

**Bruntsfield Primary School  
The City of Edinburgh Council  
14 October 2008**

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## 1. Background

Bruntsfield Primary School was inspected in June 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves the Bruntsfield area of Edinburgh. At the time of the inspection the roll was 413. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Pupils' achievements in citizenship and aspects of enterprise in education.
- Broad opportunities for pupils' wider achievements through clubs, educational excursions and sporting activities.
- The commitment and hard work of the headteacher, promoted staff, teachers and ancillary staff, ensuring pupils' wellbeing and the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- The school's strong programme for health education and promotion, including its very successful health week.

## 3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents expressed largely positive views about the school and its work. They valued the school's ethos, which they believed had many positive features. Most felt that leadership was good and communication with parents was mainly effective. Almost all believed that office and support staff, senior managers and teachers made them feel welcome and

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

respected their views. Almost all pupils enjoyed being at school. They felt safe and well looked after. They believed that teachers were good at encouraging them and helping them with their learning, and they liked the wide range of clubs and activities which the school provided. Some were disappointed that not all activities were open to all pupils. Teachers liked working in the school and expressed positive views about many aspects of its work. All believed that staff were caring and sensitive to pupils' needs. They thought that there was mutual respect between pupils and teachers. The majority felt that the school was well led but some thought that teamwork among senior staff, and communication between them and the rest of the staff, needed to be improved. Support staff expressed largely positive views about much of the school's work but were less positive about aspects of communication, teamwork, leadership and their involvement in decision making.

#### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

##### **Learners' experiences**

The curriculum provided a good range of suitable experiences for pupils. Staff had reviewed it in light of the design principles of the national *Curriculum for Excellence* programme. The school had taken effective steps to ensure children's smooth transition from nursery into P1. Some important developments such as the promotion of active learning had still to achieve an impact on learning and teaching beyond the early stages. Staff had improved some aspects of English language and mathematics, but more remained to be done to bring these programmes into line with best practice. The programme in personal and social development included particularly effective coverage of health education and promotion. All pupils received good quality physical education (PE) each week, in line with national recommendations. Teaching was inconsistent in its quality, ranging from excellent to weak. Staff had begun to consider national advice on the roles of assessment in learning but many were still at an early stage of implementing best practice. Teachers gave clear instructions and explanations and mainly used teaching approaches which met pupils' needs. Some were very skilled at using questioning to challenge and check pupils' learning, building well on their responses. Staff used homework well to support and extend classroom learning, helpfully involving parents, but tasks often lacked variety and were not of consistently high quality.

The quality of learners' experiences was good. Most pupils were well motivated and the majority clearly enjoyed much of their learning. They cooperated well in group work, and showed good independence when given the opportunity to organise aspects of their own learning. They discussed the next steps in their learning with teachers but sometimes needed clearer advice on how to improve their work. Most pupils confidently presented their views and ideas to others in class and at assemblies. They had commendable opportunities to raise their awareness in, and develop skills relating to, citizenship, sustainable development and enterprise. Pupils learned good skills through the programme in information and communications technology (ICT) but did not have enough opportunities to apply these important skills across different areas of the curriculum.

## **Improvements in performance**

The school had maintained positive standards in recent years. Overall, pupils' attainment was good and the school continued to promote their wider achievements. Staff had introduced improvements to programmes, learning and teaching. Overall, the school demonstrated good improvements in its performance.

Pupils had attained good standards in English language over a number of years. There had been a slight dip in pupils' attainment in reading in 2006, but their performance in writing had improved steadily over the last four years. Most pupils from P3 to P7 were attaining appropriate national levels and, at all stages, many pupils exceeded these levels. Pupils with additional support needs who were working towards personal learning targets were progressing well. At all stages, higher attaining pupils needed more challenging tasks. Pupils listened carefully to teachers' instructions and explanations, and to classmates' contributions to class and group discussions. They were articulate and confident in posing questions. Pupils were skilful at reading for information and most showed interest in reading for pleasure. They read fluently and with expression, and showed a sound understanding of writers' different styles and skills. By P7, pupils could read unseen texts confidently and express opinions about books and authors they liked. Pupils responded well to the wide range of opportunities to write, including poetry, letters and the P7 yearbook. When given the opportunity, they wrote pieces of good length, for example related to their current environmental studies topic. Some lost interest in their writing when asked to redraft it too often, and there was clear scope for greater use of ICT. Overall, pupils did not consistently present their work to a high enough standard.

Pupils' attained good overall standards in mathematics. The school had maintained consistently good levels of attainment, apart from a dip in 2006 which staff had taken steps to address. Most pupils from P2 to P7 were attaining or exceeding appropriate national levels. A few pupils at all stages were capable of achieving more and needed to experience greater pace and challenge. Pupils who required additional help with their learning were making good progress. At all stages, pupils could create and interpret an appropriate range of graphs. They were able to organise information gathered from practical surveys in different ways. Overall, pupils were developing useful skills in written calculation. At some stages, they were less skilled in mental calculation. Pupils in P7 had a good understanding of the relationship between fractions and decimals. Overall, pupils showed good skills in number, money and measurement. Pupils had too few opportunities to practice skills of numeracy in different contexts and curriculum areas. They could identify two- and three-dimensional shapes and discuss their properties. At all stages, pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems and discussing strategies were under developed.

Pupils showed some developing skills in music, for example demonstrating a good sense of rhythm when playing a game of "musical dominoes". Many were skilful at sports and games, showing good balance, coordination and stamina in the PE programme and in activities offered as part of the annual health week. Pupils were knowledgeable about factors influencing healthy lifestyles and could discuss key nutrition messages. Most showed good recall of aspects of social studies, from topics which they had studied. By P7, pupils had good knowledge of important aspects of science, developed in part through a project involving associated primary schools and staff from Boroughmuir High School.

Staff were committed and successful in promoting pupils' wider achievements. Most pupils took part in the very wide range of after-school clubs, developing new skills, extending their self-confidence and social skills and encouraging a positive attitude to facing new experiences and learning new skills. Pupils showed many of the characteristics of successful learners such as enjoyment in their learning and good progress across a range of learning activities. They demonstrated confidence in social situations and showed suitable self-assurance in making presentations. Pupils from the school were currently Edinburgh City champions in badminton, touch rugby and basketball. These enhancing activities gave pupils important additional opportunities to perform and demonstrate specific abilities outwith formal classwork. The school's P1 to P7 programme for citizenship had several strong features. The pupil council considered important issues including how best to encourage children to choose healthy snacks, and met with Edinburgh Council staff to discuss safe cycling routes to school. With parents, staff and the wider community, pupils were active in social enterprises such as fundraising for important residential facilities for a South African township school. Staff and pupils had worked well together to achieve the bronze Eco-Schools Scotland award, building pupils' awareness of issues of sustainable development. Pupils demonstrated their enterprise skills at an annual enterprise assembly. They demonstrated enterprising learning at showcase afternoons throughout the year, through topics such as Mary Queen of Scots and the John Muir Award.

Staff had made steady progress with priorities in the school improvement plan. The headteacher had provided strong leadership in developing a good organisational framework for planning and implementing improvements. The school demonstrated a clear commitment to continuing improvement, and had the leadership and teaching capacity to achieve that improvement.

## **5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?**

Teachers took appropriate account of the needs of pupils when planning learning experiences. They grouped pupils of similar levels of attainment together for some learning activities. Class tasks sometimes offered too little challenge for higher attaining pupils. Learning assistants worked effectively with class teachers to support identified pupils. Arrangements for communication and coordination of their contributions were not consistently effective. The support for learning teacher provided a range of valued services. She gave very skilful tutorial support for groups and individual pupils. Working well with support agencies and parents, she accurately identified pupils' learning needs and prepared suitable individualised educational programmes (IEPs). She contributed well to initiatives designed to meet some of the needs of higher attaining pupils, including a programme of enhanced activities in mathematics and the philosophers' club. She needed greater opportunity to influence the school's strategy and broader capacity to support pupils, through a stronger emphasis on staff development and consultancy for teachers. The school worked well with agencies to provide important support for pupils' learning. However, its efforts to implement coordinated support planning arrangements were being held back by delays in processing planning documents centrally within the education authority.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>Arrangements for pupils' care and welfare were very strong. Staff made effective use of relevant education authority policies and guidelines to provide a good framework to safeguard pupils. Pupils' social and emotional needs, including those of vulnerable children, were well known, sensitively shared and acted upon. All staff were trained regularly in child protection and the school had shown a conscientious, caring approach when pursuing concerns about pupils. Effective guidelines protected pupils from unsuitable access to the Internet. Staff were diligent in monitoring pupils' attendance and took appropriate action if pupils were absent. Training was required to update staff on issues associated with some pupils' special dietary requirements. The school worked well with a wide range of pre-school centres to support the transfer of children into P1. Transition of pupils from P7 to Boroughmuir High School was well designed to meet their pastoral and learning support needs, and there had been some effective curricular links, including an innovative programme for science.</p>
Management and use of resources and space for learning	<p>The school's resources and space were very well managed. The accommodation provided a safe and attractive environment, largely achieved through the commitment of staff to make the most of the old building. Access for disabled users was very difficult. Pupils' movement was carefully managed, although the time taken for them to move to class and to start work sometimes impacted heavily on teaching time. Display was used very effectively to provide a sense of welcome to pupils, parents and visitors, act as a stimulus for learning and celebrate pupils' achievement. Despite its age, the building was well maintained and kept very clean. The school library, two gymnasias, small swimming pool, dining hall and ICT room provided good teaching spaces. Although the playground was small, it provided an attractive area due to the creativity and imagination of staff and parents.</p>

