



Aberdeen City Council

Follow-Through report following the HMIE Inspection of Muirfield School

Introduction

H M Inspectorate of Education published a report on Standards and Quality in Muirfield School in October 2005 as part of a national sample of primary education. Working with the authority, the school prepared an action plan indicating how it would address the main points for action identified in the original report. Education Officers visited the school in May 2007 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 4 main points for action in the initial report. Since the report, the school had continued to improve its work in several areas of the curriculum.

Continuous Improvement

Support for Learning staff were now used to support pupils throughout the school with more pupils receiving support in class rather than in the support for learning base. Monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching had improved with a clear focus on pace of learning for maths and language work. Attainment in reading, writing and maths had improved. The majority of P7 attained appropriate national levels of attainment in maths, reading and writing with a few exceeding them in maths and writing and nearly a tenth exceeding them in reading. The headteacher and staff will continue to focus on the development of maths particularly in the middle stages of the school. Staff development had continued to focus on literacy, assessment and promoting positive behaviour.

Pupils showed a very good awareness of the levels which they had attained and were able to discuss the need to have goals to aim for. They spoke enthusiastically about their school and felt well supported by it.

Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial report, published in October 2005, identified 4 main points for action. The following are evaluations of the progress made towards meeting the action points and the resulting improvement for pupils and other stakeholders.

To ensure improvement in reading, writing and mathematics

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

The majority of P7 attained appropriate national levels of attainment in maths, reading and writing with a few exceeding them in maths and writing and a nearly a tenth exceeding them in reading. A very focused approach to teaching reading was in place and early intervention was provided for pupils identified as beginning to need support. The teaching of writing had been a focus for Continuing Professional Development with Support for Learning staff fully involved in the planning and delivery of writing, with a resulting increase in levels of attainment. Attainment in maths showed improvement with almost all pupils having attained the appropriate national levels of attainment at early stages and the majority having attained appropriate national levels of attainment at the upper stages. Pupils read with greater understanding, with infant pupils showing good

knowledge of the parts of a book. All pupils wrote more often and for a wider range of purposes. At the upper stages pupils showed good understanding of fractions and decimals. They made use of ICT to organise and display information. The use of ICT in maths had been a focus for targeted teaching and the school had plans to continue to develop this area with the introduction of a number of whiteboards and the inclusion of ICT within maths planners.

Ensure improvement in the support for learning for all pupils receiving additional support.

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

Following the inspection, through discussion with her staff, the headteacher took the decision to bring the Support for Learning staff into one department where previously there had been two. This development involved the Support for Learning teachers working more directly in classes with a larger number of pupils. They were also able to interact more directly with class teachers and to be more involved in the planning of pupils' work. Teachers said they were able to benefit from the specific expertise of Support for Learning staff. Time for joint planning had been made available and was used well to ensure pupils' learning needs were being met.

Individual Educational Plans containing clear short and long term targets were kept and updated with the management team, who regularly monitored the progress of these. An increase in independent learning had been noted. The involvement of Pupil Support Assistants had also helped to increase the attainment for pupils who had been identified as needing additional support.

Ensure improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching.

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

The headteacher and senior management team had introduced more rigour into their monitoring schedule. A yearly timetable of Quality Assurance activities had been established. The headteacher and deputy headteacher carried out a formal programme in order to monitor learning. Included in this was monitoring of classroom practice with an agreed programme of classroom visits followed up by oral and written feedback to staff, as well as regular monitoring of pupils' written work with written comments, suggestions for improvement or well done stickers. A succession of absences prevented the full implementation of the plans to monitor classroom practice, but plans were in place to complete this before the end of the current academic year. Teachers were given helpful written and oral feedback on their forward plans each term. The focus of discussion following the monitoring of forward plans was target setting for individual pupils.

Ensure improvement in the surface of the playground

The school had fully met this main point for action.

The authority had filled in potholes in the playground and an area had been resurfaced.

Conclusion

Overall the school had made good progress towards meeting the main points for action and continued to show capacity for improvement. Attainment in reading, writing and maths showed improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching was more rigorous particularly for all pupils receiving support for learning. The support for learning for all pupils identified as needing support for learning had improved.

Education Officers will continue to monitor the work of the school as part of its ongoing quality assurance framework.

David Leng
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