

**Kaimes School
City of Edinburgh Council
1 May 2007**

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1. Background

Kaimes School was inspected in January 2007 as part of a national sample of schools for pupils with additional support needs. 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, mathematics, science, home economics and personal and social education.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including members of the eco committee, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the school board 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.

Kaimes School serves all of the city of Edinburgh. The school provides for pupils aged 5 to 18 years who have social communication difficulties. Many have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 87. Eighty three pupils had a Record of Needs. No pupils had coordinated support plans. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Highly effective approaches to meeting the social communication needs of pupils.
- The quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils' progress with their personal and social skills.
- The commitment and empathy of all staff promoted by the headteacher which led to a strong sense of equality and fairness and the very positive climate and relationships across the school.
- Partnership with parents.

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 all parents, and all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Almost all parents, pupils and staff were very positive about almost every aspect of the school. All parents thought that there was mutual respect between teachers and pupils and believed that staff showed concern for pupils' care and welfare. All parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their children enjoyed being at school and that the school was well led. Pupils enjoyed school and said that teachers told them when they had done something well. They were proud of their achievements, particularly in relation to the Eco Schools initiative. Pupils felt that teachers explained things clearly and helped them to keep safe and healthy. They said that they got on well with other pupils. Almost all staff were very positive about nearly every aspect of the school and thought the school was well led.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. At all stages the school provided pupils with a suitably broad curriculum which placed an appropriate emphasis on pupils' social communication needs and personal and social development. The school provided pupils at S3/S5 with a wide range of opportunities to attain through National Qualifications. At S5, pupils benefited from an effective programme of preparation for life beyond school. Some pupils were able to extend the level and range of their learning through attendance at Gracemount High School. Teachers cooperated well across subjects such as art, information and communication technology (ICT) and home economics to provide creative opportunities which included making an animated film. The highly effective programme of outdoor education included residential stays, and good approaches to enterprise activities. It gave pupils broad experiences which improved their confidence and self-esteem. However the length of the school week was not in line with that in mainstream schools. This prevented pupils from accessing a sufficient number of teaching sessions, particularly at the secondary stages. Overall, the quality of teaching was good, with some examples of very good interactive teaching, particularly in practical subjects throughout the school and in English at the secondary stages. Almost all teachers were well organised and planned their work carefully. Most gave clear explanations and provided predictable routines so that pupils were relaxed and able to learn. Teachers shared with pupils what they expected them to learn from their lessons and praised them appropriately. Most teachers were skilled in using questions to check pupils' understanding. In best practice they encouraged pupils to think for themselves and work independently. Almost all teachers responded flexibly to pupils' particular needs and behaviours. However, this good practice had not been shared effectively and approaches to some aspects of assessment, were not always consistent. Lack of access to suitable ICT restricted learning opportunities. The school had not yet established a suitable approach to homework which recognised individual learning needs.

The quality of pupils' learning was very good. In almost all classes the high quality of relationships and calm and ordered learning environment very effectively promoted pupils' learning. Pupils were enthusiastic and happy in their learning. They settled quickly in lessons and as they progressed through the school most were able to interact in groups and to work independently with appropriate levels of supervision. Pupils responded positively to activities involving independent research and used the library well to choose books to read for enjoyment. In most lessons, the pace of learning matched pupils' learning styles. At all stages, in best practice, pupils were able to reflect on their own learning, and to take some responsibility for aspects of it.

The school took very good steps to help pupils develop their wider achievements. All pupils were actively involved in the life of the school and were proud of their achievements which included receiving the Eco Schools Scotland green flag award. Pupils had improved the school environment through planting trees and establishing a herb garden. All pupils were involved in the school recycling initiative. The school had won first prize in a national art galleries competition. The home economics teacher had coordinated developments such as healthy eating and healthy cooking which led to the school achieving Health Promoting School status. Pupils enjoyed participating in football matches with other schools. In primary classes pupils had very good experiences in music. At all stages, pupils were enthusiastic about the very good range of physical activities both in and out of the school. Dramatic productions involved all pupils and promoted confidence and good relationships among pupils and staff.

English language

Almost all teachers provided very clear oral or visual instructions and direction to ensure that pupils understood what was to be learned. In all classes teachers focused on promoting listening and talking skills. In a few classes pupils were highly skilled in interacting with each other. At the primary stages pupils did not have sufficient opportunity to develop reading and writing skills through lack of suitable ICT resources. Teachers at the secondary stages made good use of texts which pupils found appealing. In S1, the speech and language therapist and class teacher were working together very effectively to extend pupils' vocabulary. Teachers at the secondary stages encouraged pupils to work independently whenever possible. A range of strategies such as mind-mapping successfully motivated pupils to write very good imaginative and functional stories. S3 pupils gained insights into the work of a well known author by listening to a radio interview.

