



Primary School Inspection Follow-Through

St Peter's R.C. School

April 2011

A report by Aberdeen City Council



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

Aberdeen: City of Learning

Our Vision

Aberdeen is a place which recognises, values and celebrates learning; a place where all sectors work together to ensure access to learning; a place where citizens accept learning as an essential and integral part of their lives; and a place where citizens take responsibility for learning throughout their lives.

Aberdeen City Council
Follow-through to the HMIE Inspection of
St Peter's R.C. School



1 The Inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report about the quality of education at St Peter's R.C. School in March 2009 as part of a national sample of primary education. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action. This follow-through report is based on a number of officer visits which were carried out prior to March 2011. It tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on the progress the school is making with the main points for action identified by HMIE.

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. Quality Improvement Officers have visited the school 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 3 main points for action in the initial report.

These were to:

- Broaden children's learning experiences to further raise attainment in mathematics.
- Further develop approaches to planning to ensure tasks and activities meet the learning needs of all children.
- Develop approaches to self-evaluation to improve further children's learning experiences and ensure consistency across the school.

2 The School

St Peter's R.C School is a denominational school situated in Old Aberdeen and serving Catholic parishes in the north east of Aberdeen City.

The inspection was carried out in March 2009 at which time the roll was 198, including 97 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

At March 2011 the school roll remained at 198. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010.

3 Particular strengths of the school

- The very good relationships among children, parents, staff and the community.
- The school's strong identity as a community of faith and its positive approaches to developing the children's understanding of other cultures.
- The high level of commitment and contribution of the head teacher, staff and parents to providing positive learning experiences for the children.
- The distributive leadership throughout the school allowing staff to lead school development projects.

4 Continuous Improvement

Since the inspection the school has continued to develop its work on Curriculum for Excellence. There has been an increasing emphasis on active learning. Planning formats have been reviewed and are more relevant to the needs of the children. Self-evaluation processes are evident in monitoring notes and minutes from staff meetings but further rigour needs to be applied to this area. Attainment has remained consistent with that of 2009 and is predicted to rise slightly in all three areas in 2011.

5 Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial report, published on 17th March 2009, identified 3 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.

5.1 Broaden children's learning experiences to further raise attainment in mathematics.

Good progress has been made in improving learning experiences. A whole school approach has been established for the teaching of mathematics. This approach has ensured a high level of active pupil participation and a consistent approach to the teaching of specific mathematical terms and concepts. New planning formats have been developed and they reflect the needs of the children ensuring that work is at an appropriate level for most children. Setting in mathematics was trialled in upper primary (P4-P7) but was discontinued after a departmental evaluation which highlighted time-table difficulties and lack of evidence of increased pupil progress. Attainment levels across the school in mathematics are satisfactory. Tracking of pupil performance needs to be more closely monitored to ensure that all pupils are being challenged and working at an appropriate pace.

5.2 Further develop approaches to planning to ensure tasks and activities meet the learning needs of all children

Good progress has been made on this action point. The school now has a uniform approach to planning which ensures consistency in the delivery of the curriculum. The introduction of daily and weekly plans has allowed staff to be reactive to assessment findings, planning more relevant and appropriate tasks for many of the children. A new format for Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) has been piloted. The IEPs now need to be even more child-focused and more specific targets set to ensure improved progression in learning.

The school is in the early stages of developing an approach to personal learning planning and this now needs to be evaluated and a whole school approach identified in order that the individual personal learning plans have a positive impact on pupil performance.

Homework tasks have been reviewed and the school now provides work which is more relevant to the needs, experiences and interests of the children.

Monthly professional dialogue sessions between staff and the senior management team have been established for the monitoring of forward plans and this has ensured that planning has continued to develop and it now directly responds to of the needs of all children.

5.3 Develop approaches to self-evaluation to improve further children's learning experiences and ensure consistency across the school.

The school has made a satisfactory start to this action point but further work needs to be done in this area. A calendar for self-evaluation, which involved the participation of all stakeholders, has been established. This has only been partially completed due to the time constraints of the senior management. The school now needs to explore ways in which evaluative tasks can be a shared responsibility among all staff. There is an open culture of self-evaluation and this is reflected in the notes from staff monitoring sessions and staff discussion forums.

Consultation about school improvement with pupils and parents is very good. There are many opportunities for dialogue and feedback. Changes are made as a result, for example the recent change to the delivery of the mathematics curriculum, homework and to assessment approaches. The school now needs to develop an even more rigorous approach to self-evaluation so that evaluative evidence gathered is used to have an even greater impact on pupil performance.

6 Next Steps

The school will now:

- Develop a more rigorous and systematic approach to self-evaluation ensuring that it impacts on pupil performance and attainment.
- Review the roles of Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) and Support for Learning (SfL) staff, to ensure that all staff are being more effectively deployed to support pupils.
- Continue to develop approaches to individual pupil planning which ensures that learning needs are being fully met.

7 Conclusion

Overall, the school has made good improvement since the original inspection and made progress in overtaking the main points for action.

The school demonstrates good capacity for continued improvement.

A further report will be made in connection with further improving self-evaluation and pupil progress in mathematics in one year's time.



Annette Bruton
Director of Education, Culture and Sport:
April 2011

What we aim to do for children and young people

- Provide the best possible start to learning through a high quality play-based curriculum.
- Respect the child and family as the key partners in learning.
- Ensure that learning is relevant to the learner's interests and needs.
- Provide the basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote inclusion in the social, economic and environmental well being of Aberdeen society.
- Provide positive and inspiring learning environments.
- Provide enjoyable and motivating learning experiences.
- Ensure that education, training and work place learning is tailored to needs.
- Provide a wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship.
- Enable access to high quality, responsive and accessible services and facilities.
- Provide personal support and advice - where and when it is needed.
- Enable participation in recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment.
- Provide sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop talents, broaden horizons and promote lifelong learning.
- Involve the learner in consultation and decision making on all matters which concern their learning or that have an impact on their lives.

Through the Aberdeen City approach to delivering Curriculum for Excellence we will aspire to

- Increase the recognition of the importance of learning throughout life.
- Enhance access to learning opportunities for everyone.
- Increase the staying on and course completion rates for pupils/students.
- Increase levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Increase access to and use of learning technologies.
- Increase citizen engagement and social inclusion.
- Increase recognition of and support for minority ethnic communities alongside a celebration and promotion of our Scottish heritage.

