



Primary School Inspection
Follow-Through
Byron Park
Nursery/Infant School
May 2007

A report by Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen City Council

Follow-through to the HMIE Inspection of Byron Park Nursery/Infant School



Introduction

H M Inspectorate of Education published a report on Standards and Quality in Byron Park Nursery and Infant School in March 2005 as part of a national sample of primary education. Working with the authority, the school prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original report.

New arrangements require that a follow-through report is completed within 2 years of the initial report and, in the case of Byron Park Nursery/Infant School, this is the responsibility of the Aberdeen City Council.

Continuous Improvement

Education Officers visited the school in October 2006 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work and to evaluate progress made on responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

Since the inspection, the school had continued to improve its work in several areas of the curriculum. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the curriculum had been reviewed and expanded through revised policy and planning programmes. There was now a more robust set of hardware available and the school had been given appropriate technical support. Support for Learning (SFL) staff were now used to support pupils in a wider range of curriculum activities including the use of ICT, the Reading Recovery programme and a gross motor difficulties group. Support for Learning staff were also appropriately deployed to extend the learning of more able pupils.

The school had also been focusing on raising attainment in English language and mathematics.

In Primary 2, in session 2004/05, a few children attained Level A in reading. The majority attained Level A in writing and in mathematics.

In session 2005/06 just over a third of Primary 2 pupils attained Level A in reading and in writing and just under half attained Level A in mathematics.

Although a clear increase in attainment in reading was evident over the two sessions, work remained to be done in the areas of mathematics and writing. To that end, mathematics was a focus for monitoring and sampling and assessment evidence was regularly scrutinised by the Head Teacher. Staff development had taken place with some impact on mental maths and writer's craft. The use of formative assessment had increased in the school and good practice had been established.

Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial report, published in August 2004, identified four main points for action. The following are evaluations of the progress made towards meeting the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

Raise attainment in English language and mathematics

The school had made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

A programme of staff development alongside the implementation of the Reading Recovery programme had resulted in significant progress in reading for the lowest performing pupils. Practice in mental mathematics had improved, as had that in writer's craft. The use of formative assessment techniques has also supported the raising of attainment. Mathematics practice continued to be a focus for Head Teacher monitoring and she had been supporting staff by team teaching in mathematics lessons. Tracking systems were in place for monitoring pupil attainment. Classroom Assistants had received further training to support pupils and one had been involved in the Reading Recovery programme.

Parents had been involved in homework with the policy being reviewed. The use of story sacks had been extended to infants and nursery parent partnerships had been further developed through curriculum events.

Share targets with pupils across the curriculum and further develop approaches to providing pupils with feedback on how to improve their work.

The school had made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

Significant staff development had taken place in the use of formative assessment. Self-evaluation had taken place using Assessment is for Learning audits and good practice and development needs had been identified as a result. The effectiveness of employing formative assessment strategies had been evaluated through the Head Teacher's monitoring of learning and teaching and by sampling pupils' work.

Improve arrangements for support for learning to better meet the needs of all pupils.

The school had made adequate progress towards meeting this main point for action.

Considerable support and staff development had been put into place to enable Support for Learning (SFL) staff to extend the range of practice and support pupils across wider curricular areas. Now trained in the Reading Recovery programme, SFL staff had made an impact on the reading attainment of a small number of pupils. A gross motor skills group had been formed with good impact on the skills of pupils involved.

The role of SFL had been reviewed on a termly basis and priorities duly adapted to meet pupils' needs. This included the use of ICT, challenging more able pupils in English language and Environmental Studies and in mathematics.

Liaison opportunities with class teachers had been time tabled and planning, sampling and monitoring of SFL input to classes had been put in place.

Extend pupil skills in the use of Information and Communication Technology

The school had made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

The technical support officer had regularly visited to respond to requests for assistance with technical difficulties. The Head Teacher had undergone training in Leadership for Learning which had facilitated a strong lead and vision for ICT.

Development time had been allocated to staff for further familiarisation with ICT usage. All classes had embarked on a programme to achieve Level A. A revised planning format had been devised for use from August 2006 linking outcomes and resources. Plans had been made for the improved use of the ICT suite and the introduction of new hardware.

Conclusion

Since the inspection, the school had improved the areas of work identified in the report.

Staff development had been put in place to enable many of the actions associated with these recommendations and the Head Teacher had monitored and reviewed progress on each action plan.

Overall, the school had made good progress in meeting the main points for action. Education Officers will continue to monitor the work of the school as part of its ongoing quality assurance framework.

John Tomlinson
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May 2007