
Inspection of Windsor Park School Falkirk Council

1. The inspection

The inspection of Windsor Park School took place in November and December 1998 as part of a national sample of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The inspection covered all aspects of the work of the school at all stages. 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. Sign language interpreters assisted members of the inspection team to communicate with pupils. Members of the inspection team inspected aspects of integration of pupils from Windsor Park School into Glenfair Nursery School, Bantaskin Primary School and Falkirk High School. They also observed staff from the Windsor Park School's outreach service for hearing impaired pupils working with pupils in some of the authority's primary and secondary schools.

The results of a questionnaire sent to all parents were taken into account during the inspection.

2. The school

Windsor Park School provides primary and secondary education for pupils with hearing impairments.

At the time of the inspection the roll was sixteen, of whom twelve were in the two primary classes. Six of the primary

pupils spent a considerable part of their week in Glenfair Nursery School or Bantaskin Primary School. All four of the secondary pupils spent varying degrees of time in mainstream classes in Falkirk High School. Pupils lived in Clackmannan, Stirling and Falkirk Council areas. Records of Needs had been opened for fourteen pupils. Attendance was in line with national levels.

Staff also provided a specialist support service to pupils with hearing impairments in nursery, primary and secondary schools.

The school's aims

The numerous aims in the school handbook did not give direction to the school's work. In the proposed review of the aims, staff should include improving attainment and the development of pupils' communication.

Ethos

The school's ethos was good. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good. Teachers made good use of praise to encourage pupils and displayed their work well. Pupils had good opportunities to play in the playground with friends from the neighbouring mainstream school. Staff were on occasions too ready to intervene and direct pupils and this restricted pupils' independence. Very few pupils participated in extra-curricular activities, in part due to transport arrangements. Teachers should implement their aim of involving adults with hearing impairments to show pupils how much they can achieve in life.

At secondary, a reward system for good work and behaviour linked well with that operated by Falkirk High School.

Staff worked well together. However, their morale was low due to the frequent changes in leadership over recent years and uncertainties caused by a lack of clarity about the role of the school.

Pupils took part regularly in assemblies led by the chaplain and some joined assemblies in Bantaskin Primary School and

Falkirk High School. These provided good opportunities for religious observance.

The school in its community

At the primary stages, parents and teachers exchanged information by means of home-school diaries. These parents met staff formally twice each year to discuss their children's progress and received a yearly report. Where pupils integrated into Bantaskin Primary School they also received a report from their mainstream teacher. Consideration should be given to providing reports which give comprehensive coverage of a pupil's work in both schools.

At the secondary stages, parents had one formal meeting each year to discuss pupils' progress with teachers. Consideration should be given to providing parents with further regular opportunities to review and plan their children's integration programme and their school work.

There was no School Board or parents' association.

Speech and language therapists kept parents abreast of their children's progress. They also provided pupils with work to carry out at home. Teachers involved parents in their children's education through well-considered homework.

Links with Glenfair Nursery School were very good. The links with Bantaskin Primary School and Falkirk High School had strengths but action was required to ensure that staff in these other schools were familiar with the policies and practices for supporting pupils with hearing impairments.

Links with the education authority's psychological services were unsatisfactory. The degree of support provided to the school, pupils and parents by educational psychological services was poor. There was no social worker for the deaf, which placed pupils and their parents at a distinct disadvantage. Very good links had been established with health trust personnel, the careers service and the authority's support for learning officer.

Senior pupils from other secondary schools undertook valuable work experience in Windsor Park School.

Parents' views of the school

A questionnaire which sought views about the school and its outreach service was sent to all parents and the majority responded. Parents were generally positive about the work of the school. All parents who responded felt that:

- their children enjoyed school and the outreach support they received and were treated fairly by their teachers;
- pupils were supported well to overcome difficulties and encouraged to give of their best; and
- teachers dealt well with their concerns and were good at informing them of their children's strengths and weaknesses.

Almost all were of the view that:

- the school had a good reputation in the community; and
- the acting headteacher was approachable and helpful.

However, a significant number of parents were deeply concerned about the frequent changes in leadership of the school over recent sessions.

