

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

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## 1. Background

Kinneil Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in April 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, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves part of the town of Bo'ness. At the time of the inspection the roll was 208, including 41 children in the nursery class. 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. A Support Base for pupils with additional support needs arising from behavioural difficulties formed part of the school's provision. This facility provided placements for pupils in Kinneil Primary School and from all other local primary schools.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- High quality provision in the nursery class.
- Courteous and well-behaved nursery children and primary pupils.
- Children's progress in early mathematics in the nursery class and pupils' attainment in mathematics in school.
- Commitment of the school to citizenship activities.
- Effective staff teamwork and their commitment to meeting the needs of children and pupils, including pupils in the Support Base.
- The school's positive partnerships with parents.
- The leadership of the headteacher in driving forward improvement.

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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 highly satisfied with almost all aspects of the school's work. Parents spoke positively about being involved in their children's learning through various well-planned activities. In particular, they appreciated being consulted about personal learning planning involving their child. They felt their children were motivated and enjoyed school. Pupils were very proud of their school and felt safe and happy. They thought that teachers helped them to improve their work and expected them to work hard. Almost all pupils felt that at least one teacher knew them well. Teaching, support and visiting specialist staff were positive about all aspects of the school. They highlighted the leadership of the headteacher as a particular strength. They appreciated the opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process and were very positive about the quality of teamwork and communication amongst staff.

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

#### **Learners' experiences**

The overall quality of the curriculum was very good. The curriculum in the nursery class provided children with a stimulating range of learning opportunities both inside the playroom and in their garden. Children were actively involved in enjoyable and challenging learning activities. Staff interaction with children was skilled to support them in making appropriate choices and encouraged their independence. Interventions were well judged to increase the complexity of play and thoughtful questioning and dialogue extended children's learning. In the primary school, steps were being taken to improve opportunities for pupils at the early stages to be more active in all aspects of their learning. Curricular areas had recently been reviewed to provide challenging and enjoyable programmes for pupils. The programme for environmental studies and writing had been restructured effectively which promoted good progression in pupils' learning. There was now a need to have a stronger focus on reading to improve pupils' experiences. Pupils had very good opportunities to develop skills in enterprise and financial education, and Eco-Schools Scotland activities. The school had made good progress in providing two hours of physical activity for each pupil. Pupils were encouraged to take responsibility for additional health and well-being activities. They were developing their skills in information and communications technology (ICT) in a variety of contexts, but provision of ICT resources to support learning needed to be improved in classrooms. Personal and social skills were being developed effectively throughout the curriculum. Pupils had very good opportunities to exercise responsibility and develop their citizenship skills throughout the curriculum. Most teachers made good use of a range of teaching approaches which encouraged pupils to respond well in class. In the best lessons teachers introduced lessons clearly, often with a quick review of previous learning, and tasks and activities were practical and linked to real-life contexts. This good practice was not yet consistent across the school. Teachers did not always provide individual pupils with sufficient feedback to help them

be clear about what they needed to do to improve. Homework was well planned across the school.

Children's learning experiences in the nursery were very good. Children were highly motivated, enthusiastic and were making very good progress in their learning. They were independent and responded very well whilst working alongside others. Children were learning to plan their own experiences in order to develop their ideas and interests. At the primary stages, pupils' learning experiences were very good. Pupils were well motivated and interacted positively with each other. In most classes they were effectively using a range of ways to support their own learning, including working in pairs and small groups. Whilst there were a few examples of an over-reliance on textbook and worksheet activities, most pupils had effective opportunities to work in practical purposeful contexts. For example, a small group of older pupils worked cooperatively together, sharing their views and discussing aspects of a novel they had been studying together. Pupils were learning important life skills in financial education through organising and running the pupils' bank. At all stages, pupils responded creatively and imaginatively to a variety of interesting activities in music, drama and, in particular, to the visit of the Masai warrior dance troop.

### **Improvements in performance**

The school had successfully improved its performance in a number of important areas. In particular, the nursery had successfully improved its performance in its approaches to using ICT in different play experiences. In the primary classes, the whole-school approach to citizenship and enterprise activities was very successful.

Children in the nursery class were making very good progress in communication and language. They followed simple instructions given by staff. They listened intently to each other in order to share ideas and solutions. Children were confident speakers and were able to address a larger group. They enjoyed sharing favourite books and all children could recognise their name. Almost all older children were able to write their first name and younger children recognised their written name. Children enjoyed practising their early writing skills through preparing the daily snack menu.

