

**Longhaugh Primary School
Dundee City Council**

26 February 2002

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

1. Introduction

Longhaugh Primary School was inspected in November 2001 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 science.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents. A member of the inspection team also met representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents.

2. The school

The school serves the Fintry and Whitfield areas in the north-east of Dundee. At the time of the inspection the roll was 359.

Parents' views

Parents and guardians who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about most aspects of

the school's work. All felt that the school set high expectations of pupils and that parents' evenings were helpful and informative.

Almost all thought that:

- the school encouraged pupils to work to the best of their abilities and set clear expectations for their work;
- pupils found school work stimulating and challenging;
- teachers were good about informing parents of their children's strengths and weaknesses; and
- school buildings were kept in good order.

Ethos

The school had a very good ethos. It provided a welcoming and supportive environment. Pupils identified strongly with the school and were proud to be part of it. Pupils were courteous, friendly and generally well behaved. Staff used praise effectively to encourage pupils to achieve high standards. They were highly committed and gave freely of their own time to provide pupils with a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils in P7 were given good opportunities to exercise responsibility as monitors in the dinner hall and library. A pupil council was being established to allow pupils to express their views on aspects of the school. Regular assemblies provided appropriate opportunities for religious observance and for celebrating pupils' efforts and achievements. Attendance was in line with national levels.

School and community

The school had established very good links with parents, local playgroups and other schools, educational support services and the wider community. Positive features included:

- an active PTA and parents who were very supportive of the school;
- regular and high quality communication with parents, including a well-presented handbook, and informative leaflets and newsletters;
- helpful reports and meetings with parents to discuss children's progress;
- regular involvement of pupils in community events and sporting activities;
- very good transition arrangements with local nurseries and the associated secondary school; and
- productive links with the education authority, support agencies, local businesses and the local church.

Accommodation

The overall quality of accommodation and facilities was very good. Teaching areas, the assembly hall and gymnasium were bright and spacious. There was good storage and an effective security system. Recent improvements included an excellent library and a computer suite. The accommodation and extensive school grounds were well maintained. Children's work was attractively displayed in classrooms and corridors.

Staffing and resources

The school was very well staffed. There was a good mix of experienced teachers and more recently qualified staff. Teachers in their probationary period were very well supported by promoted staff. Visiting teachers provided valuable specialist teaching. Clerical, auxiliary, janitorial and kitchen staff made very positive contributions to the life of the school.

Overall, the school had a very good range of resources, including computers. In the past four years staff had worked hard to re-organise and improve resources to support all areas of the curriculum. The headteacher managed the school's devolved budget very effectively to support development priorities.

3. How well are pupils performing?

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Most pupils performed well in coursework although greater challenge was needed for able pupils. Almost all pupils from P1 to P3 and most from P4 to P7 were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in *listening, reading* and *talking*. Almost all in P1 to P3, most at P4/P5 and the majority at P6/P7 were achieving national levels of attainment in *writing*. Some pupils were exceeding the levels appropriate to their stage. Most pupils read regularly for enjoyment and talked confidently to one another, and to adults. Their skills in listening to instructions and reading aloud fluently with expression required further development. Overall standards of handwriting were good, but some needed to take more care with the presentation and structure of their writing. From P4 to P7 pupils needed to write at greater length.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Most pupils performed well in their coursework but sometimes tasks lacked sufficient challenge. Most pupils could interpret information displayed on graphs and had experience of using computers to display information. At all stages they had a good understanding of the features of different shapes. Pupils' skills in mental calculation were not well enough developed. Almost all pupils at the early stages, the majority at the middle stages and most at the upper stages had attained national levels in *information handling* and *number*,

money and measurement. The majority of pupils from the early and middle stages, and most at the upper stages, had reached these levels in *shape, position and movement.* At all stages pupils demonstrated good skills in *problem-solving and enquiry.* However, few had sufficient awareness of the range of strategies they could use to tackle problems.

Science

The overall quality of attainment in science was good. Most pupils performed well in classwork. Pupils in P2 and P5 were developing a good understanding of living things and the processes of life. In P3 and P4 pupils showed a good awareness of important aspects of the Earth and the solar system. At the upper stages, pupils were developing a good knowledge of electricity. Throughout the school pupils were developing informed attitudes about their environment. They were able to describe recent practical investigations carried out and the results they had obtained. Pupils' skills in designing investigations and interpreting results were not sufficiently well developed.

4. How good is the curriculum?

The school provided a very good curriculum which included French and German in P6 and P7. Links between curriculum areas were made very effectively.

English language

The programme for English language was good. It gave good attention to developing pupils' handwriting, comprehension and grammar skills. At the early stages, it focused very well on early literacy skills. The reading programme gave appropriate emphasis to the use of a wide range of books to develop pupils' reading skills. The programme for listening and talking did not give pupils sufficient opportunities to work in groups. The newly introduced writing programme was having a positive impact on the development of skills. Teachers

needed to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of writers' various skills.

Mathematics

The overall quality of the mathematics programme was good. Recently introduced programmes of study were well structured and gave good opportunities for pupils to make progress in their learning. Pupils were given appropriate opportunities to develop their skills in mental calculation and in problem solving. The programme needed greater emphasis on encouraging pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge in practical situations.

Science

The programme for science within environmental studies was good. It provided a well-balanced coverage of earth and space, energy and forces, and living things and the processes of life. Good attention had been given to the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils had good opportunities to take part in practical investigations. However, teachers were not yet developing pupils' investigative skills progressively throughout the school.

