

**Laurieston Primary School
Falkirk Council
6 December 2005**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on Standards and Quality in Laurieston Primary School in October 2003. 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.

Inspectors revisited the school in October 2005 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.

During this time, the education authority had provided very effective support to the school. They had supported the continuing professional development of staff, including leadership development for the headteacher and training for staff on approaches to teaching writing and reading. They had also supported the school through the provision of additional resources. The Quality Improvement team had visited the school regularly to monitor the school's progress carefully. These visits included observations of learning and teaching, reviews of attainment and meetings with staff.

2. Continuous improvement

The school had improved its overall capacity for continuous improvement. Aspects of leadership throughout the school had been strengthened and there was a greater involvement of all staff in the process of school improvement. There had been significant improvements in aspects of the school's accommodation. Toilets throughout the school had been refurbished to a very high standard. A new kitchen area had been built and school meals were now prepared in the school. As part of the *Hungry for Success* initiative, education authority staff had worked with the school and pupils in improving school meals, advising on the tuck shop and promoting healthier eating. Parents and carers were now given regular information and menus in advance. The school had also enhanced its approaches for recognising and celebrating pupils' achievement in and out of school. These approaches included the introduction of regular star writer awards. Pupils' overall levels of attainment in mathematics had improved since the time of the original inspection. There had also been a slight improvement in pupils' overall levels of attainment in writing. In particular, from P5 to P7, there had been a notable increase in the proportion of pupils achieving beyond the level expected for their stage in both mathematics and writing. There was evidence of improved attainment in reading at some stages, but overall levels of attainment in reading showed a slight decline.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in October 2003 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 The school should improve the quality of programmes in the subjects inspected as indicated in the text. Teachers should raise levels of pupils' attainment, particularly in writing, listening and talking.

Overall, the school had made very good progress with this action point.

The school had taken systematic action to improve the quality of programmes across the school. The deputy headteacher had provided a strong lead to this aspect of the school's work. There had been significant improvements in all aspects of the English language programme. The school had adopted agreed whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading and writing. These approaches were beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' overall levels of attainment in writing, particularly higher attaining pupils. Progress in improving attainment in reading was more mixed. The school had developed a clear framework for assessing pupils' listening and talking skills. In doing so, it had made good use of resources provided by the education authority. The school was beginning to implement cross-curricular approaches to the development of these skills. Teachers were beginning to assess pupils' listening and talking skills systematically, but the school had yet to monitor pupils' progress in these areas to ensure that pupils' skills are built upon progressively and systematically. The school had also made significant improvements to the mathematics programme and programmes in social subjects.

3.2 The school should continue to strengthen forward planning and teachers should more clearly identify learning outcomes and how these will be achieved and assessed.

Overall, the school had made good progress in this area.

The school had used its work on improving programmes to introduce more simplified approaches to planning in a number of areas. A good start had been made and the school was well placed to continue to extend this work further. Teachers had worked together in developing long-term and weekly planning formats. These revised approaches to planning were leading to the clearer identification of expected outcomes for pupils and how teachers would assess pupils' progress and achievements. Senior managers monitored teachers' plans on a termly and weekly basis. The school had also introduced personal learning planning for all pupils. There remained scope to simplify planning further and to ensure that pupils' personal learning plans had a clear focus on what pupils needed to do to improve.

3.3 Teachers should be given clearer guidance on the content of programmes of work across the curriculum. Better use should be made of assessment information to ensure all pupils' needs are being met well.

The school had made good progress with this recommendation.

In developing and improving its programmes, the school had provided more detailed advice to staff. This advice was proving helpful to staff and it was informing their forward planning. A working group in the school had also developed a new assessment policy. This policy took good account of best practice nationally. As a result, staff were now adopting more consistent approaches across the school. These approaches were leading to a more coherent

experience for pupils across the stages with improved continuity and progression in their learning. Senior managers now met regularly with individual teachers to monitor pupils' progress. There was scope to develop this work further to ensure that pupils' coursework is consistently matched to their needs and leads to continued improvement in levels of attainment at all stages, particularly in English language.

3.4 Senior staff should involve teachers more in evaluating learning and teaching and pupils' progress, and in identifying priorities for improvement.

Good progress had been made in this area.

All staff now engaged more systematically in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching. This was largely achieved through more systematic monitoring of their approaches to forward planning. Senior managers also undertook regular observation of learning and teaching. This work had a clear focus on improving teachers' use of assessment information in planning learning and improving the pace of pupils' progress. There was scope to take this work further through creating more opportunities for staff to discuss and share good practice. The headteacher had improved aspects of communication. Staff were consulted more regularly. There was greater engagement of all staff in planning for school improvement. Staff were also making effective contributions to working groups which had been established to take forward developments within the school.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the school, with well judged and effective support from the education authority, had made good progress in addressing the main points for action. The school had increased capacity for further improvement. It now needed to ensure that its improved approaches raised pupils' overall levels of attainment further, particularly in English language. In view of the overall good progress, HM Inspectors will make no further visits in connection with the inspection report of October 2003.

Chris Webb
District Inspector

6 December 2005

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