Accommodation

The school opened in purpose-built accommodation in 1972. The building housed the two primary classes and a very small base for the four outreach service staff. Storage space was limited, and storage of resources in one of the classrooms restricted teaching space. The staffroom also served as a room for testing children's hearing. This was an unsatisfactory arrangement. There were no appropriate facilities for parents. Rooms used by speech and language therapists were adequate for one-to-one work but not for group work. Fittings and soft furnishings in classrooms were appropriate and contributed to suitable acoustics for learning and teaching. No large space was available for activities such as physical

education. Some rooms in Bantaskin Primary School, used regularly by pupils with hearing impairments, did not have appropriate acoustics.

All pupils had good access to hardstanding and grassed play areas. Car parking facilities for Windsor Park School were too restricted. To improve safety, steps should be taken to stop pupils from neighbouring schools using the vehicle driveway as a thoroughfare.

Very good attention had been given by the education authority to ensuring the security of the building.

The base in Falkirk High School consisted of two appropriate classrooms. Secondary pupils attended the Windsor Park building for medical examinations. This practice should be reviewed, in consultation with pupils.

Facilities for outreach teachers working in other schools varied considerably. The acoustics of rooms which mainstream pupils with a hearing impairment used for their everyday work and for their specialist time with outreach staff were often far from ideal. More suitable space was made available in Glenfair Nursery.

Overall, the accommodation had some important weaknesses.

Resources and equipment

The provision of resources was good overall. However, several matters should be addressed. Software for computers should be updated and better integrated into pupils' learning programmes. Sign language resources should be increased and should include signed video stories for use in classes. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that books and reading material are always appropriate to the age and interests of pupils. Good use was made of the Council's library service. There was scope for improving pupils' use of Bantaskin Primary's library facilities. Secondary pupils benefited from the very good access to resources provided by Falkirk High School.

Pupils had appropriate modern personal hearing aids and radio systems. However, staff had no technical support for repair and maintenance of hearing aids on site.

Staffing

The overall provision of staff was fair. Several teachers had shown very good commitment in service to the school and its outreach services. Over the last five years, however, the school had experienced significant disruption because of several changes of leadership. The current acting headteacher had only been in post for a few months. No promoted post holders or outreach teachers held a secondary teaching qualification. Eight of the ten teachers had an additional qualification as a teacher of the deaf. The degree to which pupils integrated into mainstream classes was occasionally constrained because there was insufficient signing support for pupils who required a high level of signing. Speech and language therapists ably supported pupils. Ancillary staff made a valued contribution to the work of the school.

3. The effectiveness of the school

Courses - the structure of the curriculum

The primary curriculum was broad and took account of the national 5-14 guidelines. However, too little time was given to some aspects of mathematics, environmental studies and expressive arts. The programmes for art and design, drama, environmental studies and personal and social development (PSD) did not ensure that pupils systematically developed their skills, knowledge and understanding. In class two, greater attention should be given to the study of other world religions in religious and moral education.

The school faced the challenge of giving time for pupils to develop communications skills. Some of these programmes were necessarily highly specialised and intensive, particularly at the nursery stage and in class one. Teachers and therapists had devised very effective programmes. Staff should ensure that the forms of communication used in classes meet the diverse needs of all pupils.

The secondary curriculum was largely in line with national advice except that no pupil had an opportunity to learn a foreign language. Some 75% of the curriculum was delivered in the hearing impairment base by two teachers from Windsor Park. Pupils, supported by these teachers, integrated where appropriate into mainstream classes to follow subjects of their choice. The degree of integration should be subject to regular review.

Learning and teaching

Overall, the quality of learning and teaching was good although it ranged from unsatisfactory to very good across classes.

The following were features of learning and teaching.

- Teachers generally gave clear explanations and made effective use of questions.
- The pace of some lessons was too slow and occasionally pupils needed more challenge in their learning.
- Pupils did not have sufficient responsibility for organising their own work and for making choices.
- Staff knew pupils well and provided them with good feedback on how to improve their work.
- National tests were used in English language and mathematics to confirm teachers' judgements of pupils' attainments.
- Homework was regular and appropriate.

