



Education & Children's Services

HMle – Follow Through Procedures Progress Report to Parents

1 Introduction:

Balhousie Primary School was inspected in September 2008. The report on the inspection by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMle) was published in **December 2008**.

The school, with support from the Local Authority, prepared a full plan for improvement which has had a positive impact on a wide range of aspects within the school.

Both headteacher and staff have worked co-operatively with authority staff to take forward the areas identified in the original HMle report as requiring development and the authority endorses the information within this report.

Further information about the broader achievements of the school is contained in the school's annual Standards & Quality report published in September.

2 Areas for Improvement – Evaluation of Progress:

The initial inspection report published in **December 2009** identified 2 main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made to date in addressing each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders. Satisfactory progress or better has been made in taking forward the main points for action.

Area for improvement 1

Use self evaluation to ensure consistent good practice in learning and teaching across the school.

As part of the ongoing continuous improvement process, the school audits its current progress and practice using the quality indicators in the HMle document 'How Good Is Our School'. During their inspection of the school HMle evaluated the school's self evaluation processes as satisfactory. Through its audit process, the school has identified, planned and implemented the following actions in order to further develop priorities for improvement and ensure good practice in learning and teaching across the school.

Evaluation of progress and impact:

- The Head Teacher and Principal Teacher use the Perth and Kinross Standard for Learning as a focus for monitoring class visits. This has led to a shared understanding of the principles of good learning and teaching approaches and a clear agenda for discussion between management and staff.
- Staff use the Perth and Kinross Standards for learning and teaching in the self evaluation of their own practice. Through discussions with management, targets are identified to improve the quality of learning and teaching approaches. Staff have shared examples of good practice in relation to these standards at collegiate meeting times. This has led to some improvement in the quality of leaning and teaching.
- Staff have begun to use questions devised by Perth and Kinross and from HMle document 'Improving Outcomes for Learners Through Self Evaluation' as a focus when carrying out whole school audits. This has led to more focussed audits, a shared understanding of the audit process and the identification of areas for improvement which will lead to improved practice and better learning outcomes for the children.
- Co-operative learning approaches are being used in staff meetings and development sessions. This is helping to promote and develop a positive ethos within the school and opportunities for all staff to take part in professional discussion. Staff are also beginning to use these strategies with the children as an approach to develop better co-operative learning approaches and group skills. As a result, better teamwork between the staff and improved learning outcomes for the children is emerging.
- More effective teamwork among staff is emerging. Staff are working together better by supporting and challenging each other. Pupils now have more opportunities to work with different staff in more specific groups appropriate to their needs. This has resulted in a wider variety of experiences for pupils and increased confidence for some of the older children in particular. For example children across Nursery and Primary P1-3 work in groups and groups across stages have been developing activities in e.g. Health, ECO and the Pupil Council. Staff have also shared expertise in specific areas leading to more opportunities for pupils in e.g. the netball club and early years numeracy and literacy groups.

Area for improvement 2

Continue to improve children's writing skills

The development of writing has been a priority for development for the past two years and HMle acknowledged the progress that had already been made in this area at the time of the inspection. The following actions have been implemented since the inspection in October 2008.

Evaluation of progress and impact:

- Teaching staff have shared good practice in writing. This has led to staff discussing effective approaches to the teaching of writing and staff reflecting on their own practice.
- The Head Teacher and Principal Teacher focus on approaches to the learning and teaching of writing as part of the ongoing monitoring programme. This has ensured a continued focus on writing across the school and evidence of improved writing skills is emerging.
- Nursery to P3 have continued to develop opportunities for writing through play contexts. This has offered children a variety of opportunities and contexts for writing which can be seen in their written work.
- Children are being encouraged to make marks on paper from an early stage and examples of writing are being used regularly as models for writing e.g. stories/information leaflets/ big books. This has helped the younger children see there are different purposes for and styles of writing. They are becoming more able to copy simple writing formats and talk about some features of different genre.
- Teachers are modelling writing with their children as part of some writing sessions. There is evidence emerging of improved writing skills across the school.
- Approaches to Assessment is for Learning are being used in the teaching of writing. Feedback that lets the children know what they have done well and what they need to work on next in their writing is helping the children to improve their writing skills.
- Children are encouraged to self and peer assess their writing by being given the criteria they are looking for, the learning outcomes they are working on and examples of what this looks like. This is helping them to see what they need to do to improve and be able to assess their own and their peers' writing critically.

- A Film Club for P4-P7 pupils run by a volunteer parent gave an additional motivating context for developing writing skills. The children were motivated to write the script for the film as well as develop skills in film making.
- Existing and new resources for supporting writing are currently being reviewed by staff. Thereafter, the programme for writing will be updated in order to further enhance the quality of learning and teaching in writing.

Headteacher: Agnes Thomson

Date: 16 December 2009

Service Manager: Pat Fegen

Date: 16 December 2009