Aspect	Comment
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>Pupils, parents and staff were proud of the school. Senior managers, teachers and support staff related well within their separate teams but needed to work more effectively as one unified team. They all shared a common commitment to pupils' progress but did not consistently respect the contribution of others. Pupils and staff related well together. Staff shared high expectations of pupils' attendance, behaviour and achievement but there remained scope for more consistently high expectations of pupils' attainment. Overall, teachers used praise well to reward and promote achievement. Pupils were very well behaved, polite and hard working. Each class identified a pupil of the week, recognising achievements in one of the aspects of <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i>. The school provided very effective opportunities for pupils to consider issues of equality, often making sensitive and effective use of the wide variety of cultures represented among the pupils' families. Pupils had won national competitions to challenge racism and bullying. A book of pupils' "stories of migration from a school community" had been published with funding from the Scottish Arts Council. It had been displayed in an art gallery and broadcast on national radio. Pupils enjoyed assemblies, such as the special event marking the beginning of the annual health week. Assemblies, which were often led by pupils, also provided valuable opportunities for religious observance and recognising pupils' achievements.</p>

Aspect	Comment
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school had developed very successful, productive relationships with parents carers and families over many years. The headteacher recognised the need to maintain these relationships carefully, and to take steps to monitor parents' collective views. Parents valued opportunities to keep in touch with the work of the school through parents' evenings, workshops, reports on pupils' achievements and newsletters. Many were involved in supporting classes on educational excursions, in after-school clubs and in classwork. They were encouraged and supported to work with their children on homework. Senior staff balanced carefully the need to keep access to the school secure for pupils, whilst making parents feel welcome and their views valued. Parents were appropriately consulted, for example on sensitive health issues and when pupils had additional support needs. The Parent Council took a closely supportive and businesslike interest in the school's work. It had worked well with the headteacher to improve communication with parents, establish a valuable website and seek parents' views on key areas of interest. The school worked closely with other schools in its cluster, for example developing a common policy for higher attaining pupils.

## 7. Leading and improving the school

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

Bruntsfield Primary School provided a good and improving quality of education. Staff shared a common interest in pupils' welfare and worked hard to meet pupils' needs. Pupils experienced a good curriculum, with some very strong features including a range of opportunities for wider achievement. The school performed well in many respects. However, staff needed to improve aspects of teamwork and focus more effectively on improving learning and teaching to raise pupils' attainments further.

The headteacher had a clear vision for the school, which she had made some progress in sharing with staff and parents. In her short time in post, she had developed a sound basis for improving the school's performance. She was very hard working and highly committed to the pupils. She demonstrated strong organisational skills and was appropriately committed to developing her leadership and management skills. The remits of the two depute headteachers provided them with opportunities to play significant roles in the school. Both made important contributions to leading key aspects of the curriculum, in ICT and modern languages. Both needed to give a clearer emphasis to leading and managing the school as members of the senior management team, whilst maintaining some appropriate teaching duties. The principal teacher provided a very strong role model as an exemplary classroom practitioner and through her chairmanship of working groups. The business manager made a strong contribution

to ensuring the smooth running of the school, and provided the headteacher with valued financial management information. The school's approaches to judging the quality of its work had some positive features. Senior managers monitored staff forward plans and surveyed samples of pupils' work on a regular basis. They visited classrooms informally, and on a planned basis, to gather information about the quality of pupils' learning. These were valuable approaches but feedback to staff was too general and did not consistently lead to improvements. Senior managers and teachers reviewed attainment data but lacked some skills in interpreting the data and making decisions about pupils' progress. Their approaches to setting targets were too broad. The school relied too heavily on informal sources of stakeholder views, such as comments from parents' evenings, and needed to establish more effective approaches. The school had clear potential for continuous improvement and had begun to realise that potential more fully.

### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority, in liaison with HM Inspectors, should take action to ensure improvement in:

- the effectiveness of self-evaluation in supporting further enhancements to the quality of pupils' learning and their overall attainment, in the context of the school's development of *Curriculum for Excellence*;
- the use of information and communications technology across the curriculum;
- meeting pupils' learning needs, through more strategic use of staff expertise and more effective liaison; and
- staff teamwork, building on mutual respect for the commitment of all members of the school team.

### **What happens next?**

The school and the education authority 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. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Bill Geddes  
HM Inspector

14 October 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.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
The curriculum	good
Teaching for effective learning	good
Learners' experiences	good
Improvements in performance	good

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting learning needs	good

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

<b>Leading and improving the school</b>	
Developing people and partnerships	satisfactory
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	good
Leadership of improvement and change (across the school)	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

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
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh 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.

<b>What parents thought the school did well</b>	<b>What parents think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all thought that the school had a very strong reputation in the community.</li> <li>• Staff made them feel welcome in the school and kept them well informed about pupils' progress and the school's work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents thought that aspects of leadership across the school could be improved.</li> </ul>
<b>What pupils thought the school did well</b>	<b>What pupils think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers encouraged them and praised them when they did something well.</li> <li>• Teachers explained things clearly and helped them when they found tasks difficult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around a quarter thought that activities were not always open to all pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>What staff thought the school did well</b>	<b>What staff think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers liked working in the school and found pupils to be enthusiastic learners.</li> <li>• The school related well with parents and the local community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff thought that the school would benefit from better teamwork.</li> <li>• Some teachers and support staff believed that aspects of leadership and communication could be improved at all levels.</li> </ul>

### **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.

#### **Citizenship**

Staff identified a need to develop citizenship within the school, following the experience of a teacher exchange programme to America. A group of teachers worked together to produce a programme of learning to develop citizenship from P1 to P7. This was shared with staff and resources produced to support the learning outcomes. Character trait posters were designed and displayed to raise awareness around the school.

Classes work through a programme designed to develop character traits, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness and caring. Pupils work towards earning badges when they display the skills around the school. Achievements are celebrated during weekly assemblies with Curriculum for Excellence Certificates.

Children hold leadership responsibilities in school such as Pupil Council, eco group and Peer Mediators and work with each other and staff to lead citizenship in school and promote good citizenship in the playground and the community.

This has resulted in the pupils having a valued voice within the school and increased sense of responsibility for the work they do. Staff have found the Citizenship programme promotes positive behaviour and equality within the school and helped develop a very strong school ethos. Staff welcome and value children, families and staff from all nationalities and this adds richness to the culture of the school.

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Children and Families, 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, T1 Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD or by telephoning 0131 244 8371. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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 e-mail [HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk).

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**Craiglockhart Primary  
School and Nursery Class  
The City of Edinburgh  
Council  
1 March 2011**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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### **1. The school**

Craiglockhart Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Craiglockhart and Shandon area of west Edinburgh. The roll was 359, including 40 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in January 2011. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

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

- Well-behaved, confident and friendly children who are keen to learn.
- Children developing confidence and personal skills through a wide range of school clubs and sporting and cultural activities.
- The school's partnership with parents and with a range of agencies.
- Staff willingness to adopt new approaches to learning and teaching.
- The leadership of the headteacher in promoting school improvement.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Almost all children in the nursery class are confident and enthusiastic in their play. They make appropriate choices but would benefit from a greater range of problem solving and investigative learning experiences both in the playroom and outdoors. At the primary stages, children are well motivated and show interest in their work. They experience a good range of learning activities including the use of computers and other information and communications technology (ICT). They work together well in pairs and groups on specific tasks and are increasingly involved in evaluating their own performance and giving each other feedback. In a minority of classes, they need to experience greater challenge in their learning through being more actively engaged in solving problems that make them think for themselves.

