

**Lochee Primary School
Dundee City Council
12 June 2007**

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1. Background

Lochee Primary School was inspected in February 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 representatives of the Lochee Primary School Partnership and a group of parents¹. There was no School Board.

The school serves the Lochee area of Dundee. At the time of the inspection the roll was 148, including 17 children in the nursery class. A part-time nurture class had been set up in January 2007 to cater for a small number of pupils with a range of additional support needs. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was below the national average.

The work of the nursery class was not included in this inspection.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The school's successful approaches to the promotion of healthy eating.
- Pupils' active participation in the wide range of clubs and after-school activities.
- The quality of pastoral care.
- Effective links with support agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

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.

Parents were satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. They thought that children enjoyed being at school and were treated fairly by staff. They agreed that staff showed concern for their children's care and welfare and that the school was well led. A few felt that the school did not have a good reputation in the community and that staff did not always deal effectively with inappropriate behaviour. Most pupils enjoyed being at school and felt that teachers explained things clearly and helped them with difficulties. Most pupils agreed that they were treated fairly and that staff were good at sorting things out when they were upset. A small number felt that pupils' behaviour could be better and that the school was not always good at dealing with bullies. Staff were satisfied with most aspects of school life. They enjoyed working in the school and agreed that they worked well together. A few felt that promoted staff did not always deal consistently with indiscipline.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

Teachers provided pupils with a broad curriculum. They had reviewed and improved the programme for environmental studies to ensure that pupils in composite classes experienced continuity in their learning. They had taken further steps to improve pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by introducing new planning sheets and resources but it was too early to assess the impact. Specialist staff for music, physical education, swimming and art provided a good level of support for teachers and pupils. Most teachers provided pupils with well-planned opportunities to take part in a range of enterprise activities to develop their understanding of the world of work. Staff in the nurture class were developing individualised programmes to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. The quality of teaching was good. Most teachers shared learning intentions and set learning targets for pupils, particularly during writing activities. Their classroom management and organisational skills were good and they had created attractive and stimulating learning environments. Teachers planned their work well but did not always make sufficient use of assessment information to identify and plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Most teachers used a variety of teaching approaches, gave clear explanations and made effective use of questioning to reinforce pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Across the school, teachers were making good use of computers to develop pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT). The quality of homework activities was variable.

The overall quality of pupils' learning was adequate. Across the school, the majority of pupils were making good progress in their learning and were able to work well together and learn from each other. Teachers in P1, P2/3 and P3/4 provided a wide range of well-judged practical activities to enable younger pupils to learn through play. Pupils' skills in ICT were good and most used computers confidently to support and extend their learning in areas such as mathematics and project work. In a small number of lessons, the pace of learning did not always take full account of pupils' learning needs. Teachers and staff used a range of appropriate strategies to promote positive behaviour and respond to the challenging behaviour and negative attitudes of a small group of pupils from P2/3 to P7. However, the negative behaviour regularly disrupted the quality of other pupils' learning. The quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of written work were not of a consistently high standard.

