

**St Clement's RC Primary School
Dundee City Council**

6 January 2004

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff	1
4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils supported?	3
6. How good is the environment for learning?	4
7. Improving the school	4
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	6
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	7
How can you contact us?	8

1. Background

St Clement's RC Primary School was inspected in September 2003 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 and the environment for learning. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed staff and pupils. They assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation. They analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents and carers, pupils and to all staff. Information about responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2. A member of the inspection team met members of the School Board and the parent teacher association (PTA), groups of parents and the local priest.

The school is denominational and serves the Charleston area in the west of Dundee. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 241. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was just under 40 percent and was well above the national average. Pupils' attendance was generally below the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The high quality of support for pupils' learning and arrangements for meeting pupils' needs.
- The school's arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils.
- The climate and relationships in the school, including pupils' very positive attitudes and mutual respect for one another.
- The high expectations of staff and the school's arrangements for celebrating pupils' successes and achievements.
- The school's very well developed partnerships with parents and the role the school plays in the local community.
- The school's rigorous and systematic approaches to quality assurance and the commitment of staff to continuous improvement.

3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff

The team found that parents and carers, pupils and staff were notably positive about the school. All parents and carers and staff felt the school had a good reputation in the local community and was well led. All parents and carers felt that their children found school work stimulating and challenging. They also felt that staff showed concern for the children's care and welfare, set high standards for pupils' attainment and encouraged their children to work to the best of their ability. All pupils felt teachers were good at telling them how they were getting on with their work and letting them know how they could improve their learning. They also felt that teachers checked their

homework and expected them to work as hard as they could. All staff enjoyed working in the school and felt there was regular discussion about achieving school priorities.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school's curriculum provided a broad and balanced experience for pupils. There were clear and well-structured programmes of study in all curricular areas. The information and communications technology (ICT) programme was a particular strength. It enabled the systematic and progressive development of pupils' skills across all stages. There was very good provision in music. Pupils were taught French in P6 and P7, but the time allocated to this study was too limited. Teachers generally created good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in information handling within the context of topics studied as part of the environmental studies programme.

The quality of teaching across the school was good, with some examples of very good practice. Teachers structured lessons well and shared learning outcomes with pupils. Teachers generally used questions well and, in some classes, used them very effectively to check and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teacher and pupil interactions were very positive and there was a committed and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. There were some very good examples of direct interactive teaching, including the use of ICT. Teachers set regular and appropriate homework. The quality of pupils' learning experiences was good. Pupils were well motivated and hardworking. They were generally enthusiastic about their learning, particularly in the early years. The school gave a high priority to improving the quality of pupils' learning. In mathematics, pupils received very clear information on what they needed to do to improve. This gave pupils opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and set clear and specific targets for improving their attainment. The school had plans to develop these approaches further and share and extend examples of good practice.

Across the stages, pupils were developing very good skills in the use of ICT. In the early years, pupils in P1 could use computers to create and manipulate images. By P7, pupils were skilled in the use of digital cameras and microscopes and could use the technology to make and record evidence of their observations. In P6, pupils were making a very good start to the development of their listening and talking skills in French. At all stages, pupils had developed very positive attitudes and respect for others. Pupils in P7 worked as monitors. They exercised their responsibilities very well. The well-organised pupil council gave pupils very good opportunities to develop skills in citizenship. The pupil council was clear about its role and it represented the views of pupils very well. The school used the council to consult on a variety of issues and had responded appropriately by making improvements to provision in a number of areas. Pupils from P4-P7 had designed new playground facilities and had been successful in bidding for additional funding to improve the provision of playground equipment. Throughout the year, all pupils had opportunities to make contributions to assemblies and annual school shows. Pupils also took part in after school sports and other extra-curricular activities.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Levels of attainment in reading and writing had improved over the last three years. Across the stages, most pupils were achieving

appropriate levels of attainment in listening, talking and reading. The majority achieved these levels in writing. In P1/P2, pupils were developing good early literacy skills. Almost all pupils completed their coursework well. At all stages pupils' written work was generally well presented but, overall, they needed to produce more extended and well-structured writing. There was a need for teachers to provide pupils with more frequent and regular opportunities to develop their writing skills. In particular, writing tasks needed to be more consistently challenging and better matched to pupils' prior learning and levels of attainment. Most pupils had developed good skills in reading for information and understanding. At all stages, pupils made very good use of the library to develop their personal reading. Most could talk well about their experiences, ideas and opinions. They could listen attentively and were able to respond appropriately.

