



Follow Through Report on the Inspection  
of Toward Primary School

Inspection: May 2007

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HMIE published a report on Toward Primary School in August 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action.

This follow-through report tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action within the inspection report.

First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has improved the ways in which it helps children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes, which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents<sup>1</sup>.

This report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well children are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

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Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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## **1. The school**

Toward Primary School is situated on the Cowal Peninsula, seven miles south west of Dunoon. The school is situated by the shore and is surrounded by farm land. It commands superb views over the Firth of Clyde towards Bute and the hills of Arran beyond.

The building dates from 1875 with extensions added in 1977 and 1979.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Polite, well behaved and courteous pupils
- Positive relationships among staff and the high quality pastoral care shown by all staff
- Productive relationships with parents and the community
- The development of pupils' ICT skills, particularly their presentations of the work of the school to the parents and the wider school community.
- The development of the curriculum in the light of the national initiative, Curriculum for Excellence, in particular the work that the school has taken forward in interdisciplinary learning.

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

Children are confident and all are making good progress. They are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. Children have regular opportunities to work together and share ideas. Children's learning experiences have become more relevant through linking learning across the curriculum. A good example of this is the work of the pupils at the upper stages in planning their own learning across a range of curricular areas as part of an interdisciplinary topic. This work will be further developed next session with the involvement of parents in the planning process.

Real life contexts are used where possible to further develop and reinforce pupils' skills in maths and numeracy through the use of the outside environment. An ongoing project at the early stages involved pupils in planting potatoes as part of the Eco programme and they are continuing to measure and plot graphs of the potatoes' growth as part of their maths work.

All pupils have been involved in designing and planning gardens with their clan partners. They have been allocated sums of money to purchase plants and senior pupils have been involved in developing their skills in using timetables as part of this work as they plan a visit to the local garden centre.

Literacy circles have been created in the senior class. Pupils are organised into groups and are able to exercise personal choice and agree their reading materials in consultation with each other and the teacher. They work collaboratively and, for the most part, independently to organise and run their group. Pupils work towards specific targets and weekly plenary sessions provide opportunities for them to discuss and evaluate their work and learning.

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

Staff continue to work very effectively as a team and with other agencies to fully support children's learning. They ensure that planned activities are carefully matched to individual needs.

Across the school children know what they need to do to improve and set themselves targets as part of their personal learning plan.

Staff have opportunities to share good practice and to work together to evaluate and improve their teaching and pupils' learning experiences. This has included opportunities, within the school, to observe and comment on each other's teaching practices as part of the formal monitoring process.

A recent open afternoon provided the parents of pupils at the early stages with an opportunity to work cooperatively with each other and their children. This supported them in developing their understanding of the work of the school and how they can support their own child with their learning at home.

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

Children have good opportunities to influence and improve the work of the school and its environment.

Their recent work in sustainable education has been nationally recognised and as a result the school has been awarded solar panels to the value of twenty five thousand pounds. Through this work they have developed their skills as responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The school is continuing to work towards a silver award in the Eco Schools programme. They have recently begun to work with the local authority in developing the adjacent field to further enhance the local environment and pupils' learning experiences.

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

Staff continue to set high expectations for children's attainment and wider achievement. Most recently, pupils have been developing their understanding of how to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Children respond well to these increased expectations and are polite and well motivated.

Children's successes and achievements are regularly celebrated.

Through the personal learning planning process, children are encouraged to set their own learning and personal targets and evaluate their success.



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

Staff continue to provide a high quality education for all pupils through a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff are enthusiastically developing aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. The very effective leadership of the head teacher and the staff's support and commitment ensures that the school has sense of vision and direction. Plans for improvement are appropriate and identify a clear sense of vision and direction. Staff meet regularly to talk about their work and how they can make the school better.

## **8. What happens next?**

As a result of the continued sound record of improvement and the effective leadership of the school, the school has demonstrated a strong capacity to continue to improve.

Community Services: Education will continue to monitor the work of the school as part of its procedures for ensuring quality

Douglas Hendry  
Director of Community Services: Education  
Argyll and Bute Council  
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