In the nursery class, most children are confident in their physical play and are developing an understanding of the need to care for living things, for example feeding the birds in the nursery garden. At the primary stages, almost all children extend the range of their achievements through participating in a wide range of planned school activities. Commendably, the school has undertaken an audit of children's involvement in activities within or outwith the school. Staff have used this to identify a few children who require to be encouraged and supported to become more involved. Many participate in school committees or take on responsibilities, for example by acting as monitors, house captains, buddies for younger children and road safety officers. Children develop skills for life through regular class educational visits and by fundraising for charity. Participation in the many school clubs and frequent cultural and sporting school events, gives children very good opportunities to develop a wide range of personal and social skills. They also develop confidence through succeeding in events, such as an inter-school technology competition or performing in public in a school choir.

Children in the nursery class talk confidently and enjoy engaging in conversation with each other and adults. Most are learning to count and are able to sort and match objects by shape and size. Their skills in early writing require further development and they need more experience of applying their numeracy skills and using measuring equipment. At the primary stages, over recent years, standards of attainment in English and mathematics have been high. There has been a steady improvement in overall levels of attainment with a significant proportion of children making very good progress. Children are confident in group discussion and in giving presentations in class and to wider audiences. At times, class topics let them use their writing skills in a meaningful context but children should have better planned opportunities to develop their literacy skills across all curricular areas. In mathematics, children are confident in mental and written calculation with most of those at P6 and P7 having a secure understanding of the relation between decimals, percentages and fractions. They are able to solve problems but they need more

experience of applying their numeracy skills, for example in measurement, across the curriculum.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff have made a good start to developing the curriculum based on *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the nursery class, learning experiences are firmly based on play and promote enjoyment and choice. The use of the outdoor area and the local environment should be further developed to improve learning opportunities across all areas of the curriculum. At the primary stages, teachers are increasingly taking account of children's interests and experiences in planning class topics. They are beginning to use these more systematically for developing skills in literacy and numeracy. The school now needs to develop the curriculum further in order to ensure effective delivery of the outcomes and experiences for health and wellbeing. All children benefit from two hours of good-quality physical education each week. Children benefit from the contributions of visiting teachers of art and design, French, music and physical education.

In the nursery class, staff know children well and are sensitive to their emotional needs and individual family circumstances. They keep "My Special Books" for each child to record progress but now need to use their observations more effectively to plan what individual children will learn next. At the primary stages, children's learning needs are well met overall. Staff share the purpose of lessons with children and use questioning well to monitor their understanding. To ensure that children continue to make progress through suitably challenging learning experiences, staff should track their progress within the experiences and outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence*. This is particularly important at the early stages to build effectively on children's nursery experience and increase the pace of learning. The learning support teacher works well with an effective team of learning assistants and a range of council specialist staff, to provide children with additional learning needs with increasingly effective support.

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

Parents have a high degree of confidence in the nursery class and the school. Regular newsletters, the school website and leaflets from the Parent Council keep them well informed. They receive detailed evaluative reports on their children's progress. A programme of parents' evenings provides opportunities for parents to learn about current developments, such as the school's approach to *Curriculum for Excellence*. Children benefit from the school's working closely with parents. The Parent Council has led several consultations, including one about what parents feel makes a good school, which helped inform the school improvement plan. Fundraising by the Parents' Association has been important in enhancing the school's ICT resources. A range of council support services, such as the Active Schools coordinator, give the school valuable support. The school collaborates well with other local schools in joint work to improve their educational provision and to extend opportunities for achievement, for example in choral singing. The school has effective arrangements to ensure the smooth transition of children from nursery to P1 and from P7 to a range of local secondary schools.

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

Children are collaborating well in improving the school community. The work of a range of school committees and the pupil council makes a positive contribution. For example, the health committee helped plan the school's health week and the road safety committee has given advice to encourage safe travel to school. The eco committee is now actively working towards achieving an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag. Children have contributed to continuous improvement by participating in pupil focus groups, for example to agree the characteristics of a good mathematics lesson. The headteacher places high priority on improving school self-evaluation and involving

staff in school improvement. Members of staff have cooperated well in developing a comprehensive range of procedures to monitor the work of the school. As a result, promoted staff now have a very good knowledge of staff strengths and development needs and give them supportive advice on enriching children's learning. Teachers are responding very well by extending the range of their teaching approaches and are working well together to take forward the school's approach to *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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

The school has a calm and friendly atmosphere. Staff have established very positive relationships with children and have high expectations of their behaviour and attitude towards learning. Children cooperate very well with each other and with staff. Staff are aware of their responsibilities for child protection and have procedures in place to follow-up promptly any unexplained absence. Children are encouraged to make healthy life choices. In collaboration with children, staff have developed a clear anti-bullying policy and children feel safe and secure in the school. Staff treat children fairly and include discussion of equality issues in lessons. There is scope to develop children's understanding of diversity issues, including race equality, more systematically across the school. Staff place high priority on encouraging effort through recognising success. They frequently celebrate achievement at school assemblies. These, along with end-of-term services at a local church, provide opportunities for religious observance and reflection on the shared values of the school community.

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

The headteacher provides the staff with very supportive leadership. Together with the acting depute headteacher, he is succeeding in getting the staff to work well together as a team to take forward a well judged improvement agenda. He has also strengthened partnership

working with parents. Staff are responding well to the headteacher's lead and are beginning to share developing good practice in active learning approaches with each other. Individual members of staff are now ready to lead particular aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*, and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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

As a result of the good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to develop the curriculum using *Curriculum for Excellence* and ensure learning activities enable all children to experience a suitable level of challenge.
- Build further on staff involvement in school self-evaluation and extend individuals' responsibility for leading aspects of school improvement.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Craiglockhart Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:** Grant Mathison  
1 March 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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You can find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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**Dean Park Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Balerno  
City of Edinburgh Council  
9 October 2007**

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## 1. Background

Dean Park Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in May 2007 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated nursery children's learning experiences and pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined the quality of the children's experience in the nursery, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves the village of Balerno and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 581, including 105 children in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Attainment in English language.
- Promotion and celebration of pupils' achievements and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.
- Arrangements for the pastoral care of pupils.
- Use of outdoor spaces to provide stimulating learning environments.
- Effectiveness of shared leadership and the commitment of staff to ensuring continuous improvement.

## 3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

Almost all parents were very positive about the school. They reported that the school had a good reputation in the local community. They thought that their children were well looked after and enjoyed being in school. A third of parents believed that the school did not give them enough information about their children's learning or inform them effectively about improvements. Pupils were very proud of achieving the Eco School (Scotland) Green Flag award. They said that teachers expected them to work hard and looked after them well. They also appreciated being able to influence and change aspects of school life. Staff enjoyed working in the school and drew great satisfaction from their strong teamwork. They praised pupils' enthusiasm for learning and high standards of behaviour. A few support staff, particularly in the nursery, would like to be more involved in communication and decision making.

#### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

##### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

The school provided pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which included well-developed experiences in enterprise education and citizenship. Teachers developed pupils' skills in reading, writing and information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Whole school aspects such as Eco School (Scotland) developments provided very good contexts for learning. The quality of the curriculum was strengthened by the support of skilled specialist teachers in art and design, music and physical education. The nursery provided children with a good curriculum. Staff followed children's interests but they did not yet fully involve them in planning activities. The quality of teaching was good overall. Staff in the nursery provided stimulating learning experiences for most children. However, there were a few children in the nursery who required more challenge in their learning. There were examples of very effective teaching across the school, when teachers used pupils' responses to questioning skilfully to extend their learning. Most teachers gave clear explanations and shared the aims of lessons with pupils. They frequently helped pupils to reflect on what they had learned. In English language lessons teachers very effectively linked curriculum areas to provide interesting opportunities for pupils to read and write. Teachers needed to provide more practical activities in mathematics. They supported pupils' learning well with regular homework activities.

The quality of pupils' learning was very good. Children in nursery and pupils at the early stages had good opportunities to be active in their learning through play. Most children in the nursery played well alone and with others, confidently making decisions and choices in their learning. Their knowledge and understanding of the world was developing well. They enjoyed learning about floating and sinking at the water tray and about changes in materials through baking cakes. Many were engrossed in imaginative activities. They were developing their skills and confidence well through energetic physical play. At all stages, pupils' learning was strengthened through joint work on tasks. Pupils had regular opportunities to take responsibility for their learning, for example in undertaking independent research at P6 and P7. At all stages, pupils used ICT very well to support and extend their learning. Overall, the pace of learning was brisk and pupils made very good progress in their coursework. Most pupils were clear about what they needed to do to improve their work.

