

**Grange Primary School
and Nursery Class
Bo'ness
Falkirk Council
2 September 2008**

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1. Background

Grange Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in May 2008 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 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 Parent Council, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the eastern end of Bo'ness and is part of the Bo'ness Integrated Learning Community. At the time of the inspection the roll was 220, including 40 children in the nursery class and 15 pupils in the enhanced provision. The enhanced provision was used by pupils from within and outwith the catchment area. This provision provides for pupils with a range of additional support needs. The school had undergone a period of staff change and absence. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average. The school had achieved a silver award from Eco-Schools Scotland and was working towards green flag status.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Commitment and vision of the senior management team.
- Staff management and use of space across the primary school and nursery class to provide a stimulating environment for learning.
- Positive relationships between children in the nursery, primary pupils, staff and the wider learning community.

¹ 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 expressed very positive views about the school. They felt welcome in the nursery class and primary school and found parents' evenings very helpful. A significant minority felt that the school did not clarify the standard of work expected from pupils, nor how parents could help their children. However, parents spoke positively about the packs of pupils' work which were sent home each month. A few parents felt the school did not deal quickly enough with incidences of poor behaviour but almost all felt children were treated fairly. A few parents of nursery children would like more information about their child's progress. Most pupils enjoyed being at school. They felt that the school was good at praising them, particularly at assemblies. While a significant number of pupils expressed concern about the poor behaviour of a few, pupils felt safe and well looked after in school. Pupils felt that they were treated fairly and that their views counted. Staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. All enjoyed working in the school. Most of the support staff and all other staff felt that the school was well led. They felt that the management team had high expectations but supported them well. They felt that staff worked well as a team.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The overall quality of the curriculum across the nursery and primary stages was satisfactory. All nursery children and primary pupils had access to a broad and balanced range of learning experiences. Visiting specialist teachers effectively helped develop pupils' skills in music, drama and physical education. However, primary teachers needed to ensure that all pupils had sufficient access each week to high-quality physical education provision. Time was not used efficiently across the school week. For example, large blocks of time allocated to English language and mathematics contributed to a slow pace in those lessons. Curricular areas were not sufficiently integrated and pupils had limited opportunities to develop skills in numeracy and literacy across the curriculum. Teachers were beginning to link different areas of learning through a themed approach to lessons in some curricular areas but this was not used in a consistent way across the school. Staff made good use of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils in P2 and P3 visited Dynamic Earth, to support their work in science. All pupils were involved in enterprise education activities, which raised money for the school's link with a child in Malawi in particular. The school had very good arrangements in place to prepare pupils for nursery, including home visits. There were also good arrangements to support children moving from nursery to P1, and pupils at P7 moving to the next stage in their education. The quality of teaching was satisfactory. Nursery staff were caring and supportive in their interactions with children. Teachers in the early primary years were beginning to provide pupils with opportunities to learn through play. However, these experiences were not yet sufficiently developed to provide appropriate challenge for pupils. Across the primary stages, lessons were well organised and built on previous learning.

Teachers ensured that instructions were clear. In the best lessons, teachers used a variety of approaches to maintain pupils' interest but this was not consistent across the school. In a few classes, information and communication technology (ICT) was used well to motivate pupils. Teachers gave pupils regular and meaningful homework. Overall however, across the nursery and primary stages, staff questioning did not always challenge pupils to extend their thinking and develop as active learners. Pupils were given insufficient opportunities to work collaboratively and take responsibility for their learning.

The overall quality of learners' experiences was satisfactory. Children in the nursery were happy and settled and chose confidently from play activities. A few children concentrated well on tasks but the majority needed more support to develop their learning. Pupils were well behaved throughout the school and although lessons were frequently based on resources which did not stimulate pupils, almost all pupils were engaged in their learning. Planned visits from partner agencies enhanced the learning experience for pupils. In science, for example, pupils at P5 had produced imaginative Plastizote models with guidance from a BP support officer. Pupils were learning useful skills in note-taking from books and the internet. For example, at P6, pupils researched the answers to questions they had chosen to ask about fish. However, children in the nursery classes and pupils at the primary stages had not yet developed the skill of working together purposefully. In almost all lessons, the pace of learning was not sufficiently brisk and lessons did not always take account of pupils' abilities and challenge them in their learning. Overall, pupils were not sufficiently aware of their progress and of how to improve their performance.

Improvements in performance

The school had shown a satisfactory improvement in performance across the nursery and the primary classes, despite a number of staff changes and absences. Most nursery children and primary pupils were making satisfactory progress but they were not sufficiently challenged to improve further on this performance.

The progress of children in the nursery in communication and language was good. Most children listened carefully to adults and followed simple instructions well. Most children could recognise their name in print and some children were attempting early writing. Children were learning about letter sounds and rhyming words.

