

ST DAVID'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

1. The inspection

HM Inspectors published a report on the quality of education in St David's RC Primary School in August 2013. Subsequently the school with support from the education authority amended the school improvement plan to take account of the findings of the inspection.

An education authority team recently visited the school to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to develop the quality of its education including the areas identified for improvement and produced a progress report for parents.

This report tells you how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best.

2. How well do young people learn and achieve?

There was a positive ethos for learning across the whole school community from Nursery to P7. Pupils were well mannered, polite, engaged, motivated and eager to share their learning. Pupils in the focus group were very proud of their school and were able to talk about the many learning opportunities they experienced at St David's RC Primary School. They were particularly proud of their personal learning profiles which clearly showed their many achievements. Opportunities were provided for the pupils to work independently, in pairs and in groups. In most classes learning intentions were shared with the pupils and in the best lessons success criteria were created with the pupils giving them ownership of their learning.

In the nursery, pupils clearly enjoyed and achieved through taking part in whole school activities as well as joint project work with Pirniehall Primary School Nursery. There was a strong focus on community involvement which allowed them to develop their skills and achieve out with the nursery. In the nursery almost all children were developing their literacy skills very well. Bilingual learners were making very good progress and were applying literacy skills in their play. Nursery pupils were given opportunities for wider achievement through participation in library activities and a Swim Start programme. The introduction of numeracy and literacy trackers in the nursery were helping to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for learners.

There was a clear focus on pace and challenge across the school. Careful analysis of standardised assessments, *Curriculum for Excellence* levels and spelling assessments clearly demonstrated that pupils were making progress from their prior levels of attainment in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. The school was well placed to further improve attainment levels. Pupil attainment was carefully monitored and pace and challenge for all learners was discussed at termly tracking and attainment meetings. Pupils in the focus group were able to talk about the "learning conversations" they had with their peers, their class teachers and the senior management team. The pupils felt that these discussions gave them a greater understanding and confidence in their

learning and it helped them to know and be able to discuss their next steps in learning. The senior management team had used the significant aspects well to help staff, pupils and parents understand pupils' learning and next steps. Personal learning profiles had been reviewed and were used effectively to collect latest and best pieces of work. These were shared with parents each term and parents are encouraged to comment on the learning of their child and their achievements. In the nursery this was evidenced through the use of online journals. Whole school termly 'Sharing Our Learning' events with parents allowed staff to demonstrate teaching strategies. This enabled parents to support their child's learning at home.

Pupils in P1 – P7 continued to have opportunities for wider achievement. P5-P7 participated in residential experiences and activity weeks. P5 pupils took part in the John Muir Award and P6 and P7 pupils worked towards accreditation in the Junior Award Scheme Scotland (JASS) programme. Pupils felt they were treated fairly by staff and were proud of the inclusive and respectful ethos of St David's RC Primary School.

Pupil voice was strong in St David's RC Primary School and pupils from all classes contributed to the life and work of the school through the Eco Council, Pupil Council, Health group and Rights Respecting Schools. Recognition of the good work of the Pupil Council and Eco groups have resulted in the school achieving its third green flag and Level 2 accreditation in Health Promoting Schools. In partnership with the Parent Council, the pupils planned an evening event to demonstrate their learning about diversity to their parents and carers.

Joint campus meetings helped to build positive relationships between St David's RC Primary School and Pirniehall Primary School. Planned playground meetings involving staff and pupils from each campus will further improve relationships for pupils.

The recent health and well-being questionnaire found that the pupils at St David's RC Primary School felt included, safe and respected.

3. How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

The re-establishing of the school's vision with staff, pupils and parents at the beginning of the session had ensured that the curriculum had a clear rationale based on shared values and learners' entitlements. The curriculum at St David's RC Primary School focused on the child as a learner, and allowed for breadth and depth of learning, offering challenge and enjoyment. Termly learning leaflets which have been introduced ensured pupils and parents had a greater understanding of the curriculum being taught. Parents reported that they now know what their children were learning. The development of progressive curricular programmes of work in all areas had ensured that pace and challenge was appropriate to all learners. The school will now link these progressions with the significant aspects of learning.

The school's curriculum working party had developed a progressive skills programme focusing upon skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. The programme included a particular focus on: leadership, teamwork, enterprise and employability, organisation and problem solving skills. Teachers from nursery to P7 ensured that there are planned opportunities within the classes where pupils demonstrated these skills and 'Leaders of Learning' (LOL) were selected each week and their achievements celebrated at whole school assemblies.

There was a whole school progressive spelling programme which demonstrated clear progression and allowed pupils to have personalisation and choice built into their spelling and homework. The implementation of the cursive handwriting and the updated correction code ensured a more consistent approach to presentation across to the whole school. Evidence of the spelling and handwriting could be seen on the walls and in the jotters and pupils reported that they felt challenged in their spelling tasks and were motivated to complete homework tasks.

