

PROGRESS ON THE MAIN POINTS FOR ACTION

Bankier Primary School was inspected in November 2005 as part of a national sample of primary education. The school received a very positive report with a number of key strengths identified along with three main points for action. The school and local authority were asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they would address the main findings of the report and provide an evaluation of progress to HMIE two years on.

On receipt of that report HMIE informed Falkirk Council Education Services that no further visits were required and, as part of their follow through process, a report to parents should be provided. This leaflet provides an account of how the school, in partnership with the local authority, has progressed since the inspection.

Continuous Improvement

Bankier Primary School has made steady and substantial progress with all recommendations in the HMIE report. The headteacher, Susan Dyer, quickly responded to the areas identified and in some cases had anticipated them as part of her school improvement plan. The very effective management team and high staff motivation have initiated and ensured improvements in all areas. Pupils have responded positively through applying themselves well in the classroom, setting personal targets with their teachers and achieving very well. This is a school with very good leadership which is likely to make continuous progress and become excellent in some areas.

The school has been supported and monitored throughout by the Quality Improvement Officer through meetings with the headteacher, staff and pupils, classroom observations and scrutiny of documentation. Progress with each of the action points is detailed below.

Attainment 5-14

Attainment in general at Bankier Primary School has shown an upward trend over the past five years and is very good in mathematics particularly. Reading and writing have also made progress in relative terms and listening and talking are also good. The school attributed this progress, at least in part, to the efforts made to gain and inform parental support, most emphatically through information brochures such as the impressive 'Writing Guide' detailing how parents could support their children at every stage and level.

Action Point 1

Continue to monitor recent changes made to the balance of the curriculum to ensure full impact on pupils' learning particularly at the early stages.

- The headteacher responded positively and creatively to the implications of 'A Curriculum for Excellence' by tackling constraints on time allocations to curricular areas in the 5-14 curriculum to increase opportunities for cross curricular work.

- The school has developed an overall education, curriculum and learning and teaching policy which identifies links between collaborative learning, enterprise education and thinking skills as fundamental approaches to ensuring effective learning and teaching.
- The adjustments made to structure and balance of the curriculum have enabled the provision of two hours of physical education for every stage and pupil in the school.
- With regard to the early years a higher allocation of time has been afforded to literacy and numeracy by means of increased permeation of other curricular areas.
- Structured play has been introduced through good practice visits to other centres in the authority and skill sharing by early years staff. The school has become committed to this approach.

The school has made very good progress with this recommendation.

Action Point 2

Continue to enhance pupils' learning experiences and attainment in English language and mathematics by offering more opportunities for pupils to be independent in their own learning and to work collaboratively.

Writing:

- Writing attainment was the focus of innovative approaches to encourage pupils to share their work with different audiences.

- Functional writing was given greater emphasis in the school in keeping with the overall aim of providing contextual relevance to the curriculum and preparing pupils for life.
- Classroom and corridor displays demonstrated the efforts made to promote pupil confidence in their written work.
- ICT has been creatively used to support pupil input to school assemblies where they had, for example, been authors and presenters of PowerPoint presentations.

Less Reliance on Published Texts and Worksheets:

- Following the headteacher's lead, staff shadowed each other, discussed their professional skills and visited other schools in Falkirk Council and other local authorities. This opened up staff perceptions and paid real dividends in learning and teaching approaches.
- Teachers have reduced the reliance on paper-based learning, initiated fresh methodologies and gained more autonomy over their day to day work.
- Maths and language planners at all stages have been modified to flag up potential opportunities for more flexibility and eg collaborative learning.
- Staff regularly employed formative assessment strategies and collaborative learning in the course of their work and made strenuous efforts to ensure their pupils were fully aware of the importance of these in the learning process.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Thinking Skills:

Thinking skills, using the de Bono 'six hats' model, have been systematically developed across the school and the model used with pupils in a range of contexts. It has also been used very effectively at staff meetings. Bankier Primary School has become a de Bono accredited school and their particular advances in this field were acknowledged in a personal letter last session from Edward de Bono himself.

The school has made very good progress with this recommendation.

Action Point 3

Further develop opportunities for pupils at the early stages to learn through play.

- Following staff development a programme for structured play was developed for the early years and implemented from August 2006.
- As staff skills in the management of structured play developed and additional equipment was purchased, the programme evolved to incorporate and articulate with learning outcomes within other areas of the early years curriculum. Steps were taken to ensure improved progression from nursery and to increase the level of creativity in the programme.
- 'Let's Think', was introduced as an element of the school's structured play programme to promote infant thinking skills and problem-solving. It was anticipated that this would have a powerful impact on children's learning and

contribute in time to increased attainment in the later stages of primary.

The school has made very good progress with this recommendation.

Additional Recommendation

Support staff felt that communication in the school could be improved.

- Recent consultation with support staff has shown that they were fully informed in all areas appropriate to their work. They felt part of the school, and knew that their contribution was valued by staff and parents.
- Staff bases have been merged into one area in the staffroom to encourage better communication between teachers and support staff. The staffroom notice board has displays of all memos and minutes which were also available to all, electronically, on the school's ICT shared area.
- Staff meetings have two new standing items - staff and pupil welfare. Support staff have a weekly face to face meeting with a school manager, following twilight staff meetings for teachers, to inform them about relevant issues and allow for discussion.

The school has made very good progress with this recommendation.

For further information on this report or the Council's strategy for Raising Achievement please contact the headteacher or

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Further copies of this report and the original HMIe report are available from the school or on the HMIe website at www.hmie.gov.uk

Falkirk Council Education Services are committed to open communication that achieves shared understanding and helps overcome barriers. This leaflet can be made available in other languages, in Braille, large print or on audio tape. Please contact 01324 506600 for further information.

Designed by Communications Unit, Corporate and Commercial Services, Falkirk Council



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Education Services



LEARNING TO ACHIEVE
A Strategy for Raising Achievement

Follow Through Report on the
Inspection of

**Bankier
Primary School**
February 2008



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