

**Deanburn Primary School
Bo'ness
Falkirk Council
25 April 2006**

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1. Background

Deanburn Primary School was inspected in January 2006 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, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA), and a group of parents¹. There was no School Board.

The school serves part of the town of Bo'ness. At the time of the inspection the roll was 384, including nine pupils who received enhanced provision and 60 children in the nursery class. Following a fire in the former building, pupils at P4 to P7 had recently moved into new accommodation. Children in the nursery and pupils at P1 to P3 remained in the older building. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attendance was below the national average.

The work of the nursery class was not included in this inspection.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Examples of good interactive teaching and the quality of pupils' learning.
- Very well-behaved, polite and enthusiastic pupils.
- Good attitudes to learning amongst pupils and successful approaches taken by staff to promote positive behaviour.
- The quality of display of pupils' work throughout the school.
- The environmentally friendly accommodation in the new building and surrounding leisure areas which provided a most effective context for pupils to learn and to play.

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 a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

The inspection team found that parents, pupils and staff were positive and supportive about most aspects of the school. Parents liked the new building. They thought that staff showed care and concern for pupils' welfare and that there was mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Parents wanted more information regarding school priorities, homework and pupils' progress. Pupils felt safe and well looked after. They thought that the school helped them to stay healthy and they appreciated the regular checking of their homework by teachers. All staff liked working in the school. They reported that pupils' successes were regularly celebrated in the school. A quarter of the teaching staff and a majority of support staff stated that communication between staff was not effective. Similarly, a significant number of staff felt that communication between senior managers and staff needed to improve.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school provided pupils with broad and balanced learning experiences. Additional time given to English language and mathematics had been used successfully to raise pupils' attainment. The good curriculum included enterprise activities and ensured the effective development of personal and social skills. It took appropriate account of Scottish culture. Pupils' language skills were enhanced through good community links and use of the surrounding environment. Specialist teachers in fabric craft, art and design and physical education worked in the school on a regular basis and provided pupils with positive learning experiences. A member of the information communication technology (ICT) masterclass team had been deployed effectively to support the teaching of ICT. There was scope for increasing the opportunities for all pupils to develop their skills in physical education and for pupils at P1 to P3 to learn actively through play. Across the school, the quality of teaching was good. In many lessons, teachers set a brisk pace and suitably high levels of challenge, to which pupils responded very positively. Teachers were well organised, planned lessons carefully and used a wide range of teaching approaches. They provided clear explanations and made some very effective use of questioning to check and extend pupils' understanding, particularly in mental calculations. Teachers used praise well to build pupils' self-confidence and were increasing the feedback they gave pupils on their strengths and how they could improve their work. Pupils' regular homework tasks included investigative work as well as a variety of English language and mathematics activities.

The quality of learning across the school was good. The learning environment was bright and stimulating. Pupils were motivated and worked enthusiastically. They responded positively to teachers and stayed focused on their work. Pupils had some good opportunities to work in pairs and in groups. At P3, pupils worked well together using telescopes and magnifiers to explore their topic about light. At P5, pupils were encouraged

to work collaboratively on a technology project. However, at times, a few teachers provided pupils with too much direction and did not allow them to develop enough independence in organising their learning.

Pupils had many opportunities to take responsibility, develop good citizenship and demonstrate achievement. They took part in decision making at class and school level. Their active involvement in the school council enabled them to express views about the school's work and suggest improvements. At all stages, pupils worked together on a range of successful enterprise projects. Pupils' contributions to setting priorities and activities for improving the school environment had helped the school to achieve a recent Eco School award. Pupils in the upper stages were learning to accept a degree of responsibility through helping friends from the enhanced provision class and assisting in the playground and dining hall. Pupils were successful in raising funds for charities, for example, recently supporting the Asian tsunami appeal. They showed confidence in leading presentations about their Eco-friendly school to visiting pupils and staff from other schools. In the upper stages, pupils enjoyed a residential experience which helped to develop their self-esteem and social skills.