Staff planned their work for various time spans and used a range of assessment and recording procedures. Steps should now be taken to devise individualised educational programmes (IEPs) which map out the short and longer term goals for each pupil.

Pupils in class one had been successfully integrated into Glenfair Nursery and the P1 class in Bantaskin Primary. The success of the integration of pupils into Bantaskin Primary or Falkirk High depended on Windsor Park staff sharing their specific teaching approaches with their mainstream colleagues and this was not taking place consistently. All teachers needed to understand the implications of hearing impairments for learning and teaching and, in particular, of the relatively recent change to using signed communication in addition to oral/aural methods in Windsor Park. There was much scope for developing a greater awareness of these implications for teachers from P2 upwards in Bantaskin Primary and in Falkirk High.

Support for pupils

All teachers were sensitive to pupils' personal and emotional needs. The small classes allowed teachers to provide pupils with a high degree of individual attention. Pupils were well taught to have regard to personal safety and hygiene. Almost all of the youngest pupils demonstrated very good levels of maturity in dealing with their difficulties. Some aspects of the PSD programme in primary classes required review.

The secondary PSD programme was comprehensive and linked well with that in Falkirk High School. Greater attention should be given to ensuring that pupils learn about deafness and deaf awareness issues. Pupils were developing a range of important life skills but there was scope for developing their independence further. Their achievements were recorded appropriately using the National Record of Achievement folders. Careers advice was available through a specialist careers officer.

Secondary pupils had access to support from the guidance staff of Falkirk High School. Staff should consider the benefits of pupils mixing with mainstream pupils at the start of each school day and of finding alternative arrangements for checking hearing aids. All pupils had learning difficulties and would have benefited from contact with the learning support department in Falkirk High School.

Very good support was provided to pupils and their teachers by the speech and language therapists. They also ensured that parents were informed of what their child was doing by providing a diary which gave simple tasks to be carried out at home.

The overall provision to meet pupils' audiological needs was fair. There was no trained educational audiologist to carry out accurate and comprehensive regular hearing checks and to monitor the performance of and use of hearing aids. The length of time taken by teaching staff to do daily hearing aid checks impacted on the time available for learning and teaching.

Teaching staff tested the hearing of pre-school children. They also tested the hearing of school-age children to determine if referral to health services was required. In consultation with the local Health Trust, the education authority should review whether teachers should be carrying out these tasks.

Most pupils in the school had Records of Needs. However, the education authority did not discharge its responsibilities well in terms of meeting the requirements of legislation. The opening of Records was not always carried out efficiently. Annual reviews of most pupils' Records had ceased to take place and the updating of Records was unsatisfactory. Very few Records made any reference to pupils having social and emotional needs. The education authority should address these shortcomings as a matter of urgency.

Programmes and standards of attainment

Communication and Language

Staff had rightly recognised the need for change from a previous oral-only policy to one which incorporates a visual approach to language acquisition. They set out to provide a range of communication methods within Total Communication (TC) to enable deaf children to acquire and develop language. Appropriate steps included integrating pupils into mainstream classes where signed language was to be established, finding a role within the school community for deaf adults as role models, and proposals to evaluate the new policy on a regular basis. Whilst some good progress had been made in

introducing TC, much remained to be done, including continuing to improve the proficiency of teachers' signing. The school should make clear to pupils that all strategies for communication are valued.

The school should present a clear definition of TC and should share this with parents and staff in schools where pupils integrate into mainstream classes. The relationship between language and communication and their importance in helping deaf children to develop a positive personal identity should be addressed.

The overall programme for listening/watching and talking/signing was fair. Pupils, particularly those in the primary classes, needed more planned opportunities to communicate with each other as well as with adults. Pupils at the secondary stages required a planned programme to improve their signing skills.

The following were features of pupils' attainment in communication.

- At most stages, pupils were making good progress in communicating with classmates, using gesture and sign to support spoken language.
- Most pupils were able to make use of a signed component presented simultaneously with a teacher's spoken communication.
- Many pupils demonstrated the ability to develop their own sign language communication.
- In the secondary, pupils communicated well orally and were confident talkers amongst themselves and in small group situations.

