

**Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School
City of Edinburgh
20 May 2008**

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. How well does the school raise achievement for all?	2
4. How good is the environment for learning?	8
5. Leading and improving the school	9
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	12
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	13
Appendix 3 Good Practice	14
How can you contact us?	15

1. Background

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School and Kindergarten were inspected in January 2008 as part of a national sample of nursery, primary and secondary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the school's work at all stages. HM Inspectors evaluated how well the school was raising achievement for all pupils, taking into account the extent to which pupils' learning needs were met by the curriculum and teaching. They analysed pupils' achievement in national examinations and other areas, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its overall effectiveness and capacity for improvement. In the lower school, there was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics. In the upper school, the subjects included in the inspection were English, mathematics, business education and history. Unless otherwise stated, the evaluations in this report apply to provision in both the lower and upper schools. Inspectors invited the school to identify examples of good practice and have reported on one example of good practice in Appendix 3.

HM inspectors examined the quality of children's experience in the kindergarten and the work of pupils at the primary and secondary stages. Inspectors also observed learning and teaching and evaluated the achievements of children in the kindergarten and pupils at the primary and secondary stages. They analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents¹ and pupils and to all staff. They interviewed groups of pupils and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, representatives of the parent teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents.

The school is an independent, coeducational school for children aged three to 18, situated on the west side of Edinburgh. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 256, with 35 children aged three to six years in the kindergarten, 135 pupils aged six to 15 years in lower school classes 1 to 8, and 86 pupils aged 15 to 18 years in upper school classes 9 to 12.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Quality of outdoor learning experiences for children in the kindergarten.
- The commitment of staff to the work of the school and to the children in their care.
- Very positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- Strong partnerships with parents.
- Wide range of opportunities for pupils' achievement resulting in confident and responsible young people.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers and carers who are relatives or friends.

3. How well does the school raise achievement for all?

The curriculum, teaching, meeting learning needs, impact on learners

The work of the school is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. This philosophy of child development, learning and teaching and spiritual awareness were fundamental to the school, and were reflected in the curriculum. This was built around a programme of daily “main lessons” which were grouped in blocks to provide 20 to 40 hours of learning on specific aspects of human experience and knowledge.

The quality of the curriculum was good with some very good aspects within main lessons. The curriculum in the kindergarten and in the lower and upper schools was based on a clear rationale and shared values of the Steiner model. Particular features of the curriculum included the following.

- The main lesson programme provided pupils with a wide range of stimulating learning experiences which encouraged pupils participation. The programme developed pupils’ knowledge and understanding across a wide range of curriculum areas.
- Fundraising and organising a range of events provided good opportunities for pupils to develop citizenship and enterprise skills.
- All pupils benefited from a wide range of creative and artistic opportunities.
- New courses in business management and psychology had been introduced to meet the needs of a small number of pupils.
- All pupils in the lower school and almost all pupils in the upper school studied French and German.
- Pupils were presented for examinations generally at an older age than the normal national pattern.
- Pupils in the upper school did not use information and communications technology (ICT) sufficiently, and in the lower school ICT was not used, in keeping with Steiner principles.
- The school did not provide sufficient opportunities for physical education (PE), particularly in the upper stages of upper school.

The overall quality of teaching for effective learning in the kindergarten and lower school was good, with examples of high quality teaching in a few classes. Staff in the kindergarten made very good use of the outdoor environment to provide a range of stimulating learning experiences. They interacted skilfully with children to engage and support them in learning. In the lower school, teachers were well prepared for lessons. They explained things clearly and used questioning well to develop pupils’ understanding further. Teachers used praise effectively to encourage pupils and to build their confidence. A few teachers provided clear feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. This practice was not consistent across all classes in the lower school. Overall, the pace of most lessons was good but in some lessons it was too slow and a few pupils lost interest in their learning. Overall, homework was well planned and supported pupils’ learning in class.

