

**Clelington Primary School
Dundee City Council
28 August 2007**

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1. Background

Clelington Primary School was inspected in April 2007 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-staff association and a group of parents¹.

The inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of school meals provision.

The school serves an area of Dundee City. At the time of the inspection the roll was 424, including 16 pupils who have additional support needs arising from autism spectrum disorder (ASD). These pupils were taught in the ASD unit and, where appropriate, they joined their peers in the mainstream classes. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The quality of pastoral care.
- Positive and supportive relationships between pupils and staff.
- Inclusion of pupils with additional support needs in the life of the school.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

Overall, parents were pleased with the work of the school. Almost all thought that their children enjoyed being at school and were well looked after. They felt welcome in school and found parents' evenings informative and helpful. Most felt that inappropriate behaviour was dealt with effectively. Pupils enjoyed being at school. They thought that teachers explained things clearly, expected them to work hard and helped them to improve their work. Staff were satisfied with almost all aspects of the work of the school. They felt pupils were enthusiastic about learning and there was mutual respect between staff and pupils. The majority thought that time for school development work was not used effectively.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was adequate. Teachers delivered a broad and balanced experience for pupils. They had made a good start to developing pupils' skills in enterprise and citizenship. Visiting teachers of drama, art and design, music and physical education enhanced pupils' experiences. The school should consider how to extend the time allocated to physical education. Curriculum flexibility time had been allocated to English language and mathematics, but this had not resulted in improved attainment in these areas. Pupils were learning appropriate skills in information and communications technology (ICT), but did not have enough opportunities to use their skills to support their learning across the curriculum. The length of the school day for pupils in the ASD unit was shorter than that for pupils in the mainstream school and this affected their opportunities for learning. Teaching was variable in quality and adequate overall. While there were examples of good or very good teaching, a lack of consistency across the school lessened the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement and attainment. Almost all teachers gave clear instructions and explanations. They did not consistently share with pupils the purposes of each lesson. Most teachers used questioning well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a few lessons, teachers questioned pupils skilfully to challenge them and to extend their thinking but this good practice was not sufficiently widespread. Not enough emphasis was placed on developing pupils' independent learning skills. Homework was set regularly and was effectively linked to classwork.

Staff had established a positive climate for learning in almost all classes. Across the school, almost all pupils were well motivated and enthusiastic learners. They listened attentively to adults and completed tasks conscientiously. However, they did not have sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. They responded positively to opportunities to work collaboratively, for example in planning writing lessons and in drama lessons. In too many English language and mathematics lessons, the pace of learning and choice of activities lacked sufficient challenge. Across the school, there was an over-reliance on text book activities. Pupils were not clear about what they needed to do to improve their work. At all stages, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of issues relating to healthy lifestyles.

The school took effective steps to help pupils develop their wider achievements. Staff paid good attention to developing pupils' confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Pupils developed skills in music and drama through presenting concerts for parents and

the local community. They took part in a variety of sporting and cultural activities. They used their enterprise skills effectively to raise funds for charities. Recently, pupils had won a solar-powered computer in a competition aimed at supporting an environmental charity. Pupils in P7 developed their independence and social skills through a residential visit. A group of senior pupils had produced a well-presented school newspaper. Representatives from P4 to P7 served on the pupil council and the eco-committee. Pupils, particularly those at the upper stages, would benefit from more opportunities to exercise responsibilities and take part in decision making.

English language

The quality of attainment in English language was weak. Attainment in reading and writing had steadily declined over the last three years. Across the school, the majority of pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading and writing. Most pupils with English as an additional language were making good progress. In the ASD unit, almost all pupils were learning to communicate appropriately, using visual cues and eye contact when talking to others. They were making steady progress in reading and were beginning to develop their writing skills. Across the school, most pupils at P1 and P2 were making good progress in their coursework. At P3 to P7, the pace of progress was too slow. Across the school, almost all pupils listened well to adults and responded appropriately to instructions. They were less skilled when listening and talking to each other in groups. Most could read fluently and identify the key features of books. At P7, pupils could discuss the language and structure of poetry. At all stages, pupils were able to write for different purposes. They produced interesting pieces linked to other curricular areas. However, they were not confident in writing at length. The standard of handwriting and spelling was not sufficiently high.