The school took very good steps to develop pupils' wider achievements. All pupils participated in democratic processes organised by the pupil council. The pupil-led celebrating success committee arranged for the achievements of their peers to be recorded, celebrated and publicised. Other pupils at all stages had regular opportunities to take responsibility on committees and as prefects and helpers. Pupils' involvement in environmental developments had recently been rewarded with the school achieving Eco School (Scotland) Green Flag status. The innovative 'windows on the world' project effectively developed pupils' understanding of the lives and values of children in Boston, Kuwait, Sweden and Malawi. The school had won a number of high profile national awards. Pupils were regularly successful in local and national competitions in a range of sports. The wind band, rock band and choir performed confidently at regular public events. The advanced studies group displayed maturity and initiative when organising the rock band's CD and tour. Commendably, staff had begun to record pupils' skills and wider achievements and planned to involve pupils in this process.

### **English language**

Overall, nursery children were making good progress in communication and language. In the nursery class, children spoke confidently when sharing their news and most listened well to stories. The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was very good. Attainment in reading was excellent. The school had been successful in maintaining very high standards. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing, and a majority were exceeding these levels. Across the school, pupils listened and responded well to one another's ideas in group work. At P2, pupils confidently presented personal talks and answered classmates' questions. At all stages, pupils were making very strong progress in developing their reading skills. Pupils in all classes read extensively and confidently for pleasure. They discussed what they had read enthusiastically. Most nursery children could recognise their name in print and were encouraged to recognise letters in their play. Pupils at P6 demonstrated exceptional understanding of how language is used in the media. By P7, pupils were skilled in using techniques to gather information quickly from a range of library and online sources. At all stages, pupils wrote regularly for a range of purposes. They understood how writers used language to achieve their effects and applied these skills in their own writing. Pupils at P1 demonstrated significant progress in writing through producing detailed and ambitious descriptions of the Gala Queen.

### **Mathematics**

Children in the nursery class were making very good progress in their understanding of early numeracy. They investigated weight, recognised basic shapes and counted confidently. The quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was very good overall. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels and a significant number were achieving these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Across the stages, several pupils were capable of achieving higher standards. At P6 and P7, pupils could interpret graphs accurately. In a few classes, pupils developed their mathematical skills in real contexts. For example, pupils at P4 had used ICT effectively to create recycling pie charts. Pupils at P7 had analysed the outcomes in the recent Scottish elections. They had used spreadsheets and produced charts to present the information very effectively. At all stages, pupils carried out mental and written calculations quickly and measured accurately. By P6 and P7, pupils had a good understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional

shapes. Pupils at all stages could apply a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems.

### 5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Nursery staff identified children's learning needs well. Across the school, teachers chose resources and planned activities carefully to match pupils' needs and interests. In some curriculum areas teachers were helping pupils to understand their next steps in learning. There was scope to develop these approaches to further enhance a few pupils' progress in the nursery class and in mathematics across the school. There were very effective arrangements for identifying pupils experiencing difficulties in their learning. The learning support teachers and learning assistants worked very effectively together to provide well-judged support for pupils. They collaborated effectively with parents and with a range of relevant support agencies to identify and meet pupils' learning needs. Pupils with additional support plans and individualised educational programmes were making very good progress towards achieving their learning targets. High attaining pupils participated in an advanced study group which enabled them to apply a wide range of skills in real life contexts.

### 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>The work of the school's pastoral care team was excellent. Chaired by the depute headteacher, this group met weekly to discuss pupils' individual needs. They worked very effectively with families, external agencies and health care staff to ensure that concerns were promptly and sensitively addressed. Arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils were very effective. Staff skilfully implemented the positive behaviour policy and dealt very effectively with incidents of bullying. Appropriate arrangements were in place for child protection and were clearly understood by all staff. Pupils had a very good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. The school provided healthy snacks in the nursery. At all stages, pupils learned about personal relationships and aspects of personal safety. Staff had developed very good arrangements to support nursery children as they moved to P1 and pupils transferring from P7 to Balerno High School.</p>

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of the accommodation and facilities was good. Positive features such as the library, the science laboratory, the ICT suite and electronic whiteboards were used well for the benefit of pupils. Staff, parents and pupils had developed the school's grounds to provide an exceptional environment for physical and imaginative play. Projects underway in the school's garden linked well to various curriculum areas. The school had appropriate security arrangements and access for people with restricted mobility. Classes at P3 and P4 were accommodated in an annexe approximately half a mile from the main school building. Some classrooms in the annexe were cramped for current class sizes. Staff had organised the timetable so that the loss of learning time when travelling between buildings was minimised.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>Pupils were friendly, polite and very well behaved. Senior pupils acted responsibly by looking after younger children and ensuring that everyone was included at play time. Staff supported one another well to improve their work. Systems for communication and consultation did not always involve support and nursery staff effectively enough. Staff used praise and feedback effectively and almost all had very high expectations of pupils' work and progress. Pupils had appropriate opportunities for religious observance. There was a strong sense of equality and fairness and all pupils were respected and valued. There were very sound approaches to promoting pupils' understanding of issues of equality in society, including racial equality. Pupils at all stages had contributed to an exhibition on the rights of the child. The pupil council had recently discussed their perspectives on war with pupils in the United States in a videoconference.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	The school had good links with parents and the community. The School Board, the PTA and the covenant committee which administered significant funds gifted by parents, provided strong and active support. Nursery staff had built up very positive relationships with parents. Parents supported pupils in school and ran numerous clubs. They were well informed about events in newsletters, open evenings and through an attractive yearbook. Staff consulted parents appropriately about sensitive aspects of health education. Staff provided parents with informative reports on their children's progress twice each year and met with them annually. However, they did not yet involve parents of pupils and nursery children enough in supporting their children's learning. Strong links had been established with several local businesses to support learning. Staff used a wide range of global partnerships very effectively to promote pupils' learning. Pupils served the community by, for example, entertaining elderly residents. The school worked effectively with other local schools to produce shared learning resources.

## 7. Leading and improving the school

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

Pupils at Dean Park Primary School achieved very well in a positive, supportive environment. Pupils experienced a broad curriculum enriched by opportunities to develop skills of enterprise and citizenship. There were significant strengths in pupils' attainment in English language. The caring staff were sensitive and responsive to pupils' needs. They worked together very well as a team and were highly committed to improving the standard of education in the school. They had taken promising steps to improve the use of assessment to plan pupils' learning.

The experienced headteacher provided very good leadership. He had earned the respect and confidence of staff, pupils, parents and the community. He had applied his clear vision and extensive professional knowledge to managing change effectively. He had shared leadership across the school, encouraging staff to lead curriculum developments and promote pupils' wider achievements. The two depute headteachers and principal teacher provided a very good level of support to the headteacher and made an effective contribution to the work of the school. The school's arrangements for self-evaluation were very good. Staff regularly reviewed the work of the school and monthly reports helped to identify strengths and areas for development. Senior managers had introduced effective arrangements to track pupils' attainment and met regularly with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. They sampled classroom practice, and monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work. The headteacher was developing plans to further extend consultation with parents. The school was in a strong position to further improve consistency in teaching.

Management and nursery staff were familiar with the Scottish Social Services Codes of Practice and their implications. At the last Care Commission inspection there were three requirements and two recommendations. The nursery has still to address the requirements and the recommendations were partly addressed.

#### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- ensure that high quality teaching is consistent across the school; and
- continue developments to involve parents more effectively in their children's learning.

#### **Recommendations for improvement in the nursery class**

- Increase children's involvement in planning activities and use assessment information more effectively to plan children's next steps in learning.

#### **What happens next?**

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority 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. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Jacqueline Sinclair  
HM Inspector

9 October 2007

## 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.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
Structure of the curriculum	very good
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	very good

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting pupils' needs	very good

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Pastoral care	excellent
Accommodation and facilities	good
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	excellent
Equality and fairness	excellent
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	good

<b>Leading and improving the school</b>	
Leadership of the headteacher	very good
Leadership across the school	very good
Self-evaluation	very good

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 outweigh 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.

<b>What parents thought the school did well</b>	<b>What parents think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoyed school and found the work stimulating.</li> <li>• Their children were treated fairly in school and staff showed concern for their care and welfare.</li> <li>• The school was well led and had a good reputation in the local community.</li> <li>• Staff made them feel welcome in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide them with more information about their children's strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Explain how they can support their children with homework.</li> <li>• Provide them with more information about the school's priorities for improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>What pupils thought the school did well</b>	<b>What pupils think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers told them when they had done well and helped them when they had difficulties.</li> <li>• At least one teacher knew them well, and they got on well with other pupils.</li> <li>• Teachers checked their homework and expected them to work hard.</li> <li>• The school helped them to keep safe and healthy and gave them a say in how to make the school better.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve approaches to promote anti-bullying.</li> </ul>
<b>What staff thought the school did well</b>	<b>What staff think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff recorded a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few support staff would like improved communication and more involvement in decision making.</li> </ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Children and Families, 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, T1 Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD or by telephoning 0131 244 8371. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://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 Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail [HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk).

