

**St Columba's School
Kilmacolm**

17 April 2001

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. The school	2
3. How well are pupils performing?	5
4. How well are the inspected departments performing?	8
5. How good is the curriculum?	14
6. How good is the learning and teaching?	16
7. How well are pupils supported?	17
8. How well is the school managed?	19
9. How well does the school perform overall?	21
Key Strengths	
Main points for action	
Appendix	24/25
Indicators of quality	
Quality of lessons observed	
How can you contact us?	26

Inspection of Standards and Quality in St Columba's School Kilmacolm

1. Introduction

St Columba's School was inspected in December 2000 and January 2001 as part of a national sample of nursery, primary and secondary education.

The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. HM Inspectors evaluated learning, teaching and attainment, examined pupils' work and interviewed staff and pupils. They inspected the nursery class and English language, mathematics and music in the primary school. The secondary subjects included in the inspection were English, mathematics, S1/S2 sciences, chemistry, history and physical education.

HM Inspectors also evaluated the quality of support for pupils, including arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils and child protection, and aspects of guidance and support for learning. In evaluating how well the school and departments were managed, HM Inspectors assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation and development planning.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents. They met the chairperson and a member of the Board of Directors, the chairperson of the parents' association and a group of parents.

2. The school

St Columba's School is a non-denominational independent school located in the village of Kilmacolm, west of Glasgow. At the time of the inspection the roll was 657, with 20 nursery children and 268 pupils from P1 to P6 in the primary school. The senior school roll of 369 included 60 pupils in Transitus, the P7 stage.

Parents' views

Parents who responded to the questionnaires were very satisfied with the work of the school.

Almost all thought that:

- pupils were well behaved and enjoyed being at school;
- teachers knew pupils as individuals and encouraged them to work to the best of their ability;
- pupils would be helped if they were having difficulty; and
- the school was well led.

Some parents of primary pupils wanted more information on their child's progress and better information on the work of the school.

Ethos

The school's ethos was very good. There was a strong sense of community and very good teamwork throughout the school. Staff morale was high. Pupils were courteous, polite and very well behaved. Relationships between pupils and staff were very good. Staff provided an extensive range of extra-curricular activities which were very well supported by parents. Large numbers of pupils participated in sports, musical activities, performances and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Tours abroad enriched some senior pupils' experiences. Senior pupils willingly undertook a range of responsibilities and all pupils were involved in fund-raising for

charity. Assemblies provided regular opportunities for religious observance and to celebrate achievements.

Attendance was well above the national average.

School and community

The school had established very good links with parents, other schools and the wider community. Partnership was especially well developed in the senior school. Notable features included:

- the accessibility of the rector and the headteacher of the primary school to parents;
- the very supportive Board of Directors and parents' association;
- regular reports to parents and meetings to discuss pupils' progress;
- a well-designed web-site and regular, informative newsletters for parents;
- close ties with other schools and groups abroad; and
- adult education classes to serve the local community.

The new headteacher of the primary school was in the process of improving communication with parents. She had held the first of a series of meetings for parents about the curriculum.

Accommodation

Accommodation was good overall. A major building programme had brought substantial improvements in accommodation and facilities in the last five years. Significant strengths included the attractive modern teaching areas for art, music and technology, a well-equipped business studies room and the refurbished senior school library. The newly-completed primary school building would also provide accommodation of a very high standard. An all-weather pitch

under construction would improve games facilities. Buildings were kept very clean and effective use of display enhanced many areas. However, the accommodation had a number of weaknesses.

- The nursery had no secure outdoor play area and parts of the small senior school playground needed resurfacing.
- Some classrooms in the old buildings were too small and cramped to support fully effective teaching.
- In the main senior school building, the hall was too small to assemble all pupils and staff and storage facilities were poor.
- The location of the physical education facilities in the primary school led to timetabling constraints for the senior school.

The school should continue to monitor road safety arrangements. A number of health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the rector and Board of Directors.

