

**Goldenhill Primary School
Clydebank
West Dunbartonshire Council
3 October 2006**

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1. Background

Goldenhill Primary School was inspected in May 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 the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parents' association (PA), and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the Hardgate area of Clydebank. More than half of the pupils attended the school from outwith the designated catchment area as a result of parental placing requests. At the time of the inspection the roll was 274. 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.

- The broad curriculum and focus on promoting pupils' wider achievements.
- Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.
- The commitment of the headteacher and staff to the care, welfare and inclusion of all pupils in the life of the school.
- Confident, courteous and hard-working pupils who had a sense of responsibility and pride in the school.
- Partnerships with parents, School Board, Parents' Association and the wider community.
- Inspirational leadership of the headteacher and her impact in ensuring high standards of attainment and achievement.

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.

Parents, pupils and staff were positive about almost all aspects of the school. All parents who responded to the questionnaire thought that the school had a good reputation in the local community. Almost all thought that there was mutual respect between teachers and pupils and that staff showed concern for pupils' care and welfare. Almost all parents thought the school was well led. A few thought that the school building could be improved and a few wanted more information on the school's priorities for improvement. Pupils felt that teachers expected them to work hard and helped them to keep safe and healthy. Almost all thought that they got on well with other pupils. A significant minority felt that the behaviour of a few pupils could be better. Staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. All staff enjoyed working in the school and thought the school was well led. Support staff wanted more opportunities to be involved in decision making. They did not think that training provided for them by the education authority was effective.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was very good. The school provided pupils with broad and balanced learning experiences which ensured a very effective focus on the development of pupils' personal and social skills. Additional teaching time had been allocated to literacy and numeracy with a view to raising pupils' attainment and to enhance pupils' achievements across the curriculum. This had been effective. They made very good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Overall, the quality of teaching was good with some very good examples of interactive teaching. Teachers gave clear explanations and made good use of praise to build pupils' self-confidence and reward their achievements. Several made very effective use of direct, interactive teaching, notably at P1 and P7. Most teachers were skilled in using questions to check pupils' understanding. They shared with pupils what they expected them to learn from their lessons, especially in writing. However, a few did not make consistent use of questions to extend pupils' responses. They did not always encourage pupils to ask questions or share what they had learned. Homework was varied and set regularly.

Almost all pupils were well motivated, hardworking and well behaved. In many classes, pupils worked effectively in pairs or small groups to support one another in a range of learning activities. Pupils responded very well to teaching approaches which encouraged them to discuss their learning. In most lessons, the pace of learning was brisk. However, in a small number of lessons it was too slow and a few pupils lost concentration. Across the school, pupils needed to be encouraged to take more personal responsibility for their learning.

Throughout the school, pupils were making very good progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem. All pupils had regular opportunities to demonstrate their achievements in class work and in aspects of personal and social development. They excelled in many sporting and musical events and all pupils took part in school concerts. At all stages, pupils were able to contribute their views through the pupil council. They would benefit from more opportunities to discuss the work of the pupil council with their teachers and pupils in their class. Pupils were developing effective skills in enterprise, through, for example, their well-established links with local businesses which helped them learn about the world of work. Pupils were very aware of the needs of others and regularly raised significant sums of money for charities. A notable number of pupils took part in a wide range of activities throughout the session, in addition to the formal curriculum. Older pupils took responsibility for others, by, for example, acting as playground buddies to look after younger pupils. At P7, pupils benefited from a residential trip to Auchengillan Centre where they further developed their social skills and demonstrated good teamwork.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good. Almost all pupils were attaining appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading and writing. Throughout the school many pupils achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Standards of attainment had remained high in recent years. Pupils experiencing difficulties with their learning were making very good progress in their coursework. Pupils used their language skills effectively across all areas of the curriculum. They listened very well to staff and one another, and showed understanding of what they had heard. Overall, pupils were very articulate and expressed themselves very well in talking. Standards in reading were very high. Pupils enjoyed reading, and read a variety of texts for pleasure. They were confident in describing texts and had a good knowledge of different authors and styles of prose. They used reference books effectively in research and also used the Internet well in their personal research topics. Standards in writing were very good. Pupils wrote very well for a wide variety of purposes. They expressed themselves very well in, for example, imaginative pieces of prose, reports and poetry. By P7, the quality of many pupils' writing was very high. Standards of handwriting and presentation were very good.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. In recent years, the school had been successful in raising pupils' attainment. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics. Many achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected but a few were capable of achieving even better standards. Across the school, pupils could read and interpret graphs well. They needed more opportunities to make use of databases and spreadsheets. Pupils at all stages performed mental and written calculations well. At P3, a few pupils did not yet have a firm grasp of number bonds. At all stages, pupils were developing their skills in measurement. They could recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and identify their properties. Pupils had acquired good skills in problem-solving and enquiry and now needed to be encouraged to discuss strategies they might use to reach solutions.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The quality of pastoral care was excellent. The caring and committed staff knew their pupils very well and were sensitive to their medical, physical, social and emotional needs. All staff formed a cohesive team which provided highly appropriate and well-judged individual support for pupils. The headteacher had produced a range of helpful policies relating to pupils' safety and well-being, including child protection, which were implemented appropriately by staff. Pupils felt safe in the school and were very confident that they could discuss sensitive matters with the approachable headteacher and staff. The school strongly promoted inter-agency involvement and maintained detailed records of pupils' needs. Senior managers had developed a very effective 'Friday phone-in' system for specific children which ensured that parents were kept fully informed of their child's progress and behaviour in school. A helpful red card system alerted key staff to any medical emergencies in class and in the playground. The school had a strong commitment to health promotion which included a focus on exercise and healthy eating. It promoted healthy food choices through the distribution of free fruit and the provision of good quality meals at lunch times. Pupils also benefited from a breakfast club. Transfer arrangements from pre-school to P1 and P7 to secondary school were supportive and very effective.