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Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school?*<sup>1</sup>. Quality indicators for the nursery class can be found in the publication *Child at the Centre*<sup>2</sup>. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

The Care Inspectorate publishes quality grades to inform people and the Scottish Government about the quality of care services. Awarding grades at inspections is aimed at encouraging providers to identify and address areas for improvement. The Care Inspectorate also uses the grades to ensure its inspection activity is targeted and proportionate. The grades at inspection are awarded against four quality themes, details of which can be found on the Care Inspectorate website.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for James Gillespie's Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings.

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>Quality of environment</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	<b>adequate</b>
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	<b>adequate</b>

<sup>1</sup> *How good is our school? The Journey to Excellence: part 3*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3\\_tcm4-684258.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HowgoodisourschoolJtEpart3_tcm4-684258.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *The Child at the Centre (2), Self-Evaluation in the early years*, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007, [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/Images/catcseey\\_tcm4-712692.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/Images/catcseey_tcm4-712692.pdf).

Please note that the term "adequate" in these documents has been replaced with "satisfactory".

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the nursery had five requirements and ten recommendations. From these, two requirements and five recommendations have been met.

The outstanding issues relating to care and support, staffing and management and leadership are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are two requirements and four recommendations.

## **Requirements**

1 The provider must evidence that:

- Staff have received guidance and are clear about the purpose of learning stories.
- Learning outcomes are identified for each child.
- Parents and children are involved in setting next steps in learning.

This is in order to comply with Scottish Statutory Instruments (SSI) 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) Health and welfare and safety of service users. We have also taken into account the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 4 – engaging with children.

2 The provider must ensure that:

- They review the current ‘behaviour management’ strategy to ensure staff promote positive behaviour and treat all children fairly and with respect.
- Children with language barriers are supported through staff understanding of their needs and their responsibility to meet these.
- Staff are able to meet the needs of all children through positive interaction in a quality learning environment that challenges and extends children’s learning.

This is in order to comply with Scottish Statutory Instruments (SSI) 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) Health and welfare and safety of service users. We have also taken into account the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 4 – Engaging with children. Standard 5 – Quality of experience. Standard 6 – Support and development.

## **Recommendations**

1 It is recommended that parents are given further opportunities to help and contribute to the life of the nursery. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 7 – A caring environment.

2 It is recommended that the service makes effective use of the resources and facilities in the community. They should explore ways that children can contribute to the life in the community. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 9 – Involving the community.

3 It is recommended that staff receive training to ensure they are up to date with current best practice to deliver a quality, challenging, nurturing and inclusive learning environment. The manager should then monitor effectively the quality of work of each member of staff and evaluate how effective their practice is in meeting the

needs of the children. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 13 – Improving the service.

4 It is recommended that the manager develops quality assurance systems to monitor the quality of the service as a whole. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 14 – Well-managed service.

A notification from the Care Inspectorate will be sent to the Provider to complete an action plan to address the Requirements and Recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

A copy of the full letter is available on the Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate websites at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/JamesGillespiesPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.asp> and  
[http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489](http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7644&Itemid=489)

24 June 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**James Gillespie's Primary School and Nursery Class  
The City of Edinburgh Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the 'Growing Confidence' project, children's engagement in their learning, and how staff assess and track children's progress. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

**How well do children learn and achieve?**

Children in the nursery are happy and motivated by the activities in the playroom. They engage confidently in their play, and most can carry out routine tasks such as putting on coats and preparing snacks independently. Children cooperate well, and most show a mature awareness of the feelings and needs of others. There are positive and nurturing relationships between children and staff. We have asked staff to give children more responsibility and encourage them to make decisions, design activities and solve problems by themselves. We were impressed by how confident, articulate and engaging the children are at the primary stages. They are very well behaved and clearly committed to learning. They set themselves high standards and work hard to achieve these. Children enjoy lessons because the tasks they are given are active and engaging. They are good at taking responsibility for their own learning. They are also skilled at working together to solve problems by thinking creatively and analytically. They clearly understand the purpose and application of their learning and what successful achievement looks like. They showcase their learning in many ways including popular class 'shows' for parents and the community.

Many of the children come in to nursery with well-developed skills in literacy and numeracy. They are confident communicators and several have a very well-developed vocabulary for their age. Almost all are good at listening to and talking about stories and many are beginning to write. Most of the pre-school children count confidently and use money appropriately in play. Staff in the nursery need to ensure that they plan learning opportunities which build effectively on this strong early achievement. At the primary stages, the school supports and

encourages children's achievement and helps them to develop their skills. The choir performs at prestigious events around the city. Many children play musical instruments or competitive sports to a high standard. All children participate in special school events such as science week, citizenship week, enterprise activities and Scots Language and Culture fortnight. Older children are developing leadership skills by supporting younger pupils and acting as role models. The 'Growing Confidence' initiative has had a positive impact on children's ability to tackle problems and persevere when facing challenges. At all stages, children are making strong progress in their learning in English and mathematics. Their use of vocabulary and literary techniques to create effective writing is of a particularly high standard. Children carry out mental calculations quickly and accurately, but need more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills, including interpreting and presenting information, in real-life contexts. By P7, children play a range of games and sports, competently analysing their performance. They are also good at thinking and working scientifically. Children use information and communications technology skilfully as part of their learning.

### **How well does the school support children to develop and learn?**

Children in the nursery are safe and well cared for. A 'key worker' system has helped staff to learn more about the individual children for whom they are responsible. Staff take some account of children's interests when planning learning activities. They now need to observe and engage with children during play. They should use their observations to plan learning opportunities which support and challenge all children. We have advised staff to plan individually for children who require additional support with their learning. Children with English as an additional language need to be better supported with appropriate resources. Primary class teachers are responsive to their pupils' learning needs. Senior managers meet class teachers regularly to review children's learning. This is a very good way of ensuring that all children are making progress with appropriate support. Teachers design lessons to engage and interest the children. Along with support staff, they meet children's needs well in lessons. We have asked the school to give the Support for Learning team a clearer role and purpose. In particular, the school needs to evaluate the impact on children of extracting them from class, to ensure their needs are met.

Staff have begun to improve play areas in the new nursery. They have designed outdoor learning experiences for children to develop their skills across a range of curriculum areas. This work needs to be continued throughout the nursery to ensure that activities offer children opportunities to learn and build on their existing skills. The P1 teacher visits nursery to get to know children so that she can plan for their learning. Teachers at the primary stages have been developing Curriculum for Excellence over a number of years and are continuing to do so. They plan children's learning thoroughly. They use assessment and tracking of what children know and can do, and agreed programmes to ensure that children develop skills progressively over time. Staff should consider updating some topics to give more attention to the local area and current affairs.

## **How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

There have been significant improvements in the nursery over the last year. The environment for learning has improved with the move to the new building. Children have many more learning activities on offer. Leadership in the nursery is being supported by a seconded local nursery headteacher. Senior managers have agreed priorities for improving the nursery, and are working closely with staff to develop their capacity for making further improvement. Primary children take responsibility for leading improvements in the school. Parents' views are sought regularly and working parties from the Parent Council work closely with the headteacher. Parents and children are keen to become even more involved in driving change. Staff are highly committed to improvement. They carry out rigorous self-evaluation to improve their teaching and children's learning. The extent to which staff share their skills and support one another is impressive. The headteacher gives staff clear direction with effective leadership of improvement. She has commendably focused her attention on implementing Curriculum for Excellence and improving teaching and learning. At present, she needs to be better supported by administrative systems so she can focus on leading learning and teaching across the school. Two deputy headteachers support the headteacher effectively. Overall, James Gillespie's Primary School is a happy and caring school which provides high-quality learning experiences, and where children achieve high standards. It would benefit from continued support and advice from the City of Edinburgh Council to improve the nursery.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Confident, articulate, well-mannered children who are ambitious to achieve and proud of their school.
- The quality of children's attainment in writing.
- The high quality of teaching across the primary stages.
- How well all staff work together to improve the school.

We discussed with staff and the City of Edinburgh Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue with plans to develop children's skills across the curriculum.
- Improve management of information and communication systems to allow staff to focus on learning and teaching across the school.
- Continue to improve children's learning experiences in the nursery.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection of the nursery class, the school had five requirements and ten recommendations. From these, two requirements and four recommendations have been met. Outstanding issues relating to care and support, staffing and management and leadership are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there are two requirements and five recommendations.

