



PROGRESS ON THE MAIN POINTS FOR ACTION

Denny Primary School was inspected in June 2009 as part of a national sample of primary education. The school received a very positive report, with the following key strengths identified by HM Inspectors.

These were:

- Children who are happy and confident and who engage enthusiastically in their learning.
- Strong staff teamwork and contribution to improving education.
- Work with parents, agencies and businesses to extend children's learning.
- The headteacher's leadership of learning and development of a culture of improvement.

HM Inspectors also identified three main points for action, which the school and the authority have addressed.

MAIN POINTS FOR ACTION

- Increase the pace of learning to ensure that all children progress at an appropriate rate.
- Further improve attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

Falkirk Council Education Services were asked to evaluate the progress made by the school in taking forward the recommendations within two years of the original inspection.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Since the publication of the school's HMIe report in August 2009, there has been very good progress towards the main points for action. The headteacher and his staff have been and remain firmly committed to an agenda of continuous improvement, and to a culture of self-evaluation and reflection. Progress has been verified through classroom observations, meetings with the headteacher, staff and pupils, and through scrutiny of the school's documentation.

Progress in meeting the recommendations has been monitored and supported by the Quality Improvement Officer.

Progress against the three action points identified by HMIe is detailed below.

ACTION POINT 1

Increase the pace of learning to ensure that all children progress at an appropriate rate.

The school has made significant progress with this action point. Using a range of strategies, including relevant training for all staff, the school has ensured that expectations of learners are appropriate and relevant for all children. The school has a high percentage of pupils with additional support needs (ASN). Staff across the school, however, are firmly committed to acquiring the skills required to support their children. This includes the recent project with Speech and Language Therapists, which was highlighted in the initial HMIe inspection in 2009. Learning from that project continues to impact on the experiences of pupils. The strong partnership with the agencies

involved continues to enhance the school's capacity to support all learners.

Tracking and monitoring processes are now more stringent and rigorous, involving all stakeholders. Termly meetings are held with the senior management team (SMT) and teaching staff to discuss the progress of all the children. Both SMT and teaching staff acknowledged the improvement in expectation and performance which these very useful discussions have brought. Children are also involved in discussions about their learning; for example, SMT monitor jotters with the children and ask questions about their learning.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through the use of learning logs, invitations to open days and attendance at assemblies. A parent forum has been introduced to further gather parental views and involve them more fully in decision making. The number of parent helpers in the school has also improved.

All teaching staff are members of a Teaching Learning Community (TLC) and are very enthusiastic about the benefits of this group for enhancing their teaching and learning strategies. Staff have been trained in Co-operative Learning and Thinking Hats. This has further improved expectations and experiences in learning.

Learners are very comfortable with methodology such as co-operative learning and are knowledgeable about the four capacities of CfE and what this meant for their learning. They are clear about learning intentions and success criteria and how these related to target setting for their own progress.

Classroom observations confirmed that Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are embedded across the school and well understood by staff and pupils. Observers were impressed by relationships between, and the commitment of, staff and children in their classroom practice with children fully involved in leading and evaluating the learning.

Very good progress has been made towards meeting this recommendation.

ACTION POINT 2

Further improve attainment in English language and mathematics.

5-14 ATTAINMENT

There has been very good progress in attainment in English language and in literacy in general. The school has used a wide range of strategies to improve in this area. Both teaching and support staff have received training to support the development of skills for the children. Involvement in cluster moderation and development has been particularly important especially in the improvement in writing. The school was one of the first in the authority to use Big Writing techniques, which are now in use cluster-wide. Staff from the school regularly input to CPD for teachers in other authority schools. Regular assessment of children with analysis of progress and identification of next steps are ensuring that levels of achievement continue to improve.

Staff are increasingly gathering folders of evidence of best work to illustrate children's progress, and learning logs are also taken home to keep parents



FURTHER INFORMATION

informed. Standardised testing, offered by the authority, will be used in Primaries 1, 3, 5 and 7 to confirm the school's judgement of children's progress.

Attainment in mathematics continues to be an issue for the school but good progress has been made and impact is beginning to become more evident. Staff are now moving away from resource based learning to ensure that numeracy has a strong focus across the curriculum and is used in real life settings. Active and co-operative learning is making mathematics more enjoyable for all children. Staff are continuing to evaluate and develop methodology used to support numeracy, and children are fully involved in the evaluation and planning of activities.

Achievement, in school and outwith, continues to be celebrated through assemblies and certificates in line with the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, with input from the children on why these awards should be given.

Very good progress has been made in literacy and good progress in numeracy towards meeting this recommendation.

ACTION POINT 3

Continue to develop the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

As with all schools, Denny Primary is currently on a journey to excellence. However, the school is well on track with its three year implementation plan for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). All planning and assessment is based on the experiences and outcomes of CfE and staff continually evaluate practice, resources and methodology. Through the

work of the TLC, staff support and reflect together on what works best in their school for their children. Increasingly, forward plans are evolving into records of work as the children are actively involved in taking the learning forward.

All staff are involved in working groups which are linked to school improvement and they use the 'How Good is Our School?' series to evaluate the work of the school. They are a very collegiate staff and use each other's strengths to develop the school's curriculum and ethos. Support staff feel valued and included and have ensured that they have undertaken further training to support their and the children's work.

Staff, pupils, parents and other agencies involved with the school reported that they felt it was a warm and welcoming environment where everyone felt happy and safe, where the children were thriving and suitably challenged.

Good progress has been made towards meeting this recommendation.

Overall, Denny Primary School has made very good progress towards meeting the action points identified by HM Inspectors. Commitment by the senior management team, staff and pupils to the highest quality learning and teaching continues to increase. By working together, improvements in performance will continue to rise. The school is well placed to take forward development of a Curriculum for Excellence continuing the principles of curriculum design to include personalisation, choice and appropriate pace and challenge. This is a very good school which serves its community well and continually seeks to meet the needs of its children, which will be further enhanced with the addition of a nursery class in the autumn of 2011.

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

The Communications Officer
Falkirk Council
Education Services
Sealock House
Grangemouth
FK3 9XB
Tel 01324 506600

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

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Falkirk Council
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LEARNING TO ACHIEVE
A Strategy for Raising Achievement

Progress Report on the
Inspection of



Denny Primary
School
August 2011



Falkirk Council
Education Services