In the upper school, the overall quality of teaching for effective learning was good with some instances of very good teaching. Across the school, most teachers planned their lessons well and built on pupils' previous learning. Most teachers fully involved pupils and encouraged them to express their views and ask questions. They used questioning effectively to find out what pupils knew, to clarify and consolidate key points of lessons. Whilst teachers made sound judgements and responded to pupils' contributions in ways that met most needs, there were a number of passive learners whose needs were not met effectively. Whilst most teachers shared the purpose of lessons with pupils, they did not always review learning at the end of the lesson but, following Steiner principles, revisited learning the following lesson. In a few classes, ICT was used imaginatively to extend pupils' learning. In most classes, homework was used well to support learning.

The quality of learning in the kindergarten and lower school was good. Children in the kindergarten were highly motivated and engaged enthusiastically in play. They cooperated well and were developing independence and responsibility through play activities. Children were making very good progress in understanding the world around them. They recycled vegetable waste as compost which they then used to plant and grow beans. They explored a wide range of natural materials when playing both indoors and outside. They investigated the change in vegetables when making soup. Effective use was made of props and costumes to develop imaginary play scenarios. Children sang tunefully and a few explored the sounds made by found objects. They successfully used puppets to retell stories. Outdoor energetic experiences for children were of high quality. Children were becoming skilled at climbing, crawling, balancing and jumping and were developing good control of their hands and fingers when, for example, cutting vegetables and carding wool. Overall, pupils in the lower school were motivated to learn and settled well to tasks. Most pupils confidently expressed their views and participated in learning activities with enthusiasm. When given the opportunity pupils worked very well in groups and learned from each other. However, there were too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently or to work in groups. Pupils were not sufficiently involved in discussing the quality of their work or next steps in their learning.

The school's approaches to meeting children's and pupils' learning needs were good. Teachers and kindergarten staff knew their pupils well and worked hard to ensure that the needs of most pupils were met effectively. Most tasks and learning activities matched the needs of individuals, particularly in the upper school. Across the school and kindergarten, the pace of learning was appropriate for most pupils. Pupils benefited from small class sizes. In one subject area, a class had been arranged in two attainment groups to allow staff to meet learning needs more effectively. In the upper school, teachers monitored pupils' progress effectively and quickly acted if concerns about individuals' attainment were identified. In the lower school, teachers did not always provide tasks which were sufficiently challenging or appropriate to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Across the school and kindergarten, specialist staff provided very good support to address children's and pupils' additional support needs. They identified children's and pupils' needs effectively and provided high quality support programmes, working with individuals and small groups, and providing support in class where appropriate. Support teaching was very skilful, engaging pupils well and resulting in clear enjoyment among the pupils and progress in their learning. Teachers across the school received good support to help them address pupils' additional needs, for example through helpful profiles which summarised individual needs and described strategies to help meet these needs. Overall, staff planned well to ensure individuals' needs were met. They made good use of the school's small community to ensure effective communication, for example through regular staff meetings and termly reviews

of pupils' additional support needs. However, planning was not consistently well coordinated, or presented in ways which would ensure easy access to key information by all relevant staff.

Improvement in performance

English language in the lower school

The quality of children's progress in communication and language in the kindergarten was good. Children in the kindergarten spoke confidently to adults and each other and listened intently to stories. They concentrated well in group settings. Most children could recognise their name in print. A small range of books was used independently by a few children. There was scope for more consistent challenge through improved opportunities to develop early literacy skills. However, the development of early literacy skills was generally deferred as a matter of principle. The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language in the lower school was good. Almost all pupils were working at or beyond expected national levels for listening and talking. The development of children's early reading and writing skills was slowly paced as a matter of policy and met the needs of most children. Pupils in classes 1–4 were not working at expected national levels in reading or writing but by class 6 most pupils had attained these levels. Almost all pupils listened and responded well to their teachers and to each other. Pupils were articulate and confidently expressed their point of view. Pupils in class 3 successfully presented a class play through effective choral work. By class 4, pupils demonstrated good skill in oral presentation. Some pupils clearly presented solo talks on animals to their class, showing a good awareness of audience. By class 6, pupils were skilled at building on ideas from others. Pupils in classes 1-3 were at the early stages of developing literacy skills. At the middle stages pupils were able to read a familiar text but their comprehension skills were not sufficiently developed. By class 6, most pupils read with confidence and understanding. They had a very good knowledge of language and could analyse a text effectively. Pupils could write at length and for a variety of purposes. Across the lower school, staff needed to develop pupils' spelling more effectively. Standards of handwriting and presentation were not consistently good.