Mathematics

Attainment in mathematics was weak and had shown no improvement in recent years. At the early stages, most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in mathematics. At the middle and upper stages, the majority of pupils were achieving these levels. For too many pupils the pace of progress in key aspects of mathematics was too slow. Across the school, most pupils had an appropriate understanding of information handling. They used real life contexts well to carry out surveys and record the results. Pupils' skills in using databases and spreadsheets were developing appropriately. Across the school, most pupils performed written calculations well. At all stages too many pupils were not sufficiently quick and accurate in carrying out mental calculations. There were weaknesses in pupils' understanding of fractions and decimals. At all stages, pupils could identify an appropriate range of shapes. Throughout the school, pupils' skills in problem-solving and enquiry required further development. Too many pupils were not appropriately aware of strategies they could use to solve a range of mathematical problems. Pupils in the ASD unit tackled practical tasks with confidence and were making good progress.

Personal and social education

Pupils in the ASD unit were making very good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Staff planned carefully to allow pupils to share many of their learning

and social experiences with mainstream pupils. Pupils joined appropriate mainstream classes for a number of aspects of the curriculum. Transition arrangements were effective, and pupils were very well supported as they moved between classes. Pupils' skills for life were enhanced by a range of activities outwith the formal curriculum, for example visits to the local shops.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Overall, the school's approaches to meeting pupils' needs were adequate. Teachers provided activities for different groups within their classes, but tasks were not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers did not use a consistent approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress and, as a result, the rate of progress was not always maintained when pupils moved from class to class. The school did not have a reliable, robust arrangement for tracking and predicting pupils' attainment. As a result, for too many pupils, the pace of progress was too slow. Bilingual support service staff provided effective support for pupils and parents with English as an additional language. Support staff were well deployed and made positive contributions to pupils' learning. The support for learning teachers liaised effectively with staff to provide well-judged support for those pupils requiring additional help. They created individualised educational programmes (IEPs) which contained clear targets for learning which were shared appropriately with parents and pupils. Arrangements for those children who were looked after by the local authority were good. The school worked closely with a range of external agencies to ensure appropriate support for pupils with identified needs.

Teachers and support staff in the ASD unit supported pupils well. They planned programmes of learning effectively, and placed a strong emphasis on personal and social development. Pupils were successfully involved in the wider life of the school, including, for example, attending assemblies and raising funds for charities. Staff had created IEPs for their pupils, and had involved parents closely in setting and reviewing targets for pupils' attainment and social and emotional development. They liaised effectively with support agencies to support pupils' development and learning.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>Staff knew pupils well and were sensitive to their individual, personal, social and emotional needs. Effective procedures were in place for child protection and to deal with any instances of bullying. There were appropriate arrangements for the administration of medicines. Pupils felt secure and happy in school. The eating for health assistant provided a range of activities to promote pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy eating. The quality and presentation of school meals needed to be improved. The headteacher carefully monitored pupils' attendance. Effective arrangements were in place for the transfer of pupils from pre-school to P1 and from P7 to Morgan Academy.</p>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The school building was spacious, with ample provision of general purpose rooms. Staff had created a stimulating environment through attractive displays of pupils' work. However, there were some important weaknesses in the quality of accommodation. There was no effective means of access to the building for those with a physical disability, and no access for them to suitable toilet facilities, which were located on an upper floor. Areas of the building, including toilet facilities for staff and pupils, were in need of upgrading and refurbishment. Aspects of security arrangements required to be reviewed.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	Relationships between almost all staff and pupils were very positive. Almost all pupils were well behaved and hard working. In most instances teachers used praise well to motivate pupils and to recognise success. Pupils' achievements were celebrated through a range of awards. Assemblies provided suitable opportunities for religious observance and for pupils to share their work with one another. Overall, staff set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. They needed to raise their expectations of pupils' attainment and pupils' abilities to take responsibility for their own learning. Staff treated pupils fairly. Pupils were developing a sound understanding of customs and festivals from other cultures. Staff had yet to customise the education authority's race equality policy to guide the school's work in valuing diversity.
Partnership with parents and the community	Relationships between the school, parents and the local community were good. The School Board and the parent-staff association were very supportive of the school. Parents were kept informed about events in school through regular newsletters. They received helpful annual written reports about their children's progress and found them, together with parents' evenings, to be very informative. The school had consulted parents appropriately about sensitive issues in the revised health education programme. Parents had expressed a wish for more information about their children's learning in school. Staff had responded to this by producing helpful leaflets for parents about aspects of pupils' learning. They had good plans to extend this further. There were effective links between the school and a number of pre-school groups. The school had established productive links with a few local businesses.