The school had a well-developed approach to identifying and assisting pupils with additional support needs. Working closely with parents, teachers, agencies and specialist staff, the principal teacher was very effective in co-ordinating support for a range of pupils at different stages of the school. Pupils with additional support needs, including those with behavioural difficulties were very well supported. They were following clear learning and behaviour targets set out in individualised educational programmes. Despite this good practice, a few teachers did not always provide appropriate activities or sufficient challenge to meet these needs. The school was developing its approaches for identifying higher achieving pupils and for recording their strengths and areas for development. Support staff provided valuable additional assistance to groups and individuals.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The overall quality of accommodation was adequate. Staff made very good use of all available areas to enhance pupils' learning experiences. However, some classrooms were cramped and space for active learning and for the storage of resources was limited. Throughout the school, there were interesting and attractive displays of pupils' work which provided a stimulating learning environment. The school was clean and well maintained. Security arrangements were appropriate. The school building was on several levels and accessed by many stairs. Access for those with mobility difficulties was very limited. Pupils benefited from a large playground. However, its surface was uneven in places and required attention.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	Staff, pupils and parents had a strong sense of identity and pride in their school. Staff had created a warm and welcoming environment and relationships between staff and pupils were very positive. Throughout the school, pupils were friendly, courteous and very well behaved. Staff had high expectations for pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievements. School assemblies provided regular opportunities for religious observance and for celebrating pupils' efforts and successes. Staff promoted equality and fairness in their dealings with pupils. Throughout the school, pupils were developing their understanding of religious diversity. Teachers had not yet had formal training in race equality. The school now needed to develop its approaches to promoting race equality and to helping pupils recognise and tackle discrimination.
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had very good partnerships with parents and the community and with its supportive School Board and PA. Parents received regular, helpful information about the work of the school. They also received a very helpful information leaflet about their child's class and how they could support learning at home. Staff provided a comprehensive end-of-year report and met with parents twice per year to discuss pupils' progress. They organised helpful curriculum workshops for parents to better equip them to support their children's learning. The school consulted parents appropriately on sensitive health issues such as personal relationships and sexual health. They gathered parents' views on the work of the school and used these effectively to help plan for further improvement. The school had well-established links with the local community. Pupils' involvement in school concerts and fund raising enhanced the school's reputation in the community.

7. Improving the school

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

The school provided high quality education for its pupils within a very caring environment, within which concern for pupils' welfare was excellent. Teachers and support staff were very successful in encouraging all pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. Overall, pupils were attaining high standards, and making very good progress in their personal and social development. There was scope for further improvement in developing consistent approaches to learning and teaching.

The headteacher provided very good leadership. Through her inspirational leadership, teachers had improved many aspects of the curriculum and ensured that pupils were achieving well in a broad range of areas. She had a clear vision for the school and delegated responsibilities to a range of staff to encourage their involvement and ownership of school developments. She was very well supported by the deputy headteacher and principal teacher who carried out all of their responsibilities diligently and effectively. Despite a recent extended period of staff absence, the school had maintained its high standards and had ensured no disruption to pupils' learning. The school had well-developed approaches to ensuring improvement. Both the deputy headteacher and principal teacher supported pupils in classes. The senior management team regularly discussed pupils' progress with staff, tracked attainment and sampled pupils' work. They made regular informal visits to classes and knew each child well as an individual. They now needed to continue, as planned, to introduce more formal visits to classes to ensure continued improvements to learning and teaching.

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:

- build on recent improvements and existing good practice in learning and teaching to ensure consistently high quality learning experiences at all stages of the school;
- continue to develop more rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating classroom practice; and
- improve aspects of the accommodation highlighted in this report.

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. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Lesley R Brown
HM Inspector

3 October 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	very good
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	good
Pupils' attainment in English language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	very good

How well are pupils supported?	
Pastoral care	excellent
Meeting pupils' needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Accommodation and facilities	adequate
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	very good

Improving the school	
Leadership	very good
Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities	very good
Self-evaluation	good

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 children’s care and welfare and set high standards for pupils’ attainment. • Their children were treated fairly and were encouraged to work to the best of their ability. • Parents’ evenings and school reports were helpful and informative. • The school had a good reputation in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few would like more information on the school’s priorities for improvement. • Accommodation could be improved.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers expected them to work as hard as they could and told them when they had done something well. • Teachers helped them when they were having difficulty and checked their homework. • The school helped keep them safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of a few pupils could be improved.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All liked working in the school which was well led. • Teachers set high standards of attainment and pupils’ success was celebrated regularly. • Pupils received constructive feedback about their work. • Pupils were enthusiastic about learning and there was mutual respect between staff and pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff did not think that training offered by the education authority was effective. • They wanted more opportunities to be involved in the decision making process. • Teaching staff had no significant issues.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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, Unit 7, Ground Floor Suite, Blair Court, Clydebank Business Park, Clydebank G81 2LA or by telephoning 0141 435 3550. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk.

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