

**Glebelands Primary School
Dundee City Council**

3 September 2002

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Inspection of Standards and Quality in Glebelands Primary School Dundee City Council

1. Introduction

Glebelands Primary School was inspected in May 2002 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 drama within expressive arts.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents. They also met the chairperson of the School Board and representatives of the parent-staff association (PSA).

2. The school

The school serves an area east of the centre of Dundee. At the time of the inspection the roll was 460, including 63 children in the nursery classes.

Parents' views

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about most aspects of the work of the school.

Almost all thought that:

- their children enjoyed being at school and found the work stimulating and challenging;
- staff made them feel welcome in school and parents' evenings were helpful and informative; and
- staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils.

A minority of parents wanted to be consulted more on decisions which affected their children and to be more actively involved in some aspects of the school's work. The school needed to explore this issue further with parents.

Ethos

The school's ethos was very good overall with a welcoming atmosphere and a strong commitment to ensuring all pupils had equal opportunities in their learning. Almost all pupils were polite and well behaved. They responded well to the school's system for promoting positive behaviour. Staff worked well as a team. Almost all teachers had good relationships with their pupils and set appropriately high expectations for their work. Staff worked hard to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. Weekly assemblies provided good opportunities for recognising pupils' achievements and for religious observance. Attendance was in line with national levels.

School and community

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

Positive features included:

- helpful information leaflets for parents on key areas of the school's work;

- informative reports to parents on pupils' progress and attainment in all areas of the curriculum;
- weekly plans on display outside the nursery which kept parents well informed about their children's activities; and
- productive links with the educational psychologist who provided helpful advice to teachers.

The school had a very supportive PSA. The chairperson of the recently established School Board was strongly committed to developing partnerships between parents and the school.

Accommodation

The quality of the accommodation was good overall. Most classrooms were bright and spacious. The school was well provided with flexible teaching space. It had an effective security system. Some areas of the school had been attractively re-decorated. The school had identified a number of areas which still needed to be refurbished. Fences in the playground presented potential safety hazards.

Staffing and resources

The school was well staffed overall. Class teachers had a wide range of experience. Visiting teachers of the expressive arts made a valuable contribution to the school's programmes. Ancillary staff provided good support for pupils and teachers. Long-term staff illness and a consequent high turnover of supply teachers had adversely affected some pupils' learning.

The school had a good range of resources, including good provision of computers. A room was being refurbished to accommodate more computers to support the use of ICT in the curriculum. Library areas had been effectively re-organised. Pupils' work was displayed attractively throughout the school. The school had identified the need to improve reading resources for pupils at the upper

stages. The headteacher managed finances very effectively.

3. How well are pupils performing?

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Most pupils at all stages performed well in their coursework. Some work was not sufficiently challenging. Most pupils listened well and talked with confidence. At the early stages pupils were making very good progress in developing their reading and writing skills. At the middle and upper stages most pupils enjoyed reading and showed good skills in reading for information. Pupils throughout the school wrote for a variety of purposes but the quality of the work produced was too variable from class to class. Some at the middle and upper stages needed to improve the structure of their writing and to write at greater length. Most pupils achieved appropriate national attainment levels in *listening, talking and reading*. The majority achieved these levels in *writing*.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was fair. Pupils performed well in most aspects of their coursework, but the pace of progress was too slow in some classes. At all stages pupils were developing good skills in mental and written calculation. Most pupils could identify a range of shapes, but needed to develop their understanding of position and movement. Although pupils used graphs well they did not make enough use of computers in information handling. Skills in using databases and spreadsheets were limited. In *problem solving and enquiry*, pupils solved simple mathematical problems with confidence. Almost all pupils at the early stages and most at P4 achieved appropriate national attainment levels in *information handling, number, money and measurement, and shape, position and movement*. Some pupils in P2 had exceeded these levels.

The majority of pupils at the upper stages attained these levels.

Drama

The overall quality of attainment in drama was good. At all stages pupils responded well to their teachers' instructions. At the early stages pupils acted and sang very confidently at assemblies. By P3 they engaged enthusiastically in acting and miming scenes from a story. At the middle stages pupils mimed well and could act out short scenes from stories or historical topics they were studying. At the upper stage pupils engaged very effectively in a number of mimes and sketches based on a topic about electricity.