Staffing and resources

The school was very well staffed by experienced, committed teachers. Administrative, auxiliary and janitorial staff gave excellent support. Provision of resources in the primary school was good. The school should continue to improve materials for primary mathematics. The supply of learning and teaching resources ranged from good to very good in secondary departments. The school was developing very good resources for information and communications technology (ICT), including a computer network system and wireless laptop computers. It should plan to manage ICT resources to ensure their effective use.

The rector managed the school's finances very effectively. Along with the development committee, he was adept at securing funds for developments from a variety of sources. The bursar and finance staff contributed to the efficient

management of the budget. Within the school, funds were allocated fairly. The rector and Board of Directors responded positively to any justified requests to fund new resources.

3. How well are pupils performing?

Nursery

Children in the nursery class were making good progress in their learning. They talked with confidence, enjoyed listening to stories and were developing early reading skills. Almost all children were developing good hand control using puzzles, games and jigsaws. They needed additional opportunities to take part in energetic physical play.

The primary school and Transitus

English language

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was very good. Almost all pupils were performing well in their coursework. Almost all pupils at P3 and Transitus were achieving appropriate national levels in *listening, talking, reading and writing*. A number of pupils at each stage were attaining beyond these levels. However, many pupils were capable of achieving higher standards, particularly in writing. Pupils at all stages listened attentively to instructions and directions. They spoke confidently about themselves and their interests but their skills in talking were not being consistently developed. Almost all could read aloud with fluency. Pupils' handwriting was of a very high standard in all classes.

Mathematics

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was very good. Almost all pupils achieved high standards in their classwork, although a number found some of the tasks too easy. Almost all pupils at P3 and Transitus were attaining appropriate national levels of attainment in *number, money and measurement* and *shape, position and movement* and some were working beyond these levels. Most pupils were

achieving appropriate standards in *information handling*. Almost all pupils were developing very good skills in mental calculation and had good understanding of 2D and 3D shapes. Pupils at the Transitus stage applied their mathematical skills well when tackling unfamiliar problems.

Music

The overall quality of attainment in music was very good. Almost all pupils were making very good progress in their coursework. At all stages, pupils sang confidently and tunefully. Pupils at P2 used percussion instruments to identify rhythms and play up and down simple scales. At P6, pupils played recorders and other wind and brass instruments together as a group with very pleasing results. They were able to play different styles of music and improvise. Throughout the primary classes pupils participated enthusiastically in lessons and were developing important skills in reading music.

Attainment in the secondary school

Overall quality of attainment

The overall quality of attainment was good in S1/S2 and very good from S3 to S6.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Awards

The following comments are based on SQA awards up to and including 1999.

Performance in SQA examinations was consistently high. At Standard Grade, few awards were below Credit level. At Higher Grade, the proportion of pupils achieving A and A–C awards was well above the national average. Almost all pupils presented for the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies gained A–C awards.

Taking account of the small number of enrolments for national certificate (NC) modules, performance was above the national average.

Information on the subjects inspected is given later in this report. Significant features of attainment in the subjects not inspected were as follows.

- At Standard Grade, pupils consistently performed less well in art and design than in their other subjects.
- Over the last three years, pupils had achieved better results in French writing and geography than in their other subjects at Standard Grade
- At Higher, pupils performed consistently better in biology than in their other subjects and better than might be anticipated from their Standard Grade results.
- Over the last three years, all pupils presented for Higher Grade German had gained A awards.

Information and communications technology from P1 to S6

The following were notable features of pupils' proficiency in ICT.

- In P2, pupils made effective use of a computer program to reinforce reading skills.
- Pupils in P5 made good use of a CD-ROM to carry out research for their topic on Egypt.
- Pupils in S3 used software packages competently in graphical design and music lessons. Those taking the computing course were developing good word-processing skills.
- In Higher art and design, S5/S6 pupils made good use of a computer drawing package to amend images on the screen.

The geography department gave pupils experience of accessing the Internet to obtain information. The school's very good provision of computers created the potential for

wider effective use of ICT by pupils. At all stages, teachers should consider ways of enhancing pupils' learning and attainment through the use of ICT.