At the primary stages, the overall quality of attainment in English language was satisfactory. Levels of attainment in national tests had improved steadily in recent years. Most had achieved appropriate national levels in reading and writing, with significant numbers of pupils at the early stages achieving the relevant level earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress and developing confidence in reading. Most pupils listened well to teachers for instructions and information but did not listen carefully to each other. Most spoke confidently and were keen to express their views. However, their skills of listening and talking in class discussion were less well developed. Pupils had made good progress in reading. Most read confidently and with good understanding. The majority of them enjoyed reading. At the upper stages, pupils were able to express opinions on books they had read and summarise a story for their peers. They were less confident in discussing the author's use of language. Pupils wrote regularly for a range of purposes

across different aspects of their classwork. However, opportunities for pupils to produce good-quality writing in other areas were limited. New writing strategies were beginning to impact on pupils' skills in creative writing but pupils were not yet writing at sufficient length. The standard of presentation of pupils' work was good.

The progress of children in the nursery in early mathematics was good. Children were learning about numbers in games and in outdoor activities. They could identify simple shapes and sort and match by colour and size. They were not yet learning about mathematical language to use in play.

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was satisfactory. Levels of attainment had remained consistently high, and increased steadily, in recent years. Most pupils achieved appropriate national levels and across the school, a significant number had achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress. Across the school, pupils did not have enough opportunities to consolidate and reinforce concepts and a few pupils at each stage were insecure at their level. At all stages, pupils could draw graphs and interpret information. However, they were insufficiently confident in using ICT for information handling. At all stages, pupils completed simple written calculations accurately but were less secure in mental calculations, fractions and decimals, particularly at the upper stages. Almost all pupils were confident in their understanding of money and time. Pupils in the early stages were unsure of measurement. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical and meaningful contexts varied across the school. At all stages, pupils had a sound understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes and of symmetry. Across the school, most pupils' skills in problem solving were not sufficiently high.

Children in the nursery were learning about growing and planting. They were learning to care for animals in role-play and were developing skills in using the computer. However, they were less sure in investigating and solving simple problems. Children showed good progress in painting and model making but had less experience in music-making activities. In physical development and movement, children were developing skills in cutting, sticking, construction and writing. They participated eagerly in physical activities indoors and in outdoor play. At all stages, pupils were developing a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles. They were developing very positive attitudes towards environmental issues. Pupils in the upper stages used ICT effectively to research different topics. The themed approach adopted by the school had enabled some pupils to learn about other countries and cultures. Pupils in P7 were developing confidence in spoken French and were developing their listening skills. Their reading and writing skills were less well developed. Pupils' artwork displayed a good range of techniques which they had learned to apply. Pupils were using the school garden and insects to learn about plants and aspects of science. However, the science programme did not give pupils a coherent experience across the school.

The school had taken good steps to develop pupils' wider achievements. Children in the nursery were developing independence in a range of play activities. At the primary stages, staff raised the self-esteem of pupils by supporting them in activities such as dramatic performances and competitions in the local community. For example, a P7 pupil won the local Seabox Society art competition. Successes were celebrated at assemblies and in displays throughout the school. Pupils across the stages were consulted on school issues such as lunch menus and they were confident that their

views mattered. They also had good opportunities to be involved in decision making such as choosing outdoor furniture, through the pupil council. They were developing a sense of responsibility and citizenship through classroom duties, as playground buddies, as House captains and as members of the pupil council. Pupils in P6 also ran the healthy tuck shop. The eco group had successfully encouraged pupils and staff to improve the school's carbon footprint. Almost all pupils in P7 took part in a cluster schools residential trip to Dalguise to develop their personal, physical and social skills. Pupils had raised funds for a number of charities, including the school's link with Malawi. These activities had engaged pupils and developed in them a better awareness of their responsibility towards others.

The school's self-evaluation had identified appropriate priorities for improvement in the nursery and across the primary stages. Staff were working effectively towards addressing these priorities. Several of the improvements had had a positive impact. For example, pupils' writing was beginning to improve through a new writing strategy. At the primary stages, the school had made good progress in addressing priorities for health promotion and self-evaluation. However, the improvement plans were not yet making sufficient impact on improving children's learning.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

In the nursery, arrangements for meeting pupils' needs were weak. Staff matched activities to the broad needs of children. They made observations of children during their play and noted progress in profiles which they shared with children and parents. Staff did not focus clearly enough on developing learning to meet individual needs. Individualised educational programmes (IEPs) did not provide sufficient detail on daily learning targets and successes. At the primary stages, the school's arrangements for meeting pupils' needs were satisfactory. Teachers did not always provide work which was appropriate to the needs of all pupils. In the majority of lessons, teachers relied too heavily on work from textbooks or worksheets which were insufficiently challenging for pupils. Pupils at P1 to P3 did not have enough opportunities to learn through well-planned play activities. However, arrangements for identifying pupils who required additional help effectively targeted pupils with the greatest needs. IEPs helped set targets to measure progress in learning for pupils who required support. Parents and pupils were not yet sufficiently involved in agreeing learning targets in IEPs. The learning support teacher provided good support to identified pupils in small groups or to individuals. Her record keeping of pupil progress was thorough. A team of support staff worked well with teachers and provided good assistance to individuals and small groups of pupils.

