

**Carmuir Primary School  
Falkirk Council  
5 September 2006**

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## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Carmuir Primary School in June 2004. 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 revisited the school in May 2006 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 significant changes in staffing. A number of teaching staff had retired and the headteacher had carefully assigned staff to classes at different stages. As a result, at all stages teaching was more effective. The headteacher and staff had successfully ensured an increased focus on raising attainment through improved approaches to learning and teaching and to monitoring pupils' progress. Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics had improved since the original inspection. The headteacher had deployed staff effectively to meet the needs of pupils across the school and used models of good practice to improve learning and teaching approaches. Appropriate staff were now in place to support pupils with additional support needs. Staff had raised their expectations of pupil achievement, and success in raising attainment had strengthened teacher's confidence in this aspect of school life. The school continued to provide pupils with a broad and well-balanced curriculum. The school was experiencing major repair works to several classrooms and P7 pupils were located in another building. The school had used this as an opportunity to focus on safe routes to school and increasing physical activity. Pupils had risen to the challenge of working in a community building and behaved with maturity and responsible attitudes.

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

The initial inspection report published in June 2004 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 Improve attainment in English language and mathematics.**

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

Following the original inspection, the headteacher and staff had reviewed aspects of learning, teaching and assessment in mathematics and in aspects of English language. In English language, this review included implementing a whole-school approach to teaching writing. Staff had undergone supportive staff development activities to assist them in this work. Teachers had raised their expectations of pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics. In mathematics, the school had reviewed its approaches to learning and teaching and introduced new resources to support staff in implementing programmes. Staff

made effective use of agreed approaches to teaching mental skills and problem solving. In both English language and mathematics, teachers' use of assessment information had improved since the original inspection. They now made better use of information on pupils' progress to ensure further development in their learning. Effective use was made of target setting for all pupils. As a result of these improvements, the school had ensured that the overall quality of pupils' attainment had risen in reading, writing and mathematics. Across the school, most pupils had attained national standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This was predicted to increase again towards the end of the school session. By P7, pupils wrote for a wide range of purposes and produced pieces of good quality and length. In mathematics pupils displayed increased confidence when completing practical tasks and when working in groups to tackle problem solving activities. Staff recognised the need to sustain this improvement.

### **3.2 Improve learning and teaching to a consistently high standard across the school.**

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

The overall quality of learning and teaching had improved since the original inspection. The headteacher had effectively promoted the sharing of good practice across the school. Staff were working closely as a team to continue to develop the use of a range of learning and teaching approaches and these were becoming embedded across the school. All staff shared the purposes of lessons with the pupils and made effective use of questioning to extend pupils' vocabulary and check their understanding. They also gave pupils useful written feedback in their jotters, offering praise and advice on how to improve their work. As a result, teachers were identifying and addressing pupils' learning needs more effectively. Staff use of information and communications technology (ICT), in particular interactive whiteboards, was improving. The headteacher and principal teacher had a well-established programme for monitoring classroom practice and pupil progress. Staff regularly evaluated the quality of teaching and observed each other at work. This had enabled good practice to be modelled and practised across the school. The school had taken steps to improve parental involvement in homework activities and an increased number of parents were using the materials provided.

### **3.3 Raise expectations to challenge pupils to produce higher standards.**

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

The headteacher and staff had developed whole school standards for pupils' presentation of their work. Writing and other aspects were now set out more neatly and appropriately at all stages. Pupils and staff were proud of the work they displayed around the school and used them as teaching tools. This included examples of pupils' writing and graphs produced using ICT. The effective use of target setting and clear personal learning plans ensured all pupils knew what they were trying to achieve. Success in raising attainment had supported staff in addressing this action point. The headteacher had tracked pupils' progress effectively and held regular meetings with staff to discuss pupil progress and plan next steps in learning. This contributed to ensuring that high expectations were a feature of school life. The school continued to promote and celebrate a wide range of achievements and the success pupils had in, and beyond, the school.

### **3.4 Develop more effective approaches to meeting pupils' needs.**

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

The level of pace and challenge provided for pupils across the school had improved significantly since the original inspection. The headteacher had carefully assigned staff to classes to meet pupils' needs and to ensure that pupils with challenging behaviour were well supported. Staff had clear expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour and these were regularly shared with individual pupils. Where appropriate, pupils had individual plans and targets. The school now had a support for learning teacher who worked effectively to support pupils with additional support needs. There was also good support for the development of pupils' motor skills. The school had taken action to improve arrangements for meeting the learning needs of boys and bring them into line with the better practice in meeting the learning needs of girls.

## **4. Conclusion**

The headteacher and staff, with effective support from the education authority's quality improvement officer, had shown a strong and successful commitment to addressing the main points for action in the initial report of June 2004. Very good progress had been made in addressing all action points. The headteacher and staff had worked effectively as a team in improving the areas highlighted in the report. As a result of the clear progress made in improving pupils' attainment, improving learning and teaching, expectations and meeting needs, HMIE will make no further visits to the school in relation to the inspection of 2004.

Susan Duff  
HM Inspector

5 September 2006

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### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

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