4. How well are the inspected departments performing?

English

Attainment

The overall quality of attainment was good in S1/S2 and very good at S3/S4 and S5/S6. Most pupils performed very well in their challenging coursework. The school did not use 5–14 levels to construct programmes or assess pupils' skills in S1/S2. Most pupils achieved high standards in the aspects of reading, writing and talking covered in their course. There was insufficient evidence available on the standard of pupils' listening skills. Performance at Standard Grade and Higher Grade was consistently well above national averages. Success rates in NC modules were above the national average. Almost all the pupils presented for CSYS achieved an A-C award.

Courses

The S1/S2 course was good. There was a need for more focus on developing pupils' oral skills. S3/S4 and S5/S6 courses were very good.

Learning and teaching

The overall quality of learning and teaching was very good. Teachers had high expectations and provided very effective direct teaching and appropriate homework. Pupils generally responded very well to challenging opportunities to develop their skills and reflect on quality literature. Small classes and individual attention helped support pupils with learning difficulties. At S1/S2, pupils would benefit from more advice on improving aspects such as spelling and re-drafting writing. The sharing of assessment with pupils in S3 to S6 helped them to take responsibility for their learning.

Management and quality assurance

The principal teacher managed the department effectively. She carefully introduced planned developments and

monitored work in progress. The department was successfully putting in place new courses leading to national qualifications and improving existing courses to raise attainment further. However, progress in a few priorities was slow.

Priorities for action

Planned development of the S1/S2 course should include practical advice for teachers on all key outcomes including approaches to developing oral skills. The department should identify its S1/S2 assessment criteria and share these with pupils.

Mathematics

Attainment

Overall attainment was very good in S1 to S4 and good in S5/S6. Almost all pupils from S1 to S4 and most in S5/S6 performed well in coursework. The school did not use 5-14 levels to assess pupils' attainment in S1/S2. However, evidence available indicated that most pupils were achieving or exceeding national standards in mathematics. At Standard Grade, almost all pupils gained a Credit award. At Higher Grade, the proportions of A and A-C awards were consistently well above national average. The majority of pupils who sat CSYS gained A-C awards. A few pupils enrolled for national certificate modules and the majority gained full success.

Courses

All courses were good. However, there was insufficient attention to developing pupils' mental and graphical skills.

Learning and teaching

The overall quality of learning and teaching was good. Staff gave clear explanations and made regular use of homework. Almost all pupils worked conscientiously. However, they relied heavily on the considerable support given by teachers. The pace and challenge of work did not always meet the needs of more able pupils. Assessment and recording was well organised. New departmental assessments at Higher were too fragmented.

Management and quality assurance

The principal teacher managed the department well. He knew the strengths of his staff, gave them very good support and promoted teamwork. Teachers made good use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress. Although the development plan lacked detail, the department had made good progress in implementing tasks.

Priorities for action

Courses should include more attention to mental calculation and graphical skills. At Higher, the department should review its assessment practice. Teachers should encourage pupils to take increased responsibility for their own learning and challenge able pupils more.

Chemistry and S1/S2 science**Attainment**

The overall quality of attainment in the biology, chemistry and physics courses at S1/S2 was good. Pupils showed very good knowledge and understanding of coursework, but their skills were more limited. The overall quality of attainment in chemistry was very good at S3/S4 and good at S5/S6. Results in Standard Grade chemistry were well above the national average. In Higher chemistry, the number of A-C awards was above the national average, although pupils performed less well than in their other subjects. Performance in CSYS chemistry was above the national average.

Courses

All courses inspected were of good quality. In S1/S2, pupils had too few opportunities to plan experiments, and to record and present their findings independently. In chemistry, too much time was given to the Standard Grade course, and not enough to the Higher course.

Learning and teaching

The quality of teaching was often very good, particularly in S1/S2. Teachers set homework frequently and their marking was helpful. Pupils were very well motivated and worked diligently. They co-operated very well together. They had insufficient opportunities, however, to show initiative and

independence. In Higher chemistry, there was little time for discussion and reflection. Teachers supported pupils very well. Assessment was good in all courses.

