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COUNCIL



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FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT  
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Clerkhill Primary School

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## 1. The school

Clerkhill School serves a residential area of Peterhead. The school has a roll of 332 pupils. There has been some staffing changes since the original inspection.

## 2. Particular strengths of the school

- A positive ethos within the school
- Very well behaved and polite pupils
- Staff commitment to improving the quality of learning and teaching
- The strategic leadership of the management team

### Examples of good practice:

- The development of *Curriculum for Excellence* through contextualised learning
- Children's learning experiences in the early stages
- The development of Early Level pupil profiles

## 3. How well do children learn and achieve?

The school had improved its quality of education and had introduced a number of initiatives to impact positively on pupils' learning. Across the school pupils were more actively involved in their learning and had opportunities to work independently, in pairs or in groups. There were increased opportunities for pupils to learn within their local environment. Programmes of work in literacy and numeracy had been reviewed to ensure appropriate pace and challenge to pilot new reading skills guidelines. Attainment in mathematics also continued to be good overall with pupils having more opportunities to consolidate their knowledge and skills through problem solving and mental agility tasks. The school's homework policy had been reviewed and personal homework diaries introduced.

More effective transition links from P6 to S1 had been put in place through the introduction of a pupil achievement profile. A deputy head teacher represented the community schools network on Aberdeenshire Council's P6 to S1 curriculum planning group and this initiative had also started to impact on the work of the school.

In the nursery there had been developments aimed at improving the quality of learning. Short term planning focused on learning outcomes and identified next steps in learning. Nursery/P1 pupil profiles had been developed and there were planned meetings with P1 teachers to ensure effective transition. Short term planning was outcome focused and pupil profiles identified next steps in learning. Children had started to develop their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills by accessing the school computer suite on a weekly basis. Overall they had more opportunities for active learning, supported by labelled activities and visual prompts. Parents were more aware of their child's learning in the nursery through access to the nursery's weekly plan and displays of curricular work.

Pupils' involvement in enterprise and citizenship activities continued to be a notable feature of the curriculum. Pupils from P4 participated in workshops run by a national oil company on studying local beaches whilst P5 pupils led Eco School developments in the school. This work had increased pupils' understanding of their local and global environment and their role as citizens. The school had gained commended level accreditation as a Health Promoting School and had gained an Eco School silver award. Pupils at all stages were encouraged to fully participate in a range of school activities to promote the development of confidence and self-esteem. There were also encouraged to be responsible and mature through their involvement in a number of school duties, including the road safety team, prefects, house captains and playground buddies.

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

Staff were committed to ensuring high expectations of learning and most had started to regularly share these with pupils. The senior management team effectively monitored teachers' predictions for pupil attainment. Most teachers were more confident about setting open questions to stimulate and develop pupils' thinking skills. Most pupils had opportunities to set personal learning targets and to engage in self and peer assessment in some aspects of the curriculum.

Following an audit, there had been a review of the school's policy for supporting pupils' needs. A more rigorous system had been developed for recording pupils' individual support needs and pupils were more involved in defining their own learning needs by contributing to their individualised education plan. The timetables of non teaching staff had been reviewed to ensure effective and flexible deployment of support. Consequently support staff timetables were more responsive to pupils' needs and these were reviewed termly or more frequently as required. There was improved communication between class teachers and support for learning teachers through more planned opportunities for discussion and through shared planning.

In most classes teachers accounted for pupils differing abilities although in a few classes, tasks required to be better matched to individual needs.

The use of learning outcomes and learning intentions in teachers' weekly planning ensured a greater focus on individual pupil progress. The school continued to use formative assessment strategies across the curriculum and there was evidence of this in most classes. Across stages pupils had more opportunities for active learning. Most teachers had developed interdisciplinary learning contexts with a focus on the outcomes and experiences of *Curriculum for Excellence* and this continued to be an area for continued focus. ICT was used more widely across the school. This included pupils in P6 and P7 using GLOW and the introduction of interactive computer programmes to enhance their access to engaging learning experiences.

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

The school had implemented a more collegiate approach to school improvement planning. The head teacher had reviewed and revised the remits of the senior management team to ensure a more focused and appropriate balance of operational and strategic responsibilities. One of two depute head teachers had been non teaching for the past year and this had continued in the current session. This arrangement had enabled the senior management team to work at a sustained pace and to spend more time in classes supporting staff informally as and when appropriate. Staff had increased awareness of the impact of self evaluation on pupils' learning their weekly planning and participation in in-service development work. There was evidence of more meaningful links between teachers' continuing professional development and the school's improvement plan. Across the school there was an increased focus on the delivery of quality learning experiences to pupils. The head teacher had introduced more rigorous and robust systems to ensure quality. Staff had an increased awareness of how self evaluation could lead to improvement. Regular visits to monitor classroom practice had a focus on the impact on pupils learning. Subsequently teachers were given feedback and next steps agreed through professional discussion. This formal approach had also been supplemented by some staff engaging with peer monitoring across classes. In addition the management team had organised increased opportunities for staff to observe, share and model good practice. Increasingly teachers had become more involved in leading developments, for example in reading, phonics, spelling and mathematics. Fortnightly whole staff morning meetings for teachers and non teaching staff also ensured regular communication about learning and teaching.

Teaching and support staff had received training in Child Protection and the Integrated Assessment Framework. Non teaching staff had worked with the Educational Psychology Service to increase their skills in supporting autistic pupils. Most recently, all staff had participated in the schools' network training event on restorative approaches to raise awareness of a whole school approach to positive behaviour management. The school had been involved in a number of charity, school and community events, for example, Children in Need and raising funds for the Haitian earthquake disaster. A committee of parents and staff had been established to take forward improvements in the nursery outdoor learning area.

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

Staff had set higher expectations of pupils and these were more consistent across stages. Pupils were polite, well behaved and willing to discuss their learning. Praise was used effectively across the school and regular assemblies celebrated children's successes. Pupils were encouraged to develop their self esteem through participation in roles of responsibility such as school prefects, a buddy scheme and an anti-bullying project. Pupils and staff were involved in improving the playground environment through an enterprise project to purchase planters.

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

The head teacher, supported by the management team, had ably led the school to progress school improvement. Most staff were able to work more confidently on whole school development and were more confident about assuming additional responsibilities within the school. There had been good progress in addressing the main points for action and the school had significantly developed its capacity for improvement.

**8. What happens next?**

There is clear evidence that the school has addressed the main points for action contained in the report of the inspection in April 2008.

As a result of the good progress made by the school, the authority will not publish further reports in relation to the 2008 HMle Report.