

**Gavinburn Primary School
Old Kilpatrick
West Dunbartonshire Council
15 March 2005**

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1. Background

Gavinburn Primary School was inspected in December 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, 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 the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA), and a group of parents.

The inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of school meals provision.

The school serves the village of Old Kilpatrick and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 323. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Polite, considerate and well-behaved pupils and the mutual respect between staff and pupils.
- The commitment of staff, the quality of teamwork and the high standard of pastoral care.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community.
- The quality of accommodation and display.
- Leadership from the headteacher and promoted staff.

3. What are the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors 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.

Parents and carers, pupils and staff were very pleased with all aspects of the school's work. They felt that the school was very well led and had a very good reputation in the community. All parents and carers felt that children enjoyed being at school, that teaching was of a high standard and that staff showed genuine concern for pupils' care and welfare. They valued the strong sense of community in the school and felt that the school was an integral part of the local community. Pupils were very positive about their experiences in the school. They enjoyed being at school and felt that they were treated fairly by teachers. They thought that teachers were helpful and were good at letting them know how to improve their learning. Teachers and other staff were very positive about all aspects of school life and were proud to be associated with the school. They felt the school was very well led. They valued the fact that they were actively involved in the life of the school.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

Teachers provided pupils with a broad and well balanced curriculum and a wide range of stimulating learning experiences. They had made effective use of flexibility time to increase the time allocations for reading, writing and mathematics and raise pupils' attainment in these areas. Pupils in P6 to P7 were learning French and they displayed a good understanding of basic oral and written vocabulary. Teachers were well organised, gave clear explanations and made good use of questioning to check and reinforce pupils' understanding. They planned their work in detail and took good account of the different learning needs of pupils. In the most effective lessons, teachers provided well-planned opportunities for pupils to work together and learn from each other. The use of setting pupils from P4 to P7 in ability groups for mathematics was good and had improved pupils' attainment. However, teachers needed to ensure that the level of challenge for the pupils in each group was sufficiently challenging at all times. Specialist teachers for learning support and physical education provided a good level of support for pupils. Learning assistants worked closely with teachers and pupils to support learning activities. Teachers used a range of assessment information to identify and develop well judged learning programmes for pupils with additional support needs. They provided a varied range of homework activities for pupils.

The quality of pupils' learning was good. Almost all pupils were confident and motivated learners. Pupils had positive attitudes to learning and could work independently with the minimum of supervision. They listened attentively during lessons, responded well to teachers' questioning and made positive contributions to class and group discussions. They were beginning to develop basic skills in using information and communications technology to extend their learning. Pupils at all stages used digital cameras while those from P4 to P7 were able to use the Internet to carry out research. Teachers provided a stimulating learning environment and took very good account of pupils' prior attainment in English language and mathematics to identify and plan the next steps in their learning. They should extend this practice to ensure that pupils' skills are developed fully in each area of the curriculum. Across the school, the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work were of a consistently high standard.

Pupils were developing a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. They made good use of their practical skills when working on science and

technology activities. They played an active part in the life of the school and there was a strong sense of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Staff provided pupils with regular opportunities to express their views on school issues through the active pupil council. In a number of classes, pupils had been actively involved in enterprise education and had set up and managed their own companies. Pupils' citizenship skills were being developed through the effective use of a structured programme and a range of successful school initiatives such as the popular 'buddy' system where senior pupils supported younger pupils. Pupils' attitudes to healthy eating and the need for an active lifestyle were being developed effectively through topics and school events. Health education was a development priority in the joint improvement plan for all schools in the area. The school highlighted and rewarded pupils' achievements in a variety of ways including the achievement board in the entrance foyer and the use of the points system. Pupils' responded well to opportunities to take part in residential events and extra-curricular activities.

English language

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was very good. In recent years, the school had increased the level of pupils' attainment in reading and writing. Almost all pupils were achieving national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. A significant number of pupils were exceeding the appropriate level for their stage. Teachers provided effective support for pupils with additional support needs in aspects of reading and writing. Pupils were making good progress with their coursework. They talked with confidence, expressed personal views and opinions and listened attentively to the views of others in class and group situations. The range and quality of books in class libraries was very good. Across the school, almost all pupils could read aloud with fluency, identify their favourite authors and talk about books they had read. Pupils at each stage were developing a range of writing skills and they produced written work of a good standard.

Mathematics

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was very good. In recent years, teachers had maintained high levels of attainment and had increased the attainment of more able pupils in P7 as part of the setting arrangement for mathematics. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels in key aspects of mathematics. A notable number were achieving these levels at an earlier stage. Pupils were developing sound skills in information handling but their skills in using computers to produce graphs and handle data were limited. At P1-3, pupils were developing very good early numeracy skills. At each stage, almost all pupils performed well on coursework. They carried out written calculations neatly and accurately. By P7, pupils' knowledge of shape and their skills in number, money and measurement were very good. Throughout the school, pupils were developing good skills in mental calculation. They could use a range of effective skills and strategies to solve problems.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The school's arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils were very good. The quality of pastoral care was of a very high standard. Staff worked together to create a strong sense of community and a climate of mutual trust, respect and confidence. They were very sensitive to the emotional, physical and social needs and concerns of individual pupils. The school had clear procedures in place to deal with child protection issues and these were clearly understood by staff. There was a well publicised anti-bullying policy and pupils felt confident that staff would help them if they had any concerns.