Management and quality assurance

The principal teacher of chemistry provided good leadership. The three heads of department ensured that S1/S2 courses were well planned. However, procedures for sharing best practice in S1/S2 across the separate science departments were very limited. Staff development was good in chemistry. The principal teacher of chemistry monitored pupils' progress carefully. However, the department had too few strategies for regular self-evaluation. The department was making good progress in meeting the targets it had chosen for development.

Priorities for action

Courses in S1/S2 should be modified to ensure that pupils' independence and skills of investigation are more fully developed. The relative time allocations to the Standard Grade and Higher chemistry courses should be reviewed. Procedures for evaluating the work of the chemistry department should be improved.

History

Attainment

Overall attainment was good. Attainment in coursework was very good in S1/S2, and at S6 and good from S3 to S5. At all stages, however, abler pupils were not challenged enough. The quality of pupils' extended writing was a particular strength. At Standard Grade, results at Credit level were well above the national average. At Higher Grade, almost all pupils had attained A-C awards in the past three years with the majority gaining A awards. Almost all pupils presented for CSYS achieved success with most obtaining A or B awards.

Courses

Courses at all stages were good, although they would benefit from a clearer definition of pupils' activities and tasks. The S1/S2 course covered a very good range of challenging topics.

Learning and teaching

The overall quality of learning and teaching was good. Teachers used questioning and homework effectively and were particularly skilled at providing contexts for historical events. They knew pupils well and provided good structures to support pupils' learning. Pupils were well motivated, but needed more opportunities to develop their understanding through independent and group work. Teachers made good use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress. However, in the lower school, the department should review the nature of assessment tasks.

Management and quality assurance

The head of department had a good clear vision for her subject. She managed the department well and had effectively introduced curriculum change. Evaluation of learning and teaching was not fully developed.

Priorities for action

The department should specify pupil activities and tasks more clearly its course plans. In the lower school, assessment tasks should be more closely linked to course aims. The department should adopt more systematic approaches to evaluating learning and teaching.

Physical education**Attainment**

The overall quality of attainment was very good at all stages. Pupils performed to a high level in their coursework and a large number took part in sporting activities after school. They co-operated very well together and most displayed a strong commitment to organised physical activity.

In S1/S2, pupils showed good levels of skill. They answered questions eagerly and accurately. In S3/S4, pupils were able to apply their skills well in games and other contexts. Most were knowledgeable about rules and tactics in games but some were uncertain about the specific effects of fitness activities. In S5/S6, skill levels were wide ranging with a few pupils performing at a very high standard.

Courses

Courses at all stages were well planned. Most units of work had clear objectives although some were not detailed enough to ensure a common departmental approach.

Learning and teaching

The overall quality of learning and teaching was very good. Teachers explained tasks well and used questioning effectively. They adapted activities very well to suit the needs of most pupils. Pupils had few opportunities to work independently or reflect on performance. Teachers were sensitive to pupils' social and emotional needs. Assessment and reporting was generally good.

Management and quality assurance

The principal teacher led the department very effectively. He was a very good practitioner who inspired confidence in staff and pupils. He had successfully developed staff teamwork and had begun key developments to improve provision. He monitored the work of the department well on an informal basis and consulted staff on all important aspects of the department's work.

Priorities for action

Teachers should provide more opportunities for pupils to work independently. The department should implement its policy on monitoring more rigorously and systematically to improve its planning.

5. How good is the curriculum?

Nursery

In the nursery class, the overall quality of the programmes for each of the key aspects of children's development and learning was good. Staff planned a range of activities to develop children's skills in art, craft and music. They provided good opportunities for children to develop early reading, writing and number skills. The programme for physical development and movement needed to be developed further to ensure that pupils had regular opportunities for energetic play.

