



**Prospect Bank School
City of Edinburgh Council
25 November 2008**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school. 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 parents¹ 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 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

Prospect Bank School serves the city of Edinburgh. The inspection was carried out in October 2008 at which time the roll was 56. The school provides education for children aged from five to 12 years of age who have additional support needs. The children's additional support needs arise from learning and communication difficulties. Children's attendance was below the national average.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Challenging and enjoyable learning for children in a wide range of activities.
- Children's progress in language and communication and their confidence and self-esteem.
- Innovative approaches to ensuring children's views are listened to and valued.
- Outstanding involvement of all staff in improving the school.
- Very effective leadership across the school.
- Partnerships with parents and other services.

3. Examples of good practice

- Consulting children with additional support needs about their learning.
- Embedding information and communications technology in classroom practice.
- Developing communication and language through total communication.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are happy and enthusiastic in school and making very good progress. Staff are very skilled in ensuring that every child is always busy and actively involved in learning. They skilfully use a range of innovative approaches to help every child contribute during lessons. At the early stages, children enjoy learning to communicate with each other and to take turns, through well-organised play sessions. At the later stages children are proud of carrying out practical tasks independently, such as shopping and preparing snacks. At all stages, children enjoy singing and making music together in music sessions and at the school assembly. Across the school children are making very good progress in understanding how to stay healthy. All children have daily well-planned activities to keep them fit, and are making very good progress in developing skills in physical education and swimming. Children have a choice of a different activity each term. The choices include horse-riding, skiing, photography and football. In these activities children develop new skills and confidence in a more challenging environment.

Children have been successful in achieving the targets within their individualised educational programmes (IEPs). The targets are appropriate and help them make very good progress in their learning. Across the school, children are making outstanding progress in developing language and communication. They can communicate with adults in the school, parents and friends very effectively using speech, signs, pictures or symbols, and voice output devices. Children are developing early skills in reading and writing and some children at later stages read very well. At the early stages, children are learning to count, sort and recognise numbers. At the later stages they are achieving well in practical mathematics activities, for example, recognising and using coins, telling the time and measuring amounts in baking. Staff plan activities well so that skills in literacy and numeracy are practised throughout the day, for example in physical education, and preparing to go home in the bus. Children are making

good progress in understanding their community and the wider world. Those in the class for children with more significant communication difficulties are able to use symbols to describe their experience on a bus and train. One group of children could talk very well about famous Scots, past and present, and another class was very excited about their visit to a local castle.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school is developing aspects of the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence* well. For example they have adapted their approaches to planning the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers plan tasks which are enjoyable and challenging for children. Children use computers independently and with their friends to solve simple problems in mathematics and to practice skills. With support, they use the class interactive whiteboard to search for information about their topics. Teachers have started a new programme to help children understand their feelings and the feelings of others. Children develop a range of skills such as planning events, allocating tasks and working with each other when they help to organise activities such as the Christmas show and the eco fashion show.

All staff contribute well to identifying children's learning needs and next steps. They ensure that tasks are at the right level for each child. The school identified the need to use a different approach for a small group of children on the autism spectrum. They successfully set up a classroom organised to meet the needs of this group. As a result children's progress has improved and they are more settled in school. Staff interact very skilfully with children to help them think for themselves. They give them regular tasks to complete at home which help them practise skills learned in school and provide enjoyable activities for them to share with their parents. Teachers write annual reports for each child which let children and their parents know what progress has been made during the year. They could use these reports more effectively to monitor long term progress and identify areas for further development.

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

School staff involve parents in the life of the school and their children's learning in a variety of ways. Staff help children tell their parents about what they have been doing in school using communication books, and simple recording devices. Parents can contribute their views at very well-organised annual reviews. Parents suggest targets for IEPs and work with school staff to achieve some of these targets. The speech and language therapists are very effective members of the school team, contributing to school developments, and working with staff in classes to develop language and communication. The coordination of planning with other services to meet children's needs is very effective. The school works very well with pre-school services and Pilrig Park School to ensure that children are secure and confident as they move into school and on to secondary school.

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

Children at all stages are successfully learning to be responsible for themselves and others. Staff consistently find approaches to ensure that all children are able to participate and take on responsibilities around the school. Staff have supported members of the pupil council very effectively. As a result, children are able to give their views about aspects of the school and to gather the views of other children in the school. Children are included very effectively in discussions about their targets, and in meetings to review their progress with their parents and school staff. The Parent Council supports the school very well, and works closely in partnership with the headteacher to achieve improvements. The school seeks parents' views about how to improve the school, and takes account of these views. All staff are actively involved in reviewing what they do in their classes and how to help each child make progress. They are also skilled in evaluating the work of the whole school. They all work together to plan, implement and evaluate new approaches. They now need to ensure that they

consistently look at the impact on children's progress when they implement new approaches.

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

All staff share very high expectations of children's behaviour and progress in learning. Children feel safe in school. They enjoy achieving Golden Time at the end of the day as a reward for working and behaving well in class. Staff understand their responsibilities for the care and welfare of children, including child protection procedures. They handle sensitive issues very well, working closely with other services and parents. The school chaplain knows staff and children well through class visits and regular opportunities for religious observance. Children all learn about a range of religious festivals and cultures, drawing on the experience of individual children and their families as appropriate. They are learning about fairness through understanding how their behaviour can sometimes hurt or upset other people. Staff and children celebrate achievements enthusiastically through awarding certificates at assemblies. A few children attend their local schools for part of the week. Children at all stages have regular opportunities to learn with children from local primary schools. This includes joint assemblies, a music festival and a joint residential experience for children at P7.

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

The headteacher has a very clear view of what she wants the school to achieve, which is shared by staff. She values all members of the school community, including staff, children, parents and partners, and successfully involves them all in the life and work of the school. The deputy headteacher and principal teacher support the headteacher and staff very effectively in taking the school forward. Across the school, staff are involved in reviewing how they work in order to find the best ways to help children learn and succeed. They have taken on responsibilities through leading developments and taking part in

working groups, some of which have had a significant impact on the work of the school. The school's very good self-evaluation has been successful in improving children's learning experiences and achievements. The school is very well placed to maintain and develop further the high quality education provided for children.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits following 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 area for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to develop in line with the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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 Prospect Bank School.

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	excellent
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Christine Knight
25 November 2008

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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