4. How good is the curriculum?

The structure of the curriculum was good. It was generally broad and balanced and gave appropriate coverage to almost all the key areas of pupils' learning. Aspects of some key programmes required further development. Provision for modern languages was not yet fully in place. The school had clear plans for all to pupils in P5 to P7 to follow a three-year programme in either French or German.

English language

The programme for English language was good overall. Teachers provided generally good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in listening, talking and reading. At the upper stages some reading work was not challenging enough. The school had produced very good guidelines for the teaching of writing. They were not yet being used consistently across the school.

Mathematics

The programme for mathematics was good overall. It was generally broad and well balanced. Teachers provided pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills in mental and written calculation. Pupils in the upper stages required more opportunities to use computers to record information in spreadsheets and

databases. The school had identified the need to update guidelines for teachers. These should ensure consistent attention to the continuous progression of pupils' learning and sufficient challenge for abler pupils.

Drama

The programme for drama was good overall. It covered appropriate skills and activities at each stage. Teachers linked these activities very well to pupils' learning in other areas. However, pupils sometimes needed more scope to develop their own creative ideas and skills. The school programme was enhanced by additional activities provided by a visiting specialist teacher. There was now a need to integrate further the planning of the two programmes to ensure that the visiting teacher's activities fully complemented the work of class teachers.

Expressive Arts

The programme for expressive arts was very good overall. In addition to drama, the school provided a very good range of activities in art and design, music and physical education. Activities were well structured to ensure that pupils developed skills progressively from stage to stage.

5. How good is learning and teaching?

The overall quality of learning and teaching was good. Most of the lessons seen were good or very good. Further information about lesson evaluations is given in the appendix.

- The school had very good arrangements for ensuring that children's learning progressed smoothly when they moved from the nursery into P1.
- The quality of planning was good overall.
- In most lessons teachers gave clear explanations and questioned pupils effectively. Most teachers made good use of praise.

- Most pupils were well motivated and settled quickly to work in class.
- Teachers ensured that most tasks given were well matched to pupils' learning needs. Some work given was insufficiently challenging.
- Approaches to assessment were good overall. Teachers made good use of National Tests to confirm their judgements of pupils' progress. The school was taking effective steps to improve the use of information from assessment to plan pupils' next steps in learning and to track their progress.

6. How well are pupils supported?

Care and welfare

The school made very good provision for pupils' care and welfare. Policies and guidelines on child protection and for dealing with any bullying incidents were clear and effective. Good procedures were in place to safeguard pupils who required medication and to deal with any incidents where pupils' health might be at risk. The school promoted a very good system of positive behaviour management which was effective for almost all pupils.

Personal and social development

Pupils' personal and social development was very well promoted through the health education programme. This included appropriate attention to personal relationships and pupils' rights and responsibilities. Pupils in P7 benefited from a drugs education initiative supported by a range of effective links with the community. The school provided good opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Pupils had very good opportunities to take responsibility by serving on the library and playground committees. Staff provided good reports for parents on pupils' personal and social development.

Support for learning

The school made very good arrangements to support pupils' learning. Most class teachers supported their pupils well. Good support was provided for several pupils whose first language was not English. Support for learning staff consulted very effectively with all teachers and senior promoted staff and provided an appropriate range of support for pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning. They provided helpful advice for class teachers, notably on useful teaching resources. Effective use of a range of assessments helped the school to identify those pupils most in need of assistance and to obtain support from a range of external agencies. Support for learning staff had recently begun to support some pupils with challenging behaviour. Plans were evaluated carefully to ensure that pupils' needs were met effectively. The school organised regular meetings with parents and agencies to review pupils' progress. Appropriate arrangements were in place for reviewing and updating Records of Needs.

7. How well is the school managed?

Overall management and leadership

The headteacher provided good leadership. He was strongly committed to supporting pupils, developing good teamwork amongst staff and raising attainment. He had played a key role in establishing the school's positive and inclusive ethos. He now needed to ensure that approaches to quality assurance focused more rigorously on identifying how learning, teaching and attainment could be improved.