Mathematics

Almost all classes had a positive learning environment for pupils. Teachers almost always shared the content of lessons with pupils. They questioned pupils well to check their understanding, and to identify any problems they might have in developing key ideas such as working with numbers and estimating. Teachers gave very useful additional explanations to try to overcome pupils' difficulties. Pupils engaged very well with the tasks they were set, which were well matched to their needs and built on what they had learned. These included practical tasks, such as working with money. In most lessons, pupils worked as a group on tasks and also as individuals. In a few cases, staff linked mathematics tasks to work in other subjects, such as home economics, to give pupils opportunities to use their learning in a range of relevant situations. There was scope to develop this further, for example, in science and enterprise.

Science

The science teacher made very effective use of direct interactive teaching and a range of questioning to promote pupils' learning. She gave clear explanations of scientific concepts and engaged pupils in a wide variety of experimental work to support their understanding. ICT was used well by pupils for researching and presenting scientific information. The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Almost all pupils responded very positively to the varied range of practical work given to them. They engaged very well in discussions about the impact of science on their lives. When given the opportunity, most pupils worked together well on practical tasks. Whilst pupils' needs were generally well met, abler pupils required further challenge.

Home Economics

The teacher of home economics had established very effective working relationships with pupils. She made very good use of direct interactive teaching to promote pupils' learning. She planned lessons very well, gave clear explanations and instructions, and used questioning effectively. She made very effective use of practical demonstrations to introduce pupils to appropriate cookery techniques. Almost all pupils showed high motivation in their practical cookery work which they carried out in a safe and hygienic manner. Almost all pupils engaged very well in class discussions about the food, equipment and techniques used in their cooking, particularly in offering their own experiences and ideas. Most pupils worked well together on practical tasks but some pupils had insufficient opportunities to work independently for longer periods of time. Generally, pupils' needs were met effectively at all stages to undertake and understand class tasks but abler pupils required further challenge.

Personal and social education

The very good teaching and learning approaches in personal and social education (PSE) were enhanced by the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils. At the primary stages PSE was embedded in all areas of the curriculum. Across all stages pupils were participating in a wide and varied range of themes and activities, some of which had been suggested by the pupils themselves. At the secondary stages they were developing functional life skills and knowledge of health and sexual education. Drama was used as an effective medium for developing communication skills. Peer group interaction provided opportunities for pupils to consider the feelings of others. Pupils were helped to cope with bereavement through an imaginative approach to dealing with the death of a pet. All pupils participated in a wide range of enterprise activities such as organising themed fruit and drink for the Caribbean café run by S5 pupils for pupils and staff. Many activities were embedded into the every day life of the school.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Overall pupils' learning needs were met well. All staff had very good understanding of pupils' social communication difficulties as well as, in some cases, their significant health needs. They used effective strategies to prevent these difficulties becoming a barrier to learning through making activities relevant, practical and visual. In almost all classes, teachers worked hard to meet the very diverse range of needs. However, on occasions teaching was not sufficiently effective for a few pupils because the range of needs was too great. The occupational therapist and speech and language therapists provided very good

in-class support and advice, but they did not have time to liaise with teachers and nursery nurses to agree targets. The educational psychologist at the secondary stages gave the school very good support. Learning assistants provided good additional support. All teachers paid good attention to planning but learning targets in individualised educational programmes for a few pupils were not always appropriate. The school was supporting a few pupils with very challenging needs but had not sufficiently clarified the strategic and day-to-day management of these pupils. The authority had not yet clarified with health managers which pupils required a coordinated support plan.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>The overall quality of pastoral care was good. There was a strong sense of caring throughout the school. Pupils said they felt safe and reported that they believed any instances of bullying were effectively dealt with. The headteacher followed child protection procedures very effectively. Almost all staff skilfully promoted positive behaviour in a calm but firm manner. Training in CALM² techniques gave staff confidence to deal with some potentially challenging behaviour. The particular needs of ‘looked after’ children were met well. Some pupils benefited from the breakfast club. Practical cookery lessons in primary classes and in home economics at the secondary stage provided pupils with a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating. While there were good approaches to healthy eating throughout the school, the quality of school lunches, which were no longer prepared on the premises, did not always meet these expectations. Arrangements for specific dietary requirements were unclear. Pupils’ fitness was well considered through the good PE programme and the extensive outdoor education activities. However, a few support staff were not sufficiently clear about matters relating to child protection.</p>

