



**Haddington Infant School
and Nursery Class
East Lothian Council
10 March 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school¹. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents² and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the ‘ethos’ of the school. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the school, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school’s aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school’s success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

¹ The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

² Throughout this report, the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

Haddington Infant School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the town of Haddington. The roll was 348, including 77 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in January 2009. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2006/2007.

The school caters for children in P1 to P3. Children transfer to Kings Meadow Primary School for P4 to P7. All members of the senior management team are recent appointments to the school.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Confident children who are eager to learn.
- The commitment of staff to provide a stimulating and nurturing learning environment for children.
- The quality of learning experiences in the nursery.
- Partnership with parents and with other services to support children's learning.

3. Example of good practice

- The nursery class garden.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery, children are achieving success across all areas of their learning. They are developing good social skills, growing in confidence and becoming increasingly independent. Children are making very good progress in developing early literacy and numeracy skills. Some children are naming letters and sounds and most can recognise their name in print. Children are becoming increasingly familiar with number symbols and a few children can accurately add and subtract numbers. They are developing an awareness of environmental issues as they sort waste materials for recycling. They are exploring the natural world and cycles of growth through high quality learning experiences in the nursery garden. Children are

becoming confident when taking part in energetic activities such as *Basic Moves* and playing outdoors.

Across the infant classes at P1 to P3, children are curious and enthusiastic learners. They are developing very good social and personal skills. They work well together in groups and are gaining important negotiating and decision-making skills. The eco committee and pupil council provide real-life contexts for children to use these skills. At all stages, children are learning the importance of active and healthy lifestyles. They are achieving well in physical education through regular high-quality experiences in a range of activities, including the *Basic Moves* programme. Most children are developing good skills in the use of information and communications technology (ICT). Children understand the importance of helping others in school and beyond. By P3, all children take on the responsibility of being playground buddies. Across the school, children are involved in raising funds for a school in Brazil and for national charities. Those in P2 take part in a residential trip which helps to build their confidence, develop social skills and encourage independence. After-school activities which help to develop physical and social skills are provided for children in P2 and P3. Overall, most children are making appropriate progress in their learning. However, higher-achieving children and those with additional support needs are not always given work in class at an appropriate level of difficulty and are not achieving as well as they should be. Standards of attainment in English language have not shown signs of improvement over the last three years. In mathematics, standards of attainment have steadily improved. By P3, most children are attaining national minimum levels in English language. Almost all children are attaining these levels in mathematics. The pace of learning is too slow and not sufficiently challenging for some children. By P3, most children read fluently and with confidence but a few children are capable of working at a higher standard. Across the school, most children are developing the skills needed to write well for a wide range of purposes. A recent focus on handwriting has brought about improvement in children's written presentation. In mathematics, children are accurate in both mental calculations and written work and are confident at solving problems.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

In P1 to P3, staff provide children with a broad curriculum. However the curriculum lacks structure. The school needs to develop programmes in most areas of the curriculum to ensure that children have progressive, well planned experiences which are relevant and coherent. The nursery curriculum offers a wide range of high quality play activities related to early literacy and numeracy development. These activities are appropriate to the age and interests of children. The outdoor area is well developed as a learning environment. In the infant classes, staff are at the early stages of developing the curriculum in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. In some classes, children are successfully developing literacy and numeracy skills through well-integrated cross curricular work but this is not consistent enough across the school. All staff now need to ensure that children have good opportunities to develop their skills in a systematic way which ensures progress in learning. Very effective contributions by visiting specialist teachers help children develop a good range of skills in the expressive arts. Children have opportunities to develop listening and talking but this should be addressed through more planned and focused activities.