The school took good steps to ensure that pupils' achievements were recognised. Staff provided pupils with a range of well-planned opportunities to develop their personal, social and physical skills. The eating for health assistant worked very closely with staff and pupils to promote their understanding of the need for healthy eating. Pupils had good opportunities to make decisions about the school through their involvement in the pupil council. Most pupils were developing good citizenship skills through their involvement in a variety of activities including the Sparks theatre project and Open Voice event. Older pupils provided very good support to younger pupils during activities such as the 'buddy' system and paired reading initiative. Pupils worked purposefully together during enterprise activities. The school had achieved a silver award for its Eco School activities. Pupils had a good understanding about issues such as personal safety, substance abuse and health education. Across the school, pupils took part in a wide range of clubs and after-school activities such as gymnastics, basketball, athletics and the Discovery Club. Almost all pupils in P7 took part in the annual residential experience to develop their self-confidence and citizenship skills.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was adequate. While there had been a drop in 2005, pupils' attainment in listening, talking, reading and writing had gradually improved over recent years. The majority of pupils were attaining appropriate levels in coursework. Pupils who experienced difficulties with aspects of reading and writing were well supported and most were making appropriate progress in their learning. Most pupils listened well and were able to express an opinion during class lessons but their listening and talking skills were less well developed in group situations and discussions. Across the school, pupils' reading skills were good. Most pupils read for enjoyment and could talk confidently about books they had read. Pupils in the early stages were making very good progress in developing their early literacy skills. By P7, most pupils could use and identify different writing styles, speak about favourite authors and discuss plays. Pupils' writing skills were improving and the majority were able to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar were limited.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was adequate. The majority of pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. In recent years, the school had not been successful in further raising pupils' attainment. Pupils in P1 to P3/4 were making good progress in their learning but a small number of pupils at other stages were capable of achieving higher standards. Pupils who experienced difficulties with aspects of mathematics were well supported and were making steady progress in their learning. Staff were making effective use of a new planning format to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Pupils made good use of computers to produce simple graphs and charts. Most pupils' skills in written calculation were good and their skills in mental calculation were improving. By P7, most pupils had a good understanding of the properties of shape. They could identify and use a wide range of appropriate problem-solving and enquiry strategies. Pupils' skills in using practical equipment in activities such as weight, measurement and volume were not well developed.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Most teachers planned a successful range of activities to meet pupils' learning needs and ensure an appropriate level of challenge for pupils. They did not make consistent use of assessment information to identify the next steps in pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics and literacy. Support for learning staff were improving assessment approaches and using the information to identify and support pupils more effectively. The system to monitor and track pupils' progress in English language and mathematics was not well used and lacked rigour. Teachers provided pupils with a good level of support when they experienced difficulties with aspects of their learning. Staff in the nurture class provided well-judged support for a small number of vulnerable pupils with behavioural difficulties. Classroom assistants, auxiliaries and the nursery nurse worked closely with teachers to assist pupils with a range of additional support needs. Support for learning teachers worked closely with teachers to support pupils who experienced difficulties with aspects of learning. The individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for pupils with additional support needs lacked detail.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	The school's procedures to ensure the care, welfare and protection of pupils were very good. Staff had received helpful training on child protection, substance abuse and the administration of medicine. The headteacher and staff worked closely with a number of agencies to provide very good support for vulnerable pupils and families. Staff were sensitive to the emotional, physical and social needs of individuals. Pupils could describe the school's procedures for dealing with instances of bullying and felt that the school would help them if they had a problem. The headteacher and staff worked well together to support pupils and families when bullying was raised as an issue.
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The quality of accommodation was very good. Staff made very good use of additional classrooms and teaching areas for activities such as music and art. They made effective use of the computer suite and well-stocked library to develop pupils' learning. The school had an extensive playground and attractive play areas. The building was suitable for users with restricted mobility. Teachers had produced attractive displays in classrooms and around the school. The school's security arrangements were appropriate.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	Relationships between teachers and pupils were good. Most teachers and pupils worked well together. Teachers treated pupils fairly and most made effective use of praise to motivate and encourage them. The overall standard of pupils' behaviour was good but the behaviour of a small number was not of an acceptable standard. The headteacher used a number of successful strategies to increase pupils' attendance. Teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment were variable. Most teachers set high standards and shared these openly with pupils. Staff had started to make good use of teaching packs and activities such as Show Racism the Red Card to increase pupils' understanding of racial issues and discrimination. Weekly assemblies provided good opportunities to promote religious observance and highlight pupils' academic, sporting and social achievements.
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had well-established links with a wide range of support agencies and groups. The headteacher had developed a good working relationship with parents and the Lochee Primary School Partnership. He had organised workshops to provide parents with advice on ways of supporting children's learning at home. Teachers held two meetings with parents each year to discuss children's progress. The quality and content of written progress reports was good. The school had consulted with parents on sensitive aspects of the health education programme. Staff, pupils and parents had raised money for a number of charities. The school had good arrangements in place to support pupils at points of transfer from nursery into P1 and from P7 into secondary school.

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Lochee Primary School provided pupils with an adequate standard of education with scope for further improvement. Staff had created an attractive learning environment. They worked well together to support pupils and the quality of pastoral care was very good. The standard of teaching was good with some examples of very good teaching. Most staff used a range of relevant approaches to promote positive behaviour but there was a need for greater consistency when dealing with challenging behaviour at class and school level. Teachers used a range of successful approaches to extend pupils' learning, including the effective use of computers. They did not make sufficient use of

assessment information to track pupils' progress in mathematics and aspects of English language. The choice of tasks and activities during lessons did not always present an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils.

The experienced headteacher was well respected by staff, pupils and parents. He was committed to the school and local community. He had a good understanding of the strengths and development needs of staff. Following an extended review of the school's work by the education authority, he had worked closely with the Quality Improvement Officer to identify areas for improvement and create an action plan. The headteacher recognised the need to raise pupils' attainment, make increased use of assessment information and ensure that the needs of all pupils were being met fully. The recently appointed depute headteacher gave very good support to the headteacher. She had a clearly stated remit and had formed a good working relationship with staff. She now needed to provide more direct support to teachers and pupils in the classroom situation. With the support of the education authority, the headteacher and depute headteacher had taken steps to monitor the school's work and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. They discussed teachers' plans, observed lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. They gave constructive feedback to teachers on their strengths and areas for further development. They had involved staff in identifying appropriate priorities for the school improvement plan such as strategies to raise attainment and ways of improving assessment. To ensure further improvements, the school should continue to work in close partnership with the education authority.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to:

- improve attainment;
- use assessment information to identify learning needs and track pupils' progress;
- ensure that tasks and activities take account of previous learning and meet the needs of all pupils;
- monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of learning and teaching; and
- work with staff to ensure consistent approaches to improve pupils' behaviour.

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.

Michael Wood
HM Inspector

12 June 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	adequate
Pupils' attainment in English language	adequate
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	adequate

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	very good
Climate and relationships	good
Expectations and promoting achievement	adequate
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents and the community	good

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

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"> • They felt that their children enjoyed being at school. • They felt that there was mutual respect between pupils and teachers and that children were treated fairly. • Almost all parents felt that they were made to feel welcome in the school. • Almost all parents felt that teachers were good at letting them know about children's strengths and weaknesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal more effectively with inappropriate behaviour. • Improve the school's reputation in the community.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most enjoyed being at school. • Most felt that teachers explained things clearly, expected them to work hard and helped them when they were stuck. • Most felt safe and well looked after and that the school helped to keep them safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the behaviour of some pupils. • Deal more effectively with bullying.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff were satisfied with most aspects of the school's work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication between the senior managers and staff. • Deal more consistently with challenging behaviour.

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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