The depute headteacher ably supported the headteacher in running the school. She effectively managed important aspects of the school's work and had taken a leading role in key curriculum developments. In the course of the current session the assistant headteacher had taken on full responsibility for teaching a class and her time for management duties had been reduced. Her teaching was a model of good practice. She continued to make an

important contribution to curriculum development and to monitoring the work of the school. Senior promoted staff worked well as a team. However it was not always clear who was responsible for introducing key developments and monitoring their effectiveness. Senior teachers carried out their remits effectively.

Staff development and review

Staff had taken part in a useful range of staff development activities which were well linked to the school's development plan. Not all teachers had yet had their work formally reviewed. Arrangements for staff development and review were fair overall.

School development planning

The good school development plan was well presented, with sections for aims, audit and action plans. Aims were appropriate. The audit process did not focus closely enough on identifying key priorities for development. Action plans gave a clear outline of how priorities were to be implemented and how their success would be judged. Very good progress had been made in implementing the school's priorities.

Approaches to improving quality

The school's procedures for quality assurance were good. Members of the senior management team met teachers regularly to support them in planning their work. They provided detailed written feedback on teachers' forward plans. The school had produced a well-written and evaluative report on the standards and quality of its provision. Promoted staff observed learning and teaching in classrooms. However the process was not yet clearly linked to key priorities in the development plan and did not consistently identify areas for improvement.

8. How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, Glebelands Primary School provided a good standard of education. Good quality support for pupils' learning and the purposeful atmosphere in almost all classrooms were strong features. Good teamwork

amongst staff meant that the school was well placed to make further improvements to teaching programmes, and to the quality of learning and teaching, in order to raise attainment.

Key strengths

- The school's implementation of its development priorities.
- The school's very positive and inclusive ethos.
- The quality of pastoral care.
- The strong links with external support agencies and the wider community.
- The quality of support provided for pupils experiencing learning and behavioural difficulties.
- The hard work and commitment of staff.

Main points for action

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

- The school should address the health and safety issues identified in the report.
- With a view to raising attainment the school should improve aspects of the programmes for English language and mathematics.
- The remits of senior promoted staff should be revised so that responsibilities for developing and monitoring key areas of the school's work are consistently clear.
- The school should continue to develop its approaches to quality assurance. Processes should focus on improving teaching programmes and raising attainment.

HM Inspectors will return between one and two years after the publication of this report to assess progress in meeting these recommendations. The school and education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main points for action in the report and to share that plan with parents.

Jane B Renton
HM Inspector
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector
Northern Division

3 September 2002

See Performance Indicator data overleaf.

Appendix

Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be *very good*

- The school's ethos
- Communication with parents
- The school's management of devolved finances
- Effectiveness of the learning support
- Implementation of Special Educational Needs legislation
- Implementing the school development plan

We judged the following to be *good*

- Partnership with parents and the School Board
- Provision of accommodation and facilities
- Provision of staff
- Provision of materials and equipment
- The structure of the curriculum
- Quality of courses or programmes
- Quality of teachers' planning
- Quality of the teaching process
- Quality of pupils' learning
- Matching the teaching process to pupils' needs and experience
- Using assessment to guide the teaching process
- Effectiveness of leadership of the school
- Effectiveness of promoted staff and senior teachers
- The school's approach to evaluating its own work
- The school development plan

We judged the following to be *fair*

- The school's arrangements for development and review of its staff

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 37% of cases, good in 40%, fair in 20% and unsatisfactory in 3%.

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 the office at the address below or by telephoning 01382 224155. Copies are also available on our web site: www.scotland.gov.uk/hmie

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 Bill Maxwell, HMCI whose address is given below. If you are still dissatisfied with our services, you can contact your member of the Scottish Parliament (or, if you prefer, any other MSP) and ask for your complaint to be passed to the Scottish Parliament Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government Departments and Agencies. He will not normally consider your complaint before the HMIE complaints procedure has been used. Instead, he will usually ask you to give us the chance to put matters right first if we can.

HM Inspectorate of Education
Wellgate House (Level 5)
The Wellgate
Dundee
DD1 2DB

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