

**Hallside Primary School
South Lanarkshire Council**

25 June 2002

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Inspection of Standards and Quality in Hallside Primary School South Lanarkshire Council

1. Introduction

Hallside Primary School was inspected in April 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 art and design within expressive arts.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents. A member of the inspection team also met the Chairperson of the School Board and a group of parents.

2. The school

The school serves part of the town of Cambuslang and surrounding communities. At the time of the inspection the roll was 364.

Parents' views

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were very satisfied with the work of the school.

Almost all thought that:

- the school had a good reputation in the community;
- parents were made to feel welcome in the school;
- staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils and treated them fairly; and
- the school was well led.

A few parents expressed concerns about lack of space in the school.

Ethos

The ethos of the school was very good. It had a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils were well behaved and courteous. Relationships between staff and pupils were very positive and all took pride in their school. Staff successfully fostered pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The school effectively promoted an ethos of achievement by recognising and praising pupils' efforts and having high expectations of behaviour and attendance. Regular assemblies provided very good opportunities for religious observance. Attendance was just below the national average.

School and community

The school had established very good links with parents, pre-school units, other schools and the wider community. These included:

- a strong and supportive School Board;
- the active involvement of parents in the work of the school;
- an informative noticeboard for parents and the wider community, regular newsletters and detailed written reports on pupils' progress;

- helpful meetings for parents to inform them about aspects of the school's work; and
- a well-organised induction programme for new P1 pupils and effective arrangements for transfer of pupils to secondary school.

Accommodation

Accommodation was very good. The modern building was very well maintained. It provided a very welcoming environment for visitors. Two adjoining classrooms built to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers were spacious and well appointed. Pupils had access to safe and extensive outdoor play areas. The open-plan accommodation was enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. Teachers made very effective use of available space. This included a separate, well-equipped gymnasium.

Staffing and resources

The school was very well staffed with experienced and well-qualified teachers, visiting and supply staff, classroom assistants and special educational needs auxiliaries. All, together with clerical, auxiliary and janitorial staff, made much valued contributions to the work of the school.

The school had very good resources overall, including a growing range of computer equipment. The school administered its finances fairly and effectively.

3. How well are pupils performing?

English language

The quality of attainment in English language was good overall. Most pupils coped well with their coursework. Across the school, most pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in *reading* and *writing*. Some pupils had attained these levels early. A majority achieved appropriate levels in *listening* and *talking*. Pupils at all stages listened attentively to teachers'

questions and instructions. Most pupils were able to talk about themselves and their experiences. Some had difficulty in supporting an opinion or offering an alternative point of view. Most pupils read fluently and with good understanding. They were developing good skills in writing for different purposes in a variety of styles and contexts.

Mathematics

The quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was fair overall. Most pupils performed well in their coursework and there was an improving trend in pupils' attainment. In P3, almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in *information handling, number, money and measurement* and *shape position and movement*. Many pupils at this stage had achieved these levels early. Progress was slower as pupils moved through the school and, by P7, a majority of pupils achieved appropriate national levels. At all stages, pupils were competent in performing written and mental calculations involving number, money and aspects of measurement. They were able to organise and interpret data and most had a good knowledge of the properties of different shapes. At all stages pupils were beginning to develop appropriate skills in *problem-solving and enquiry*.

Art and design

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in art and design was good. Most pupils were making appropriate progress in most aspects of their coursework. Some pupils at all stages were achieving high standards. Almost all pupils in P1 to P3 were developing good skills in designing, painting, printing and clay work. From P4 to P7, most were achieving appropriate levels. In P2, pupils showed well developed problem-solving skills in making expressive paper sculptures of imaginary creatures. In P7, pupils painted imaginative abstract designs based on art nouveau. Pupils' skills in observed drawing were more variable. From P4 to P6, pupils were not sufficiently skilled in describing and evaluating their own work and that of other artists.

4. How good is the curriculum?

The curriculum was appropriately broad and balanced. It was supported by a number of policies and position papers, some of which needed to be updated or completed. Pupils in P6 and P7 learned French.

English language

The programme for English language was good. Teachers gave appropriate attention to most aspects of listening, talking, reading and writing. The recently introduced writing programme was already having an impact on improving pupils' writing skills. The school now needed to develop more systematically pupils' skills in talking and to include more poetry within the programme.

Mathematics

The programme for mathematics was good. Teachers had drawn upon national and education authority advice to provide a generally broad and balanced experience for pupils. There was a good balance of oral activities and written tasks. However, there was a need to increase the pace of learning for many pupils as they moved through the programme from P4 to P7.

Art and design

The programme for art and design was good. It offered a wide range of expressive and design based practical activities. Teachers should now place greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills in evaluating and appreciating and on using the language of art and design.

Expressive arts

Overall, the expressive arts programme was good. Courses provided effective coverage of key elements of art and design, drama, physical education and music. School policies needed to give further advice on planning, assessment and the use of homework in aspects of the expressive arts.

5. How good is learning and teaching?

The overall quality of learning and teaching was good. More than half of the lessons seen were good and over a third were very good. Further information about lesson evaluations is given in the appendix.

- Teachers planned well for daily lessons. They gave clear instructions and directions to pupils and mostly made good use of praise and encouragement.
- In some classes there were very good examples of direct, interactive teaching and co-operative teaching involving other staff. Teachers used homework effectively in English language and mathematics.
- Pupils were well motivated and hard working. When given the opportunity, they worked well independently, taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers made some effective use of setting in mathematics to help match tasks to pupils' needs but, in mathematics and in other areas, some tasks remained insufficiently well-paced and challenging for pupils.
- Teachers had effective arrangements for recording pupils' progress. However, assessment information was not being consistently well used to plan next steps in learning and to match tasks to pupils' learning needs.
- Judgements about the timing of national tests for individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were sometimes inconsistent.