Mathematics in the lower school

Children in the kindergarten were making good progress in developing their understanding of early mathematics. The development of aspects of mathematics was deferred as a matter of policy. They cooperated well to solve problems when constructing tunnels and play houses. They used their skills of estimation effectively when comparing the dimensions of planks of wood. They successfully sorted and matched materials such as fir cones and pebbles. Most children could recognise and name simple shapes. Children's counting skills were insufficiently developed, in line with Steiner principles. In the lower school, the overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. At the early stages of the lower school, pupils were making steady progress in developing numeracy skills. From class 4, pupils' skills in mental and written calculation were strong. Most pupils in class 4, and almost all by class 6 were working at or beyond expected national levels in those aspects of mathematics which they had studied. By class 6, almost all pupils were secure in their knowledge of decimals, fractions and percentages. The slower pace to learning meant the majority of pupils lacked experience and confidence in aspects of mathematics such as information handling, work with two- and three-dimensional shapes and problem solving.

Inspected subjects in the upper school

English

Teaching for effective learning, approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs and the quality of pupils' learning experiences were good. Improvements in performance were good. Teachers created a stimulating learning climate for most pupils, using a planned mixture of explanation and challenging questioning. These approaches helped pupils at all stages to be curious and creative, and, especially in upper stages, to think critically. Tasks in most lessons were well planned, and frequently linked to pupils' own experiences. Activities such as drama and debating helped them to develop their skills in listening and talking. Increased group work opportunities would help teachers to meet the needs of all learners more effectively. Pupils with additional support needs were well supported by their teachers and were making good progress. Very detailed written feedback in the upper school helped learners to know what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve.

At all stages, most pupils made good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Pupils' listening and talking skills were very well developed. Pupils read widely and used their very good general knowledge to inform their writing and discussion in class. Very small numbers of pupils were presented in class 10 for Intermediate 1 but most achieved A-C awards. At classes 10 and 11, most of the small number of learners presented at Intermediate 2 achieved an A-C award. By the end of class 12, a majority of the very small numbers presented at Higher achieved an A-C award.

Mathematics

Teaching for effective learning, approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs and the quality of pupils' learning experiences were good. Improvements in performance were very good. Teachers explained lessons well and used questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding. Regular homework was issued and marked to consolidate learning. Teachers discussed the purpose of lessons and reviewed what had been taught with pupils. Activities were well chosen to match pupils' needs, but often lacked variety. In most lessons, the pace of learning was steady and, at times, appropriately brisk. Opportunities for pupils to revise their previous learning were limited. At all stages, pupils responded well to the school's high expectations of effort and behaviour. They worked well both individually and in groups when required. Pupils were not always sufficiently clear about what steps could be taken to improve their learning.

Almost all pupils worked confidently in main lessons and tackled more demanding work well. At class 7 and class 8, pupils generally had made appropriate progress in their course work and were attaining in line with national levels. At class 10, the proportion of pupils achieving Credit or General awards was above the national average. At class 12, all of the small number of pupils who sat Higher achieved a pass at A-C.

Business Education

Teaching for effective learning, arrangements for meeting learning needs and the quality of learners' experiences were very good. Improvements in performance were good. Lessons had an appropriate balance of challenging activities which motivated pupils well. Skilful questioning provided staff with opportunities to check on pupils' understanding. In addition, lively, wide-ranging discussions helped develop pupils' thinking skills and confidence. However, whilst the class teacher discussed the purpose of lessons, pupils were not always clear about the

standard of work expected of them in order to achieve examination success. Pupils had begun to assess their own and each others' work. This was helping them to know their strengths and how to improve. The teacher provided an appropriate range of resources to meet pupils' needs. Pupils responded very productively when asked to show initiative and take responsibility.

