

**Chatelherault Primary School  
Hamilton  
South Lanarkshire Council  
7 December 2004**

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## 1. Background

Chatelherault Primary School was inspected in June 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 spoke to the chairperson of the School Board, and met representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents.

The school serves part of the town of Hamilton. At the time of the inspection the roll was 413, including 60 in the nursery class. The school had a base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Eighteen pupils received support from the base. Most pupils in the base lived outside the catchment area for the school and travelled to and from it in escorted taxis provided by the education authority. Some of the pupils attended schools in their own locality for part of the week. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. One third of the pupils attended as a result of placing requests from outside the catchment area for the school. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

An integrated inspection of pre-school provision was carried out at the same time by HMIE and the Care Commission and is the subject of a separate report.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Polite, courteous pupils and their enjoyment of school.
- Very good learning and teaching at the early stages.
- Contribution of the Eco project to pupils' awareness of the local environment.
- Teamwork and commitment of teachers to providing a quality education for all pupils.

### **3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff**

Overall, parents and carers were pleased with the work of the school. All felt that their children enjoyed being at school and that the school would act if they raised a matter of concern. They thought that teachers were helpful and made them feel welcome. However, a few commented that senior managers were not approachable. Around forty per cent were not clear about the school's priorities for improvement. Pupils enjoyed being at school and thought that teachers helped them when they had difficulties. They felt safe and secure at school. Almost all staff thought that there was mutual respect between staff and pupils and that the school dealt effectively with bullying. Staff liked working in the school. However, only a third of teachers thought that there was effective communication between senior managers and staff. Three-quarters of staff thought that senior managers did not work well together and that the school was not well led.

### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

#### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. It was broad and balanced. Pupils' learning experiences were being enriched by the contribution of visits and visitors. Teachers were effectively increasing pupils' awareness of the environment across a range of curricular areas. Pupils at P1 to P3 were using information and communications technology (ICT) effectively to support their learning in a number of areas of the curriculum, for example, in mathematics. However, at other stages, teachers were not providing enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in ICT fully. The overall quality of teaching was good. Teachers provided clear explanations and questioned pupils carefully to check their understanding. Many provided stimulating lessons. However, in English language, the range of teaching approaches was limited because teachers were too reliant on the use of textbooks and worksheets. Homework was used regularly across the school, but it was not sufficiently varied or challenging. Most teachers used praise well. They gave pupils good advice on what they needed to do to improve during lessons. However, they were not as consistent with their written comments. The school did not have well-organised arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

Pupils were well motivated and many of them were enthusiastic about learning. At P1 to P3, pupils responded very well to the teaching approaches and were beginning to be able to discuss and describe their learning. Pupils worked together enthusiastically undertaking practical mathematical activities and solving problems. At P1 to P3, pupils had very good opportunities to learn through play. There were examples where the pace of learning was brisk, for example, in science at P1 and drama at P6. However, in English language, too often the pace the learning was slow. At P4 to P7, pupils had too few opportunities to develop independent approaches to learning.

Pupils across the school participated well in sporting and musical activities. They worked well together and showed respect for, and tolerance of others. In an initiative to develop their citizenship skills, pupils had taken part in mock elections and spoken to local politicians. At P4, pupils were making very good progress learning to make animated films with a visiting arts group. At all stages, pupils had a good awareness of the benefits of

healthy eating and of caring for the environment. Pupils, parents and staff had all worked very well together in the recent school show. Pupils had further opportunities to perform at the regular class assemblies.

The curriculum for pupils in the base was fair overall. It had an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' communication and social skills. At the time of the inspection, the number of hours that pupils were taught was less than for pupils in mainstream at the school. Almost all pupils spent part of their week in mainstream classes. However, teachers in the base did not always have a firm knowledge of the curriculum pupils were experiencing in mainstream classes. There were no planned programmes for personal and social development and religious and moral education. Pupils at P1 to P3 had only recently been provided with opportunities to learn through play. Teachers encouraged pupils to listen to each other. However, they did not use a sufficiently varied range of teaching approaches. Some lessons were too long and pupils found it difficult to sustain their concentration. Pupils did not have sufficient opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. Class lessons very often were focused on worksheets. Staff had not had appropriate training in specialist approaches to teaching and assessment in order to improve the pace of learning in classrooms.

### **English language**

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Most pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading and writing. In reading and writing a majority had achieved these levels early. At P1 to P3, pupils were making very good progress in the development of their literacy skills. At P4 to P7, most pupils enjoyed reading for pleasure. They participated enthusiastically in an initiative to promote reading more widely across the school. At all stages, pupils were able to find information from a variety of resources and had a good knowledge of how language is used. Pupils' punctuation and spelling skills were well developed and they presented their work very well. However, they did not write for a wide enough variety of readers and purposes. Pupils' skills in talking were not fully developed.

