

**Borgue Primary School
Dumfries and Galloway
Council**

17 June 2003

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The school
3. How well are pupils performing?
4. How good is the curriculum?
5. How good is learning and teaching?
6. How well are pupils supported?
7. How well is the school managed?
8. How well does the school perform overall?

Key strengths

Main points for action

Appendix

Indicators of quality

Quality of lessons observed

How can you contact us?

Inspection of Standards and Quality in Borgue Primary School Dumfries and Galloway Council

1. Introduction

Borgue Primary School was inspected in February 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 how well pupils were performing, the effectiveness of the school and how well the school was managed.

HM Inspectors evaluated learning, teaching and attainment, examined pupils' work and interviewed staff and pupils. They assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation and development planning. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language, mathematics, and information and communications technology (ICT).

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, and to samples of staff and pupils. A member of the inspection team also met the Chairperson of the School Board.

2. The school

Borgue Primary School serves the village of Borgue and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 34.

Parents' views

Two-thirds of the parents responded to the questionnaire. They were very positive about the work of the school.

Almost all thought that:

- they were made welcome in the school and there was mutual respect between teachers and pupils;
- staff showed concern for children's welfare and dealt effectively with inappropriate behaviour; and
- the school was well led and had a good reputation in the community.

Most thought that:

- their children enjoyed school, were encouraged to work to the best of their ability and found school work interesting; and
- the school was good at letting them know about their children's progress and consulting them on decisions which affected them.

Ethos

The atmosphere in the school was relaxed but purposeful. Pupils and staff talked positively about their school and made visitors welcome. Relationships amongst staff, pupils and parents were very good. Staff morale was high. Pupils were interested and motivated in their coursework. Staff took care to ensure that parents and pupils were treated with equality and fairness. Mutual respect, tolerance and concern for racial equality were developed through the school's personal and social education programme and the religious education programme. Achievement was promoted and celebrated, but the school could do more to discuss possible improvement goals with pupils. Pupils had good access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting events with other schools. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

School and community

The school had established very good links with parents, local nurseries and other schools, educational support services and the wider community.

- The School Board and Friends of Borgue School gave very good support to the school.
- Newsletters and detailed pupil reports kept parents well informed about the activities of the school and their child's progress.
- The school had good transition programmes with its associated secondary school.
- A number of parents helped the school with its activities, both in class and during its many visits and outdoor activities.

Accommodation

Overall the quality of accommodation was good. The school building was in good condition. Classrooms were adequate in size and well fitted. A number of areas, including the library, were well used to display pupils' work. The hall served as a dining area and provided good facilities for school activities such as music, physical education and after-school clubs. The school grounds provided good hard and soft play surfaces. Some aspects of accommodation required attention, including paintwork and fencing. The school gave good attention to pupils' security.

Staffing and resources

The school was well staffed by highly motivated and dedicated teachers. Visiting teachers of learning support, art, physical education and music made a valuable contribution to the life of the school, as did its clerical and ancillary staff.

The school had a good supply of resources for most aspects of the curriculum. The library was adequately stocked, but the school needed more novels and resources for writing. The school had recently increased

substantially its resources for ICT. The headteacher managed the devolved budget well to maintain and improve resources. Staff and the School Board were consulted on proposed expenditure.

3. How well are pupils performing?

English language

In English language, the overall quality of attainment was good. The school had made good progress in raising pupils' attainment in recent years. Most pupils at P1 and P2 were progressing well in all aspects of early literacy. At P3, almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in *listening, talking, reading* and *writing*. At P4 to P7, most pupils were achieving these levels. At all stages, pupils listened very well, both to adults and to one another. They were able to talk confidently in class and group situations. At most stages, pupils enjoyed reading and talked enthusiastically about the books they had read. A few needed to develop better fluency when reading. Pupils were learning to plan and redraft their written work, but some needed to produce more extended pieces of writing. At P4 to P7, there was a need to improve spelling, punctuation and the structure and presentation of written work. Pupils were learning to make effective use of ICT in developing their writing.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment was good. Good progress had been made in raising pupils' attainment over recent years. Almost all pupils at P3 and most pupils at P4 to P7 were achieving appropriate national levels in *information handling, number, money and measurement* and *shape, position and movement*. At most stages, some pupils were exceeding these levels. Most performed well in their classwork but some were capable of achieving still more. There was scope for abler pupils at P1 to P3 to attain higher standards earlier, through an increased pace of learning. At the upper stages, pupils were confident in their use of spreadsheets and databases. Throughout the

school, pupils were benefiting from the emphasis which had been placed on mental arithmetic.