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

The school provided a welcoming and caring environment. Pupils were confident and friendly, and were encouraged to achieve in a range of activities. Pupils in the ASD unit, and those in the mainstream classes who required additional help, were well supported in their learning and were making good progress. However, across the school, the quality of learning and teaching was too variable and attainment in English language and mathematics was weak. Staff had recognised the need to increase pace and challenge for their pupils. They had recently begun to implement more rigorous

approaches to assessing and predicting pupils' attainment. Some staff needed to accept more responsibility for ensuring improvement in the quality of pupils' experiences.

The headteacher was well regarded by staff, pupils and parents and promoted an inclusive ethos within the school. However, she did not provide sufficiently strong leadership for learning. She was very supportive of staff but did not always provide sufficient challenge. A consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school had not been established and this hindered pupils' progress. The principal teacher had made a promising start to providing effective leadership for the ASD unit. The deputy headteachers were very committed to the school and provided effective support for the headteacher. They ensured that pupils were very well supported as they transferred into and out of the school. Arrangements for self-evaluation were weak, but improving. The senior management team, in particular the deputy headteacher with responsibility for the upper stages, had introduced more rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching. The senior management team monitored teachers' plans, looked at samples of work, visited classes and gave written feedback to staff. They did not yet make consistent and effective use of the information gained. They did not track and predict pupils' progress rigorously to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress. All staff were involved in taking a broad look at the quality of provision overall, and identifying areas for improvement in the school's development plan. The school needed to build on these practices, with focused support from the education authority, to develop its capacity to improve.

Main points for action

The school and education authority, in liaison with HM Inspectors, should take action to improve the strategic leadership of the school. In so doing they should take account of the need to:

- raise attainment in English language and mathematics;
- ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all pupils in their learning;
- improve approaches to self-evaluation, in particular, tracking pupils' progress and attainment;
- provide access to the building for persons with a physical disability; and
- adjust the length of the school day for pupils in the autism spectrum disorder unit to match that of pupils in the mainstream school.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Thereafter, HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in another report to parents, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Isabel Bolton
HM Inspector

28 August 2007

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
Structure of the curriculum	adequate
The teaching process	adequate
Pupils' learning experiences	adequate
Pupils' attainment in English language	weak
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	weak
Personal and social development	very good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting pupils' needs	adequate

How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	very good
Accommodation and facilities	weak
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	good

Leading and improving the school	
Leadership of the headteacher	weak
Leadership across the school	adequate
Self-evaluation	weak

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoyed being at school. • Staff made them welcome in the school. • Parents' evenings were helpful and informative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few would have liked more information about the school's priorities for improvement.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers explained things clearly, expected them to work hard and helped them if they were stuck. • The school helped them to keep safe and healthy. • They had a say in how to make the school better. • Teachers checked their homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.

What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff showed concern for pupils' care and welfare. • The school had good links with the local community. • Pupils were enthusiastic about learning and received constructive feedback about their work. • There was mutual respect between teachers and pupils. • The school dealt effectively with any incidences of bullying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for continuous professional development was not used effectively. • Communication amongst staff could be improved.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, 1st Floor, Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee DD1 4QB or by telephoning 01382 576700. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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