### **Mathematics**

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels. A majority had achieved these levels early. Almost all pupils were making good progress in their coursework. They were competent in written and mental calculations and had good opportunities to undertake practical mathematical activities. They demonstrated a good understanding of shape, angles and measurement and could interpret a range of graphs. They were not yet able to use computers effectively to organise and display information. Pupils at all stages could use a range of strategies confidently to solve problems.

### **Achievements of pupils in the autistic spectrum disorder base**

Pupils were making fair progress in communication and language. They were interested in the stories they were read. They were making some progress with their reading, but were restricted by the lack of use of appropriate texts for lower attaining pupils. Pupils were encouraged to talk and listen in groups, however some lessons

were disrupted by challenging behaviour. Pupils completed structured activities which developed their basic writing skills. However, they were not able to write at length or for a variety of purposes. The development of pupils' communication and language skills was very well supported by the speech and language therapist.

Pupils were making fair progress in mathematics. At P1 to P3, almost all pupils could recognise numbers 1-20 and perform simple counting operations. At P4 to P7, some pupils demonstrated an understanding of measurement. Pupils' skills in number, money and measurement were not well developed. They did not have enough opportunities to undertake practical approaches to mathematics and did not make enough use of ICT to support and enhance their learning.

Overall, only a few pupils were making good progress in relation to the routines in the wider school environment. Support staff supervised pupils in the playground. They encouraged pupils to play together and promoted positive behaviour. Some pupils found lunchtimes challenging and had difficulties coping with the busy activity around them. A few had difficulties relating to staff and other pupils. At P1 to P3, teachers were making effective use of circle time to promote more positive behaviour. Pupils did not always understand the standards of behaviour set for them and the progress they were making in achieving them.

## **5. How well are pupils supported?**

All staff provided well for the care and welfare of pupils. The school had appropriate procedures in place for dealing with pupils' health, care and well-being. Teachers knew their pupils well and were sensitive to meeting their social and emotional needs. All staff were aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. In the base, staff were aware of the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils. They were not always able to meet those needs. The school should work to improve support and training for staff.

Overall, the school's arrangements to support pupils' learning had important weaknesses. At P1 to P3, pupils' needs were being met well by the choice of tasks and activities. The English as an additional language teacher worked very effectively supporting small groups and individuals. Commendably, she was undertaking assessments in pupils' first language to enable teachers and visiting specialists to plan effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils. The specialist support teacher had introduced a reading project to increase pupils' motivation and improve their reading. However, teachers were not fully aware of the purpose and outcome of this initiative. The school had introduced a number of individualised educational programmes (IEPs) to help meet the needs of pupils experiencing significant difficulties with their learning. Teachers were using the IEPs effectively to support pupils and monitor their progress. At P1 to P3, teachers planned very well for play to ensure pupils' experiences were linked to curricular areas. However, in English language at all stages, their planning was not sufficiently focused on outcomes as a result of which tasks and activities often lacked challenge.

Teachers, special needs auxiliaries and the speech and language therapist were committed to meeting the needs of pupils in the base. Commendably, there had been a gradual increase in the number of pupils attending mainstream classes. The inclusion class teacher provided valuable support to pupils in some classes. However, not all pupils from the base received appropriate support when in mainstream classes. Tasks and activities did not provide an appropriate level of challenge to meet individual pupils' needs effectively. The school reviewed pupils' IEPs and Records of Needs annually. However, learning targets in IEPs were not sufficiently specific to enable teachers to measure pupils' progress effectively and plan their next steps in learning. The targets needed to be reviewed and evaluated more regularly. IEPs did not include targets for understanding and relating to the environment.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of accommodation was good. Classrooms were bright and attractive. Classes made effective use of the hall for gym, drama and assemblies. At P5 to P7, teachers were making good use of the open areas for small groups to work together. However, at P1 to P3, one of the open areas had to be used as a teaching area for P1, which limited the space available for play. Pupils had access to an extensive playground. The area around the school had been successfully developed through the Eco project. Most windows were in poor condition and some of the toilets were broken. The accommodation for the base had important weaknesses. There was limited space for pupils to play and the size of the teaching areas restricted the range of approaches which could be used. The education authority had plans to rebuild the school.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>Staff and pupils enjoyed good relationships. Pupils were friendly, courteous and polite. Staff across the school had high expectations for pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement. However, the school did not have consistent approaches to promoting positive behaviour or strategies for managing the challenging behaviour of some pupils in the base. The depute headteachers led the assemblies which were used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and for religious observance. Teachers and pupils valued and celebrated cultural differences. Pupils from the base were included in a number of whole school activities, such as the school show. However, as yet, teachers and support staff did not have a clear understanding of the additional support needs of the pupils receiving support in the base.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had developed good partnerships with parents, the School Board, the PTA and the local community. Parents found staff approachable and helpful. However, some did not have the same confidence in senior managers. The school communicated with parents through informative newsletters and helpful written reports. It had effective procedures in place for the transfer of pupils from the nursery to P1 and P7 to secondary school. Parents supported the school through helping with classes and extra-curricular activities. While relationships between parents and staff in the base were good, the school did not provide sufficient information to parents on the curriculum and activities undertaken in the base.