Teachers and support staff in the enhanced provision were committed to, and had good interactions with, their pupils. Teachers provided detailed reports for annual reviews of pupils' progress. Pupils enjoyed their time in enhanced provision. However, programmes were not sufficiently stimulating and the pace of learning was too slow for most pupils. Tasks and activities did not always help pupils to learn actively and become more independent. Pupils in the P1 to P3 class benefited from a range of trips into the local community to enhance their learning experiences and develop their social skills. Due to staff absence, pupils at P4 to P7 attended mainstream classes for most of the week. These pupils did not have sufficient support in mainstream classes to enable

them to play an active part in lessons. All pupils in the enhanced provision had an IEP. The majority of these contained appropriate learning targets for language and mathematics. As a result, most pupils in the early stages were making good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few of the targets set for personal and social development did not help pupils to understand their development needs. Pupils were not sufficiently involved in setting their targets.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>Staff cared for pupils well and overall, there were good arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. All staff had received appropriate training on child protection and knew what to do if they had concerns about pupils' welfare. The school had good procedures in place to monitor attendance in the primary classes. These did not yet extend to the nursery class. Staff dealt sensitively with pupils' social and emotional needs. The school successfully promoted healthy lifestyle choices through the curriculum, after-school activities and facilities for active play.</p> <p>Children were learning about healthy eating through healthy lunch menus and snacks. The successful breakfast club provided a safe environment for pupils to develop social skills. The school had achieved level two Health Promoting Schools status. The transition programme between nursery and P1 helped children feel more confident in the primary class. There were effective and sensitive procedures in place to support pupils moving from primary school to Bo'ness Academy and to other schools. The school had developed strong links with partner agencies such as the Integrated Learning Community Family Support Team and Barnardo's Education and Family Support Service, to support vulnerable children and their families.</p>

Aspect	Comment
<p>Management and use of resources and space for learning</p>	<p>The school was very good at managing and using resources and available space for learning. Staff had created a well-organised and welcoming environment for learning. They presented stimulating displays of pupils' work and achievements throughout the school, as well as interesting displays of historical artefacts. Staff and pupils had access to a wide range of appropriate resources, including interactive whiteboards, to support learning. The school grounds provided very good areas for children to play and learn. The school had also developed a very attractive garden area for outdoor learning. Security arrangements in the well-maintained building were appropriate. Access within the school was unsuitable for users with restricted mobility.</p>
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>Staff and pupils identified strongly with the school. There were very positive relationships between staff and pupils across the school. Almost all pupils were well behaved and considerate of others. Staff effectively encouraged pupils to achieve success in a wide range of contexts and competitions. They used praise well to encourage nursery children and primary pupils. Pupils and staff celebrated success through a range of award certificates, the school newsletter and assemblies. However, staff did not all share a clear understanding of what was required to provide high quality learning experiences for pupils. They did not have sufficiently high expectations of the level and amount of work which pupils could complete effectively in class. The school's approaches to equality and fairness were good. All pupils were treated fairly and felt that their views were important. Pupils were aware of other religions and cultures but diversity was not yet sufficiently promoted throughout the school. The school was regularly supported by the school chaplain at assemblies. These provided suitable opportunities for religious observance.</p>

Aspect	Comment
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school had worked hard to establish good links with parents and the community. Parents were kept updated about their children's progress through detailed written reports, very informative and well-attended parents' evenings, monthly work wallets and the use of a daily diary. They were invited to assemblies to help celebrate their children's achievements. Parents were welcomed into the school as partners and had given very effective support with activities in the nursery class. Parents' views were actively sought, for example on the school's health promotion activities. Parents had also helped to raise funds to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The school was well supported by an active Parent Council. Staff consulted appropriately with parents about sensitive health issues through the Parent Council. However, parents were not yet fully involved in developments to support their children's learning and progress. Staff made effective use of partnerships with the wider community to enhance children's learning. These included links with cluster schools, partner agencies and the school chaplain. Links with RBS Supergrounds and BP had enabled the school to enhance outdoor areas to support pupils' learning.

