

**Jamestown Primary School
West Dunbartonshire Council
4 May 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	5
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	7
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	8-9
How can you contact us?	10

1. Background

Jamestown Primary School was inspected in February 2004 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, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2. Members of the inspection team also met representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents. There was no School Board.

The school serves the village of Jamestown and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 162. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The headteacher's leadership in developing a very positive ethos, a high standard of behaviour and a very good partnership with parents.
- The commitment of the hard working staff towards the pupils.
- Pupils' positive attitude to learning and the way in which they co-operated with and showed concern for each other.
- Attainment of pupils at the early stages in mathematics and English language.
- The very good pastoral care for pupils.

3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff

The inspection team found that all associated with the school were very satisfied with almost all aspects of its work. Parents and carers felt that they were made to feel welcome, kept very well informed about their children's progress and how they could help the work of the school. Staff enjoyed working at the school. Staff and parents were very supportive of the headteacher who they thought led the school well. Pupils were happy at school and expressed positive views about their teachers.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. Pupils experienced a suitably broad and balanced range of activities. Pupils in P6 and P7 learned German and those in P7 were involved in enterprise activities. Pupils at all stages had good opportunities to extend their personal and social development, notably through the well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. While there were some good examples of pupils using information and communications technology (ICT) to further their learning, teachers did not yet provide sufficient opportunities in this area. The school was working steadily to improve programmes of work across the curriculum. Recent improvements in English language, mathematics and science provided pupils with better opportunities to progress in these areas. Visiting teachers of music and physical education made valuable contributions to pupils' achievements. In almost all classes, teachers gave clear explanations and instructions and interacted well with pupils. They used questioning well to help pupils recall factual information. In best practice, teachers questioned skilfully to reinforce pupils' learning and develop their understanding. Some well-structured approaches to teaching in, for example, interactive mathematics and aspects of reading and writing, provided stimulating learning experiences for pupils. Teachers made very good use of praise to raise pupils' confidence and reward their achievements. However, not all teachers set appropriately high enough standards for all pupils. The pace of learning and the level of challenge was not always sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly at the middle and upper stages.

Almost all pupils were well motivated and keen to learn. They responded well to opportunities to co-operate with each other on shared learning tasks. Pupils paid very good attention to the presentation of their work. In P3, pupils were developing well their investigative skills in science and in P6 were progressing well in learning German.

Pupils were making very good progress overall in developing confidence and self-esteem. The school gave high priority to celebrating pupils' achievements which were recognised and promoted both in class and in the motivating, weekly school assemblies. Pupils responded very positively to the school's reward schemes. They were willing to take on class responsibilities at all stages. Older pupils carried out very well a range of additional responsibilities, especially those associated with caring for others or for the environment of the school. Pupils were developing a sense of citizenship through their involvement with the pupil council, which gave them opportunities to influence aspects of school life. The school choir has successfully contributed to a concert with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Pupils had also gained awards through participating in sports festivals and mathematics challenges.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Attainment in recent years had been variable. At the early stages, pupils were making a very good start to developing their literacy skills. At P2, the majority of pupils were achieving levels in reading and writing earlier than expected. Some pupils at the other stages were also achieving levels in reading and writing earlier than expected. Most pupils were making good progress in their coursework but some were capable of learning at a faster pace.

Teachers made good use of a new approach to teaching writing to motivate pupils and raise attainment. Pupils, particularly at the early stages, listened attentively in class and responded appropriately to teachers' instructions and explanations. By P7 pupils could express their ideas and opinions clearly and enthusiastically. At the later stages pupils did not have sufficient opportunities to study a range of authors and their styles of writing.

Mathematics

Pupils' attainment in mathematics was good. There had been an overall improving trend in recent years. At P1 to P4, pupils had made a very good start to the development of early mathematical skills. All pupils at P2 had attained national levels earlier than expected. Almost all pupils at P4 and most at P6 had achieved appropriate national levels. However, only a majority achieved national levels at P7. Almost all pupils coped well with classwork but, particularly from P5 to P7 stages, some were capable of achieving higher standards through increased pace of learning and more challenging tasks. At all stages pupils were developing skills in written calculations with most developing good accuracy in mental calculation. Pupils were able to handle mathematical information and interpret graphs. However, they had too few opportunities to use computers to organise and display information. Some pupils at P7 were having difficulty with fractions and decimals. Pupils at all stages were developing skills in problem-solving and enquiry and by P7 most could use a suitable range of problem-solving strategies.