Environmental Studies

The programme for environmental studies was good overall. It provided a good basis for balanced attention to knowledge and understanding in social subjects, science and technology. Good use was made of visitors and visits to places of interest. There was insufficient practical advice to teachers on how to develop pupils' skills in environmental studies.

5. How good is learning and teaching?

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

- The overall quality of teachers' planning was good. Staff co-operated closely with each other in using newly introduced planning formats. Plans needed to focus more consistently on what pupils were expected to learn.
- Most teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches and made effective use of questioning. They used praise well to motivate pupils.
- Staff provided good levels of support to meet pupils' needs. While the pace of learning was appropriate for most pupils, there was a need to increase the pace and challenge for some pupils in English language and mathematics.
- The school was developing its procedures for assessment in English language and mathematics. It had not yet developed approaches to assessment in science and environmental studies. Assessment information should be used more effectively to monitor pupils' progress and attainment and to help identify their next steps in learning.

6. How well are pupils supported?

Care and welfare Staff provided very good levels of support for pupils' care and welfare. They knew their pupils well and were alert to individual circumstances which might affect their well-being. Appropriate procedures were in place

relating to child protection. The school had good approaches to promoting positive behaviour.

Personal and social development

The school made very good arrangements for the development of pupils' personal and social skills. Staff planned and delivered a well-structured personal and social development programme. It included regular opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of interest. These discussions were used to promote pupils' confidence and encourage concern and respect for others. Staff promoted good behaviour through consistent application of school and class rules which were related to an agreed awards scheme. A good range of trips and after school activities provided pupils with further experiences for personal and social development. The health education programme covered suitable aspects of personal safety, hygiene, diet, drugs but required further development in aspects of personal relationships.

Support for learning

Overall arrangements to support pupils who needed additional help with their learning were good with particularly effective provision at the P1 to P4 stages. Appropriate procedures were in place to identify pupils requiring extra support. Support for learning teachers liaised regularly with class teachers to assess and plan how to meet pupils' needs. Overall, they provided well-targeted support for individuals and small groups of pupils. In preparing generally appropriate individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for pupils with specific learning difficulties, learning support teachers worked closely with parents, pupils and class teachers. Some of these programmes required more specific targets against which individuals' progress could be monitored more effectively. Support services, including the educational psychology service, gave very good assistance. Records of Needs were very well managed.

7. How well is the school managed?

Overall management and leadership

The headteacher provided very good leadership. In her four years in post she had established a strong and effective staff team who reflected her own commitment to the school. She demonstrated a high level of professional competence and provided a clear vision and direction for the school. She had established very good relationships with pupils, parents and the wider community. She had also successfully taken forward a number of initiatives aimed at improving the curriculum and pupils' attainment.

The depute and assistant headteacher fulfilled their demanding remits well and provided very good support for the work of the school. Senior teachers carried out their duties conscientiously and effectively. Aims and policies were appropriate and provided a very good basis for evaluating the work of the school.

Staff development and review

Staff development was carefully planned to match the needs of individual teachers and the school's development priorities. Teachers made very good use of staff development courses provided by the education authority. Effective use was also made of in-service training provided in the school and in co-operation with other primary schools. The school had very good arrangements in place to support probationer teachers. All eligible staff had taken part in the education authority's scheme for staff development and review.

School development planning

The school development plan was very good. It was based on a systematic and rigorous review of aspects of the school's provision. The headteacher and staff had made appropriate adjustments to the timescales for implementing priorities. Good progress was being made with current developments.

Approaches to improving quality

The school had very good systems to monitor and evaluate learning and teaching and the performance of pupils. Senior staff monitored and evaluated teachers' plans and provided constructive feedback on them. They visited classes regularly to monitor learning and teaching, and to scrutinise pupils' work. The school had published a standards and quality report which gave an accurate statement of its performance.

8. How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, the school provided a very good standard of education within a caring and supportive environment. The headteacher and staff were highly committed and had worked well as a team to improve the school's effectiveness in a number of key areas. They had successfully raised expectations of pupils' attainment, particularly in relation to performance in English language and mathematics. The school is well placed to further improve attainment and other aspects of its work.

Key strengths

- The quality of accommodation, and the levels of staffing and resources.
- The school's ethos and the opportunities provided to support pupils' personal and social development.
- The strong partnership with parents, support agencies and the wider community.
- The leadership of the headteacher.
- The care and commitment of teaching and ancillary staff to supporting pupils.
- The procedures for self-evaluation and school development planning.

Main points for action

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

- To further improve attainment, the school should make some adjustments to the programmes in English language, mathematics and environmental studies.
- Teachers' plans should focus more closely on the skills and knowledge they expect pupils to learn.
- Teachers should make more effective use of assessment information to help set targets for individual pupils and identify next steps in their learning.

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.

Kenneth Muir
HM Inspector
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector
Northern Division

26 February 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
- Provision of accommodation and facilities
- Provision of staff
- Provision of materials and equipment
- The school's management of devolved finances
- The structure of the curriculum
- Implementation of Special Educational Needs legislation
- 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
- The school's arrangements for development and review of its staff

We judged the following to be *good*

- 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
- Effectiveness of the learning support
- Implementing the school development plan

We judged the following to be *fair*

- Using assessment to guide the teaching process

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 43% of cases, good in 46%, fair in 8% 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 HM Inspectorate of Education, Wellgate House (Level 5), The Wellgate, Dundee DD1 2DB, telephone number 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 George Gray, Acting 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.

HM Inspectorate of Education
Longman House
28 Longman Road
Inverness
IV1 1SF

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