Mathematics

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was good. Most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels of attainment in information handling, number, money and measurement and shape, position and movement. In some classes, a number of pupils exceeded the expected levels of attainment for their stage. In recent years the school had made good progress in raising attainment. Pupils requiring additional support were making good progress. At all stages, pupils showed confidence in using strategies for mental calculations and were able to use these strategies in a variety of situations. Pupils in P1 and P2 were making a very good start to their early number work and showed enthusiasm for their learning. From P5 to P7, they showed a good understanding of shape, position and movement and were able to talk confidently about the properties of shapes. Pupils at most stages were secure in aspects of information handling. They were able to understand and use graphs in different contexts. At all stages, they used ICT effectively to develop their mathematics skills. Pupils in P7 showed a good understanding of using and evaluating problem solving strategies. At other stages, the level of pupils' problem solving skills was inconsistent and they would benefit from more focused opportunities to work in groups.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The quality of pastoral care was very good. Staff were very committed to the care and welfare of pupils and the school had been very successful in creating a climate of mutual trust and respect. The school had an appropriate range of policies and procedures for dealing with child protection and bullying. Staff knew pupils very well and were sensitive to their emotional, physical and social needs. The "Special Friend" buddying scheme paired P7 pupils with pupils in P1. It was very effective and provided pupils in P1 with very good support.

Overall, pupils' needs were very well met. The school had very good arrangements for supporting pupils' learning. Support for learning staff, including classroom assistants and the nursery nurse, provided a range of highly effective support. This included co-operative teaching and tutorial work with individual pupils or small groups. There were very effective strategies for systematically identifying and planning support for pupils with a range of needs, including able pupils. There was very good liaison and communication with other agencies, including psychological and bilingual services as part of a staged process of support. The school made very effective use of individualised educational programmes (IEPs) to meet the needs of pupils with identified difficulties. The IEPs set short and long-term targets. The school engaged parents and pupils in regular reviews of progress.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The overall quality of accommodation was good. Pupils benefited from a spacious building with a large assembly hall and separate gym. The school made very effective use of other facilities, including an ICT suite, a library and rooms for music and learning support. The building was in a good state of repair and the school had a very secure entry system. Pupils had access to an outdoor play area that was partially grassed. A number of matters relating to health and safety required attention and were brought to the attention of the school and education authority, including the safety of windows.
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	Staff and pupils in the school were friendly, caring and very welcoming. Pupils were very proud of the school and wore school uniform. Overall, the behaviour of pupils was very good and almost all pupils showed a strong sense of consideration to the needs of others. Relationships between staff and pupils were of a very high standard. Staff had high expectations of pupils. Throughout the school praise was used effectively. There was a very effective system for recognising and celebrating pupils' achievements. An ethos of equality and fairness and a commitment to provide opportunities for all pupils to succeed permeated the work of the school. Regular assemblies provided very good opportunities for pupils and, on occasions, parents and members of the community to worship together.
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had very well established links with parents and the school community, including the local church. The School Board and PTA supported the work of the school very well. The PTA raised funds to allow the school to provide enrichment activities for pupils, including visits by professional theatre companies. The school regularly sought the views of parents, including the use of questionnaires, and responded very effectively. It organised regular curriculum information evenings and provided very helpful leaflets for parents about a wide range of the school's work. Parents were kept very well informed about pupils' progress through informative reports, interviews with teachers and home school link sheets. The school successfully promoted the use of ICT by holding an after school class for parents and grandparents.