5. How well are pupils supported?

Staff placed a high priority on pupils' care and welfare and were sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs. Clear and well understood procedures on promoting positive behaviour and on dealing with child protection issues were in place. Arrangements for responding to pupils' concerns about bullying were very good. Pupils felt safe and well looked after. They were confident that staff were approachable if help was required. The school had begun to develop its approaches to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Pupils with additional support needs received good assistance overall. The area network support teacher, the support for learning teacher and the early intervention teacher collaborated well with the headteacher and class teachers to systematically identify pupils with additional support needs and provided focused assistance for individuals or small groups. The classroom assistant provided some pupils with additional support in reading. Appropriate individualised educational programmes (IEPs) had been devised, for a number of pupils, and identified specific learning targets. These were shared with relevant staff and parents who were also involved in the regular reviews of pupils' progress. Teachers provided a good level of support for pupils in class. However, at times some pupils were not given classwork matched to their needs and abilities or given opportunities to work at an appropriate pace.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of accommodation was good. The school buildings were very well maintained. A very good security system was in operation throughout the school. Staff made very good use of the available space. They used display very effectively throughout the school to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils. The school had recently established a well-equipped school library as an additional area for pupils to learn. However, there was still limited space for learning activities outwith the classrooms and for storage. The enclosed and well supervised playground had been marked with some interesting games to promote play. The school had appropriate facilities for disabled users.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The headteacher and staff had created a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Staff, pupils and parents identified strongly with the school and were very proud of it. Staff morale was high and they were very committed to the pupils. Teachers worked very well together and with the clerical, janitor and catering staff who made valuable contributions to the life of the school. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their wider achievements but expectations of pupils' attainment, particularly in mathematics and English language, were not always high enough. Pupils were friendly, co-operative and very well behaved. There was a strong sense of mutual respect among staff and pupils. The school had taken a range of positive steps to promote equality and fairness. The school did not provide sufficiently regular opportunities for religious observance.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The school communicated effectively with parents and had established overall a very positive partnership with them. Parents were kept well informed through newsletters, reports on pupils' progress and through a helpful handbook. The headteacher regularly sought their views about the work of the school. In addition, she had taken positive steps to encourage parents to participate and support their children's learning at home. Parents had not yet been fully consulted on the recent developments in the school's health education programme. The supportive PTA raised funds for the school and held social events which strengthened the sense of community. The school had developed productive links with other schools in the area in developing aspects of the curriculum.</p>

7. Improving the school

Jamestown Primary School provided a caring and supportive environment where pupils were making good progress overall in their learning. Staff were clearly committed to the school. They had created an environment where pupils were safe, secure and progressing very well in their personal and social development. High priority was given to celebrating pupils' achievements and attitudes to learning. Teaching was good, but some teachers did not always have high enough expectations of what pupils could achieve, particularly the higher attaining pupils. The school was well placed to improve further.

The headteacher provided effective leadership in establishing a positive environment for learning. She was highly committed to the school and had given significant priority to the promotion of a positive ethos and a high standard of behaviour. The very positive attitudes of the pupils, parents and staff reflected her accomplishments in these areas. She had introduced a number of initiatives which had helped to improve aspects of learning and teaching and overall standards of achievement and recognised that work was still required in these areas. The recently appointed deputy head teacher supported the headteacher well through leading some areas of development and through monitoring aspects of school work, particularly in religious and moral education. However, her remit was not sufficiently focused on supporting further improvement in attainment in English language and mathematics, and in learning and teaching.

The school had established an ethos of self-evaluation. Staff were actively involved in planning and reviewing the work of the school, which had resulted in improvements in some aspects of learning and teaching. Staff had made use of quality indicators to assist them in this process. The headteacher monitored the work of teachers through classroom visits, reviewing their plans and sampling pupils' work. She also worked with the teachers in tracking pupils' progress and attainment. The headteacher was committed to continued improvements in pupils' attainment and in the quality of learning and teaching. To achieve this, she had recognised the need to provide greater rigour in the school's approaches to self-evaluation and strategies to support further improvements.

The school and education authority should take action to ensure further improvement in the work of the school and to raise achievement for all its pupils. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- continue to develop the use of ICT to support pupils' learning;
- provide more appropriate pace and challenge at times, particularly for the higher attaining pupils;
- review the deployment of the deputy headteacher to more effectively support improvements in learning, teaching and attainment; and
- develop more rigour in monitoring and evaluating learning, teaching and pupils' progress and attainment.

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.

R B Hogg
HM Inspector

4 May 2004

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Pastoral care
- Climate and relationships
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents and the community

We judged the following to be good

- Structure of the curriculum
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Accommodation and facilities
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities
- Leadership
- Self-evaluation

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.

What pleased parents and carers most	What parents and carers would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents felt that their children enjoyed being at school and that staff showed concern for their care and welfare. • All parents thought that they were made welcome in the school and that it was well led. • Almost all felt that the school communicated well with them on all matters concerning their children. • Almost all felt that the school set high standards for pupils' attainment and that their children found the work stimulating and challenging. • Almost all felt that the school had explained how they could support their children with their homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents had no significant concerns.
What pleased pupils most	What pupils would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all pupils enjoyed being at school and felt that they had a say in making the school better. • Almost all felt that teachers expected them to work hard and praised good work. • Almost all felt that they got on well together, that the school helped them to keep safe and healthy and dealt well with any bullying incidents when they occurred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils felt that the behaviour in the school was not good.

What pleased staff most	What staff would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff liked working in the school and felt that the school was well led by senior managers who worked effectively as a team. • All staff felt that the school celebrated pupils' successes regularly and dealt effectively with any instances of indiscipline including bullying. • All staff felt that they showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils and that the standards set for pupil behaviour were consistently upheld in the school. • All staff felt that pupils received constructive feedback on their work and that standards of work expected by pupils were communicated clearly to parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few ancillary staff felt that aspects of communication in the school needed to be improved.

How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education and Cultural Services, 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, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. 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 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.

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More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website:
www.scottishombudsman.org.uk

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