6. How well are pupils supported?

Care and welfare

Staff were fully committed to the care and welfare of pupils. They promoted a climate of trust and respect throughout the school and actively promoted good relationships and positive behaviour. The school had well-understood arrangements in place to prevent bullying and to safeguard pupils' health and safety.

Personal and social development

The headteacher and her staff placed a very strong emphasis on the development of pupils' personal and social skills. A range of extra-curricular activities and a residential opportunity for older pupils complemented the school's formal personal and social development programme. Pupils' participation in the school council fostered their self-esteem and sense of responsibility. The school had a developing programme for healthy and safe living. Pupils showed care for the environment in practical ways, such as through litter collection and the development of the school garden.

Support for learning

The school had effective arrangements in place to support pupils' learning. Teachers, classroom assistants, special educational needs auxiliaries and promoted staff worked well together to provide a high level of support for individuals and small groups. A visiting specialist, not seen during the inspection, provided additional support for pupils. Staff had developed individual educational programmes for pupils and maintained detailed records of pupils' progress. The school should now complete its plans to finalise a written policy for learning support throughout the school.

The school had good internal procedures for managing Records of Needs. However, the education authority should liaise with the school to clarify responsibilities in relation to the timing of review meetings.

7. How well is the school managed?

Overall management and leadership

In her relatively short time in post, the headteacher had provided good leadership at a time of considerable change within the management team. She had led developments with sensitivity and professionalism and had gained the confidence and respect of pupils, staff and parents. Her open, consultative style had fostered effective teamwork and co-operative working among staff. She had placed appropriate emphasis on raising pupils' levels of attainment and had identified a clear agenda for future improvements in the work of the school.

The headteacher, staff and pupils were well supported by the depute headteacher and the assistant headteacher, both of whom carried out their remits effectively and enthusiastically. The school's two senior teachers worked conscientiously to successfully carry out their additional responsibilities. The headteacher should now lead a review of the remits of promoted staff. These remits should more closely reflect responsibilities arising from the school development plan and overall responsibilities for key curriculum areas.

Staff development and review

Arrangements for staff development and review were very good. All teachers and some non-teaching staff had participated in the education authority's development and review scheme. Teachers had taken part in a wide range of relevant in-service training which reflected their own needs and school development priorities. There was clear evidence of the positive impact of staff training on aspects of classroom practice.

School development planning

School development planning was good overall. The school had addressed an ambitious range of development work over a two year period and had made good progress in implementing its plans. Priorities were mostly appropriate and clearly stated. The development plan placed good emphasis on raising attainment. There was a

need, though, for responsibilities and timescales for implementation to be more carefully defined. Review and audit procedures were mostly effective but needed to become more systematic.

Approaches to improving quality

An ethos of self evaluation was developing within the school. Promoted staff were, appropriately, placing increasing emphasis on monitoring and evaluating the school's work in a systematic way. They provided staff with constructive feedback on most aspects of their forward plans. They monitored the quality of pupils' written work through a sampling process. Appropriately, they now planned to introduce focused visits to classes to evaluate aspects of learning and teaching and provide staff with feedback on their performance. In partnership with teaching staff, they should also track trends in levels of attainment more rigorously to help ensure an appropriate pace in pupils' learning.

8. How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, the school provided a good, and improving, standard of education. The headteacher and her staff had made considerable progress in taking the school forward and improving key aspects of its work. The school was now well placed to develop further through the implementation of its planned priorities and the recommendations of this report.

Key strengths

- The very welcoming and caring atmosphere, the commitment of staff to the welfare of pupils and the recognition of pupils' achievements.
- The very strong and effective links with parents, the School Board and the wider community.
- Accommodation, resources and the provision of staff.

- The examples of high quality teaching and the impact of staff development activities on aspects of classroom practice.
- The school's very positive approach to pupils' personal and social development.
- The very good progress made by the headteacher and her management team in developing teamwork and securing improvements in key aspects of the school's work.

Main points for action

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

- The school should seek to improve overall levels of pupils' attainment in mathematics and aspects of English language.
- The school should complete the development of school policies and programmes and ensure that promoted staff have clear responsibilities for key curriculum areas.
- Teachers should improve approaches to assessment, including national tests, to ensure that information is more effectively used to plan next steps in pupils' learning and to match tasks to pupils' learning needs.
- The education authority should liaise with the school to clarify responsibilities in relation to the timing of review meetings for pupils with Records of Needs.
- Promoted staff should continue to develop a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school focusing, in particular, on classroom practice and pupils' 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.

Gordon Coupland
HM Inspector
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector
Western Division

25 June 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
- Partnership with parents and the School Board
- Provision of accommodation and facilities
- Provision of staff
- Provision of materials and equipment
- The school's arrangements for development and review of its staff

We judged the following to be *good*

- The school's management of devolved finances
- The structure of the curriculum
- Quality of courses or programmes
- Quality of teachers' planning
- Quality of the teaching process
- Quality of pupils' learning
- Effectiveness of the learning support
- Effectiveness of leadership of the school
- Effectiveness of promoted staff and senior teachers
- The school development plan
- Implementing the school development plan

We judged the following to be *fair*

- Matching the teaching process to pupils' needs and experience
- Using assessment to guide the teaching process
- Implementation of Special Educational Needs legislation
- The school's approach to evaluating its own work

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 38% of cases, good in 55% and fair in 7%. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Executive Director (Education Resources), 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 0141 242 0100.

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 Frank Crawford, HMCI whose address is given below. If you are unhappy with the response, you will be told in writing what further steps you may take.

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