Information and Communications Technology

The overall quality of attainment in ICT was fair. At all stages, pupils had opportunities to develop skills in *using technology*. Good progress was being made in those aspects of *controlling and modelling* that pupils experienced. In *creating and presenting*, pupils were developing text handling skills appropriate to their stage, but graphic skills and multimedia skills were not yet well developed. Most pupils had developed some research skills through work related to their environmental studies programme, but more consistent development of ICT skills was needed across the school.

4. How good is the curriculum?

The overall structure of the curriculum was good. It provided pupils with a broad and balanced experience. An increased time allocation was given to English, mathematics and the expressive arts. Pupils at P4 to P7 studied French. Very good use was made of the local environment. Opportunities for personal and social development were taken in a range of curricular areas.

English language

The programme for English language was good overall. There was an appropriate balance of attention to listening, talking, reading and writing. The school was reviewing and developing its programme in phonics in the early years. The programme for listening and talking offered a wide range of appropriate opportunities for discussion. There was strong emphasis placed on encouraging reading for enjoyment. In writing, pupils were learning how to plan and redraft their work. The school needed to ensure that the reading and writing programme placed more emphasis on the progressive development of pupils' skills.

Mathematics

The programme for mathematics was good overall. It was broad and well structured. It gave very good attention to developing pupils' skills in mental calculation and placed an appropriate emphasis on practical activities to develop knowledge and understanding. At all stages, more emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of problem-solving strategies was a priority for attention.

Information and Communications Technology

The school was still developing its programme for ICT. Strengths of the programme were its development of pupils' knowledge and confidence in using technology, creating and presenting and some aspects of controlling and modelling. Skills in researching and analysis were being developed on an individual basis, as pupils increased their use of the school's ICT resources. A more structured approach to the development of skills in ICT was now required.

5. How good is learning and teaching?

Teachers interacted well with their classes. Overall the pace of learning was good.

- Planning was extensive but its quality was variable. It did not show clearly what learning would take place and how it would be assessed.
- Teachers made effective use of a wide range of teaching methods. They explained tasks well and made good use of questioning and discussion to develop pupils' understanding. Pupils had good opportunities to talk about their work and to explain their thinking.
- Most pupils were making steady progress with the work they were set. They had many opportunities for independent thinking and to take responsibility for their learning.

- Overall, there was a suitable choice of tasks to provide for pupils' differing abilities and aptitudes. However, at P1 to P3 more able pupils required greater challenge. At P4 to P7, some who were experiencing difficulties required additional support with their learning.
- Teachers regularly assessed and recorded pupils' progress in English language and mathematics. Pupils received feedback about their progress, but this needed to be more focussed to include future steps in learning. National tests were used to confirm pupils' levels of attainment, but these should be more regularly administered.
- Pupil reports provided parents with accurate evaluations of how their child was progressing and suggested appropriate next steps in learning.

6. How well are pupils supported?

Care and welfare

Staff provided very good pastoral care for pupils. The strengths and needs of individuals were well known and discussed with both pupils and parents. Individual achievement was acknowledged. Procedures were in place to promote positive behaviour. Staff took prompt action on any problems affecting pupils' welfare. Child protection, drugs education and personal relationships were covered through the school's programmes and by contact with outside agencies. Good provision was made for pupils' personal safety.

Personal and social development

Personal, social and emotional development was very well catered for within the school's activities. The health education programme built on well established contacts with outside agencies. The school provided a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a residential visit, to develop pupils' confidence, positive attitudes and sense of responsibility. The emphasis on investigation

and discussion of practical activity gave pupils confidence in expressing themselves. The new pupil council gave pupils a role in decision-making within the school. Pupils were well behaved and considerate of the needs of others.

