

**Miltonbank Primary School
Glasgow City Council
17 January 2006**

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?	1
4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils supported?	4
6. How good is the environment for learning?	4
7. Improving the school	5
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	8
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	9
How can you contact us?	10

1. Background

Miltonbank Primary School was inspected in October 2005 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, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the Milton area of Glasgow. At the time of the inspection the roll was 153. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well above the national average. Pupils' attendance was below the national average. The school monitored attendance closely and had appropriate arrangements in place to encourage all pupils to attend regularly.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The consistently high quality of teaching.
- Very well planned and effective arrangements to support pupils' learning.
- A welcoming atmosphere and very good relationships amongst staff and pupils.
- Very well behaved and motivated pupils.
- Comprehensive and effective arrangements for monitoring the work of the school.
- High quality leadership.

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.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends

Parents, pupils and staff were very positive about all aspects of the school. Those parents who responded to the questionnaire thought that staff were welcoming and supported their pupils very well. Most reported that their children enjoyed going to school and found the work stimulating and challenging. They were pleased with the progress their children were making. They felt that the school had a very good ethos and that it deserved its good reputation in the community. They thought that the head teacher and her deputy led the school very well. Pupils felt very safe and happy in the school and many made very positive comments about their teachers. They thought that teachers were good at telling them how well they were doing and how to improve their learning. Many pupils appreciated the opportunities they were given to be involved in making decisions about the school. All staff enjoyed working in the school and commented positively on the very good behaviour and motivation of almost all of their pupils. Teachers and support staff felt that staff operated very effectively as a team.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school provided pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Available time had been used effectively by giving extra time mainly to mathematics and English language to help raise attainment. Staff used information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning in mathematics and English language. The recent addition of a computer suite was enabling pupils to improve their ICT skills and to make increased use of ICT across the curriculum. At P1 to P3, staff made effective use of a wide range of resources in a well-organised programme to encourage pupils to learn through play. School policy statements and guidelines provided helpful advice to staff in preparing programmes within a consistent framework to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers introduced lessons clearly, usually with a review of previous learning, and tasks and activities were shared effectively with pupils. Teachers mostly shared the aims or learning outcomes and concluded lessons with an attempt to summarise these learning outcomes. At all stages, teachers gave good explanations and instructions and managed their teaching resources well to ensure good progress in lessons. They used questions very effectively in most lessons, and many were skilled at engaging all pupils in the work of the class. Homework was well planned within a clear school policy framework and was set regularly.

At all stages, pupils were very well motivated and well behaved in class. They started work quickly with little prompting, and most responded very well to teachers' questions. They worked well when given opportunities to work in pairs or groups, and cooperated very well when working together on tasks. Pupils at P6 and P7 worked well independently and were prepared to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. They produced group and individual projects each summer term which helped to develop their research skills. Teachers were beginning to introduce such challenging activities at other stages. There was a brisk pace in almost all lessons observed, and senior staff worked effectively with teachers to ensure appropriate progress through programmes of work. Pupils requiring additional assistance with their learning were well supported by teachers.

Pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to aspects of citizenship and an awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils and staff were working towards achieving an Eco School Green Flag and pupils were developing a good knowledge of issues related to promoting a sustainable environment. They were also engaged in a number of enterprise activities, one of which, reducing waste, was directly linked to the Eco School project. Pupils at P6 had gained national recognition in an Internet-based weather project. They took daily readings from a small weather station in the playground and submitted them to a website. P5-7 pupils published a well-presented bi-annual school magazine. A high proportion of pupils participated successfully in a range of sporting activities, including football, basketball and swimming. Others regularly attended a gardening club after school and had provided floral displays for the school entrance. Many pupils enjoyed a sense of achievement through participation in Christmas concerts, fundraising events and entertaining local elderly people. At P6 and P7, pupils developed their personal and social skills through annual opportunities to participate in successful residential educational visits to an outdoor centre.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Levels of attainment had fluctuated over the past three years but had shown an improvement more recently. Most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in reading and writing. At the early stages, many were exceeding them. Those not attaining national levels were making good progress in their classwork. Pupils at all stages listened well and talked about their activities with confidence. Pupils participated effectively in small group and class discussions. They read regularly for pleasure and, at the middle and upper stages, were developing good skills in reading for information. Pupils could describe the key features of different types of books and showed good knowledge of language. Older pupils needed to develop further their understanding of how writers create their effects. Most pupils at all stages were making steady progress in developing the range and quality of their writing. They showed a good knowledge of punctuation and grammar and took pride in presenting their work well.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good, and some aspects were very good. In recent years, levels of attainment had fluctuated. Overall, however, there was an improving trend and the school had exceeded its targets for attainment in mathematics in 2005. By P3, almost all pupils were achieving appropriate levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics, and many at P2 were achieving such levels earlier than might normally be expected. From P4 to P7, most were achieving appropriate levels. At all stages, pupils were making good progress in their classwork. They showed confidence in creating and interpreting a range of graphs and in using ICT to display information. At P1/P2, pupils had made a good start to the development of early mathematical skills. By P7, almost all pupils performed well in mental and written calculations and were developing a good understanding of number, money and measurement. They had good knowledge of geometric shapes and could discuss their properties confidently. Across the stages, pupils were developing their skills in problem-solving and enquiry, were aware of appropriate strategies and were increasingly able to apply these strategies effectively.