English language

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good. Standards had improved over the last few years and, despite a dip in reading attainment last year, were consistently above national levels. Most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. Pupils not attaining national levels were making appropriate progress in their coursework. Almost all pupils listened well to their teachers and to each other. At P6 and P7, pupils expressed their opinions confidently and built effectively on ideas from others. Almost all pupils read for pleasure and could talk enthusiastically about books they had read and their favourite authors. Pupils had good opportunities to learn about the Scots language. At the early stages, pupils were successfully developing their writing skills. By P3, a majority of pupils produced extended pieces of writing. Pupils in P4 to P7 needed more opportunities to write at length, in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes. Handwriting and presentation across all stages was consistently of a high standard.

Mathematics

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was good. Standards had improved over recent years. Most pupils were attaining in line with, and sometimes above, appropriate national levels. In the early stages, almost all pupils attained these levels earlier than might normally be expected. At all stages, pupils performed well in classwork. Most pupils, including those with additional support needs, were making good progress. Pupils at the early stages had made a brisk start in learning to count. Pupils at P3 to P7 could collect data, and interpret results from an appropriate range of graphs. They demonstrated well-developed skills in number work and carried out written calculations accurately. Most showed speed and confidence in mental calculations. Across all stages, pupils were able to describe the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. All pupils regularly experienced a range of problem-solving activities and resources, but were not yet using systematic approaches to tackle problems.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The school's arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils were good. It had clear policies and procedures for child protection and dealing with bullying. A few teaching staff, however, were not fully aware of these procedures. The school was extending its approaches to promoting health and wellbeing by encouraging healthy eating and developing a healthy tuck shop. Staff knew pupils well and were sensitive to their emotional, social and physical needs. Almost all pupils felt safe and well looked after. They thought that the school was good at sorting things out if they were upset. A small number were not clear what to do if they were upset and did not think that action taken to address concerns was always effective. The school should further develop its approaches to handling such concerns.

Overall, support for pupils' learning was adequate. In class, teachers gave good help to pupils experiencing difficulty with their work. They often took effective steps, such as grouping pupils by levels of attainment or using additional resources, to meet the differing needs of pupils in their classes. The school had an effective approach to identifying pupils requiring additional support with their learning. The newly appointed network support teacher had made a good start to enhancing the school's approaches to supporting pupils. Support staff provided valuable support for a range of pupils but were not always deployed well. In partnership with Barnardo's, staff had also developed good arrangements to give some P7 pupils additional support in preparation for their move to the secondary school.

A small number of pupils received significant additional support for learning through arrangements for enhanced provision. Staff had established a positive, supportive learning environment within the enhanced provision classroom. They gave good attention to promoting pupils' language and numeracy skills. However, in this class approaches to learning and teaching were not always well suited to the specific needs of individuals. Speech and language therapists provided very good support to promote pupils' language and communication skills. Staff had prepared clear and concise individualised educational programmes in consultation with class teachers and parents. Pupils' progress towards the learning targets set for them was monitored regularly by staff involved in the delivery of enhanced provision. Overall, targets, particularly those for personal and social development, did not fully address pupils' barriers to learning. Teachers delivering enhanced provision worked alongside class teachers and classroom assistants to support pupils in mainstream classes. However, arrangements for enhanced provision required to be improved to ensure well-targeted support that clearly addressed pupils' specific learning needs.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>Overall, the quality of accommodation was very good. A large section of the school building had been rebuilt in 2005 following a fire which had caused significant damage to the former school. The new school building was secure, clean, well maintained and set amidst spacious and attractive grounds. Staff made very effective use of display in classrooms and open areas to create a bright, stimulating environment for pupils. The large gym hall, school library, and a number of additional rooms were well used to support a variety of learning and teaching activities. The range and quality of resources, including the provision for ICT, was very good. The school was accessible for all users and included a lift to allow access to the upper floor. The distinctive features of the design helped to make the school environmentally friendly. Pupils were proud of their Eco-friendly school and were knowledgeable regarding its distinctive features. The education authority was working with the school to continue to improve the accommodation used by the nursery, P1, P2 and P3.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>All pupils were very well behaved. They responded positively to the effective arrangements made by staff to promote good behaviour and achievement. Pupils were friendly, polite and courteous. Relationships between support staff and pupils were not always positive. Several teaching and support staff did not feel fully involved in the decision making processes of the school. For some staff, this had a negative impact on morale. School assemblies provided regular opportunities for religious observance and for celebrating pupils' efforts and successes. The good programme for religious education was successful in promoting pupils' awareness of various cultures and their special celebrations. Pupils were developing tolerance for others and a good awareness of race equality. Those with additional support needs were well integrated into the life of the school.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	There were important weaknesses in the arrangements made by the school to develop partnerships with parents. In particular, parents did not receive sufficiently detailed or regular information regarding pupils' progress. The most recent standards and quality report published by the school contained limited, but also inaccurate, information. There was no School Board and the school had not surveyed the views of parents regarding the work of the school. The school was working in collaboration with other primary schools in the area to provide parents with information regarding the teaching of sensitive health issues. An active PTA raised funds for the school and the school benefited from supportive links with the local church and business community.