The implementation of Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning (SEAL) at the early stages, and City of Edinburgh Mental Agility guidelines across the whole school, had ensured that learners had a greater understanding and grasp of number work. Pupils were enthusiastic about the new reading resources which had been purchased for the early stages and these were having a positive impact on the motivation and enthusiasm of learners. Staff were now more confident when planning for Inter Disciplinary Learning (IDL) resulting in the learning being more meaningful and relevant for the pupils. The recent planned Diversity Day (Around the World in 90 minutes) reflected the many cultures celebrated at St David's RC Primary School.

Pupils from P5-P7 benefit from having one-to-one devices which have increased their motivation for learning. Pupils were being more creative in the way they display their work and were able to capture their 'latest and best' work through the use of Apps. P6/P7 pupils have piloted the one-to-one devices going home. This has transformed learning and teaching and has also improved home school links by increasing parental involvement in the learning process.

Staff have worked closely with colleagues within the cluster to develop specific aspects of the curriculum such as expressive arts, technologies, modern languages and assessment and moderation practices.

There was very good support in emotional health and wellbeing for all learners and targeted support for specific individual pupils.

Transition at all stages was effective and robust. Transition from home to nursery was innovative and provided parents and their child the opportunity to meet key workers and familiarise themselves with the nursery environment. The P1 transition programme included staff working alongside other agencies such as community learning and development, English as an additional language and the Pilton Community Health Project. There was a structured transition from stage to stage where class teachers were required to meet and pass on identified information to the next class teacher. The P7 to S1 transition programme allowed the school to work very closely with the associated high school. This included pupils with additional support needs engaging in an enhanced transition programme. This year the school invited staff from the associated high school to attend P7 child planning meetings which enhanced the transition process. English as an Additional Language (EAL) staff supported the enrolment process across the school by completing an enhanced transition report with the pupils.

Across the different nursery areas, including outdoors, staff provided children with broad, varied and exciting learning experiences and resources which met their needs very well. A number of partnership agencies worked very well with the school to help meet and support children's varying needs. This session the nursery and P1 staff and pupils participated in developing an exciting new music resource that engaged learners in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being through music.

In the primary stages the majority of lessons, tasks and activities were differentiated and were matched well to the needs of the pupils. A small cohort of children benefitted from high quality support in the nurture class.

Teaching staff confidently used pathways of support to identify relevant and appropriate teaching and learning experiences for all pupils. The school worked closely with visiting staff including EAL, speech and language therapist and Visiting Teaching and Support Services (VTSS). Regular child planning meetings identified needs of learners and allowed a plan to be put in place to meet their needs. Joint campus work ensured that positive relationships were being formed with staff and pupils.

4. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

All staff, parents, learners and partnership agencies were involved in self evaluation and were aware of the strengths and development needs. They were committed to take action to implement change. St David's RC Primary School used every opportunity to capture the views of staff, parents and pupils across a wide range of nursery and school activities. Positive feedback from a variety of evaluation opportunities throughout the year indicated a high level of parental satisfaction.

Nursery staff met on a regular basis to discuss and reflect on the outcomes of planned experiences for children. The deputy headteacher met monthly with the nursery team which ensured all staff were fully informed about school improvement and new early years initiatives such as building the ambition. This has impacted positively on the delivery of the curriculum at early level in nursery and P1.

The headteacher provided a strong culture of school improvement and effective support for career-long professional learning. She, along with her deputy headteacher and principal teacher provided very good leadership skills and displayed a very clear sense of direction for the school, empowering and enabling staff to demonstrate and take responsibility. All staff members at St David's RC Primary School were on working parties and were given the responsibility for updating the improvement plan and delivering training sessions to school and cluster colleagues. Close cluster working and cluster moderation days helped staff ensure a consistent and shared standard across the four primary schools and the associated high school. Staff focused continuously on the quality of learning and teaching across the school and termly self-evaluation meetings continued to ensure that pace and challenge was given a high priority. Pupils were taking responsibility for improving their own learning and they spoke with great enthusiasm about their personal learning plans. They discussed their progress and next steps with their teacher at "Take 5" sessions. The pupils in the focus group discussed the importance of sharing their learning with their parents and described how they invited their parents into their classrooms on a termly basis to demonstrate their learning to them.

5 Conclusion

St David's RC Primary School provided a good standard of education for its young people. The school had made significant improvements in light of the inspection findings. The teamwork in the school provided a very good basis for continued improvement. The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the 2013 HMIE report.

Therese Laing
Quality Improvement Officer
June 2015