## **What happens at the end of the inspection?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that most of the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with the City of Edinburgh Council to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. Parents will be informed of the extent to which the school has improved.

Jacqueline Sinclair  
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations and national care standards gradings, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/JamesGillespiesPrimarySchoolEdinburghCity.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

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**Roseburn Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
The City of Edinburgh  
Council  
24 August 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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

Roseburn Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Roseburn and Murrayfield areas of Edinburgh. The roll was 260, including 48 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in May/June 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

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

- Polite, confident and articulate children.
- Positive relationships between staff and children.
- A strong school ethos encouraging respect for others.
- The contribution made by committed staff to the improvement of the school.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

In the nursery class, children are motivated and engaged in their learning. They interact well with each other. They are developing their investigative skills well and are using information and communications technology (ICT) competently to support their learning. At the primary stages, children are polite, highly motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They are mutually supportive and take their learning seriously. Most concentrate on tasks in the many opportunities for independent and collaborative learning. They use ICT effectively as a means of learning.

Overall, children are achieving well. They benefit from a good range of activities which contribute to their wider achievement and personal and social development. They are very proud of their school and wish to see it improve further. Many, including younger children, are developing a sense of active citizenship through their enthusiastic service to the junior pupil council, the eco group, the garden gang and the whole school pupil council. Older children support the younger ones in many ways, for example through reading to them and through buddying.

In the nursery class, children are developing literacy and numeracy skills well. In the primary classes, most children are attaining appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and writing. The majority achieve these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Children are able to talk confidently for a range of purposes. They are able to listen well for instructions and to each other in discussion. They read with accuracy and comprehension and can write competently for a range of purposes. In writing, there is still room for improvement, particularly in the quality of imaginative writing. Across the school, most children achieve appropriate national levels in mathematics, although the pace of progress for some groups needs to be increased. Children are secure overall in number work, information handling and problem solving. They are less confident in applying mathematical skills and knowledge in different situations. For a few children, skills in using fractions and place value need more reinforcement. Children are knowledgeable about health and wellbeing, including healthy eating, the importance of exercise and knowing how to keep safe.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The nursery curriculum is built on children's interests and on meeting their individual needs through play and active learning. Staff have made a good start to planning learning experiences using *Curriculum for Excellence*. Children have opportunities to develop their early literacy and numeracy skills through play situations and real life contexts. Staff now need to plan more challenging learning experiences to meet the needs of all children. At the primary stages, the curriculum is broad and suitably balanced. Teachers plan their work carefully and have adopted a positive approach towards using *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have been improving the literacy programme through revised approaches to teaching reading. Staff have recognised the need to review the continuity of the mathematics programme. The school pays good attention overall to health and wellbeing. It provides children with two hours of high-quality physical education each week. The school's links with Ghana and emphasis on

fair trade and recycling are developing children's understanding of global citizenship and sustainable development well.

Within the nursery class, staff have a sound knowledge of children and their families and use this well in supporting their learning and development. Children's needs are evaluated on a regular basis and the information is used effectively to plan what they will learn next. Staff identify those who may require additional support at an early stage. Children for whom English is an additional language still require more support. At the primary stages, staff know children well and are sensitive to their needs as individuals. Staff are beginning to incorporate more active learning at all stages in meeting children's needs. Across the school, tasks and activities do not yet challenge all learners consistently enough and pace is sometimes slow. For example, recurrent staffing changes have affected adversely the pace and continuity of learning at P5, although children are now more settled. The school needs to build on existing good practice, for example at P7 where very well-structured debates challenge children to express and justify their views. Class teachers work well with learning support staff to identify those who need additional support. Learning support staff, including classroom assistants, make a valuable contribution to children's learning. Individualised educational programmes now need to have more focused and manageable targets. For a few children, the link between short-term targets and the work undertaken in class needs to be clearer. Better overall monitoring of the progress of children with additional support needs is still required.

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

Staff work well with others to support children's learning, including psychological services, speech and language therapy and a support service for English as an additional language. The school has close links with other primary schools and constructive links with the associated secondary school to help P7 children transfer. The school

enjoys a positive partnership with the community overall, including local businesses and the church. Parents, including the Roseburn Parent Partnership and the parent-teachers association, are supportive of the school. They work very well together to raise additional funds to enhance children's learning. The support of parents who help within the school is welcomed by staff.

Notwithstanding these positive features, the establishment of a more effective and positive partnership with parents remains a major priority for the management of the school. Some aspects of communication with parents are useful, for example the weekly planner used by staff to set out the work of the week and homework to be done. Better, regular communication about parents' roles in children's learning, particularly reading, is still required as is a more systematic response to parental complaints and concerns.

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

Staff are reflective about their own teaching and are fully committed to the improvement of the school. They contribute well to its development through participation in working groups, continuous professional development and project leadership, as in the successful reading development group. Staff have identified accurately the priorities for further development of literacy and numeracy across the school. Many teachers are innovative and prepared to introduce initiatives to improve learning. Staff now feel they need to move forward as a team with more pace, momentum and clarity of overall purpose. The headteacher monitors forward plans and aspects of children's work conscientiously. She now needs to agree with staff better strategies for evaluating teaching and its impact on the quality of children's learning, including by seeking the views of stakeholders more systematically. Children are highly committed to the school community. Many make important contributions through their involvement in the pupil councils and other groups. They do not yet have enough opportunities to offer their views on how best their learning could be developed further.

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

The school provides a welcoming ethos for children which supports their learning and achievement well. Staff use praise well to raise self esteem and encourage good behaviour and effort. Children's work is displayed attractively around the school. Whilst staff share expectations about learning with children regularly, these are not always high enough. Children are encouraged to make healthy food choices. Almost all say they feel safe and cared for in school. Staff provide good opportunities for children to share their worries and concerns. Most say that they have adults they can speak to if they are worried. Staff are confident with the safeguarding procedures in place and all have been trained in child protection. The headteacher now needs to improve procedures for monitoring and recording safeguarding issues. Equality and diversity are promoted through school assemblies and through religious and moral education. The school is actively involved in promoting global citizenship which extends children's understanding of other cultures. The school provides regular religious observance.

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

The headteacher has been in post for just over nine months. She is committed to the school and is keen to build an ethos where children are valued and developed as individuals. She has been well supported by the acting principal teacher whose experience and commitment has been very valuable at a time of transition. The headteacher now needs to develop a clearer and more consistent sense of direction for staff and to build a more effective partnership with parents. With continued support from the education authority and better coordinated contributions from all staff, the school has the scope to fulfil its clear potential.

## 8. What happens next?

We are not fully confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements. We do not at this stage intend to make further visits to the school in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents within a year about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. The outcome of this will determine whether a further visit by HMIE will be required.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Increase pace and challenge for children's learning in mathematics and in writing.
- Monitor the progress of children who require additional support more systematically to guide their progress.
- Establish effective arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of children's learning.
- Develop better partnership with parents and a clearer sense of direction for the school.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the centre there were no recommendations and two requirements. One requirement has been satisfactorily met. The remaining requirement regarding the heating system is currently being addressed.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Roseburn Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Lachlan MacCallum  
24 August 2010

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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**Sciennes Primary School  
City of Edinburgh Council  
20 March 2007**

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## 1. Background

Sciennes Primary School was inspected in December 2006 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met representatives from the School Board, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of school meals provision.

The school serves the areas of Grange, Mayfield and Sciennes in Edinburgh. At the time of the inspection the roll was 630. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate achievement, good citizenship and enterprise skills through the very good curriculum and the wide variety of extra-curricular activities provided by the school.
- Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Highly motivated, well behaved and enthusiastic pupils who were achieving very well in a broad range of areas.
- Pastoral care provided by staff and the very positive ethos within the school.
- Productive partnership with parents, the PTA, School Board and the wider community.
- Leadership provided by the headteacher and management team and the commitment of all staff to improving pupils' learning and achievement.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

### **3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?**

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents, pupils and staff were positive about almost all aspects of the school. Almost all parents thought that there was mutual respect between teachers and pupils and that staff showed concern for pupils' care and welfare. A few parents felt that there was insufficient time allocated to physical education. Pupils enjoyed school and thought that teachers expected them to work hard. They were very positive and proud of their achievements, particularly the fact that their school was environmentally friendly. Staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. All staff enjoyed working in the school and almost all thought that the school was well led. They thought that staff showed care and concern for pupils. They felt that they were given good opportunities to demonstrate leadership and support the further development of the school.

### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

#### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

The curriculum provided a suitably broad and balanced range of learning experiences for all pupils. Staff organised the curriculum effectively to sustain high levels of attainment in English language and mathematics. A challenging and stimulating science programme was successfully developing pupils' skills. Staff ensured that the development of skills of citizenship, enterprise and creativity were embedded in a very good range of stimulating and motivating learning experiences for pupils. Staff made very good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The school planned to increase the time for energetic physical activity for pupils. The overall quality of teaching was very good. Teachers were well organised and their classrooms were bright and stimulating environments for learning. They used a variety of teaching approaches in lessons to involve pupils and help meet their learning needs. Teachers gave clear instructions and directions. They set pupils a good selection of homework tasks to support the learning taking place in school.

Pupils were well behaved and worked well on the tasks set by their teachers. Pupils at all stages responded enthusiastically when working together in group activities or when given opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. However, in some lessons, tasks set by teachers did not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. At the early stages, pupils required more opportunities to learn through play. The pace of lessons was variable across the school. Overall, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to develop their skills as independent learners. In the best lessons, pupils responded positively to the lively pace and to opportunities to discuss, question and carry out independent research.

The school had taken very positive steps in helping pupils to develop their wider achievements. All pupils were involved in a range of enterprise activities which were contributing to the development of their confidence and self-esteem. For example, at P6, pupils had organised a very successful fashion show which had been recognised

by an active citizens achievement award. The school celebrated pupils' achievements in and out of school. The school choir had recently produced their own compact disc. A school orchestra had performed successfully at a number of events. The Eco Committee had gained a silver award and had involved parents and the wider community in their efforts to raise awareness of environmental issues and improve the land used as their garden. Pupils across the school took responsibility for others through the buddy system which was particularly effective for P1 pupils. The pupil council made effective contributions to the decision making processes within the school, including deciding on the interior design of the new cloakrooms. Across all stages, pupils had a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and they strongly promoted aspects of healthy living during their annual "Health Week". The school had established very effective links with Hillview School in South Africa which was increasing pupils' awareness of global citizenship.

### **English language**

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good and had been consistently very good over a number of years. Almost all pupils attained appropriate national levels in reading and writing. A significant number of pupils had attained these levels earlier than might normally be expected. This was particularly the case at the early and upper stages. Others were well supported by teachers and support staff and were making good progress. Almost all pupils were attaining appropriate levels in listening and talking. They listened attentively to staff and each other, respecting others' points of view and contributing appropriately. Pupils worked well together in pairs and groups and expressed themselves clearly in whole class discussions. Almost all pupils read fluently and pupils at P7 tackled demanding texts with confidence in group discussion. They could describe the key features of different types of books. Almost all pupils made good use of the well stocked library, borrowing novels on a weekly basis. However, all pupils did not yet have regular opportunities to borrow information books. Almost all pupils wrote well for a range of purposes. Pupils at P2 and P7 were good at improving their writing through teacher and peer evaluation. The presentation of pupils' work was not always of a sufficiently high standard across the school.

### **Mathematics**

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. Staff had maintained high levels of attainment over recent years. Overall, most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels of attainment. Across the stages, more than half of the pupils were attaining such levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils not achieving these levels were supported to make good progress in their classwork, but a few were capable of attaining more. Across the school, pupils could collate information accurately and display this in graphical form. Pupils at the early stages were developing very good numeracy skills. By P7, pupils had a confident grasp of most key areas of number, money and measurement. Pupils' speed and accuracy in mental calculation was too variable. Pupils could identify an appropriate range of shapes and their properties. They were confident in problem solving and most had a good understanding of a range of strategies they could use in different situations.

## 5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

The school's approaches to meeting pupils' needs were good. Teachers took account of prior learning when planning work for their classes. Most pupils performed well in tasks set by their teachers. However, tasks did not always provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. On occasion, the pace of learning was too slow. Staff had very effective arrangements to meet the needs of pupils who required additional support. They systematically and appropriately identified pupils' learning needs. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress. The support for learning teachers consulted with class teachers, parents and pupils and prepared appropriate individualised educational programmes for pupils who required them. They worked well with small groups and individuals in the support for learning base. The support for learning teachers also provided good advice for staff. Learning assistants provided valuable support for pupils in all classes. Pupils for whom English was an additional language were making good progress. The school worked well in partnership with a range of external agencies to provide support for pupils' specific needs.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Pastoral care	The school provided pupils with excellent pastoral support. All staff demonstrated outstanding commitment to ensuring pupils' care and welfare and were fully aware of child protection procedures. They worked effectively together to create a climate of mutual trust, respect and confidence. Staff set high standards for pupils' behaviour. Older pupils supported younger pupils very well including, for example, in their role as monitors. Pupils were well supported in their personal and social development. A well-organised programme for personal and social development placed appropriate emphasis on pupils' emotional security and self-esteem. The school had a strong commitment to health promotion, which included a focus on exercise and healthy eating. A care zone, created in part of the school, ensured that pupils needing support or assistance were always able to speak to a senior member of staff or to other pupils. Transition arrangements from pre-school to P1 and P7 to secondary school were very effective.

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>Staff made very effective use of all available space. The quality of display was of a high standard and provided a stimulating and attractive environment in which pupils could learn. Pupils, parents and staff benefited from a number of features including a swimming pool, computer suite and various meeting rooms. Building security arrangements were appropriate. However, the overall quality of the accommodation was adequate, with some weaknesses relating to available space, maintenance and access. Access into and around the main building was not suitable for those with mobility difficulties. The playground areas, and the classrooms used by younger pupils were restricted for space. There were a number of repairs outstanding with regard to the swimming pool and the dining hall area.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>Pupils, staff, parents and the community were very proud of the school and identified strongly with it. Relationships throughout the school were very good and staff and pupil morale was high. Overall, staff had high expectations of achievement and behaviour and used praise effectively to motivate pupils. The school organised regular assemblies that provided opportunities for religious observance and celebrating achievement. There was an extensive range of after-school and lunch-time opportunities for pupils. The school regularly supported local and international charities and pupils took a key role in planning such activities. Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the needs of others. The school had clear and appropriate policies on race equality and equal opportunities. There were plans for all staff to receive further training regarding race issues and scope for the school to further recognise, and celebrate, cultural diversity.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The school had developed very good partnerships with parents, local schools, education authority support services and the wider community. The School Board, Friends of Sciennes and active PTA were closely involved in the work of the school. The headteacher provided parents with regular and helpful newsletters to keep them informed of school events and procedures. A school website was being revised and developed. The school actively encouraged parents to support their children's learning through leaflets explaining the curriculum for the forthcoming term and a range of school events which were open to all to attend. Parents also worked alongside staff and pupils, leading out of school activities and, for example, organising healthy food initiatives. Parents were consulted regularly, including over the school's approach to sensitive health issues. Teachers held two meetings each year to talk with parents about their children's progress and provided a detailed annual written report. This required further development to give parents a clearer indication of those areas of learning in which pupils required further help. Staff were increasing the opportunities for parents and staff to share information more regularly through pupils' personal learning planning.</p>

## 7. Leading and improving the school

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

Sciennes Primary School provided high quality education for its pupils within a caring and supportive environment. Pupils were attaining high standards and were achieving very well in a broad range of areas. The school successfully encouraged wider achievement and a significant number of pupils participated in music, sport, and drama. Pupils were keen and motivated learners. There was scope for further improvement in developing consistent approaches to pupils' learning experiences.

The headteacher provided very good leadership. She was highly respected by pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. She had a very approachable manner and had used her very good interpersonal skills to help take forward changes with the full cooperation of staff. She demonstrated a clear vision for the school and delegated responsibilities appropriately to a range of staff to encourage their involvement in and ownership of school developments. She had correctly identified those areas where improvements were needed, and had the professional knowledge and commitment necessary to achieve them. In doing so, she was very ably supported by the two deputy headteachers. Both were deployed effectively across wide-ranging remits. They had supported the headteacher in making improvements to the curriculum and led initiatives with considerable professional expertise. The principal teacher had recently returned to

the school following a period of absence. His remit had a limited impact upon the continued development and improvement of the school and required review. The headteacher and staff had developed good procedures for monitoring the work of the school, using performance indicators developed nationally. They tracked pupils' attainment, regularly evaluated and discussed the quality of learning and teaching, and prepared an informative annual report for parents on the school's performance. They were beginning to monitor more systematically the rate of pupils' progress towards learning targets and planned to review pupils' jotters more regularly to check their progress. Overall, the school had a very good capacity to improve.

### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- share effective practice across the school to ensure consistently challenging and appropriate learning experiences for all pupils;
- make improvements to the accommodation; and
- develop more systematic approaches to monitoring pupils' learning and tracking their progress.