Support for learning

Arrangements for supporting pupils' learning were good. A visiting teacher provided good support for a number of pupils with learning difficulties, helped by a classroom assistant. A special needs auxiliary supported pupils with particular needs well. The headteacher had devised individual learning programmes (IEPs) for a small number of children with significant learning difficulties. Most were well designed, but progress towards the set targets was slow and was not being evaluated clearly enough. Procedures for storage and managing Records of Needs needed to be improved.

7. How well is the school managed?

Overall management and leadership

The headteacher had been in post for five years and provided good leadership. He was enthusiastic and showed a high level of commitment to the school. His positive, open approach encouraged good working relationships among staff. He had maintained good links between the school and parents and the wider community. Along with staff, he had successfully introduced a number of initiatives aimed at raising pupils' attainment. He should now establish clearer planning for the day to day delivery of the school's work and for its future development.

The school's aims were appropriate and provided a good basis for the school to evaluate its performance. Staff had participated actively in the development and review of school policies designed to achieve these aims.

Staff review and development

Staff development activities were well organised and clearly linked to the school development plan. Both full

time members of staff were due to be reviewed shortly, in line with the local authority's arrangements for staff development and review.

Planning for improvement

Planning for improvement was fair. The school's development plan was based on an audit of the school's needs. Clearer priorities, timescales and indicators of success were needed, however. There had been some delays in implementing previous identified priorities.

Approaches to improving quality

The school was starting to make progress in using quality indicators to develop a more systematic approach to quality assurance. The headteacher worked closely with the classteacher to discuss progress across the school. A tracking system had been introduced to chart pupils' progress. Nevertheless there was still a need to focus more sharply on the monitoring of assessment results, and to share targets with pupils, as part of the strategy for raising overall standards of attainment.

8. How well does the school perform overall?

Borgue Primary School provided good learning experiences for its pupils. Staff were very hardworking and highly committed to the well being of pupils. They had created an environment where pupils were happy, secure and confident. A number of initiatives to raise attainment and achievement had been implemented. Standards of attainment had improved consistently over recent years. Better monitoring of pupils' progress and more systematic self-evaluation was now required, to make planning for improvement more effective.

Key strengths

- The positive staff-pupil relationships and the high quality of pastoral care.
- The commitment and teamwork among teaching and ancillary staff.
- The provision for the personal and social development of pupils.
- The quality of teaching and the opportunities for discussion and independent learning.
- The high level of support provided for the school by parents and the School Board
- The broad range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for learning from the environment.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should act on the following recommendations.

- The school should improve its programmes in English language, mathematics and ICT, in line with the recommendations of this report.
- The school should develop more effective approaches to monitoring and evaluating its work, as a basis for planning improvements.
- The headteacher should develop clearer procedures for planning the day to day work of the school and for its future development.

HM Inspectors have asked the school and education authority 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. In liaison with the education authority, HM Inspectors will monitor progress to ensure improvements in line with the main findings of the report. They will arrange for further progress reports and visits to the school if necessary and will inform parents and carers of the outcomes of these when they occur.

Mr Alan Blair
HM Inspector
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector
Eastern Division

17 June 2003

See Quality Indicator data overleaf.

Appendix

Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be *very good*

- Climate and relationships
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- The teaching process

We judged the following to be *good*

- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Accommodation and facilities
- Staffing
- Provision of resources
- School management of finances
- Structure of the curriculum
- Courses and programmes
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Assessment as part of teaching
- Reporting pupils' progress
- Learning support
- Leadership
- Staff review and development
- Self-evaluation

We judged the following to be *fair*

- Teachers' planning
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Implementation of legislation relating to SEN and disabilities
- Planning for improvement

We judged the following to be *unsatisfactory*

- No aspects were found to be in this category

Quality of lessons observed

HMI also evaluated the quality of the lessons observed. The overall quality of lessons was very good in 31% of cases, good in 56% and fair in 13%. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

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 HMIE Office, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD or by telephoning 0131 244 8437. Copies are also available on our web site: 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 Dr Gill Robinson, HMCI at the above address. 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.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Professor Alice Brown
The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
23 Walker Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7HX

Telephone number: 0870 011 5378

e-mail: enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk

More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website:

www.ombudsmanscotland.org.uk

Crown Copyright 2003

HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.