

**Chatelherault Primary School
Hamilton
South Lanarkshire Council
13 June 2006**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Chatelherault Primary School in December 2004. Inspectors visited the school in September 2005 to assess progress in addressing the main points for action in the initial report and published an interim follow-through report in November 2005. In view of the very significant progress identified in the November 2005 report, HM Inspectors decided to bring forward the follow-through inspection and visited the school again in March 2006. This report is the outcome of that visit.

2. Continuous improvement

The headteacher in post at the time of the inspection by HMIE in June 2004 retired in November 2004. A new headteacher and a depute headteacher with responsibility for the base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders were appointed. The school was now part of the Hamilton Learning Community. In the period since the initial inspection the school had benefited from considerable support from the education authority.

The new headteacher, with strong support from senior promoted staff, teachers and support staff had made very significant progress in taking forward the school. Notable achievements included the very positive, purposeful ethos in the school and the high morale shown by staff.

The education authority, as part of its extensive school modernisation programme was building a new replacement school adjacent to the present building. Work on this was well under way and it was hoped that the school would operate in its new building early in session 2006-2007. The plans for the new building indicated that it would offer considerably enhanced facilities for pupils and staff, including those in the base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

The school had continued to develop its approaches to caring for the environment. With strong support from staff, parents and outside agencies, including countryside rangers, pupils had developed a willow tunnel and were now working on a 'trim trail'. In recognition of their efforts the school had been awarded a second Eco flag.

Pupils at P7 were contributing to the school's bid for health promoting school status by basing their enterprise project on buying and selling healthy foodstuffs.

The school had made significant improvements in pupils' attainment in national assessments in reading and writing and was maintaining a strong position in mathematics.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in December 2004 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 leadership and teamwork among senior managers.

The school had made excellent progress in meeting this main point for action.

There was clear evidence of an open, consultative and highly participative approach to leadership by the headteacher which included all three depute headteachers, the principal teacher, teachers and support staff. There were regular, minuted, meetings of the senior management team, complemented by daily informal meetings which dealt with day-to-day matters. Managers attended meetings of the School Board and reported on aspects of the school's work for which they had responsibility. Staff were actively involved in initiatives and were encouraged to suggest areas for development. Parents and staff valued the headteacher's approachability, high profile in the school and support for their work. The headteacher knew her colleagues very well and how best to use their strengths for the benefit of the school. Collectively, the headteacher and other senior managers constituted a very effective team.

3.2 Develop rigorous approaches for senior managers and teachers to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the work of the school, including learning and teaching.

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

The school had successfully established a very positive climate for self-evaluation and highly effective approaches to monitoring the school's work, including learning and teaching. Senior managers each played a significant part in working with teachers to ensure plans were appropriate, pupils were making due progress and that they achieved in line with their capabilities. The programme of class visits undertaken by senior managers was providing a very good basis for discussions with teachers about approaches to learning and teaching within an informed, supportive, climate. All members of staff had been involved in evaluating aspects of the work of the school. This information was being used very effectively to target improvements. There was now a very strong sense of a culture of self-evaluation and reflection on practice and a desire to continue to develop and improve among staff. Pupils were clearly benefiting from improvements in approaches to learning and teaching.

3.3 Improve learning and teaching in English language to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.

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

With support from education authority staff and a strong lead from the depute headteacher with responsibility for English language, teachers were now providing pupils with greater challenge using a broader range of approaches. Teachers placed less reliance on textbooks and workbooks and pupils were encouraged to ask questions, work with one another and discuss. Notable features of improvements in English language included the quality of writing being produced by many pupils and the introduction of more demanding reading texts for pupils achieving higher standards. The school was aware of the need to raise the levels of boys' attainment in national assessments and was taking appropriate action, including giving greater emphasis to non-fiction books within the reading programme.

3.4 Improve the school's approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress in key areas of the curriculum.

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

Improvements to the school's approach to planning now enabled teachers to match more closely the work they planned for pupils to their assessment of how well pupils were achieving in a number of key areas of the curriculum. Of particular note was the establishment of a framework, linked to national guidelines, to support more formal assessment of pupils' attainment in listening and talking. The school now ensured that pupils at P2 who were ready to take a national assessment in reading were given the opportunity. The adoption of the education authority's programme for science and improved materials in maths had also helped teachers improve assessment and recording in these areas of the curriculum.

3.5 Improve the curriculum and the quality of learning and teaching for pupils who attend the base.

The school had made good progress overall in improving the curriculum and learning and teaching in the provision it made for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The length of the school day was now the same for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders as for their peers. The new deputy headteacher who had taken over responsibility was providing strong leadership for staff and pupils, including the outreach team. Staff valued his support highly. Pupils' behaviour was now well managed. The teacher, designated to support pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream classes had established effective relationships with teachers and pupils. Mainstream teachers had received training to build their confidence in responding to the educational needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and further staff development was planned. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders now benefited from good opportunities to learn through play.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the school had made very good progress in addressing the main points for action. In particular, the improvements in leadership, teamwork and sense of direction coupled with the establishment of a strong commitment to improvement among staff were benefiting pupils throughout the school. The improvements achieved in a relatively short time reflected very well on all involved. HM Inspectors will make no further visits to the school regarding the 2004 report.

Nick Pepin, HMI
District Inspector

13 June 2006

How can you contact us?

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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, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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