### **What happens next?**

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority 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. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Peter Carpenter  
HM Inspector

20 March 2007

## 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.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
Structure of the curriculum	very good
The teaching process	very good
Pupils' learning experiences	good
Pupils' attainment in English language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	very good

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Pastoral care	excellent
Accommodation and facilities	adequate
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	good
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	very good

<b>Leading and improving the school</b>	
Leadership of the headteacher	very good
Leadership across the school	good
Self-evaluation	good

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 outweigh 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.

<b>What parents thought the school did well</b>	<b>What parents think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff made them feel welcome and the school had a good reputation in the community.</li> <li>• Staff showed care and concern for their children.</li> <li>• Pupils were dealt with fairly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult further with parents regarding decisions which affect their children.</li> <li>• Give better information about school priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>What pupils thought the school did well</b>	<b>What pupils think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers expected them to work as hard as they could.</li> <li>• School was enjoyable.</li> <li>• They were pleased that teachers told them how they were doing with their work.</li> <li>• Teachers told them when they did well and helped them with problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few felt the behaviour of pupils could be better and that incidents of bullying were not always dealt with well.</li> </ul>
<b>What staff thought the school did well</b>	<b>What staff think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regular celebration of pupils' successes.</li> <li>• Showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils.</li> <li>• All staff liked working in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few support staff wanted their training time to be used more effectively.</li> <li>• A few support staff felt they were not sufficiently involved in decision making processes.</li> </ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Children and Families, 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, T1 Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD or by telephoning 0131 244 8426. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

#### **If you wish to comment about primary inspections**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, Acting HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of the HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure leaflet is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: [ask@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk).

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**South Morningside Primary  
School and Nursery Class  
The City of Edinburgh  
Council  
1 December 2009**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate

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1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

South Morningside Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the areas of Morningside, Greenbank and Comiston in the south of Edinburgh. The roll was 653, including 42 in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in October 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008. The school and nursery class are situated across three sites. There have been a number of changes in staff recently. At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for five months and the temporary depute headteacher two months.

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

- Polite, well-behaved children who are eager to learn.
- The range of activities for children to achieve outwith the classroom.
- Children's achievements in listening, talking and reading.
- Links with the community to enhance children's learning.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

In the nursery class, children enjoy learning and are developing friendships. Almost all cooperate well with each other. Children concentrate on their chosen activity for extended periods of time. They need more opportunities to take responsibility during their play. Across the primary stages, children are motivated and eager to learn both in and outwith the classroom. They feel well cared for within school. Children are enthusiastic when working together in pairs and groups. They respond positively to opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. At the early stages, children benefit from being involved in active learning through planned play activities. Overall, children do not yet have enough responsibility for evaluating what they do well or identifying what they need to do to improve their learning.

In the nursery class, children are gaining an understanding of technology. They enjoy creating their own pieces of art work. For instance, older children are becoming confident in using fine brushes and a variety of colours to create interesting autumn pictures. Across the primary stages, children achieve well in a wide variety of activities, including through an extensive range of after-school activities.

Children have a clear understanding of environmental issues and, as a result, the school has achieved a silver Eco-Schools Scotland award. Children are developing their skills in information and communications technology (ICT) well. For example, those at P6 used ICT to create an informative magazine-style publication about themselves. Children's skills in technology could be developed further. Children at P5 and P7 extend their personal and social skills very well through participating in residential excursions.

In the nursery class, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Children listen well to stories and rhymes. They choose to look at books independently and most can recognise their name. A few children can write their name. Children are not yet confident in approaching early writing in all areas of play. In early mathematics, most children count to ten confidently. The majority make good use of mathematical language during play, for example, when weighing ingredients to make bread. They do not use their mathematical skills enough in all areas of play. Across the primary stages, children's progress in listening, talking and reading is very good. Their progress in writing and mathematics is good. Almost all children achieve appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and mathematics and most do so in writing. In recent years, standards of attainment have remained high. Children requiring help with their learning are making appropriate progress. In English language, almost all children are articulate and confident when speaking. They demonstrate good skills when listening and talking to each other in groups. Children enjoy reading and talk confidently about books they have read. By P7, almost all children are skilled at describing characters and how the author develops the plot within a story. They comment confidently on how an author uses language to create effects. Most children write for a range of purposes and are developing good skills in punctuation and spelling. Children are capable of achieving a higher quality of writing. In mathematics, most children are accurate when making written and mental calculations. They have a secure understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and confidently identify lines of symmetry.

Children gather and present information well using a range of graphs and charts. Their skills in problem solving are not sufficiently well developed.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff have started to review the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the nursery, the curriculum is based appropriately on play and staff use the outdoor area well to broaden children's learning opportunities. Across the primary stages, the school provides children with a broad curriculum. Staff are helping children make connections across learning and are beginning to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. They provide well-planned opportunities for children to develop their skills in enterprise education. Staff need to make more use of ICT to support children's learning across the curriculum. Children benefit from learning French and German. A wide range of excursions and visitors to the school make learning more interesting for children. Children do not yet experience two hours of high quality physical education each week.

Overall, staff meet children's learning needs well. In the nursery class, staff know children very well and are aware of their individual learning needs. They plan activities at the right level for the majority of children. They do not always identify children's next steps in learning effectively. Across the primary stages, on most occasions tasks and activities are at the right level of difficulty for children. At times, activities are not always challenging enough especially for higher achieving children. The school has appropriate procedures for identifying and supporting children with additional support needs. The support for learning teachers provide effective support for children requiring help with their learning. Recent changes to the role of learning assistants are having a positive impact on ensuring children's learning needs are met. Overall, children requiring help with their learning are well supported and make appropriate progress. In examples of effective practice, teachers use questioning skilfully to

support and extend children's learning and provide motivating homework activities. However, this is not consistent across the school.

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

Staff have developed effective partnerships with a range of agencies to support children's learning, including the school nurse and speech and language therapist. The Parent Council supports the school well. Parents assist the school in a variety of ways, for example, by taking after-school activities. The school communicates effectively with parents through informative newsletters, e-mail and a regularly updated notice board. Staff consult parents about sensitive aspects of health education. Parents receive helpful information about their child's progress. The school is good at sorting out complaints from parents and other members of the community. The school has highly effective links with the local community to enrich children's learning. For example, children are increasing their knowledge of caring for the environment through strong links with Braidburn Valley Park. The school has developed well-planned arrangements for children as they move from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Boroughmuir High School.

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

Children respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school. Older children enthusiastically act as buddies for younger ones. Through the pupil council children improve the school. Recently, they evaluated the impact of school excursions on their learning. The acting headteacher and depute headteachers use a range of approaches to evaluate and improve the work of the school, including monitoring children's progress, reviewing forward plans and sampling children's jotters. They provide staff and children with helpful comments to improve their practice. Staff are committed to the school

and most are receptive to new ideas. In the nursery class, staff are beginning to review their work and make necessary improvements. Across the primary stages, staff are involved in taking forward priorities identified in the improvement plan through working parties. This is improving children's experiences. Some staff take part in a 'reflective practitioners' group' to share ideas and practice which is helping to improve the quality of learning and teaching. All staff now need to be more involved in self-evaluation and have a shared responsibility for ensuring high quality experiences for children consistently.

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

Children enjoy school and have positive relationships with staff. They are polite and very well-behaved. Children know what to do if they have any concerns, including using the 'confidential' box. Children's achievements are recognised through displays, assemblies and in newsletters. Children are developing an understanding of global citizenship through learning about other cultures and links with a school in Malawi. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. They use praise well to encourage children in their learning. Staff have high expectations of children's attendance and behaviour. They now need to have higher expectations of what children can achieve. There are regular opportunities for religious observance, including assemblies and celebrations in local churches. Local chaplains provide helpful support to the school, including working with children.

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

The acting headteacher is highly committed to improving the work of the school. She has identified what is working well and what now needs to improve. During her short time in post, the acting headteacher has improved the work of the school. The acting headteacher and depute headteachers work very well together and have a clear idea of how they want the school to develop. A few staff

readily take on leadership roles and take responsibility for aspects of the school's improvement agenda. The school should build on this good practice, and clarify the roles and responsibility of all staff in taking forward leadership for learning. With continuity in staffing and the support of the education authority, the school has the capacity to improve.

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

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in learners' achievement.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Increase opportunities for children to evaluate what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Improve approaches to evaluating the work of the school in order to ensure that children in the nursery and primary classes are making appropriate progress.
- Extend leadership for learning at all levels.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were, three recommendations made. These are being addressed.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for South Morningside Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

**HM Inspector:** Janie McManus  
1 December 2009

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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You can find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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