Staff in the nursery meet the needs of all children very effectively. Greater communication with primary staff about active learning approaches and next steps in children's learning would further improve children's smooth progress into P1. Across the infant classes, lessons taught to whole class groups do not always meet the needs of higher-achieving children or those with additional support needs. Children are not sufficiently clear about how well they are getting on in their learning or how to improve their work. A few teachers effectively share clear learning intentions with children and use questioning well to check children's understanding. Children complete regular homework tasks which support their learning but tasks lack variety. The school has effective arrangements for supporting children with identified additional support needs. Staff successfully engage parents and other services in reviewing and supporting children's learning. Support for learning teachers provide very effective support in

developing literacy skills. Children with significant needs have appropriate learning targets in place and are very well supported by support assistants. Learning support staff effectively use a range of planned programmes to meet the needs of children. An identified group of children are developing physical skills through taking part in a daily movement programme. Teachers should work more closely with the support for learning team to ensure learning experiences in class build on well from the work of the support for learning team.

5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

The school works closely with the Parent Council. Parents feel better informed about the work of the school through improved communication. Parents of children with additional support needs help to review the progress their children make towards individual targets. Staff work hard to develop effective partnerships with a number of organisations outside the school, such as psychological services and the school travel coordinator. These partnerships provide good opportunities to support children's learning. The school has very effective procedures in place for dealing with any complaints from parents or children. Arrangements for children transferring from P3 to Kings Meadow Primary School have recently been improved and are effective. Children are supported very well to make a confident and successful move from nursery to P1 and from P3 to Kings Meadow Primary School.

6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff are beginning to work well together to improve the school's work. The school has carried out a survey of the views of parents, children and staff. As a result, staff successfully reviewed lunchtime arrangements for children in P2. Staff are at the early stages of sharing good practice through visiting other classes. They now need

clearer guidance on developing, delivering and evaluating the curriculum. The school needs to develop agreed programmes of work to ensure consistently high quality learning which builds on well from children's prior learning. Staff recognise the need to track children's progress better. Children are enthusiastic helpers in the school. By P3, they successfully take on a range of responsibilities. Children from all stages share their ideas for school improvement through the pupil council. These improvements have focused on school accommodation and playtime procedures. Children now need to be more involved in discussing improvements in aspects of learning. The eco committee has played a major role in achieving the Eco-Schools Scotland silver award.

7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

The ethos of the school is very positive and welcoming. Children and staff are very proud of the school. Staff know children well and are sensitive to their needs. All staff are confident in their knowledge of child protection procedures. At all stages, children and staff show care and respect for each other. Children respond well to the high expectations set for their behaviour. Children's wider achievements are recognised in displays and at assemblies. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations for the amount and quality of work children should produce in lessons, particularly higher-achieving children. Appropriate procedures are in place to monitor and encourage children's attendance at school. There are suitable arrangements for religious observance.

8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The senior management team show a strong commitment to the school and to improving its work. Together they successfully promote a positive ethos and are developing a strong sense of teamwork. The headteacher has been in post for one year. She has a clear and well-judged vision for the school, based on developing a 'can do' attitude. The school has successfully shared its revised values and aims with staff, parents and children. Staff and children successfully worked together to produce the school motto 'together we can do anything'. The depute headteacher plays a highly effective role in nurturing the warm and welcoming ethos and in leading improvements in learning and teaching. The headteacher and depute headteacher work very well together. They have taken good steps to strengthen working relationships within the school and with partner agencies. They are held in high regard by staff and parents. The principal teacher fulfils her role effectively in improving aspects of learning and teaching. She has successfully supported staff in developing a more active approach to teaching reading. Teachers are encouraged to take a lead in development initiatives and school improvements. Staff are responding positively to this and are beginning to work together to improve the work of the school. They now need to work together to improve the curriculum. The school is well placed to build on existing good practice and to develop its work through improved approaches to self-evaluation.

9. What happens next?

We are confident that 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 following this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

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

- Involve children more fully in their learning by providing high quality feedback on how to improve their work.
- Develop the curriculum to provide a clear structure and programmes of work to support progression in learning.
- Ensure class and group work is better matched to meet the needs of all children.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. In addition, two recommendations were made, both had been 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 Haddington Infant School and Nursery Class.

Infant school

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

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

The curriculum	weak
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: Belinda Greer
10 March 2009

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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