A wide range of staff provided a very good level of support for pupils experiencing difficulties with aspects of their learning. Teachers used a range of strategies to identify pupils with additional support needs and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The visiting network support teacher and learning assistants worked closely with staff to provide effective support for pupils. The school had developed clearly stated individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for pupils with additional support needs but the learning targets were not always sufficiently clear. Staff reviewed pupils' progress regularly and shared the IEPs with parents. The deputy headteacher was the learning support coordinator. She worked in partnership with a range of professionals and support agencies to maximise the learning opportunities for a small number of pupils with significant additional support needs. The school had effective arrangements to support pupils at points of transfer from the nursery class into P1 and from P7 into secondary school.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The quality of accommodation was very good. Staff had made effective use of the available space to create a number of attractive and well-resourced learning areas including the recently opened computer suite. The school interior was in a very good state of repair although a number of the metal window frames were in a poor condition. Teachers had created very attractive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and in all areas of the school. The education authority had started work on creating a turning area to improve the parking arrangements around the school and ensure pupils' safety.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>Staff, pupils and parents were proud of their school. There was a genuine sense of community within the school. Pupils' behaviour was of a consistently high standard. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good. The quality of teamwork among all staff was commendable. Teachers had high expectations and shared these with their pupils. They made very effective use of praise to encourage, motivate and reward pupils. Staff, pupils and parents took part in a range of fundraising events for the school and for charity. The school successfully highlighted and rewarded individual achievements during regular school assemblies. Staff actively promoted a sense of fairness and mutual respect. Teachers were developing aspects of the programme for personal and social development to further increase pupils' awareness of the importance of racial equality.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The school had very strong links with parents, support services and the local community. The School Board and PTA provided a very good level of support to the school. Parents were actively involved in the life and work of the school. They had regular contact with the headteacher and staff and were invited to a range of curriculum workshops and meetings. A number of parents helped out during the school day or accompanied the staff and pupils on fieldtrips and outings. The school had plans in place to consult with parents over the health education programme. A meeting was planned and resources would be on display. Teachers produced informative annual reports and met with parents to discuss children's progress on two formal occasions each year.</p>

7. Improving the school

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

Gavinburn Primary School provided a high standard of education for the pupils in its care. Staff were committed to the school and provided a caring and supportive learning environment. The overall quality of learning and teaching was consistently good. Pupils' attainment in mathematics and English language was very good. All staff made effective and regular use of praise to motivate and encourage pupils. Teachers and staff worked very well as a team and provided pupils with a broad range of well-planned and appropriate learning experiences.

The school had the capacity to ensure ongoing improvement. The experienced headteacher was a very good leader with a clear sense of vision for the school. She had developed a team approach and worked in close partnership with staff to promote a positive ethos and strong sense of community. She was committed to school and the well-being of pupils. She was held in the highest regard by staff, pupils and parents who valued her contribution to the life and work of the school. The headteacher had involved staff in reviewing the work of the school and identifying priorities for development. She worked with teachers to monitor and evaluate the school's strengths and development needs and the attainment of pupils. Promoted members of staff reviewed teachers' plans and pupils' work. They now needed to introduce more formal procedures to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in classes. The deputy headteachers and principal teacher provided a very good level of support to the headteacher and staff. They carried out their remits effectively and were actively involved in teaching classes and groups. They made a very good contribution to the work of the school and were actively involved in supporting staff and leading developments in the curriculum.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- ensure that all pupils have increased opportunities to work together and learn from each other.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. 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 the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents and carers.

Michael Wood
HM Inspector

15 March 2005

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Structure of the curriculum
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Pastoral care
- Accommodation and facilities
- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Leadership

We judged the following to be good

- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- 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.

<p>What pleased parents and carers most</p>	<p>What parents and carers would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoyed being at school and respected teachers. • Teachers set high standards. • The helpful and informative reports and parents' evenings. • The school's reputation in the community. • The level of care and concern shown by staff. • The leadership of the headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents expressed some concerns about aspects of the accommodation, including parking arrangements and the condition of the metal window frames.
<p>What pleased pupils most</p>	<p>What pupils would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They felt safe and well looked after. • They felt that they were treated fairly by staff. • Teachers knew them and helped them to learn. • Teachers explained things clearly. • They had a say in deciding how to make the school better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils were very satisfied with all aspects of school life.
<p>What pleased staff most</p>	<p>What staff would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was very well led. • The effective level of communication. • Staff had very good opportunities to be involved in the decision making process. • The mutual respect between teachers and pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few staff expressed concerns about aspects of accommodation such as the amount of storage space and the condition of some windows.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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