The primary school curriculum: P1 to P6

The structure of the curriculum and time allocation for each subject area was being reviewed. The time allocation for science, technology, ICT and problem-solving and enquiry would be extended when pupils move into the new school building. Pupils at all stages studied French. Secondary specialists taught music and physical education in the primary school.

English language

The programme for English language was good overall. A new writing programme had been introduced recently to ensure the systematic development of skills. Further attention needed to be given to some key aspects of the programme, particularly in providing more opportunities for pupils to listen and talk in groups and to write at length for a variety of purposes. Teachers needed to ensure that tasks and activities provided sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly in reading and writing.

Mathematics

The school was in the process of introducing a new programme in mathematics. The programme at the time of the inspection was fair. It included very good emphasis on the development of skills in mental mathematics but gave too little attention to aspects of information handling and problem-solving and enquiry. It did not include opportunities for pupils to learn appropriate uses of calculators. Overall, the programme did not provide higher attaining pupils with sufficient challenge.

Music

The programme for music was very good. It provided a progressive musical experience for pupils with good opportunities to make music, invent and improvise and listen.

Expressive arts

Overall, the programme for expressive arts was good. The physical education programme was good. The art and design programme required review to ensure appropriate emphasis was given to creativity and design and evaluation and appreciation. The school needed to improve the attention given to drama.

Senior school curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum was fair from Transitus to S2 and good from S3 to S6.

Timetable arrangements imposed some constraints. The limited number of lessons within the week restricted flexibility and the time available for some Higher courses. The uneven length of lessons on Wednesdays created difficulties for some classes. To increase pupil choice some subjects were offered at lunchtime or twilight sessions, or in composite classes. Teachers should ensure that the needs of both groups are met in composite classes.

At Transitus and S1/S2, pupils experienced a fragmented curriculum with a lack of continuity in some subjects. Commendably S3/S4 pupils could choose to follow between 6 and 8 Standard Grades from a broad range of appropriate subjects. However, uptake for creative and aesthetic and technological subjects was low. Pupils in S5/S6 pupils had access to a good range of appropriate courses. The school had made good progress in implementing courses leading to the new National Qualifications at Intermediate 2 and Higher level. Most departments offered either SYS or Advanced Higher courses. A few NC module courses were also available.

6. How good is the learning and teaching?

The overall quality of learning and teaching at all stages was good. Almost all lessons seen were very good or good. Further information about lesson evaluations is given in the appendix.

Specific features of learning and teaching included the following:

- Teachers gave clear explanations and set homework regularly. Most made good use of questioning.

- Almost pupils were well motivated and worked conscientiously.
- Pupils responded well to opportunities for discussion, enquiry and collaboration. They should have further opportunities to show initiative and independence in learning.
- Teachers knew pupils well and gave them good individual support. They should ensure that the pace of learning and activities are challenging enough for higher attaining pupils.
- In nursery and primary classes, teachers needed to improve their planning by setting out what pupils were expected to learn.

Staff in the nursery class had developed effective arrangements to assess and record children's progress. In primary classes, arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' attainment needed to be more systematic and rigorous. Teachers did not make sufficient use of assessment information to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. In the senior school, teachers made good use of assessment evidence to target support for individuals.

7. How well are pupils supported?

Care and welfare

Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils were very good. The school had established effective arrangements for combating bullying and had a clear policy on child protection issues. It should now agree procedures for dealing with incidents which might threaten the health and welfare of pupils, including drug misuse.

Guidance

The pastoral care of pupils was very good. Staff knew pupils as individuals and were sensitive to their needs. Teachers made effective use of praise to support pupils and actively

encouraged positive behaviour. Registration time provided good opportunities for discussion of issues and concerns.

Positive features of guidance in the senior school included the following features:

- effective support for pupils at transition points;
- very good procedures for monitoring individual pupils' progress;
- work experience for all S5 pupils and good arrangements for careers education; and
- good links with appropriate external agencies.

Guidance staff maintained very good contact with pupils. They taught almost all personal and social education (PSE) lessons and within these they were beginning to help pupils prepare personal action plans.

