitoring and self-evaluation to ensure a positive impact on pupils' experiences.

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

The school had reviewed the remits of senior staff and both the headteacher and depute headteacher now had a clear understanding of their roles in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Teachers actively contributed to work to improve the school. A monitoring calendar had been introduced and was being systematically implemented. Activities included monitoring teachers' plans, sampling pupils' work, observing and evaluating classroom practice and tracking pupils' progress. Regular discussion took place with teachers about the quality of learning and teaching, pupil progress and target setting. Clear action points were agreed with members of staff and they found this to be very helpful. There was a clear focus on improving pupils' experiences and this had contributed to the rise in attainment.

3.4 Engage pupils more in their own learning, setting higher expectations and increasing pace and challenge.

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

All teachers had benefited from the education authority's training in relation to 'Learning Together in Dundee' (LTiD). Teachers had found the demonstrations of lessons by the LTiD teacher to be very effective and had begun to implement these approaches within their classrooms. Staff were using a wider range of teaching strategies and challenging pupils more in their learning. Teachers, pupils and parents regularly discussed individual learning targets and the progress made. Pupils were given effective opportunities to assess their own work and help others by evaluating the work of classmates. Senior managers identified pupils who were experiencing difficulties in their learning and deployed staff effectively to support these pupils. The headteacher met with teachers on a termly basis to discuss the progress made and to set future targets. The primary education manager undertook helpful and supportive meetings with the headteacher twice yearly to discuss overall attainment targets and monitor improvements made.

3.5 Establish a positive climate for independent learning.

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

Parents, pupils and staff had been involved in reviewing and agreeing the school's new behaviour guidelines. The school had recognised the need to focus on celebrating pupils' success with a positive praise and reward system. A points system was in place and pupils were responding positively to this. Several opportunities had been created to enable pupils to take greater responsibility within the school. These opportunities included more effective involvement of the pupil council, the introduction of house captains and the training of pupils at P7 to act as 'buddies' in the playground. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school was much improved. There had been fewer pupil exclusions and parental complaints had also decreased. Most classrooms had a calmer working environment and most pupils could work collaboratively together when given the opportunity to work in pairs and groups. A number of classes had been involved in taking responsibility for their own learning when working on collaborative projects with neighbouring schools.

4. Conclusion

The education authority, headteacher and staff had worked closely together to ensure good progress with the main points for action. All staff had been involved in contributing to and delivering improvements. They had participated in a range of staff development and training and had welcomed the support and advice of education authority staff. A more positive climate for learning had been established. Under the leadership of the headteacher, and with the commitment of staff and the support of the education authority, the school's capacity for further improvement had been enhanced. HMIE will make no further visits to the school in connection with the original inspection report.

Isabel Robb
HM Inspector

19 February 2008

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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. 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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