Reading and writing

The programme in reading and writing was good overall. In class one, pupils should have more opportunities for dictating

or writing their own stories. In class two, pupils were making good progress in developing their reading skills but reading for pleasure and for information should feature more regularly. Pupils should have more opportunities to write at length and for a variety of purposes. In the secondary stages, there were good links between English language and other aspects of the curriculum. Attention should be given to ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to read and discuss materials which are appropriate to their age. Pupils' attainment in their class coursework in reading and writing was good, although, they had yet to achieve appropriate national standards.

The following were features of pupils' attainment in reading and writing.

- The youngest pupils had a well developed appreciation of books and stories.
- Pupils in class two were able to read familiar texts well.
- Older pupils in the primary classes were able to write short stories but needed to develop their writing skills further.
- Secondary pupils' could write briefly and neatly about the novel they were reading.

Mathematics

The mathematics programme was suitably structured and took good account of national guidelines. Pupils required more opportunities to develop their mental arithmetic skills in line with recent advice contained in the HMI report *Improving Mathematics Education 5-14*. They also needed to use computers more regularly to undertake mathematical activities and to develop their skills in problem-solving and enquiry.

Overall, pupils' attainment in class coursework was good although they had yet to achieve appropriate national standards.

The following were features of pupils' attainments in mathematics.

- The pupils in class one could count to 10 accurately and to 20 with prompts. They had a good understanding of sequence, direction and shape.
- Pupils in class two were making good progress. Some could add and subtract within 20 with accuracy and the oldest could use larger numbers with confidence. Many had difficulty in telling the time accurately and giving the correct change when using money.
- Most secondary pupils could identify and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes and some could calculate time intervals, find averages and use fractions.

Environmental studies/Science

Pupils in the primary classes followed a programme of topics which provided opportunities for them to study some of the aspects of environmental studies recommended in national advice. Overall, however, the programme was weak and insufficiently challenging. Health education was a prominent feature of class work. Pupils' technology and information and communications technology skills were under-developed. They had too few opportunities to carry out practical activities to develop their skills in science and technology. Some secondary pupils followed a course leading to the award of a National Certificate in biology. They also studied aspects of geography and history using a topic-based approach.

The environmental studies programme for the whole school should be reviewed to ensure systematic coverage of all the relevant aspects. Teachers should take better account of the range of pupils' abilities in any one class. Staff should seek to build up their knowledge of the concepts where pupils have been particularly successful or which pupils have had difficulty in understanding. Strategies should be developed to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding

systematically. The arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in environmental studies should be reviewed.

Pupils were making good progress in the coursework set although the overall quality of attainment was fair compared to national standards. The following were features of pupils' attainment in environmental studies/science.

- Pupils in class one could accurately recall details of their study of transport and were knowledgeable about different kinds of animals. Those in class two could discuss with confidence their recent work on Early Man.
- Most secondary pupils were able to describe the apparatus they would use to measure various environmental conditions. They knew how to measure the moisture content of soil.
- Across the school, pupils were developing appropriate knowledge and skills in health education. They had a good understanding of hygiene routines and of how to keep themselves safe.

Expressive arts

Programmes for art and design, music and physical education were fair. The programme for drama was unsatisfactory. A review of the programmes should be carried out and should aim to develop pupils' skills systematically. In art and design, primary pupils worked using a restricted range of media and techniques. They required more opportunities to express their own ideas and to use their imagination when drawing and painting. Secondary pupils had an opportunity to undertake a Standard Grade course in Art. The work of the visiting specialist teacher in music was good and many pupils integrated well with mainstream pupils to participate in physical education lessons. In drama, pupils had too few opportunities to explore role play, mime and puppetry. Assessment in the expressive arts should be reviewed.

Overall, pupils' attainment in expressive arts was fair.

The following were features of pupils' attainment in expressive arts.

- Pupils in class one could act out how to cross a road safely and offer insightful comments on the performance of others.
- Pupils in class two had produced a large and colourful frieze depicting prehistoric times. Secondary pupils could produce drawings with good attention to detail.
- Most primary pupils were able to play untuned percussion instruments and clap to keep a beat. They showed a good recall of simple action songs.
- Some primary pupils demonstrated an ability to follow the rules in a game and understood the importance of warming up before starting physical activity.

