

**St Luke's and St Matthew's RC
Primary School
Dundee City Council
13 September 2005**

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1. Background

St Luke's and St Matthew's RC Primary School was inspected in May 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 parents.

St Luke's and St Matthew's RC Primary School is a denominational school serving the Fintry, Mill o' Mains and Whitfield districts in the east of Dundee. At the time of the inspection the roll was 211. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well above the national average. Pupils' attendance was well below the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning.
- The quality of pupils' learning at the early stages.
- Many aspects of the school's ethos and care for pupils.
- The commitment of staff to the school and their involvement in continuing professional development activities.
- The positive impact of the headteacher's leadership on the school's ethos, pastoral care, and partnerships with the community.

3. What are the views of parents and carers, 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 and carers were positive about many aspects of the work of the school. They felt that their children enjoyed being at school and that the school had a good reputation in the community. A minority felt that they did not have a clear idea of the school's

priorities for improving pupils' education. Pupils also had positive views about the school. For example they thought that teachers explained things clearly and were good at letting pupils know how to improve their learning. A few had concerns about the behaviour of some pupils, and felt that the school did not always treat all pupils fairly. Almost all staff liked working in the school, and all thought that time for professional development and training was used effectively. A few had concerns about aspects of communication among staff, and the way in which indiscipline was dealt with.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school's curriculum was broad and balanced. The time devoted to English language and mathematics had appropriately been enhanced to improve pupils' skills in these areas. Pupils in P6 and P7 were learning French language. Very good attention was given to improving pupils' skills in ICT. The school was aware of the need to improve technology within the environmental studies programme. The quality of teaching was good, and at times very good. Teachers gave clear explanations and generally used praise well. Teachers used brisk, direct, interactive approaches effectively, particularly in the early stages and in mathematics lessons. There was not always sufficient direct teaching or effective questioning at other stages or in other curriculum areas.

Pupils generally applied themselves to the tasks they were given and worked well together. At all stages they enjoyed using computers, taking part in practical activities, and having discussions about important topics. For example, pupils in P1/P2 were making good progress in listening to stories about Jesus and learning moral messages from them. Pupils in P5 increased their understanding of the properties of materials by enthusiastically carrying out an experiment to separate mixtures. They were also developing good ball-control skills in physical education. A few pupils at this stage did not show good self-discipline in team games. P7 pupils worked well on computer-based programmes to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In the best lessons the pace of learning was good and pupils were appropriately challenged by demanding tasks. Some lessons were not sufficiently brisk or challenging. The school was taking steps to make homework tasks more interesting and demanding.

Staff were working hard and with good success to help pupils develop an awareness of the importance of self-discipline and positive relationships with others. Some pupils who needed to build their confidence and self-esteem were gaining much from a pairing scheme in which they helped other pupils in their reading. Pupils responded positively to very good opportunities to accept responsibility and show citizenship. For example they could participate in the school council, as tuckshop monitors, or in a very effective group which met regularly with the school cook to agree suitable lunch menus. Overall, pupils were benefiting from their health education. Many pupils were involved in preparing for the school musical show. Older pupils had broadened their understanding of the world around them by undertaking an enjoyable outdoor activities trip. A recent theatre visit had made a positive impact upon pupils at all stages.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Most pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking and reading. In writing, most pupils at the early and middle stages achieved these levels, but less than half in the upper stages did so. Most pupils were able to listen attentively and respond appropriately to direct questions and instructions. All pupils could talk knowledgeably about their reading texts. Pupils in the early stages were making good progress in developing reading and writing skills. The development of grammar and punctuation skills was improving across the school. In the middle and upper stages pupils' skills in writing reports and in writing at length required to be improved.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. Pupils in the early stages were making good progress in developing numeracy skills and the school was increasingly building on this good progress at other stages. In the middle and upper stages, pupils had a good understanding of three-dimensional shapes and could draw and interpret graphs accurately. By P7 a majority of pupils were able to carry out mental and written calculations accurately. Others had difficulty, particularly with calculations involving decimals, fractions and percentages. All pupils were developing skills in problem solving. Further work was required to ensure that all pupils had a good knowledge of problem-solving strategies.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The school had very good arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. Staff were alert to the social and emotional needs of pupils and responded to these needs effectively. Appropriate systems were in place for dealing with situations in which pupils' health and safety might be at risk. Health education was given good attention, and the importance of healthy lifestyles, including the need for a balanced diet, was promoted in practical and effective ways. Staff and pupils were increasingly working together well to create a climate of trust and respect and to build pupils' self-confidence. A small number of pupils required further support to help them be fully effective and well-behaved members of the school community.

