

**Dalneigh Primary School
Inverness
The Highland Council
28 March 2006**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Dalneigh Primary School in March 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.

An inspection team revisited the school in January 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 inspection the headteacher and her staff had worked hard to improve a number of aspects of the school. The headteacher, with strong support from the education authority, had organised a range of staff development activities that had helped to improve staff expertise and the quality of programmes in the school. All staff had worked effectively to improve attainment and there was evidence of improvements in mathematics and writing. The ethos of the school continued to be positive. Pupils were actively encouraged to be involved in the pupil council and other initiatives such as a *Grounds for Learning Project* and *Safer Routes to School*. Staff had developed further the systems for promoting positive behaviour and there was a purposeful and positive atmosphere in most classrooms. The school had been successful in gaining an award as a *Health Promoting School* which had raised awareness by staff and pupils of healthier lifestyles. Pupils had been actively involved in supporting a number of charities at both local and national level. Overall the headteacher had worked closely with staff, the authority and the wider community to improve opportunities for all pupils.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in March 2004 identified six 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 recommendation.

The headteacher had introduced a simple system to track attainment and met regularly with class teachers to review the attainment of individual pupils. She also ensured that staff had good opportunities to discuss pupils' attainment during staff meetings and to identify areas where improvements were needed. Further work was planned to involve teachers in predicting pupils' attainment and involving pupils in setting their own targets. The school had reviewed and updated its programmes of work in English language and mathematics. This ensured a more consistent approach to, for example, the development of reading and the teaching of writing. Staff had reviewed and improved the programme for mathematics and purchased new resources to provide additional challenge for higher attaining pupils and to

link the programme more effectively to appropriate homework. Learning assistants and support for learning auxiliaries were providing additional valuable support for individuals and groups of pupils. As a result of these developments, standards of attainment had improved significantly in mathematics. Standards had improved steadily in writing but it was too early to see the impact of the new developments in reading on overall attainment.

3.2 Develop consistent approaches to learning and teaching across the school.

The school had made good progress with this recommendation.

All staff were now using the same programmes in mathematics and English language which helped to provide consistency of experience. Staff discussed and agreed approaches to planning which focused on what pupils were expected to learn and how the learning would be assessed. The headteacher and depute headteacher had agreed a major focus on learning and teaching which had been well supported by a range of appropriate staff development activities. The school had made a successful bid to join with two other schools in the Dalneigh cluster to develop a project as part of *Assessment is for Learning*. This was having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and in encouraging them to review and reflect on the learning process. The headteacher, supported by her depute, had established a monitoring framework which included a programme of classroom visits and feedback to staff. This was encouraging teachers to reflect on the strengths of their own teaching and areas for development. Further work was required to ensure that all staff had equally high expectations of pace and challenge in classes and that agreed approaches to learning and teaching were reflected in a school policy that could be shared with teachers, pupils and parents.

3.3 Improve the range and quality of learning experiences provided for pupils.

The school had made very good progress with this recommendation.

Teachers were involved in a number of projects that encouraged pupils to be more active in their learning. These included involvement in the *Highland Council Literacy Project*, the *Building Bridges Project* and the Dalneigh cluster *Assessment is for Learning Project*. All these projects encouraged pupils to be more independent in their learning. Examples included pupils working in pairs and in small groups as well as acting as 'reading buddies' and assessing their own work and that of a partner. These experiences were helping pupils to work with others and to become aware of their own learning needs. The school was also providing pupils with a wide range of opportunities to engage in aspects of their learning outwith the classroom. These included opportunities within sports and the arts provided through productive links with Eden Court Theatre, the Youth Music Initiative, Feis Ros and the sports coordinator.

3.4 Review the remits of the management team.

The school had made very good progress with this recommendation.

The remits of both the headteacher and depute headteacher had been fully revised to give a stronger focus on curriculum development, improving attainment and monitoring the work of the school. The new remits were helping them to give a clearer focus to those key areas of work for which they had responsibility. The remits were reviewed annually and matched closely to the development priorities for the school. Both the headteacher and her depute had led appropriate staff development and engaged constructively with teaching and non-teaching staff through the process of annual professional reviews.

3.5 Continue to involve all staff, pupils and parents in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and identifying priorities for improvements in a development plan with clear targets and timescales for action.

The school had made very good progress with this recommendation.

The headteacher and depute headteacher had both attended authority training on school improvement through self-evaluation. As a result of the training, they developed a calendar of activities that included the monitoring of learning and teaching, sampling of pupils' work, tracking attainment and surveying the views of staff, parents and pupils. The outcomes of these activities were discussed with individual staff and at staff meetings to ensure that there was a common understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. All staff had been involved in reviewing and deciding upon the priorities in the development plan. They also had been given opportunities to work in groups or to be released from the classroom to develop work linked to specific priorities. The pupil council had been actively involved in thinking about how to improve the work of the school. They had developed their own set of school aims and school rules and took on board suggestions for improving the playground and tuck shop. Some parents had been involved in workshops linked to a reading project at P4 and the *Building Bridges Project* at P6/P7. Other parental workshops were being planned.

3.6 Address the accommodation issues identified in this report.

The school and education authority had made very good progress with this recommendation.

The school had worked closely with the authority and the wider community to address the accommodation issues. The school nursery had been completely refurbished and the external painting of the school had been completed. The school security system had been improved and a planned programme of internal decoration, replacement of window blinds and floor coverings was underway. The school was part of a planned programme of window and toilet replacement. The infant toilets had been completely refurbished but work was required urgently to improve the quality of toilet provision for other pupils.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the school had made very good progress in addressing the main points for action. As a result neither the authority nor HMIE will publish any further reports in connection with the March 2004 report.

Dr F Carlisle HMI
District Inspector

28 March 2006

How can you contact us?

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