



Daliburgh School

Progress Report

June 2014

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**Roinn an Fhoghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne
Department of Education and Children's Services**

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1. Introduction

In September 2010, HM Inspectors published a report on Daliburgh School. Subsequent visits took place to the school in August 2011, August 2012 and August 2013. The school was re-visited in June 2014 by two Quality Improvement Officers from the education authority and a Headteacher from one of the local primary schools. During this visit, officers talked to children and worked closely with the Headteacher and staff. This report describes progress made by the school regarding the recommendations made by HM Inspectors during the follow through visit in August 2013. The focus of the visit was upon how well children are now learning and how the school is continuing to support them to achieve their potential.

Evidence has been collated from a number of sources and activities. Direct classroom observations, work sampling, data analysis, pupil and staff focus groups and meetings with school management have informed the findings of this report.

2. How well do young people learn and achieve?

The Head Teacher, working with staff, has had a clear focus on raising attainment. Across the school and nursery, improvements have been made to how children learn and levels of achievement have improved. Children at all levels talk about their targets and this is particularly evident in the younger age groups. They can articulate their targets very clearly in Mathematics, Language and Health and Wellbeing. In some classes, notably in the upper primary stages, children are less confident about discussing their strengths and next steps in learning. Children at upper stages set their own targets and these are checked by the class teacher. However, there needs to be more discussion about learning in these classes and appropriate targets should be negotiated and agreed. This will support children in developing their skills as effective learners.

Each child has a learning journey folder in Mathematics and progressive targets have been set. All staff are involved in discussing children's progress at tracking meetings and assessment folders provide the evidence to support judgments. 'Challenge Fridays', where the school focusses on specific areas in Mathematics have helped the children improve their skills in problem solving.

There are good examples of children self-checking their work and in most instances pupil work is systematically corrected by teachers and evaluative feedback is provided. There is still some scope to improve this as the quality of feedback is, on occasions, inconsistent. The school's correction code should be given greater prominence to help children understand expectations in terms of presentation.

The results in P3 and P7 Progress in English and Progress in Mathematics assessments indicate that revised approaches to teaching, learning and assessment are having a positive impact. A significant proportion of children in Daliburgh School achieved above the national average in key areas of learning. Pupils in the Gaelic Medium classes, across all stages, were making good progress in key areas of learning. Overall, assessment results show a marked improvement in performance in comparison with school test scores from 2013. There is still a need to look at strategies to help improve pupils' spelling at P7.

The school has a Gaelic Learner Programme in place and children at the earlier stages spoke positively about the work that they are doing in their class and they showed a good awareness of Gaelic Language. Children at upper stages need to have more opportunities to develop their speaking skills in Gaelic in class situations. They have frequent extra-curricular opportunities across the school, both learner and fluent speakers, to participate in Mods, Fèisean and Gaelic singing. The local authority has supported the school by staffing the Gaelic Medium classes above the nationally agreed formula. The authority will continue to support staffing in Gaelic classes at the current level in session 2014-15.

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

As a consequence of the target setting process, the learner discussions and the rigorous implementation of the Quality Assurance timetable children are now more actively involved in their learning. There are examples of good practice in the school of confident children being able to discuss their learning. However, practice was not consistent.

The school is using new resources to engage the pupils more and learning and teaching approaches are promoting more active learning activities. There is still scope to improve children's learning skills independently at upper stages and also to devolve some of the leadership for learning to the pupils. Although children's behaviour is in general very good, the behaviour of a few children interrupts the learning of others. The school should continue to work with parents, children and the authority to address this matter.

Active Maths and i-planners have contributed to the improved attainment in Mathematics and these resources enable teachers to plan for differentiated work more effectively

Children are involved in learner discussions with the Head Teacher and the evidence from these discussions is used at the school's monthly monitoring meetings. At these meetings any dips in performance are discussed and action plans to address the concerns are agreed. Children reported that they would like to have more choice in terms of choosing books. The school is developing the use of Higher Order Thinking Skills through the refreshed reading programme. Information derived from the standardised assessment is used effectively to inform planning.

Pupils are involved in leading a number of initiatives in school and examples include Rag Bag, Daffodil Tea and Harvest Soup day for senior citizens. These contexts are enabling pupils to apply their learning in real and meaningful ways. The school has been involved in Commonwealth Games activities and pupils have visited the Culloden battlefield to help give them a better understanding of this event in Scottish history.

The school continues to strengthen its commitment to Gaelic Medium Education and has been involved in projects supported by Education Scotland on questioning, transitions, assessment and moderation. The school was also involved in an inter-authority project with Shetland focusing on staff moderating evidence of good questioning techniques. The outcomes of these projects are discussed at school level and are used to help improve learning and teaching approaches.

The quality of children's written work in Gaelic needs further improvement. The marking of pupils' work should be based on an agreed code, applied consistently across the school.

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

Staff work much better as a team and are effectively led by the Head Teacher. There is a focus at meetings on improving the quality of learning and teaching. The school now tracks children's progress more closely. There is still further work to be done to embed an effective target setting process across the school.

Staff meet on a termly basis and evaluate the information derived from a range of assessments. This information is then used to discuss and monitor pupil progress and to identify next steps in learning. Approaches to teaching and learning are amended to incorporate the changes to bring about further improvements for learners

Class teachers observe the work of colleagues through peer support and by acting as critical friends. This session some members of staff have worked with other schools in collaborative teaching and in moderation exercises in writing. All teachers have had experience of moderation of writing and planning for assessment. The results of these activities now need to be used to build consistency of practice across the school.

Information from Learner Conversations is shared with staff to inform practice and planning. Parental views and comments are gathered through questionnaires, focus groups, Parent Council and feedback sessions from Parents' Evenings. Parents have been involved in the organisation of a number of school activities including school trips. The schools' behaviour policy was agreed incorporating suggestions from parents and arrangements for Sgoil Àraich parents night with transition teacher has changed following consultation. The school should now engage more with parents to discuss the curriculum.

5. Conclusion

The Head Teacher, and staff, have introduced a range of measures which have impacted positively on the quality of provision and there is clear evidence of improvement. The Head Teacher recognizes that more needs to be done to share good practice, and to build consistency, across the school.

Daliburgh School provides a good standard of education for its young people. The school has made good progress since the follow through inspection in 2013 and has tackled most of the necessary improvements, in light of the original inspection findings in 2010. The education authority will not publish further reports in connection with the 2010 HMIE report. The authority is confident that the range of measures which have been implemented will lead to sustained improvements. It will continue to work with the school to address the issues identified in this report.

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