Religious and moral education

The programme of study in religious and moral education for the primary classes was fair. It comprised stories from the Bible, Christian festivals and moral education. Personal search and the study of other world religions were under-developed. Steps should be taken to plan a programme which provides the breadth, balance, continuity and progression set out in 5-14 national guidelines. Assessment of pupils' progress had yet to be fully addressed.

Secondary pupils followed a certificate course entitled 'Christianity Today'. The programme, which was suitably designed to meet the needs of pupils, was very good. Overall, pupils' attainment in religious and moral education was fair.

The following were features of pupils' attainment in religious and moral education.

- Primary pupils knew about God and Jesus and could recall aspects of Bible stories and important Christian festivals.

- Pupils had a good understanding of the need for rules and the importance of respecting the needs of others.
- Secondary pupils had a good recall of the life of Martin Luther King.

4. Management and quality assurance

Staff management and leadership

The school had experienced several changes in leadership over the last five years. At the time of the inspection all promoted staff were appointed to their posts on a temporary basis only. The acting headteacher had worked hard at and been successful in establishing good relationships with staff and parents and developing a sense of teamwork. As the education authority had not clarified the purpose and future development of the school, she had found it difficult to identify priorities requiring action. However, she was managing the day-to-day work of the school efficiently. The acting assistant headteacher provided her with good support and had ably assisted a probationer teacher. The acting assistant headteacher responsible for the outreach service had made a very good start to organising the staff involved and provided good leadership. Senior promoted staff spent a considerable time each week assessing children's hearing and this reduced the time available for them to carry out management duties. A full review of all remits should be undertaken with the aim of ensuring that the time of senior managers is used more effectively to address the challenges facing the school.

Class teachers and auxiliary staffing were generally deployed effectively. Care should be exercised, however, to avoid young pupils having to work with too many adults. Better arrangements were required to ensure that Windsor Park staff had suitable consultation time with mainstream teachers to discuss pupils' progress and their next steps in learning in integrated and outreach settings. Outreach staff were making a good contribution to supporting hearing impaired pupils.

The authority was revising its scheme for staff review. As a consequence, no member of staff had received a career review. The acting headteacher had benefited from a fellow headteacher acting as her mentor. Staff were not fully familiar with national advice on the curriculum. Commendably, all staff were involved in weekly signing classes in order to improve their communications with pupils.

Steps should be taken to improve the opportunities for joint staff training with Bantaskin Primary School and Falkirk High School. There should also be better links established with these schools to raise awareness of deaf issues for learning and teaching amongst mainstream teachers.

Resource
management

The school made prudent use of the budget devolved by the education authority. However, future spending should be more closely aligned to priorities for action identified in the school's development plan. The management of space, particularly the organisation of resources, should be reviewed. An inventory of resources should be drawn up.

Policies, quality
assurance and
school development
planning

The school had a range of brief policy statements. These should be updated to provide a better match to national advice and clearer guidance on learning and teaching. Critically, a policy on the integration of pupils into mainstream classes should be agreed in consultation with receiving schools and the education authority. Principles, roles and responsibilities should be clearly spelled out.

The arrangements for quality assurance were unsatisfactory. Promoted staff did not systematically monitor and evaluate classroom or outreach practices. Quality assurance was not at the heart of weekly management meetings. Discussion relating to the curriculum amongst staff required more emphasis. The effectiveness of the implementation of the Total Communication policy had not yet been evaluated. Class teachers' evaluations of their own work should be used more systematically in planning programmes of study. The HMI publication *How good is our school?* will provide a good basis for introducing self-evaluation.

The development plan had some important weaknesses. It was over-ambitious and was not based upon a thorough audit to identify priorities for action. The current plan did not give sufficient attention to raising pupils' attainment. Future development plans should be based on revised aims for the school.

5. Key strengths of the school

The strengths of the school included the following.