Overall, pupils had made good progress from their prior levels of attainment. All of the very small number of pupils presented for Intermediate 2 in business management had achieved A-C awards and were making very good progress within their Higher business management course. Some pupils successfully developed their ICT skills through formal lessons in classes 9 and 10, and by undertaking extension activities in a range of subject areas. Individual pupils used their ICT skills effectively to prepare a computer presentation, giving a modern day interpretation of a traditional Scottish text.

History

Overall, teaching, arrangements for meeting pupils' needs and the quality of learners' experiences were good. Improvements in performance were good. Teachers used a helpful variety of teaching and learning approaches to motivate pupils and develop their knowledge and understanding of history. Classroom tasks were well planned and encouraged pupils to participate in debate and engage in critical thinking. Teachers valued pupils' views and developed their ideas to help improve their learning. Field trips and investigation of the school's history helped pupils to understand what had happened in the past, in a real life context. Teachers made some use of ICT to improve pupils' presentation skills. There were too few opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively, to discuss historical issues and come to conclusions. Feedback to pupils was not always rigorous and it was sometimes difficult for pupils to identify their next steps in learning. Teachers knew pupils well and matched activities closely to their needs. However, having only the option to sit Higher history at the end of class 12 did not meet the needs of a few pupils.

In all classes in the upper school, almost all pupils made good progress from their prior levels of attainment in knowledge and understanding. A few pupils studied history through interesting informal classes. The skills of evaluating sources of evidence, comparing and contrasting and coming to evidence-based conclusions were not developed systematically. Almost all of the small numbers presented recently for Higher had gained A-C awards.

Achievement in national assessments, examinations and other areas

It was a feature of the school that patterns of presentation differed significantly from those usually found in Scottish schools and related directly to the Steiner curriculum structure. Small numbers of pupils were presented for external examinations and included various combinations of Standard Grade, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Higher, General Certificate of Education (GCE) and Advanced Supplementary (AS) level courses across different subjects. Pupils were presented for Standard Grade or GCSE courses in English, mathematics, French and German in class 10; and could then take a two-year Higher course. In other subjects, the most common pattern was presentation for GCSE in class 11, with possible presentation for Higher in class 12. Across the school, particular features of pupils' progress, results in examinations and other qualifications are included below.

- In classes 7 and 8, most pupils were making good progress in almost all areas of the upper school.
- Pupils were confident in discussion and able to present very good arguments during debates.
- Pupils contributed to the life of the school in a number of ways including preparing school lunches, organising events such as fashion shows and buddying younger pupils.
- The school organised a number of residential trips to places such as Hadrian's Wall, Germany and Romania.
- Performance in national examinations was generally well above the national average.
- At GCSE, all pupils gained A*-C passes in physics; almost all pupils gained A*-C passes in biology, chemistry and geography; most pupils gained A*-C passes in French and German.
- At Higher, all pupils gained A-C awards in chemistry, French and music. Almost all pupils gained A-C awards in biology. Most pupils gained A-C awards in German.

4. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>Staff provided pupils with very high quality pastoral care. The school policy on child protection was based on appropriate principles and staff were fully aware of their duties. Related policies for anti-bullying and anti-racism also provided a useful framework but staff training was also needed in these respects. The programme for personal and social education (PSE) for classes 9-12 included valuable opportunities for pupils to study important, relevant topics, which they were able to negotiate and debate. Pupils received appropriate support when choosing different subjects, for example for classes 9 and 11. They received helpful advice and guidance on careers. This was effective in helping them identify relevant progression beyond school to higher education or other destinations. It included strong support for the significant numbers of pupils taking gap years, for example informing them about voluntary and charitable initiatives. Staff acted as "guardians" for each of the classes 9-12, developing close working relationships over the four years, providing effective and comprehensive pastoral support and supporting close liaison with parents. Tutors also provided complementary support, working with smaller groups to track their progress and provide assistance where necessary. Regular meetings with guardians and tutors provided important opportunities for pupils to discuss issues and raise concerns, respecting their growing maturity and capacity to identify priority issues which affected them. Pupils were happy and felt safe and secure in the school. Staff were kept well informed overall about key information concerning pupils' progress and welfare, but the school needed to identify possible improvements in coordinating the information to make it more accessible to relevant staff.</p>
Management and use of resources and space for learning	<p>The overall quality of the management and use of resources and space for learning was adequate. The outside play areas, particularly in the kindergarten, provided a stimulating place in which to learn and relax. The school provided a number of areas to display pupils' high quality art and craft work. The few computers were up-to-date and well maintained. The school used a number of visits to local sites of interest to support teaching and learning. Accommodation was cramped and sometimes constrained opportunities for active approaches to learning. The systems for identifying and addressing health and safety issues were not always rigorous and this led to a slow response to some issues. The school was now aware of the issues and was taking steps to achieve improvements.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and equality and fairness	<p>The quality of the school's climate and relationships was very good. Pupils had confidence that they could achieve and were proud when they did so. Children, pupils and staff had created an environment where everyone felt very welcome. Pupils at all stages responded very well to opportunities to take responsibility. Pupils' achievements were celebrated in school newsletters and the local press. The school gave very good support for a number of pupils at risk of missing out on opportunities to learn. There were very positive relationships across the school, founded on the Steiner philosophy, which promoted mutual trust and self-respect for all pupils and staff. The children and pupils were well behaved and demonstrated a clear concern for others through charity fund-raising and their caring attitude to each other. All pupils and their parents were included in the work of the school. Across the school, staff promoted a strong sense of equality and developed pupils' ability to challenge inequalities. Many aspects of the curriculum helped pupils develop an awareness of diversity and the needs of others. The school provided regular and appropriate opportunities for religious observance. Through main lessons, pupils had a range of experiences which helped them to reflect on difficult issues of equality.</p>
The school's success in involving parents	<p>The school was very successful in involving parents in the life of the school. Parents participated very well in a range of events which developed their understanding of the Steiner methods of teaching and helped them to support their children to learn. In the kindergarten, the parents' and toddlers' room enabled parents to learn about the school in a relaxed and welcoming environment. The PTA was very active and represented the views of parents well. It was successful in raising funds to support the work of the school. Parents were satisfied with the education the school provided. A few indicated that responses to issues and enquiries were not always prompt.</p>

5. Leading and improving the school

The Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School and Kindergarten served its children and pupils well. Staff displayed a high level of commitment to the school and worked well to address a wide range of needs. There was a strong caring ethos, which was recognised and appreciated by parents. Overall, the quality of learning and teaching was good but there was scope for greater consistency in practice in subjects beyond main lessons.

Leadership of improvement and change across the school was weak. In line with the Steiner philosophy, responsibility for self-evaluation, the strategic direction of the school and priorities for improvement rested with the College of Teachers, which met weekly. From the

College of Teachers, a management group of three was elected which met regularly with the bursar to deal with organisational matters. The team worked well together and dealt with a wide range of day-to-day concerns put forward by colleagues. However, members of the College of Teachers did not have clear enough remits or accountability to enable the progress of developments to be led or monitored effectively. The development of people and partnerships was adequate. Almost all staff participated regularly in professional development activities, particularly those which were designed to improve understanding and application of the Steiner curriculum. Kindergarten staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council's Codes of Practice and the implications for their work. Staff were encouraged to reflect on their practice but the extent to which this was effective varied considerably. Most staff contributed regularly to a number of committees. However, agendas overlapped and the structures and remits of the committees were not clear. Commendably, new staff were well supported by mentors. Independent advisers assessed the practice of individual teachers every second year. These reviews were well focused, identifying strengths and areas for development. However, there was no system in place to monitor appropriately the level of progress from initial recommendations. The school maintained partnerships with the local community and businesses but did not always use them effectively to support learning.