Personal and social development

The primary school had a very good programme for personal and social development. Staff in the nursery encouraged children to share resources and co-operate with each other during games and activities. Primary pupils had a range of opportunities to develop their personal and social skills at class and school level. The health education programme was being developed. It included aspects of healthy eating, personal safety, hygiene and drug education.

The PSE programme in the senior school was good. The school had recently developed aspects of the programme. It covered a wide range of topics and included key aims and objectives at some stages. The quality of pupils' learning experiences was generally high. However, there was no regular planned programme for S1 and insufficient progression in some topics.

The principal teacher of guidance provided very effective leadership for guidance with very good support from the rector. They had a very good knowledge of individual pupils. The committed guidance staff worked very well as a team. Regular informal self-evaluation included some canvassing of pupils' views. Guidance staff had made good progress in meeting most of their development targets.

Support for learning

The primary school had implemented good procedures for identifying learning difficulties and supporting pupils' learning. The deputy headteacher of the primary department provided well-organised and high quality support for pupils from P1 to P6. Parents were fully involved in key decisions relating to their children.

The school made appropriate use of specialist services. Staff were beginning to make effective use of individualised educational programmes for specific pupils.

The overall quality of support for learning in the senior school was good. The deputy rector managed learning support services well and contributed significantly to meeting pupils' needs. Learning support staff maintained very good links with the primary department and external support agencies. They had made a very good start to producing individualised educational programmes for selected pupils. Learning support teachers fulfilled their roles effectively, providing tuition for individual pupils, with some co-operative teaching in classes. Although they provided advice for other staff, arrangements were largely informal. The school needed to further develop its use of learning support services in line with school policy, and establish a regular review of staff deployment. Good development planning had helped to take forward the work of the department.

Priorities for action

The school should continue to develop its provision for PSE. It should extend its use of individualised educational programmes. The senior school should continue to review its deployment of teachers with specialist skills and qualifications in supporting pupils' learning.

8. How well is the school managed?

Overall management and leadership

The rector was highly committed to the school and provided very good leadership. He worked strenuously to advance the school and under his direction the roll had increased significantly. He was widely respected for his contribution to the success of the school and its positive atmosphere. His personal commitment to high standards and the need to build confidence and self esteem set the tone of the school. Staff and pupils valued his encouragement and his concern for their individual welfare. During her three years in post, the depute rector had worked closely with the rector and given him good support. She had made important contributions to management processes and had been influential in the development of whole school planning. All heads of department made a good contribution to the life of the school and some were very good leaders. However, they needed to develop their role in evaluating the quality of their work.

The headteacher of the primary school was an effective leader. In the five months since taking up post, she had earned the respect and confidence of pupils, teachers and parents. She had identified and started to implement necessary changes and had built upon the strong sense of teamwork among the staff. The depute headteacher of the primary school carried out her remit effectively and gave the headteacher very good support.

Staff development and review

Arrangements for staff development were good. They were generally well organised to support the work of the school development plan and take account of individual needs. Involvement in school committees was providing useful opportunities for staff development. Teachers had made good use of the training provided for the implementation of the new National Qualifications, and of courses offered by the Scottish Council for Independent Schools (SCIS). The school itself had organised ICT courses and was offering to

support staff who wished to take part in further training. A scheme of formal staff review was one of the priorities in the current school development plan but was yet to be implemented.

School development planning

School development planning was still at an early stage. A good start had been made. The three-year plan was the result of a whole school audit, using national performance indicators. It had involved staff in implementation groups, and had been reviewed at the half way point. A further review of some sections by the headteacher of the primary school had resulted in well-judged amendments to the plan. Tasks, timescales and responsibilities in the plan were clearly identified. However, the intended educational outcomes of the actions proposed were not always clearly specified. The link between school and secondary departmental planning had yet to be fully established. Generally, departmental plans lacked a clear focus on achieving improvement. Nevertheless, at school and at departmental level staff had made good progress in implementing projects.