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Grange Primary School and Nursery Class provided a caring and welcoming environment for learning. Nursery children and primary pupils were happy, confident and well behaved. They benefited from a broad curriculum and from a number of opportunities to take part in activities and visits which extended their learning experiences, and increased their confidence and self-esteem. Support for learning staff provided pupils with a good level of support to enable them to achieve success. However, the standard of teaching was not consistently high and there was a need to improve pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics. Staff needed to improve the pace and challenge in lessons to meet the needs of all primary pupils and nursery children.

The headteacher provided good leadership. She was wholly committed to the school and to improving the quality of pupils' learning and achievements. She had formed strong partnerships with other agencies and with the wider community to support pupils' learning. She had led developments which were impacting positively on pupils' attainment, such as new writing strategies. She shared her vision for the school with her depute who joined the school in 2006. Since then, the depute had taken forward a number of successful initiatives such as the storyline project for the school's centenary

in 2007. The headteacher and her depute gave staff very good support. The headteacher set high expectations of staff and successfully encouraged them to share good practice. However, there was limited staff involvement in leading developments across the school. The headteacher had involved staff, parents and pupils in identifying appropriate priorities for the school improvement plan through discussion and the use of questionnaires. She knew the school's strengths and development needs well. The arrangements for reviewing and improving school practice were satisfactory. The headteacher had introduced a range of approaches to monitor the work of the school systematically, such as sampling pupils' work, reviewing teachers' plans and classroom visits. However, these arrangements had not yet led to direct improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. The headteacher had not yet allocated a full monitoring role to the depute to enable them both to focus on learning, teaching and tracking attainment across the school. Teachers had begun to review their own practice but had not yet embedded recent developments consistently in their lessons. All staff were committed to the school. The headteacher and the senior management team needed to continue their work with staff to improve pupils' attainment, and the quality of children's learning experiences in the nursery, the enhanced provision and across the primary stages. With support from the education authority, the school had the capacity to keep improving.

Nursery staff were aware of the Scottish Social Services Council's Codes of Practice and were in the process of registering with the Council. The school had addressed the recommendations from the previous Care Commission inspection.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve attainment and the learning experiences for pupils and children in the nursery. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- involve teachers, pupils and parents in rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance;
- maximise the time for learning opportunities within the curriculum to improve the learning experiences for primary pupils and nursery children; and
- improve approaches to teaching and learning to better meet the needs of all learners in the nursery and across the primary stages.

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.

Fiona Pate
HM Inspector

2 September 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

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

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	satisfactory
Teaching for effective learning	satisfactory
Children's experiences (nursery class)	satisfactory
Learners' experiences (primary stages)	satisfactory
Improvements in performance (nursery class)	satisfactory
Improvements in performance (primary stages)	satisfactory

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs (nursery class)	weak
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	satisfactory

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

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	satisfactory
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	good
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.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children enjoyed being at school.• Children were encouraged to work to the best of their ability and found work stimulating.• Parents' evenings were helpful and informative.• School buildings were kept in good order.• Staff made them feel welcome.• Children were treated fairly.• Provision of very good nursery education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deal more effectively with inappropriate behaviour.• Make it clear what standard of work is expected from pupils.• Explain how to support children with their homework.• There were no significant issues from parents of children in the nursery.

What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers explained things clearly. • Teachers expected them to work as hard as they could and checked their homework. • Teachers told them how they were getting on with their work and helped them when they had difficulties with classwork. • Teachers let them know how their learning could be improved and told them when they had done something well. • Teachers knew them well and listened to what they said. • They had a say in deciding how to make the school better. • The school helped keep them safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with bullying better. • Ensure that all pupils behave well.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all teachers were pleased with all aspects of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant number of support staff did not feel that there was good communication between senior managers and staff. • The majority of support staff did not feel that they had good opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes.

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.

Partnership Working: P7 Transition Group

The school staff understood the need to build and maintain effective partnership working to support pupils at the point of transfer to secondary education. Teachers had developed a wide range of partners, including Health Services, Social Work Services, Psychological Services, Specialist Teachers, Behaviour Support Teachers and Family Support Workers, among others, to meet the needs of pupils.

One of the school's most successful collaborations had been with Barnardo's Education & Family Support Service, which provided Nurture Groups for both nursery and primary children. For more vulnerable pupils at P7, who may have found the move to secondary school more challenging, staff provided an enhanced transition process. The 'Transition Group' met weekly throughout the session to explore issues and concerns raised by the children and to develop their confidence. The pupils had additional visits to the secondary school to become thoroughly familiar with the layout and routines, and to meet their senior school 'buddies' and key staff. Pupils also met with their peers from other schools, so that friendships could be formed before the start of S1. At the beginning of S1, the Transition Group leaders offered a 'drop in' support service to address any concerns pupils might have. In this way, primary school staff aimed to ensure that the children's secondary experience got off to the best possible start. The benefits to pupils were obvious and feedback from pupils involved, parents and secondary staff indicated pupils settled more readily into their S1 year.

How can you contact us?

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