There were significant weaknesses in approaches to planning for improvement through self-evaluation. The school had produced a standards and quality report which outlined progress made over the last year. No significant progress had been made for some priorities that had been identified. For other areas of work, the evidence to support the conclusions drawn was sparse and progress had generally been slow. In particular, self-evaluation had achieved little impact on improving learning, teaching and pupil achievements. The current improvement planning process did not make it clear who was responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress and for reporting to the College of Teachers. The school had not yet developed rigorous classroom observation procedures whereby staff were able to share good practice across the school. The school required to continue to develop its approaches to planning for improvement and its management structures to increase its capacity to improve.

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Main points for action

The school and the Board of Trustees should take action to improve the monitoring and leadership of the work of the school. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- broaden the curriculum to provide more opportunities for ICT in the upper school and PE;
- strengthen the involvement of pupils in the learning process;
- address the aspects of health and safety detailed in the report;
- build leadership capacity within the Steiner philosophy of collegiate leadership; and
- implement a system of rigorous self-evaluation.

At the last Care Commission singleton inspection of the kindergarten, there were six requirements and eight recommendations. Five requirements and six recommendations had been met. One requirement and one recommendation concerning safe recruitment procedures for staff were still to be addressed. The remaining recommendation regarding staff's access to child protection training was on-going.

What happens next?

The school and the Board of Trustees have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the Board of Trustees in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in a report to parents, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

David Gregory
Managing Inspector (Upper School)

Belinda Sheehan
Managing Inspector (Lower School)

20 May 2008

Appendix 1 - Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How well does the school raise achievement for all?	
The curriculum	Good
Teaching for effective learning	Good
Learners' experiences	Good
Meeting learning needs	Good
Improvement in performance in English language in the lower school	Good
Improvement in performance in mathematics in the lower school	Good
Improvement in performance S1/S2	Good
Improvement in performance S3/S4	Very good
Improvement in performance S5/S6	Very good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	Very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	Adequate
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	Very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	Very good
Equality and fairness	Very good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	Very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	Adequate
Leadership of improvement and change (<i>across the school</i>)	Weak
Improvement through self-evaluation	Weak

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just out weigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 - Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<p>Overall, parents were very positive about the school. For example, almost all thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their child enjoyed being at school; • staff were very welcoming; • there was mutual respect between staff and pupils; and • the school encouraged children and pupils to work hard. 	<p>A few parents thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school could be more prompt in dealing with issues they had raised.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<p>Almost all pupils thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers explained things clearly; • they were expected to work to the best of their ability; and • homework was checked regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around a half of pupils thought they had a say in deciding how to improve the school. • A significant minority of pupils in the upper school thought the school could do more to help them keep safe and healthy.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<p>Staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. For example, they thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they had good opportunities to be involved in decision-making; • pupils were enthusiastic about learning; • they liked working in the school; and • senior managers operated effectively as a team. 	<p>A small number of staff thought:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication between senior managers and staff could be better; • time for continuous professional development was not always used effectively; • indiscipline was not dealt with effectively; and • standards set for pupils' behaviour were not consistently upheld.

Appendix 3 - Good practice

In the course of the inspection, the following aspects of innovative and effective practice were evaluated as being worthy of wider dissemination.

Developing citizenship

The school wanted to develop the celebration of both Christian and multicultural festivals, as whole school community events. It decided to develop a range of citizenship skills alongside promoting an understanding of celebrations and festivals. One such example was the Michaelmas festival. Three classes in the lower school prepared a play together which was performed to the whole school. Subsequently, the lower and upper school had a meal together. The food for this meal was prepared by classes, with each class taking on a particular dish. For example, some classes made soup, others baked bread and biscuits, some made fresh apple juice and prepared fruit, and others laid the tables or did the dishes afterwards. Ingredients used were almost exclusively organic. During the meal, classes were mixed, so there were one or two children from each class at each table. The benefits were that learners perceived themselves as part of the school community in the capacity of positive, effective contributors to the whole, which promoted responsible citizenship. They were encouraged to feel confident and comfortable outside the safety of their peer group. Older pupils were encouraged to help younger ones. Citizenship was further developed by learning new skills such as baking and cooking, and by practising good table manners and other social skills.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the head and school staff, the Board of Trustees, and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA or by telephoning 01506 600 389. Copies are also available on our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also email HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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