

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 15 JUNE 2011

REPORT ON: HMIE INSPECTION OF HILLSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 253-2011

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the findings of the HMIE Inspection of Hillside Primary School.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Director of Education to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement contained in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Hillside Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in March 2011. They published a report on their findings on 26 April 2011. At the time of the inspection the roll was 282, including 18 in the enhanced provision for children with additional support needs.

4.2 HMIE identified the following key strengths of the school:

- staff attention to children's care and welfare and a positive learning environment
- approaches which include all children in the life of the school
- staff commitment to improving children's health and wellbeing
- almost all children are polite, respectful and well behaved
- children's wider achievements beyond the classroom

4.3 The following areas for improvement were agreed with the school and education authority

- increase the pace of using Curriculum for Excellence to improve the curriculum and teachers' planning
- improve approaches to self-evaluation so that these focus more directly on improving learning and teaching
- develop shared leadership roles for staff to share good practice and support ongoing improvement.

4 Quality Indicators

4.4.1 HMIE reports use a six-point scale for reporting performance:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

4.4.2 The following quality indicators from "*How Good Is Our School 3*" (HGIOS 3) were evaluated:

Quality Indicator	Primary
Improvements in performance	Good
Learners' experiences	Satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	Satisfactory
The curriculum	Satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	Satisfactory

4.5 The Hillside Primary School Improvement Plan (2009-2012) will be reviewed in order to maintain a focus on the areas for improvement identified by HMIE. These will be regularly monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and authority quality improvement calendar.

4.6 HMIE have indicated that they will not return to Hillside Primary School. Their District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in learners' experiences and in the school's approach to evaluating its work. Parents/carers will be informed of the progress towards the identified main areas for improvement by the school and education authority within 2 years of the publication of the main report.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty and equality impact assessment and risk management.

5.2 There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Finance.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

JIM COLLINS
Director of Education

29 April 2011

Hillside Primary School Dundee City Council

26 April 2011

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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1. The school

Hillside Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Menzieshill area of Dundee City. The roll was 282, including 18 in the enhanced provision for children with additional support needs when the inspection was carried out in March 2011. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010. The new headteacher is in her first full session as headteacher. Over half of the children on the school roll are from outwith the school's designated catchment area.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Staff attention to children's care and welfare and a positive learning environment.
- Approaches which include all children in the life of the school.
- Staff commitment to improving children's health and wellbeing.
- Almost all children are polite, respectful and well behaved.
- Children's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Almost all children have good manners and can express themselves confidently. They are developing well their self esteem and feel safe, valued and well cared for. Most engage well in planned tasks and activities and are positive about their school experience. They are being encouraged to have a 'can do' attitude to their learning and to take on responsibilities for helping other children. They have increasing opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) to support their learning. At the early stages, play is beginning to be used well to make learning more effective. The quality of children's learning is too variable across the school, however. Children need more regular opportunities to work collaboratively and to share and discuss their learning with others. They need to apply their learning more often in real life and meaningful contexts. They are not yet sufficiently clear about their strengths and areas for improvement. Children in the enhanced provision are motivated in their learning and are building their confidence well. They are being well supported to work independently where this is possible.

Children are developing their confidence through their presentations to audiences at assemblies. They are becoming more creative through a wide range of in and out-of-class activities. Children are improving their team working skills well through timetabled team building experiences and other out-of-class learning. Children in P7 are more confident about handling risk as a result of their outdoor residential week. Buddies, monitors and play leaders are developing their social and leadership skills in helping and supervising other children. Children, including those in the enhanced provision, have good opportunities to be active and develop their sporting performance through lunchtime and after-school clubs, for example, in football and athletics. They have good awareness of how to look after the environment. The school has secured an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag award. Children's independence and leadership skills need to be encouraged more consistently across all classes.

Children are making good progress in their learning. They attain appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of attainment have remained consistently high. In English language almost all children have well-developed skills in reading and writing. Their skills in listening and talking are not as strong. Children are developing their reading well. By P7, most children can read with fluency and good expression. At the early stages, children are becoming increasingly confident writers. When given the opportunity, children across the school write well for a range of purposes. They are proud of their writing and it is displayed well to good effect. They need more frequent opportunities to write independently

and in an extended form. Talking skills in groups need to be improved. Overall, standards of presentation of children's work are high in English language but more variable in mathematics. In mathematics, most children can carry out written and mental calculations accurately. They need more regular opportunities to develop and explain their thinking in mathematics and to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum. More able children could be making even better progress. Children who need additional support, including those in the enhanced provision, are attaining appropriately and making good progress.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children benefit from a broad range of learning experiences. They are learning to communicate in a modern foreign language from P6. The 'Days with a Difference' themes enhance children's skills and knowledge of aspects of enterprise and culture. Children find these days motivating and enjoyable. Children's wider achievements are supported very well through out-of-class trips, sports events, music tuition and residential visits. Their health and wellbeing is being developed well. Children have high-quality experiences in music. In the majority of classes they learn in innovative contexts where learning is linked across different subjects. In these classes they have increasing opportunities for choice. The school needs to enhance programmes and courses in a few curriculum areas to make learning more stimulating. Teachers' approach to planning needs to be simplified and class timetables require to be improved. Children do not yet benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week. The school's approach to international education should be developed to enhance further children's understanding of global citizenship. Transitions for children from nursery into P1 and from P7 to Menzieshill High School are well planned.