7. Improving the school

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

Deanburn Primary School provided a good education for its pupils. Teachers worked conscientiously to meet the needs of pupils and to help them attain high standards. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school was good. Teachers had established a purposeful learning environment with high expectations for the quality of pupils' work. Over the past three years, the school had successfully raised overall levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The school needed to ensure that learning and teaching approaches in the enhanced provision base were better matched to the specific needs of individual pupils.

The headteacher provided good leadership. She was highly committed to the school and the local community and had successfully supported staff and pupils during a period of significant change and disruption in recent years. During the three years of her leadership, the school had seen improvements in the curriculum, in teaching, learning and also in standards of attainment. She was respected by staff but needed to develop better teamwork in the school by consulting staff more often and ensuring that they were kept informed about all school matters. The two deputy headteachers and principal teacher provided good managerial support to the headteacher. The work of the principal teacher in developing a whole school approach to managing pupil behaviour was particularly effective. Both deputy headteachers provided good support to new teachers within the school and gave teaching staff effective guidance in implementing revised programmes and improving planning and assessment. One deputy headteacher held responsibility for support for learning and for the enhanced provision but had not been involved in reviewing the effectiveness of such arrangements. Arrangements for self-evaluation were weak. The promoted staff regularly reviewed the standards of pupils' work, but approaches to monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching, and to tracking pupils' progress lacked rigour. Teaching staff regularly reviewed the effectiveness of their own teaching, but they were

not sufficiently involved in reviewing the progress of the school to address agreed priority action points for improvement. Parents, pupils and staff were not sufficiently involved in the process of quality assurance. The headteacher recognised that more systematic approaches to self-evaluation needed to be developed.

Main points for action

The school and education authority, in liaison with HM Inspectors, should take action to ensure improvement in:

- communication with parents and involvement of parents in their children's learning and the life of the school;
- relationships between staff in order to build more effective team work;
- enhanced provision for pupils with specific additional support needs, to ensure that approaches to learning and teaching are better matched to the specific needs of individuals; and
- monitoring and evaluation arrangements, involving parents, pupils and staff, to ensure high quality education for all.

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

Peter Carpenter
HM Inspector

25 April 2006

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	Good
Pupils' attainment in English language	Good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Good

How well are pupils supported?	
Pastoral care	Good
Meeting pupils' needs	Adequate

How good is the environment for learning?	
Accommodation and facilities	Very Good
Climate and relationships	Adequate
Expectations and promoting achievement	Good
Equality and fairness	Good
Partnership with parents and the community	Weak

Improving the school	
Leadership	Good
Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities	Good
Self-evaluation	Weak

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	excellent
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"> • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils. • The school building was kept in good order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to parents about school priorities and about how to help pupils with homework. • Provide better information about pupils' progress.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers praised pupils when they had done something well and expected pupils to work hard. • The school helped them to keep safe and healthy. • Pupils felt safe and well cared for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better manage the behaviour of some pupils who did not behave well. • Ensure that all pupils were treated fairly.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school celebrated pupil success. • The school was an enjoyable place to work. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve opportunities for staff to be involved in the decision making processes. • Improve the training provided to some support staff. • Improve communication between senior managers and staff. • Improve communication between staff.

How can you contact us?

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