Approaches to improving quality

The school used a limited range of formal approaches to monitoring and evaluation. In preparing the school development plan, senior staff had brought in an external consultant to help them identify strengths and weaknesses of its provision. However, they had not built on this experience of using performance indicators to measure the quality of the school's work. The headteacher of the primary school had taken some initial steps to improve quality but was fully aware that further work remained to be done. She had also started to work alongside class teachers to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching in each class. In the senior school, the rector and heads of departments analysed examination results carefully. Staff systematically monitored homework and regularly discussed courses and pupils' progress at department meetings. However, minutes were not automatically shared with the senior staff. The rector maintained a high-profile presence around the school, knew the staff well and monitored their work informally. He and the

depute rector should now develop more systematic approaches to monitoring the quality of pupils' learning experience.

9. How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, the school provided a very good standard of education within a caring and supportive environment. Staff and pupils were proud of their association with the school. Pupils achieved high levels of success in examinations and had many opportunities for personal achievement in extra-curricular activities. The school recognised the need to continue moving forward and to strengthen primary-secondary liaison. Its record of improvement suggests that the school is well placed to make the changes recommended and build on its current success.

Key strengths

- The strong, positive ethos and the high quality of pastoral care.
- The teamwork among staff and their commitment to the school and its pupils.
- The courteous, polite and well-behaved pupils.
- The range of extra-curricular activities and high level of pupil participation.
- The valuable support provided by the Board of Directors and parents' association.
- The high attainment of pupils.
- The very good leadership of the rector.

Main points for action

In addition to addressing the priorities for action identified in this report, the school should act on the following recommendations.

- The school and Board of Directors should address the health and safety matters brought to their attention and referred to in this report.
- The school should review the timetable, the curriculum and pupils' learning experiences to take account of issues raised within this report.
- The school should produce a clear strategy for the effective use of ICT in the school.
- Staff in the primary school should develop more systematic planning and assessment procedures.
- The rector and depute rector should build on good practice to improve development planning in departments.
- The school should develop more systematic procedures for self-evaluation and monitoring at departmental and school level.

HM Inspectors will return between one and two years after the publication of this report to assess progress in meeting these recommendations. The school and the Board of Directors have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main points for action in the report and to share that plan with parents.

Mrs A D Crow
HM Inspector of Schools
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector of Schools
Western Division

17 April 2001

See Performance Indicator data overleaf.

Appendix

Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be *very good*

- The school's ethos
- Partnership with parents and the Board of Directors
- Provision of staff
- The school's management of finances
- Quality of the teaching process
- Quality of pastoral care
- Guidance role in monitoring pupils' progress and attainment in the senior school
- Quality of curricular and vocational guidance in the senior school
- Effectiveness of learning support in the primary school
- Effectiveness of leadership of the rector and the headteacher of the primary school.

We judged the following to be *good*

- Communication with parents
- Provision of accommodation and facilities
- Provision of materials and equipment
- Organisation and use of resources and space in the senior school
- Structure of the curriculum in the senior school
- Quality of courses or programmes in the primary school
- Quality of pupils' learning
- Matching the teaching process to pupils' needs and experience
- Effectiveness of learning support in the senior school
- Effectiveness of promoted staff
- The school development plan
- Implementing the school development plan

We judged the following to be *fair*

- The structure of the curriculum in the primary school
- Quality of teachers' planning in the primary school
- Using assessment to guide the teaching process in the primary school
- The school's approach to evaluating its own work
- The school's arrangements for staff development and review

We judged the following to be *unsatisfactory*

- No aspects were found to be in this category

Quality of the lessons observed

HMI also evaluated the quality of the lessons observed. The overall quality of lessons was very good in 48% of cases, good in 50% and fair in 2%. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

How can you contact us?

Copies of this report have been sent to the rector and school staff, the chairman of the Board of Directors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from the office at the address below or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our web site: www.scotland.gov.uk/hmis

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report, you should write in the first instance to Frank Crawford, HMCI whose address is given below. If you are unhappy with the response, you will be told in writing what further steps you may take.

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