5. How well are pupils supported?

Staff provided a very caring environment. Pupils and staff enjoyed very good relationships. Staff ensured very good inclusion of pupils with additional support needs. All staff had been trained in child protection procedures and the school had clear up-to-date policies in place for anti-bullying, race equality, drugs misuse and safe use of the internet. The school's procedures for dealing with bullying were appropriate, well established and effective. Pupils reporting injured or unwell were looked after very well by all staff. The well-planned programme for personal and social development (PSD) included opportunities for discussing personal safety and an appropriate focus on health. Free milk and fruit were readily available to pupils and the active sports coordinator was encouraging pupils to participate in sporting activities.

The school's arrangements to support pupils' learning were very good at all stages. Teachers planned effectively to provide a range of tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. They had prepared a range of appropriate activities to challenge more able pupils, including individual projects and 'master classes' after school. The depute headteacher had developed very good arrangements for those pupils with additional support needs. She had prepared appropriate individualised educational programmes and met the pupils and their teachers each week to monitor progress. Pupil support assistants provided valuable support for teachers and pupils. The effective transfer of information from stage to stage ensured that pupils' needs were well met as they progressed from P1 to P7. The arrangements for transition from the local nurseries to P1, and from P7 to secondary school were very well planned and ensured that pupils made these moves with the best possible support.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The overall quality of accommodation was adequate. Staff had made very effective use of the surplus space created by the decline in roll. Pupils benefited from separate rooms for art and design and religious and moral education, an ICT suite, and an excellent library. A further area provided additional space for younger pupils to learn through play. The education authority had recently repaired the roof. A security fence surrounded the school, and building security measures were appropriate. A gap in the perimeter fence required to be addressed. Aspects of the fabric of the building were in need of repair, including some toilets, window frames, ceilings and floors. The playground surface was very uneven, and poorly maintained drains presented trip hazards. There was limited access for disabled pupils.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>There was a very welcoming atmosphere. Pupils were proud to be associated with the school and almost all wore uniform. Relationships between pupils and staff were very good and morale was high. Pupils were very well behaved, polite and courteous to adults, and showed respect for each other. They had succeeded in initiating changes through the work of the well-established pupil council. Older pupils took their work in paired reading activities with younger pupils very seriously. Teachers set appropriately high expectations for attainment, attendance and behaviour. Staff used regular assemblies to reward pupils for a wide range of achievements and for religious observance. There was a strong sense of equality and fairness across the school. All pupils were fully supported and included in the life and work of the classes. Staff promoted positive values and attitudes and encouraged pupils to care for others through the anti-bullying and race equality programmes, and through appropriate sections of the programmes for religious and moral education and PSD.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The active School Board had strong links with the school and was supportive. Parents were encouraged to become involved with the work of the school. The school regularly consulted parents about aspects of its work, including potentially sensitive aspects of health education. Staff communicated well with parents through regular newsletters, leaflets on specific topics such as curricular developments, a bi-annual magazine and a well-presented handbook. School reports on pupils' progress were comprehensive and clear, providing useful information and suggestions for improvement. Staff had provided parents with informative guidelines to help them support homework. The school had productive links with local nurseries, neighbouring schools, educational support agencies, community organisations and local firms. The school had benefited from the support of staff from the local secondary school in a range of subjects. The school had a very good reputation amongst its own parents. It now needed to develop strategies to raise its profile in the wider community.</p>

7. Improving the school

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

Miltonbank Primary School provided a very caring and supportive environment for learning. Good relationships and the focus on care and welfare helped ensure that all pupils were supported very well to achieve their best. Staff had used a rewards and sanctions

system very effectively to ensure pupils behaved very well and were well motivated to learn. Supported and encouraged by senior managers, teachers had successfully introduced new approaches to learning and teaching and improvements to programmes of study. As a result, and despite a dip in performance in 2004, attainment had been steadily improving in recent years. Standards had risen significantly in reading, writing and mathematics and, at all stages, pupils showed increasing confidence in using ICT. The school had encouraged pupils' wider achievements through initiatives in enterprise and environmental education.

The headteacher provided very good leadership. Her strong commitment to the school and consultative and supportive management style had gained her the respect of pupils, parents and staff. She had established very good teamwork and had used her interpersonal skills effectively to achieve significant improvements in recent years. The depute headteacher provided very good support to the headteacher. Her wide and varied remit included responsibility for support for learning. She managed and coordinated this important aspect of the school's provision very effectively. The headteacher and her depute regularly and effectively monitored and evaluated the work of the school. They monitored teachers' plans, and observed teaching and learning, providing detailed and evaluative written feedback to staff. They carefully tracked pupils' attainment and worked with pupils and teachers to set targets for further achievement. The school consulted staff, pupils and parents to help identify and prepare its priorities for improvement. The headteacher published an informative annual report on standards and quality which detailed the successes achieved in previous plans. Overall, the school was in a very strong position to take forward its planned developments and secure further improvements.

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:

- develop further the use of information and communications technology across the curriculum; and
- address the accommodation issues identified in this report.

What happens next?

As a result of the improving performance, 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.

Jim Bruce
HM Inspector

17 January 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	Very good
Pupils' learning experiences	Very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	Good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Good

How well are pupils supported?	
Pastoral care	Very good
Meeting pupils' needs	Very 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	Very good
Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community	Good

Improving the school	
Leadership	Very good
Self-evaluation	Very 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 think the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents were happy with almost all aspects of the work of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents had concerns about aspects of the maintenance of the school buildings.
What pupils think the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils were happy with almost all aspects of their experiences in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.
What staff think the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All teaching and support staff had very positive views about all aspects of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were 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 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, 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.

If you wish to comment about primary inspections

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, Acting HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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

Crown Copyright 2006

HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.