² Crisis and Aggression Limitation and Management

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The quality of accommodation and facilities was weak with some unsatisfactory aspects. The facilities in the secondary building were good, particularly for practical subjects. The new library, funded by the ‘Wooden Spoon’ charity, provided very good opportunities for all pupils for extended reading and study. However, facilities at the primary stages such as the lack of tutorial rooms, areas for calming pupils and the significant shortage of suitable ICT hardware and software compromised the quality of teaching and support. Staff ensured that despite the lack of suitable secure access to various parts of the building, pupils remained safe. The general fabric of the building was poor. Ceilings were in poor condition, rain water ran into classes, window frames were faulty and there was no covered walkway from one building to the other. The kitchen serving area was too cramped to enable pupils to queue up and make choices. The outside play areas did not provide suitable informal play opportunities. Staff toilets in the primary building were inadequate. Toileting and showering facilities for some pupils were unsatisfactory.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The climate and relationships across the school among adults and pupils were very good. There was a strong sense of team working which was keenly promoted by the headteacher. Morale was high because all staff felt valued, and their commitment to pupils was very evident. The weekly assemblies further promoted the positive ethos and gave pupils opportunities to share their achievements and present aspects of their learning to others. The Eco committee provided impressive opportunities for pupils’ voices to be heard. Almost all staff had high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and worked hard to promote socially appropriate interactions. Expectations of learning were less high because of teachers’ uncertainty about the level of learning needs for each pupil. Approaches to ensuring equality and fairness were excellent. All pupils were respected and treated as individuals. Links with an African school provided pupils with very good understanding of other cultures. Inclusion of pupils from other schools in Kaimes and access to a mainstream school extended opportunities. A successful girls’ day was held to recognise the needs of the small number of girls in the school.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	The headteacher and her staff had developed strong links with parents during recent years. Parents were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. They believed that parents' evenings and review meetings were useful. The attractively presented newsletter kept them well-informed. They had been consulted about approaches to teaching their children about sensitive health issues. Home to school diaries ensured regular communication. The outreach service was particularly helpful. The school board and the Kaimes Special School Association (KSSA) were very supportive. KSSA had raised considerable funds to improve facilities. An annual Ceilidh and school shows allowed parents, staff and pupils to celebrate together. Links with Careers Scotland and several colleges supported pupils to move on from school. Reports to parents did not provide clear information about pupils' progress and levels of attainment in all subjects.

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Kaimes School had very hard-working, competent and caring staff. They fully embraced and supported the particular needs of their pupils to enable them to achieve and progress within a broad range of learning opportunities. The education authority and school now needed to extend these opportunities and raise the possibilities for broader attainment through increasing the length of the school week. The roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and depute required to be reviewed to provide better professional support for all staff.

The headteacher had played a key role in improving the culture of the school. She was very approachable and had made very positive links with parents. She had facilitated many developments which included the African partnership, the Eco School development and approaches to enterprise. She valued individual teachers' ideas and empowered them to take forward their initiatives. She had fully supported curriculum developments but had not actively guided teachers to improve approaches to learning and teaching. The headteacher was assisted by a depute who had not yet played a key role in developing the curriculum. The three highly effective principal teachers provided an outstanding range of support despite almost full-time teaching commitments. The headteacher and depute had undertaken classroom observation and monitored teacher's plans. However, these activities had not yet helped teachers to be sufficiently clear about the learning levels of pupils or ensure that the most able pupils were always suitably challenged. Staff had not used self-evaluation effectively to clarify areas for improvement.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to ensure improvement in:

- the overall accommodation and facilities by addressing the weaknesses identified in this report;
- the length of the school week so that it is in line with mainstream schools;
- the provision of coordinated support plans in line with legislative requirements;
- the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress; and
- approaches to quality assurance and improvement.

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.

Lorna Walker
HM Inspector

1 May 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	very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good
Pupils' attainment in science	good
Pupils' attainment in home economics	good
Pupils' attainment in personal and social education	very good

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

How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	good
Accommodation and facilities	weak
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	excellent
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	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"> • Pupils enjoyed school. • Staff made them feel welcome in the school. • Staff were caring and there was mutual respect between staff and pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents wanted to know how to support their children with their homework.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers told them when they had done something well. • Teachers expected them to work hard. • They had a say in deciding how to make the school better. • The school helped them to keep safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They thought that the school needed to provide them with homework.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for continuous professional development was used effectively. • They paid very good attention to the care and welfare of pupils. • They were aware of the school's procedures for child protection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior managers should operate more effectively as a team.

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 Children & Families, 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, T1, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD or by telephoning 0131 244 8293. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure

If you wish to comment about inspections of provision for pupils with additional support needs

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of provision for pupils with additional support needs, you should write in the first instance to Frank Crawford, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow, G2 8LG.

If you have a concern about this report, you should contact our Complaints Manager by telephoning 01506 600258/9 or write to Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also email HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of the HMIE Feedback and Complaints leaflet is available from this office by telephoning the above telephone number or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: ask@spsos.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsos.org.uk.

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