

**Follow-through Inspection  
Report  
Salen Primary School  
Argyll and Bute Council**

**9 December 2003**

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# **Salen Primary School Argyll and Bute Council Follow-through Inspection Report**

## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on standards and quality in Salen Primary School, Gaelic Unit and Gaelic Pre-school unit in November 2001. Working with the school, the education authority prepared and made public an Action Plan in December 2001, indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report.

An Inspector revisited the school in September 2003 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

## **2. Continuous improvement**

Since the initial inspection of Salen Primary School, which took place in May 2001, there had been significant changes in staffing. Following a period of extended absence, the previous headteacher retired on medical grounds in August 2002. An acting headteacher was appointed in August 2001 and she was formally appointed as headteacher in November 2002. The appointment of a teacher in the Gaelic unit in August 2001 filled a long-term vacancy. A replacement teacher was appointed to this post in August 2002.

Under the very effective leadership of the new headteacher, and with the strong commitment and teamwork of all staff, the school had shown a substantial capacity to improve in key areas of its work. This was particularly evident in relation to raising staff and pupil morale, promoting consistently high expectations for pupils' achievement and establishing systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. The headteacher had supported staff very well in addressing key priorities to improve the quality of programmes and learning and teaching approaches. These improvements had had a very positive impact on the climate for learning in the school and on pupils' attainment.

Argyll and Bute Council had completed its planned improvements to the school's accommodation. This provided a spacious and stimulating learning environment for staff and pupils, which had been further enhanced by internal refurbishment, displays of pupils' work and the provision of additional resources.

The school had taken steps to strengthen further its partnership with parents. It had improved communication with parents through regular, informative newsletters and helpful written guidance on ways of supporting their children's learning at home. It had arranged workshops to explain aspects of the curriculum to parents and show them examples of pupils' work. These events had been well supported and well received by parents. The school had consulted parents when revising its homework policy and kept them well informed about pupils' work and achievements. The School Board actively supported the school's efforts for continuous improvement.

### **3. Progress towards the main points for action**

The initial inspection report published in November 2001 identified six main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

#### **3.1 The education authority should proceed as planned with improvements to accommodation.**

The education authority had met this main point for action.

It had constructed two additional classrooms in the school and a separate pre-school unit on the existing site. This provided an attractive and stimulating environment for staff and pupils.

#### **3.2 Pupils' progress and attainment at P6 and P7 in mainstream classes should be improved.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.

Staff had reviewed programmes, resources and learning and teaching approaches in English language and mathematics to increase the quality and pace of learning across all stages, with a particular focus on P6 and P7. The new headteacher, who had the main teaching responsibility for these stages, had introduced very good procedures for individual and group target setting to improve pupils' motivation and attainment. Commendably, older pupils took responsibility for planning their own homework and recording their progress. Pupils experiencing difficulties with the tasks set for homework were given good quality additional support. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and

mathematics had improved substantially over the past two years. Almost all pupils at P3 to P7 in the Gaelic unit and mainstream primary classes were achieving appropriate national levels for their stage in reading, writing and mathematics, and several were exceeding these levels. At all stages, pupils produced examples of high quality writing in a variety of contexts.

### **3.3 The school should review current arrangements for the early finish for pupils at P1 and P2.**

The school had met this main point for action.

In consultation with parents, and in accordance with the education authority's guidelines, the school had now introduced a common finishing time for all pupils.

### **3.4 The school should complete the development of the English language programme and implement consistently the revised policy in mathematics.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.

The school had completed the development of the English language programme, which was now being implemented at all stages. Teachers planned carefully to ensure that all aspects of English language were given appropriate attention in classwork. Staff had introduced a range of new resources for reading and writing to improve learning and teaching in English language. Pupils had responded well to initiatives to promote independent reading, such as the establishment of a library club, novel studies and a local summer reading challenge. Pupils wrote for a wide range of purposes, including the design and writing of books or booklets and the preparation of a school magazine.

In mathematics, staff had reviewed programmes, resources and learning activities to give increased attention to developing pupils' skills in mental calculation and problem-solving. In both curricular areas, teachers provided regular opportunities for pupils to use information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance their learning. Pupils demonstrated ICT skills in, for example, presenting and editing text and organising and displaying information.

**3.5 With support from the education authority, the headteacher should address weaknesses in his management, planning and teaching, as indicated in this report.**

This point for action had been met by the appointment of the new headteacher.

She had demonstrated very effective leadership from the start of her appointment. With the support of staff, she had successfully addressed weaknesses in planning and teaching.

**3.6 The headteacher should work with staff to establish systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and units.**

The school had made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.

The headteacher had consulted fully with her staff in preparing a framework for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school and its units. This included regular classroom observation, monitoring samples of pupils' work, checking forward plans and the rigorous tracking of pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics. The headteacher provided helpful feedback to staff to ensure a consistent quality of planning, learning and teaching, and assessment. With

support from the education authority, staff had reviewed assessment procedures across all curricular areas and were now implementing a revised policy on assessment. The school planned to continue its review of policies to take account of recent improvements to programmes and learning and teaching. New guidance on improvement planning to be issued by the education authority in the current session, will assist the school in developing further its approaches to self-evaluation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The school and the education authority had made very good progress in addressing the main points for action of the report. In addition, the school had also addressed a number of priorities for improvement in other areas of its work. These included, the development of structured play at the early stages, and the implementation of a revised programme for technology and ICT with a view to developing pupils' skills in these curricular areas more systematically.

The headteacher and all staff are to be commended for the commitment they showed to improving key aspects of provision in response to the inspection report. Their actions had resulted in improvements in learning and teaching and in the overall quality of pupils' attainment.

As a result of the overall very good progress, HM Inspectors will make no further visits to the school in connection with the inspection report of November 2001.

Marjory Robertson  
HM Inspector

9 December 2003

## How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our web site: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)

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HM Inspectorate of Education  
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Victoria Quay  
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A copy of our complaints procedure is available from that office and on our website.

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