

**Beatlie School
Livingston
West Lothian Council
18 December 2007**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Beattie School in December 2005. 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 visited the school in October 2006 and published an interim inspection report in December 2006. 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 initial inspection, a new headteacher and depute headteacher had been appointed. Both had initiated a major programme of change which had already significantly improved the quality of the school's work and had raised the school's standing within the community. A key factor contributing to the success of current developments had been the headteacher's promotion of more positive teamwork and a shared understanding amongst staff of what is involved in providing high quality education for learners. The focus on learning and teaching had improved significantly through the introduction of relevant teaching programmes including the very good use of symbols to aid pupils' communication. Staff planned pupils' learning outcomes effectively using well-structured assessments. Partnership working had improved significantly with opportunities for staff to work with a range of agencies in delivering the curriculum. Senior management had put in place more effective approaches to monitoring and evaluating the quality of pupils' learning. Overall, staff expectations of performance had been raised and there was a much better capacity for continuous improvement in the school.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in December 2005 identified seven 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 Ensure improvement in the provision of relevant teaching programmes at all stages to provide pupils with an appropriate breadth and balance of experience and better progression within the curriculum.

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

The curriculum now had a clear rationale which better met the wide range of pupils' needs. Staff were using time more effectively to ensure breadth and balance across all curricular areas. All staff, including nursery staff, were actively involved in producing and implementing relevant programmes across all subject areas. For example, a very good rolling programme in understanding and relating to the environment was enabling pupils to learn through appropriate activity in the community. The introduction of supported access units

and the ASDAN (Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) programmes in the secondary department was providing a clear structure for recognising and accrediting pupils' achievements. Staff were now employing a wider range of early literacy strategies to improve pupils' learning. A greater emphasis on interaction and functional use of language ensured pupils were progressing well in their learning.

3.2 Ensure improvement in approaches to planning and assessment by teachers to enable more accurate monitoring of pupils' progress.

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

Staff were working effectively within a very clear structured planning system that was linking well with pupils' individual learning targets. Robust assessment procedures, including input from the speech and language therapist, were providing effective early intervention strategies in language and communication. Staff were using daily plans well to record ongoing evaluations of pupils' successes and areas for further development. All planning formats were monitored effectively to ensure the process of evaluation and the identification of next steps in learning were in place. Teachers made very successful use of photographic evidence to highlight pupils' successes. They had put multi-agency support plans in place for each pupil. These incorporated clear, measurable long-term and short-term targets that were well focused on pupils' individual learning. Overall, the monitoring of pupils' progress was now much more comprehensive and effective.

3.3 Ensure improvement in staff understanding of the links between individual educational plans, pupils' targets and the curriculum and the improved management of Records of Needs to ensure that pupils' curricular and individual needs are met.

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

Members of staff were now planning much more effectively to meet pupils' curricular and individual needs. They had a sound understanding of the process and shared regularly updated targets with class teams and parents and where appropriate with pupils. Pupils' learning targets were now clearly linked to their programmes of study. Pupils with similar skills and aptitudes were working well together on a number of well-organised projects. For example, pupils with similar abilities from several classes were working together on water experiments in the science group. The school had made very good progress in meeting the requirements of important new legislation. As a result of the school's implementation of *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004* (ASL), all pupils had a transition meeting and most pupils had a coordinated support plan in place. Early transition planning was in place for those pupils who were to move onto another educational setting.

3.4 Ensure improvement in pupils' achievements in communication and language through more consistent use of symbols and other forms of alternative communication.

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

The level of pupils' achievements in communication and language had shown marked improvement. Staff made arrangements to ensure that pupils now benefited from a greatly improved range of opportunities to communicate with each other. The use of symbol systems and a wide range of technological aids was providing very effective in enabling pupils to access learning across the curriculum. Those staff working with pupils who presented more challenging communication difficulties were using information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to stimulate pupils. For example, interactive whiteboards were used successfully to encourage and initiate interactions for pupils who had autism spectrum disorder. Members of staff had undertaken training in multi-sensory approaches and were now providing pupils with more progressive sensory activities. The speech and language therapist contributed effectively to the development of relevant and well-focused targets in language and communication. Her input had significantly improved pupils' communication skills. Staff had undertaken a significant level of development in a range of communication approaches and were now using this knowledge successfully across the school.

3.5 Ensure improvement in collaborative working between all therapists and all staff, and opportunities for joint training.

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

The staff had developed effective working partnerships with all health professionals. Senior managers, class teams and therapists met regularly to discuss and plan next steps in pupils' learning and the implementation of effective interventions. Detailed information on pupils' needs and appropriate interventions was being used very successfully in a range of settings. For example, support staff were well briefed on pupils' routines at lunch time and this helped to ensure that pupils' independence was encouraged. Therapy staff were providing good, well-focused training for all staff in a range of disciplines. Together, teaching staff and therapy staff were developing specific movement programmes for individual pupils. Therapy staff contributed well at pupils' reviews and parents evenings. This was welcomed by staff and parents.

3.6 Increase the length of the school week so that it is in line with mainstream schools.

This main point for action had been met.

Following a thorough consultation exercise with parents, the length of the school day had been extended in line with mainstream schools. The new arrangements were now firmly established and working well.

3.7 Improve approaches to quality assurance throughout the school to ensure that staff, senior managers and the authority are clear about the quality of the educational experience of pupils.

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

Senior staff had implemented a wide range of quality assurance procedures to improve learning and teaching across the school. They monitored and tracked pupils' progress towards meeting individual learning targets, and undertook class observations to give them first hand knowledge about the quality of pupils' educational experience. Senior managers commented and gave constructive feedback which staff found helpful. Teachers had also recently begun to observe each other's lessons. Staff were finding this provided very good opportunities to support and challenge their teaching approaches and to share good practice. The planning process was now well established and the senior management team evaluations were contributing significantly in improving learning and teaching across the school.

4. Conclusion

The school and education authority had made very good progress in improving the school and addressing main points for action in the original inspection report. There was a much better capacity for improvement than at the time of that inspection, through more effective communication, raised expectations and strong leadership. As a result, HMIE will make no further visits to the school in connection with the inspection of December 2005.

Jacqueline Burnett
HM Inspector

18 December 2007

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, at the above address.

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.

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@sps.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.sps.org.uk.

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