

**Eastern Primary School
Dundee City Council
20 March 2007**

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?	2
4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?	3
6. How good is the environment for learning?	4
7. Leading and improving the school	6
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	8
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	9
How can you contact us?	10

1. Background

Eastern Primary School was inspected in December 2006 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 and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the Broughty Ferry area of Dundee. At the time of the inspection the roll was 430, including 46 children in the nursery class and eight pupils who have additional support needs arising from a range of difficulties. These pupils were taught in a resourced location and, where appropriate, they joined their peers in the mainstream classes. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was well above the national average.

The work of the nursery class was not included in this inspection. Evaluations in this report, except where otherwise indicated, apply equally to the resourced location classes and the mainstream classes from P1 to P7.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Confident, well-behaved pupils.
- Pupils' achievements in a wide range of activities.
- Inclusion of pupils with additional support needs in the school community.
- The quality of pastoral care.
- Positive relationships among pupils, parents and staff.

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

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.

Parents were very pleased with the school. They felt the school had a good reputation in the local community, parents' evenings were helpful and informative and staff made them welcome in school. A few would have liked more information about the school's priorities for improvement and the standard of work expected of their children. Pupils enjoyed being at school and felt safe and secure. They felt that teachers expected them to work hard and helped them to succeed in their learning. Staff were very positive about all aspects of the work of the school.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. Staff planned a broad and balanced range of experiences for pupils. Additional time was used well to extend pupils' experiences in English language, mathematics and personal and social development (PSD). Visiting specialist teachers enhanced pupils' experiences in expressive arts. The allocation of time for physical education (PE) had been increased. The school was well placed to deliver two hours of PE each week by next session. Pupils in P1 and P2 had good opportunities to learn through play, and pupils in P6 and P7 were learning French and German. The school needed to improve access to, and use of, information and communications technology across the curriculum. The quality of teaching was good overall and there were some examples of very good teaching. Teachers were well organised and gave clear explanations. They shared the purpose of lessons with pupils but did not consistently review learning at the end of lessons. They used praise and rewards effectively to encourage pupils to work hard. In the best lessons, teachers used a variety of approaches, made effective use of questioning to develop pupils' thinking and involved pupils in evaluating what they had learned. Homework was set regularly, but sometimes lacked variety.

The quality of pupils' learning was good. Almost all pupils worked hard to complete tasks set for them by their teachers. They were enthusiastic and well motivated when working together in pairs or small groups, but needed more opportunities to develop skills in working collaboratively. Pupils in P4 were confident in describing science experiments they had carried out to explore sound. Pupils in P5 had recently organised a very successful ceilidh. Pupils in P6 and P7 were making good progress in listening and speaking in French and German. Pupils in P7 were developing a sound understanding of issues relating to conflict in the 20th century.

Staff successfully encouraged pupils to achieve in a wide range of activities, and this resulted in confident pupils who were willing to tackle new situations and experiences. They took part in a variety of sporting activities, including out-of-school-hours clubs. They were involved in presenting school assemblies and other performances. Pupils had recently been involved in restructuring the pupil council. They had a good

understanding of its role in the school and felt that they were fully involved in making decisions about aspects of school life. They were learning to take responsibility through serving on the pupil council, acting as class helpers and looking after younger pupils in the playground. Pupils in P3 acted as buddies for P1 pupils, and older pupils helped to organise the healthy tuck shop. Pupils showed concern for others through raising funds for charities.

English language

The quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good overall. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in reading. Many were achieving these levels earlier than might be expected. Most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels in listening, talking and writing. Levels of attainment in writing had improved in recent years but there was scope for further improvement. Pupils coped well with their coursework, but it was not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress. Across the school, almost all pupils listened attentively and took part in class discussions with confidence. They read widely for pleasure and showed a good understanding of what they had read. At the early stages, pupils were developing effective reading and writing skills. Pupils at the middle and upper stages could discuss texts they had read and express their opinion about the writers' style. From P3 to P7, pupils wrote well for a wide range of purposes and audiences.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Attainment had improved over the previous three years and was set to improve further this session. Almost all pupils at the early and middle stages, and most at the upper stages, were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics. Many in P2 achieved these levels early. At the middle and upper stages, the pace of progress was too slow for higher achieving pupils. Pupils who were not achieving national levels were well supported and were making good progress in their classwork. At all stages, pupils were confident in collecting, organising and interpreting information. Pupils at the upper stages did not have sufficient experience in using computers to handle information. Across the school pupils were able to use strategies for carrying out arithmetical calculations correctly. Pupils in P7 were competent in calculating area, perimeter and capacity. A few were not confident in working with decimals and fractions. Across the school, pupils could identify and discuss shapes appropriate to their stage. They were developing a good understanding of a variety of strategies for solving problems.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Arrangements to meet pupils' learning needs were good overall. Teachers and support staff provided good help and support for pupils in their learning. Most tasks and activities were well matched to the needs of individual pupils, but staff did not always set sufficiently challenging tasks for abler pupils. Arrangements for assessing, tracking and predicting pupils' progress needed to be more consistently applied across the school. Teachers and support staff collaborated effectively to support pupils requiring additional help with their

classwork. They ensured that pupils with additional support needs were included and supported in class activities. A teacher from the Bilingual Pupil Support Service provided good support for teachers and for a group of pupils with English as an additional language. There were effective arrangements for identifying pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning, and the support for learning teacher provided them with well-judged support. Pupils with individualised educational programmes (IEPs) were making good progress towards achieving their learning targets. Staff worked well in partnership with a range of relevant support agencies. There were effective arrangements to support pupils transferring from pre-school to P1 and from P7 to secondary school.