Pupils' learning needs were generally addressed effectively. On the whole, teachers presented classes and groups with learning tasks which were appropriate to pupils' prior attainment. Classroom assistants helped teachers to meet the demands of different groups of pupils. Two support for learning teachers, who were relatively new to the school, worked well together to meet the needs of groups of pupils who were experiencing difficulties in their classwork. A number of these pupils had helpful individualised educational programmes (IEPs). Some of these groups were extracted from mainstream classes for extended periods with the aim of re-integrating them when appropriate. As a result, the level of exclusions from the school had been reduced. However, the ability of support staff to meet the needs of other pupils as they arose in class was also reduced. In general, support for learning teachers were not yet deployed

fully effectively. They did not undertake a balanced range of activities, including staff development and adaptation of curriculum materials, and required better opportunities for liaison with class teachers. The school had suitable arrangements for ensuring the smooth transfer of children into P1 from nursery and of P7 pupils into S1.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The school had a good number of classrooms and general purpose rooms. Positive features including a hall, gym, computing suite and library. Staff used the available space very well to create a safe, pleasant and stimulating learning environment. Appropriate security arrangements were in place. The school grounds were extensive. Some parts of the building were in need of minor refurbishment, and there was no disabled toilet.
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	The school provided a friendly and welcoming environment. Staff and pupils were proud of the school and were happy to be part of the school community. Staff morale was high, although some aspects of teamwork and communication needed to be improved. While relationships between pupils and teachers were very good overall, a small number of pupils did not always show respect for staff and other pupils. Assemblies provided very good opportunities for religious observance and for pupils' achievements to be celebrated. The school was working hard and with some success to improve pupils' attendance. On the whole, teachers set high expectations of pupils' work, attainment and behaviour, and treated pupils fairly. The school had not yet drawn up an appropriate policy on race equality and was awaiting final guidelines from the education authority.

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	Parents valued opportunities to be involved in their child's learning. For example they could attend assemblies, and open days in the early stages. Homework bags encouraged them to work with their child on tasks. They were kept up-to-date through newsletters and other means of communication. They could ask for a copy of the school development plan or standards report. The school should consider sending a summary of these documents to all parents. The headteacher was waiting for education authority leaflets on health education to be distributed before consulting with parents on key aspects of this curriculum area. The School Board and parent-teacher association were very supportive and active. Links with the wider community, including local churches and the parish priest who was school chaplain, were strong. Pupils were involved in a wide range of charity activities for the local and international communities.

7. Improving the school

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

St Luke's and St Matthew's RC Primary School provided an effective education for pupils. The school's ethos was good, and several aspects were very good. Staff were strongly committed to caring for pupils and looking after their welfare, and were successful in this aim. The quality of teaching was good, and some lessons were very effective. ICT was used well to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment was good overall. Certain groups of pupils could have achieved more with better support in addressing their difficulties or greater levels of pace and challenge in their learning.

In her two years in post the headteacher had been largely successful in ensuring that all staff were involved in improving the school at a sustainable pace. She had prioritised tasks and had ensured that various aspects of the school's ethos, links with the community and pastoral care had improved. Under her leadership the school was increasingly becoming aware of its strengths and areas for development, based on scrutiny of teachers' plans and direct observation of lessons. She had accurately identified the need to improve aspects of the school's work including improving attainment in writing. The depute headteacher provided good support for her and was responsible for the arrangements for teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). Teachers were increasingly involved in good CPD activities and there were emerging signs that these activities were having a positive impact on aspects of learning and teaching. The headteacher and depute now needed to implement their plans for further improvement of learning, teaching, support for pupils, and attainment.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to ensure further improvement in the work of the school. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- spread good practice in learning and teaching more consistently across all stages and all curriculum areas;
- improve aspects of attainment, including pupils' writing;
- implement an agreed policy on supporting pupils' learning, to include the roles and responsibilities of class teachers, specialists and assistants, and monitor the implementation of the policy; and
- implement an agreed policy on race equality.

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

Douglas Cairns
HM Inspector

13 September 2005

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Pastoral care
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community

We judged the following to be good

- Structure of the curriculum
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Accommodation and facilities
- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Leadership
- 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"> • Their children enjoyed being at school. • There was mutual respect between teachers and pupils. • The school was well led and had a good reputation in the community. • School reports gave helpful information about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication about the school's priorities for improving the education of pupils.
<p>What pleased pupils most</p>	<p>What pupils would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helped them to keep safe and healthy. • Teachers explained things clearly, checked pupils' homework, and helped them when they were stuck. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of some pupils. • The way in which staff treated all pupils fairly and dealt with bullying was a concern for a few pupils.
<p>What pleased staff most</p>	<p>What staff would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for continuous professional development was used effectively. • They liked working in the school. • Pupil success was celebrated regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of communication amongst staff.

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, 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, Wellgate House (Level 5), The Wellgate, Dundee, DD1 2DB or by telephoning 01382 224155. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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