7. Improving the school

St Clement's RC Primary School provided a very positive educational experience for pupils. Arrangements to ensure the care and welfare of pupils were very good. Across the school, pupils had very well developed social skills and attitudes. They were very polite and courteous and demonstrated care, consideration and respect for each other. The school met pupils' needs very well. Overall, attainment had improved over the last three years and pupils achieved good levels of attainment in mathematics and language. There were weaknesses in attainment in writing, but the

school had correctly identified this as a priority and had clear plans for improvement. The overall quality of learning and teaching was good, with some very good examples of direct interactive teaching.

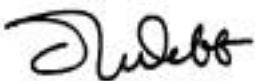
The substantive headteacher, who was currently seconded to work for another agency for a year, was highly regarded by staff, parents and carers. He had contributed significantly to improving the school. During his secondment, the school had been managed effectively by the acting headteacher. She was providing good leadership to the school. The acting deputy headteacher managed her remit well and had made major contributions to the development of the school's ICT programme. During his time in post, the substantive headteacher had developed rigorous and systematic approaches to quality assurance. Senior managers used nationally published quality indicators to monitor the quality of learning and teaching. They evaluated teachers' forward plans and regularly scrutinised pupils' completed coursework. They provided detailed and helpful written and oral feedback to teachers and pupils. The school used the results of these processes to take effective action to improve. Throughout the school, staff were very committed to raising attainment and improving the quality of pupils' experiences. They worked very effectively as a team and contributed to school improvement through membership of well focused working groups. Overall, the school had a number of significant strengths and was well placed to continue to improve.

The school and education authority should take action to ensure continued improvement in the work of the school. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- improve attainment in writing and ensure that pupils have regular and frequent opportunities to produce extended and well-structured writing for a variety of purposes;
- continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching;
- continue to develop effective approaches to assessment by extending the good practice in mathematics to other areas of the curriculum; and
- address the health and safety issues brought to the attention of the school and education authority.

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



Chris Webb
HM Inspector

6 January 2004

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Meeting pupils' needs
- Pastoral care
- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents and the community
- Self-evaluation

We judged the following to be good

- Structure of the curriculum
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Accommodation and facilities
- Effectiveness and deployment of staff
- Leadership

We judged the following to be fair

- No aspects were found to be in this category

We judged the following to be unsatisfactory

- No aspects were found to be in this category

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

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

<p>What pleased parents and carers most</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children found school work stimulating and challenging. • The school had a good reputation in the community and was well led. • Parents' evenings were helpful and informative and school reports provided helpful information on children's progress. • Teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment and encouraged children to work to the best of their ability. • Staff made parents welcome. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of children. 	<p>What parents would like to see improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents had no significant concerns they wished to see addressed.
<p>What pleased pupils most</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helped them keep safe and healthy. • Teachers explained things clearly and helped them if they were having difficulty. • Teachers told them how they were getting on with their work and were good at letting them know how they could improve. • Teachers expected them to work as hard as they could. 	<p>What pupils would like to see improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outdoor play facilities.
<p>What pleased staff most</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff worked hard to promote and maintain good relations with the local community. • Teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment and the school regularly celebrated pupil success. • Staff enjoyed working in the school and showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils. • There was regular discussion about achieving school priorities. • The school was well led. 	<p>What staff would like to see improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff had no significant concerns they wished to see addressed.

How can you contact us?

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, Wellgate House (Level 5), The Wellgate, Dundee DD1 2DB or by telephoning 01382 224155. Copies are also available on our website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report, you should write in the first instance to Frank Crawford, HMCI at HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from that office and on our website.

If you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman directly or through your member of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government Departments and Agencies. She will not normally consider your complaint before the HMIE complaints procedure has been used. Instead, she will usually ask you to give us the chance to put matters right if we can.

Complaints to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman must be submitted within 12 months of the date of publication of this report.

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