The resourced location

Pupils in the resourced location were making very good progress in their PSD. Staff planned effectively to allow pupils to share their learning and social experiences with mainstream pupils where appropriate. Pupils' learning of skills for life was enhanced by a range of activities outwith the formal curriculum, such as visits to the local shops and a residential outdoor experience at P7. Almost all pupils were learning to communicate appropriately. They were beginning to use visual cues and eye contact in talking to others. Pupils overall were making good progress in reading and were beginning to develop their writing skills. In mathematics, they worked effectively at practical tasks. Most were making steady progress in overtaking the targets which had been set for them. Several pupils from the resourced location joined appropriate mainstream classes for aspects of the curriculum, including PE, music and mathematics. Teachers and support staff in both the resourced location and mainstream classes supported pupils well, and ensured they were able to take an active part in lessons. Staff in the resourced location had created IEPs for their pupils, and had involved parents closely in setting and reviewing targets for pupils' social and emotional development. The IEPs required the addition of targets for pupils' learning in English language and mathematics, to enable staff to plan and track pupils' progress more effectively as they moved between the resourced location and mainstream classes. Overall, pupils in the resourced location were making steady progress from their prior levels of attainment.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	Arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils were very good. Staff skilfully implemented the positive behaviour management policy and dealt effectively with any incidents of bullying. Appropriate arrangements were in place for child protection and were clearly understood by staff. The headteacher carefully monitored pupils' attendance. The school was successfully promoting healthy lifestyles. Pupils had been involved in improving choices at the tuck shop. They had many opportunities to be active through dance and sporting activities.

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of accommodation was adequate. The school building was secure and well maintained. A gate in the perimeter of the playground was open to allow access to a small car park, and this constituted a safety hazard for pupils. Some classrooms were small and this limited the range of activities which could take place in them. However, staff used corridor space well to create additional work stations. The accommodation for the resourced location had significant weaknesses. The three rooms were small and inconveniently located on the fourth floor of the school. This had resulted in a loss of learning time for pupils as they travelled to and from mainstream classes. The available space had been effectively adapted to create a low-stimulus environment suitable for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This environment was not suitable to address the needs of pupils with a wide range of additional support needs.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The overall climate of the school was very welcoming and positive. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good. Pupils were polite, spoke confidently to visitors and treated one another with consideration and respect. Staff set appropriately high expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour, but needed to set higher expectations for able pupils. There was a strong sense of equality and fairness throughout the school. Staff and pupils ensured that all pupils were included in the school community. The school was committed to building further on existing good opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of racial equality and diversity. Regular assemblies provided good opportunities for religious observance, and for celebrating pupils' achievements.</p>
Partnerships with parents and the community	<p>The school had established very good relationships with parents and the local community. Parents were very supportive of the school and raised considerable funds to enhance pupils' experiences. Members of the local community were encouraged to share their time and expertise with the school to extend pupils' learning. Regular newsletters, parents' evenings and annual reports on children's progress kept parents well informed. The school consulted parents about sensitive health issues and provided helpful leaflets about aspects of the curriculum. The school had strong links with other primary schools and the local secondary school.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

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

The school provided a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Attainment in English language and mathematics was steadily improving, and staff were committed to ensuring further improvement. Staff were very caring and successfully promoted pupils' self-esteem. They provided pupils with a commendably wide range of opportunities to achieve, and this had resulted in confident and socially skilled pupils.

The headteacher led the school well. She was ably supported by the deputy headteachers, and delegated appropriate responsibilities to them. She gave a high priority to fostering teamwork, and teachers were involved in working parties to improve the work of the school. She had established effective partnerships with parents, support agencies and the local community to support and enhance pupils' learning. In the mainstream school, the headteacher and deputy headteachers monitored teachers' plans, gave written feedback and discussed them with staff. They visited classes and examined pupils' work. These activities needed to focus more clearly on the impact of learning and teaching on pupils' achievement. The school had consulted parents, pupils and staff about the effectiveness of the work of the school. In the resourced location, the headteacher and staff had not yet systematically evaluated the quality of provision, and there was a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities. The headteacher had produced an informative report on standards and quality which provided information about progress made in bringing about improvements.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve learning, teaching and achievement. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- further raise attainment in English language and mathematics;
- ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils;
- address the accommodation issues highlighted in this report; and
- improve approaches to self-evaluation, and clarify roles and responsibilities, in respect of the resourced location.

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. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Isabel Bolton
HM Inspector

20 March 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	good
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	good
Pupils' attainment in English language	good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good
Personal and social development	very good

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

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

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

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"> • Parents felt welcome in the school. • Children enjoyed school and found their work stimulating and challenging. • Staff were caring and treated pupils fairly. • Inappropriate behaviour was dealt with effectively. • Parents of children in the resourced location were pleased with the information they received about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents felt that school reports did not provide sufficient information about their children's progress.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They enjoyed being at school and felt safe and well looked after. • Teachers expected them to work hard. • Teachers helped them with their classwork and checked their homework. • The school helped them to keep safe and healthy. 	<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 were very pleased with all aspects of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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