## 7. Improving the school

Teachers were hard working and highly committed to providing a quality education for all pupils. Pupils enjoyed being at school. Their achievements in the wider curriculum had benefited from the contribution of organisations such as Artsnet in the community and the success of the Eco project. The school had successfully achieved ‘Eco-school’ status. The proportion of pupils achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics had been consistently good in recent years. However, there was room for improvement. In English language, teachers did not sufficiently focus on the development of pupils’ literacy skills.

The leadership of the school had major weaknesses. Staff morale was low. Teaching and non-teaching staff did not feel supported by the headteacher. She did not have a sufficiently high profile in the school or relate well to pupils and staff. Planning for improvement was not monitored systematically to impact sufficiently on pupils’ learning experiences. The senior managers consisted of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and an acting deputy headteacher with responsibility for the base. There was not a strong sense of teamwork among senior managers. One of the deputy headteachers had only recently been appointed. She had already gained the confidence of the staff. In her short time in post, the acting deputy headteacher had taken some positive steps to promote greater inclusion of the pupils from the base in the activities of the school. The other deputy headteacher was hard working and committed to the school. She had a substantial remit which included responsibility for a wide range of management tasks. She had not focused sufficiently on key priorities and ensured that initiatives which had started were consistently implemented. The two principal teachers had clear remits and were making effective contributions to the work of the school. The school’s approaches to self-evaluation were unsatisfactory. Senior managers monitored teachers’ plans, but teachers were not evaluating the effectiveness of their own plans rigorously. The headteacher had undertaken some classroom visits, but teachers were not clear about their purpose and had not always received feedback. Teachers were not systematically assessing and recording pupils’ progress in key areas

of the curriculum. This limited the extent to which senior managers could effectively monitor and track pupils' progress. The processes for self-evaluation did not sufficiently focus on the quality of pupils' learning experiences across the curriculum.

The school and education authority should take action to improve the management and aspects of learning and teaching. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- improve leadership and teamwork among senior managers;
- develop rigorous approaches for senior managers and teachers to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the work of the school, including learning and teaching;
- improve learning and teaching in English language to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils;
- improve the school's approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress in key areas of the curriculum; and
- improve the curriculum and the quality of learning and teaching for pupils who attend the base.

### **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. HM Inspectors will engage with the school and the education authority to monitor progress. They will publish an interim report on progress within one year of the publication of this report. Thereafter, HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in another report to parents and carers, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Maureen McKenna  
HM Inspector

7 December 2004

## **Appendix 1 Indicators of quality**

### **We judged the following to be very good**

- No aspects were found to be in this category

### **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
- Pastoral care
- Accommodation and facilities
- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities

### **We judged the following to be fair**

- Meeting pupils' needs

### **We judged the following to be unsatisfactory**

- Leadership
- Self-evaluation

## Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

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

<p><b>What pleased parents and carers most</b></p>	<p><b>What parents and carers would like to see improved</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good reputation of the school in the local community.</li> <li>• Staff made them feel welcome at school and there was mutual respect between staff and pupils.</li> <li>• If they raised a matter of concern then the school would do something about it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They did not have a clear idea of the school's priorities for improving the education of pupils.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What pleased pupils most</b></p>	<p><b>What pupils would like to see improved</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They enjoyed being at school and teachers helped them when they got stuck.</li> <li>• Teachers checked their homework and listened to what they had to say.</li> <li>• They got on well with other pupils and they felt safe and well looked after at school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils had no significant concerns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What pleased staff most</b></p>	<p><b>What staff would like to see improved</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils were enthusiastic about learning.</li> <li>• They were aware of the school's procedures relating to child protection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The communication between senior managers and staff.</li> <li>• Their involvement in the decision-making processes of the school.</li> <li>• The lack of regular staff discussion about how to achieve school priorities.</li> <li>• The teamwork of senior managers and the leadership of the headteacher.</li> </ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Executive Director (Education Resources), 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](http://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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