Planned tasks and activities keep children engaged in almost all classes. Class work is pitched appropriately to meet children's needs in mathematics but not always in English language. In English language some of the resources used are outdated. Staff use appropriate procedures to identify children who have difficulties with learning and to track their progress. The specialist teacher provides flexible and effective programmes of support for identified children, both in and out of class, to help them progress. She should be more involved in contributing to the continuing professional development of staff. Appropriate plans are in place to support children requiring additional help in their learning. Parents and children are consulted regularly about learning targets, but teachers need to measure progress towards targets more effectively and often. Children in the enhanced provision are supported effectively and their needs are well met. Staff in the enhanced provision have a good understanding of the difficulties children have in their learning and work well to help them overcome these. Children benefit from very good support from classroom assistants. Support plans in the enhanced provision need to be improved.

4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

The school works well with its supportive Parent Council which has discussed, for example, Curriculum for Excellence and homework. Groups of parents raise funds and work to improve the facilities such as the raised flowerbeds. Business partners have made contributions to enterprise activities and the creation of an attractive stained glass friendship window. Staff share children's work regularly with parents through open afternoons and evenings and through the improved use of home-school diaries. They work well with other schools to develop common cluster approaches to moderating children's progress. Increasingly, staff make skilful use of GLOW (an ICT education network) to enhance children's learning across the curriculum. The local minister contributes helpfully throughout

the session to class work and school assemblies. Support agencies such as speech and language therapists work well with staff to support families and children's progress. Good links with college, university and former pupils extend the range of achievement opportunities. The school responds appropriately to complaints.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff lead aspects of school improvement and contribute to working parties for literacy, numeracy and ICT. A few have developed Curriculum for Excellence very effectively but this practice is not widespread. The school has used formal accreditation schemes such as Eco-Schools Scotland well to improve aspects of its work. Children are involved in the pupil council, eco groups and in leading assemblies. Staff are committed to evaluating and reflecting on their work through joint working and the professional review and development process. They now need to establish more consistent expectations about learning. Self-evaluation requires to be focused more consistently on improving learning and teaching. Staff need to be involved more in sharing good practice to bring about further improvements. The school has not yet involved all stakeholders fully in evaluating its work.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

Almost all children are well behaved and respectful. Any low level indiscipline is handled well by most staff. Positive relationships exist between staff and children and leads to a happy and encouraging climate for learning. Staff know their responsibilities for keeping children safe. Children are confident that their concerns are listened to and resolved satisfactorily by staff. Their achievements are well celebrated and encouraged through assemblies, gold star awards and a wall of achievement. Staff expectations of children's attainment need to be raised. Staff give good attention to supporting children's health and wellbeing through a range of effective activities. Children's opportunities for religious observance require to be extended. Aspects of equality and diversity need to feature more prominently within children's curricular experiences.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The headteacher has established good relationships with her staff, children and parent body. Working with staff, she has placed a high priority on developing children's health and wellbeing and extending their range of achievements. She has a clear commitment to the school community and to improving children's learning experiences, and enjoys the support of her depute headteachers. The school requires a clearer sense of direction. A clear plan for taking forward Curriculum for Excellence now needs to be established and the pace of implementation accelerated. Leadership roles for all staff need to be developed further to share good practice and bring about greater consistency in learning and teaching, in order to improve outcomes for children.

8. What happens next?

The school will need support from the education authority to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. The school and education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in learners' experiences and in the school's approach to evaluating its work.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Increase the pace of using Curriculum for Excellence to improve the curriculum and teachers' planning.
- Improve approaches to self-evaluation so that these focus more directly on improving learning and teaching.
- Develop shared leadership roles for staff to share good practice and support ongoing improvement.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Hillside Primary School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: Donald A Macleod
26 April 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent means outstanding, sector leading
 very good means major strengths
 good means important strengths with some areas for improvement
 satisfactory means strengths just outweigh weaknesses
 weak means important weaknesses
 unsatisfactory means major weaknesses

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Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way,
Livingston EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator,
Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY,
telephone 0845 603 0890.

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Footnotes

1. Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.
 2. The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.
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