- The staff were hard working, caring and worked well as a team.
- The quality of integration of pupils into Glenfair Nursery School was good.
- Good relationships had been established between pupils and their teachers. Pupils' pastoral needs were well met.
- The school had taken good steps to keep parents informed about aspects of their children's progress.
- The quality of specialist support provided by the outreach team to children in the associated nursery school and to pupils in mainstream primary and secondary schools was good.
- Teachers and speech and language therapists worked very well together in developing pupils' listening, talking and reading skills.
- The programme to help pupils to understand and use language following an operation to insert a specialised aid to hearing (cochlear implant) was good.

6. Main points for action

As a matter of urgency the education authority should establish stable leadership of Windsor Park School and clarify, for staff and parents, the purpose of the school and the services it should provide. Working closely with the school, it should agree an action plan to address the major issues listed in this report. Priorities for the action plan will need to include the following.

- Clear remits should be established for all promoted staff.
- Senior staff should monitor and evaluate classroom practices in a more systematic and focused manner, promote self-evaluation and engage staff in discussions about raising pupils' attainment.
- In consultation with the Health Trust, the current procedures for testing the hearing of pre-school children should be reviewed in order to ensure that the time of promoted staff is used more effectively to address the challenges facing the school.
- Clear guidelines on the integration of all pupils into Bantaskin Primary School and Falkirk High School should be established and the resources required to support pupils agreed. Staff in these other schools should be provided with training which gives them the expertise they need to support pupils with hearing impairments.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that the legislation regarding the opening of Records of Needs and their regular review is fully met. Staff, pupils and their parents should receive advice from psychological and social work services and be supported appropriately by specialist technical staff.
- A clearer description of the Total Communication policy should be agreed and shared with associated schools and

parents. The effective implementation of this policy should be monitored and regularly reviewed.

- Individualised educational programmes should be devised for all pupils highlighting their short and longer term learning goals.
- The balance of time given to curriculum areas in the primary classes and the content of programmes for environmental studies, expressive arts and personal and social development should be revised to ensure more systematic development in pupils' learning.
- The school development plan should be revised in the light of this report. The education authority should take steps to support necessary developments and regularly monitor and evaluate the progress made towards meeting identified priorities.

Six months after the publication of this report, HM Inspectors will request a report from the education authority on the steps it has taken to address these recommendations. HM Inspectors will then return within 18 months after the publication of this report to assess progress in meeting the recommendations.

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, local councillors and the Member of Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from the office at the address below.

If you want to make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report, you should write in the first instance to the HM Chief Inspector 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 Inspectors of Schools
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
EDINBURGH
EH11 3XD

Alistair F Marquis
HM Inspector
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector of Schools
Eastern Division

Crown Copyright 1999

The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department

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

Appendix

HM Inspectors use indicators of quality when making judgements about the work of a school. These indicators have been published so that schools can use them to evaluate their own work.

This appendix summarises some of the findings contained in this report about the effectiveness of the school and how well it is managed. It also summarises HM Inspectors' evaluations of the quality of the lessons observed.

<i>very good</i>	major strengths
<i>good</i>	more strengths than weaknesses
<i>fair</i>	some important weaknesses
<i>unsatisfactory</i>	major weaknesses

The effectiveness of the school and how well it is managed.

We judged the following to be *very good*

No aspects were found to be in this category

We judged the following to be *good*

- Ethos
- Communication with parents
- Partnership with parents
- Links with other schools, agencies, employers and the community
- Provision of resources
- School management of devolved finances

We judged the following to be *fair*

- Provision of accommodation and facilities
- Provision of staff
- Structure of the curriculum
- Quality of teachers' planning
- Personal and social development
- Placement of pupils with special educational needs
- Effectiveness of leadership

- Effectiveness of promoted staff
- Effectiveness and deployment of staff
- Staff development and review
- Organisation and use of resources and space
- The development plan
- Implementing the development plan

We judged the following to be *unsatisfactory*

- Implementation of SEN legislation
- Self-evaluation

Quality of the lessons observed.

HMI also evaluated the quality of the lessons observed. The overall quality of lessons was very good in 19% of cases, good in 49%, fair in 29% and unsatisfactory in 3%.