



**Kippen Primary School
Stirling Council
18 November 2008**

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

Kippen Primary School is a non-denominational school which serves the town of Kippen. The inspection was carried out in September 2008 at which time the roll was 115. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The motivational leadership of the headteacher and her success in developing leadership at all levels across the school.
- The commitment of all staff to improve continually the work of the school.
- The stimulating experiences and opportunities available to enhance children's learning.
- The support given to children having difficulty in their learning.

3. Examples of good practice

- The school's approaches to self-evaluation.
- Leadership at all levels.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are making good progress overall in talking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last few years, the school has improved attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Children enjoy reading and read well at their level. They have written a good variety of types of writing but need to write more at length. They talk confidently but many have not yet learned to take turns and listen carefully to each other in groups. In mathematics, most children are confident in working with number and shape. However, those in

the upper stages need to get better at mental calculations. Children are able to discuss different ways of solving problems. They are developing good skills in using computers to support their learning across the curriculum. Some have used word processing skills to make attractive posters advertising events in school. Almost all children are actively involved in their learning. They are able to say how well they have done and most can explain how they could improve their work. Across the school, children are developing their skills and understanding through studying topics in environmental studies. They are enthusiastic about learning activities in these topics and visitors have made their learning interesting and relevant. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for all children to achieve, for example through the eco committee and theme weeks like the creativity week. Children have successfully organised school events such as the health week. These opportunities have helped children to develop confidence, organisational skills and skills in working as a team. Children are developing a good understanding of their responsibilities as citizens through fundraising for charities and inviting senior citizens to coffee afternoons for example.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school provides a broad and varied curriculum. Teachers are actively using the guidance from *Curriculum for Excellence* to improve aspects of the curriculum and make sure that children build on their skills across the stages. Topics and big tasks provide children with challenging and enjoyable areas of study. They help children make links between different areas of their learning. Children are developing their skills in literacy and numeracy in many areas of the curriculum. For example, children in P5/6 wrote formal letters of thanks to a visitor who had shown them Jacobite dress. Children made graphs of their hobbies for health week. All children take part in well-planned enterprise activities which develop their self-confidence. Children's personal, social and citizenship skills are developing well. Children have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They showed that they were able to take a lead in organising events from P1 onwards, for example through the pupil council. They are increasing their

understanding of differences in life in another country through their links with Kenya. Children have also developed a good understanding of equality and fairness through lessons in religious and moral education for example, and through the ethos of the school.

Staff know the children very well and are quick to assess their needs well. Support for learning assistants provide very good support for children. The school was taking steps to improve the behaviour of a few children. Teachers share the aim of lessons with children and discuss what they have learned at the end of lessons. They use good questions to develop children's thinking. Teachers give children a variety of imaginative homework, and include choices to motivate them. They provide many opportunities for children to work together but need to encourage them to work as a group better. Children would also benefit from more opportunities to work independently. Staff recognise a need to be clearer about what they want children to learn during the play sessions at the early stages. Teachers plan activities for children at different levels but they do not always set the right level of challenge, particularly for high achievers. They plan to introduce coaching sessions with children to help them set better targets for learning.

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

Staff work very well with other agencies, including the Support for Learning Area Network Team, so that children experiencing difficulty in their learning have effective support. Teachers support children well as the children move from nursery into the school. The school has actively involved parents and the community in the life of the school through events such as the health week and the school travel plan. The breakfast club run by staff and parents helps children to develop social skills. The headteacher regularly consults parents on the work of the school and the parent council has contributed towards the purchase of an interactive whiteboard. There are monthly newsletters and information leaflets for parents. However, a number of parents

would like more communication with the school. As a result, the parent council is helping the school to set up a new website.

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

The school has very good ways of gathering the views of children, parents and staff on the work of the school. It uses questionnaires to improve aspects such as homework. Staff also take account of children's views on learning and teaching through the findings of pupil focus groups. Children can bring about improvements through the pupil council. They have many opportunities to develop as leaders. They support younger children well in paired reading and playground games. The school has gained an Eco Schools Scotland silver award and children monitor the school's carbon footprint. The whole school community was involved in becoming a Health Promoting School. Staff regularly reflect on their own work and on the school's progress. The headteacher keeps staff well aware of current educational thinking through useful staff discussion. Teachers and support staff successfully lead key areas of school improvement, such as health and enterprise. Staff work very well together to improve the learning experience for all children.

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

The school is very welcoming and staff have very positive relationships with children. The local minister contributes well through assemblies and regular visits to religious and moral education lessons. Children are treated fairly and they feel safe in school. Children care for each other. Staff know about the school's child protection procedures and are committed to children's wellbeing. Staff have developed a variety of ways of encouraging good behaviour and hard work, including the use of a traffic lights system and points for golden time. Staff ensure that all children have good opportunities to take part in out of school activities. Children are encouraged to achieve in all areas of the

curriculum and out of school hours. Their achievements in school and in the community are celebrated through assemblies, certificates and newspaper reports. Staff now need to make sure that lessons challenge all children.

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

Children, parents and staff have developed a clear vision, and values for the school. The headteacher has provided strong and creative leadership. She is well supported by the two job-share principal teachers. The headteacher and the staff use a range of ways to identify what the school is doing well and areas where they will target improvements. There has been a long period of staff changes but the headteacher has repeatedly formed very good teams. Staff are enthusiastic about ideas to improve children's experiences in school. As a result of the quality of leadership across the school and very good self-evaluation, standards of attainment and achievement have improved. The school is well placed to improve further.

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.

- Continue to improve attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Ensure that learning activities are sufficiently challenging for all children.
- Continue to develop children's skills in effective collaborative working.

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 Kippen Primary School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	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: Fiona A Pate

18 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