Across the primary stages, standards in English language were good. Levels of attainment in reading and writing had fluctuated in recent years but were beginning to improve. Most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels with a significant minority achieving levels earlier than might normally be expected. At the middle stages, some pupils were not making sufficient progress in reading, with just over half achieving national levels. The school had recently introduced systems for assessing and recording listening and talking skills. This was recorded inconsistently across the school but further work was ongoing to address this issue. Pupils listened well to teachers and to each other in paired and group work. They displayed confidence in talking to adults and peers. At the upper stages, pupils were developing skills in talking to a larger audience, through delivering presentations and talks at school assemblies. The majority of pupils enjoyed reading and could talk about favourite authors and different styles of writing. Through a structured approach from P1 to P7, pupils were writing for a variety of purposes and developing their skills across the curriculum. Most pupils' work was well presented and of a high quality.

Children in the nursery class were making very good progress in early mathematics. Most children were able to identify mathematical shapes and were learning to create them on a smart board using interactive technology. Almost all children could count confidently within ten whilst engaged in play activities. They used appropriate mathematical language through imaginative play with cars and trucks. All children had collaborated to make a pictorial graph of outside activities which they were able to explain well to adults.

Across the primary stages, the standards in mathematics were good with some pupils making very good progress. Although standards of attainment in mathematics had improved in recent years, there had been a slight dip in attainment in the last year. Almost all pupils from P2 to P6 were attaining or exceeding appropriate national levels and most were doing so in P7. In the middle stages of the school, some pupils were not making sufficient progress, with just over half achieving appropriate national levels. Additional targeted tuition was in place for the more and less able pupils. This had resulted in improvements for a significant number of pupils. At all stages, pupils could create and interpret an appropriate range of graphs. They were able to use information gathered from practical surveys to collate and present the information in different ways. Pupils were quick and accurate in their mental calculation. At all stages, they had developed a secure knowledge of most aspects of number, money and measurement. At P7, pupils had good knowledge of the relationship between fractions and decimals and had an understanding of negative numbers. Pupils could identify two- and three-dimensional shapes and discuss their properties. At all stages, pupils had a good understanding of problem-solving strategies.

Nursery children were making very good progress in all other aspects of the curriculum. They investigated and made conclusions about magnets. They had planted and monitored the growth of bulbs in the garden. Children were experienced in preparing their own paints and materials in order to create detailed paintings and collages. They invented their own music and were learning to keep a beat. Children had developed their understanding of a real-life setting through visiting a local baby clinic. They used this experience meaningfully in their play activities in the nursery playroom. They were developing confidence in climbing outdoors and skills in using small equipment in the gymnasium.

Staff in the nursery and school made very good efforts to encourage and develop children's and pupils' wider achievements. Children in the nursery were confident. They showed high levels of independence within the playroom. They collaborated very well together in order to play successfully. They had contributed to fundraising and sang favourite songs to elderly people within the local community. Children were committed to sustainable development and carefully looked after their garden. In the primary classes, pupils were making very good progress in developing their confidence, self-esteem and skills as active citizens. Pupils participated enthusiastically in successful after-school clubs, including rugby, football, dance, running and a popular homework club. Older pupils were further developing self-confidence by presenting their work on enterprise to a range of audiences, including at a local authority event. Pupils showed a high level of responsibility and citizenship through pupil council work and supporting younger pupils. They spoke with pride about their efforts in caring for the environment and the opportunities they had to learn about healthy lifestyles.

Recycling activities were an integral part of school life. Pupils were knowledgeable about a wide range of environmental issues through gaining accreditation for their Eco-Schools Scotland Silver award. Pupils spoke confidently of their work on global citizenship and their links with a school in Africa. These wider achievements were recognised within the school through a clearly defined awards system but also within the community through very regular and detailed press coverage.

The school had made good progress in overtaking the priorities in its improvement plan. Several priorities were beginning to have a positive impact on nursery children's and primary pupils' learning experiences. For example, in the nursery class, children were more confident in using a wider range of ICT resources. They had extended their skills in emotional, personal and social development and were confident, independent and related very well to each other. At the primary stages, teachers had improved the involvement of parents in their children's learning through regular discussions of the personal learning planning process. The school knew itself very well and staff were constantly looking to improve further.

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

Staff in the nursery met children's learning needs very well. They planned stimulating activities which took account of children's interests and stage of development. Staff systematically observed children at play and interpreted the information well to support children in their next steps in learning. Children who required additional assistance in their learning received very good support. Appropriate individualised plans were in place and support staff effectively engaged alongside children to guide them in successfully achieving identified targets in their learning. In the primary classes, teachers worked hard to try to ensure that teaching approaches and learning activities took full account of all pupils' needs. Staff made well judged use of assessment information to monitor and track pupils' progress in English language and mathematics. There was a strong emphasis on ensuring the achievement of all pupils. The school had very good arrangements for supporting pupils with additional support needs. This included targeted support from the support for learning teacher, classroom assistants and support for learning auxiliaries. Effective individualised educational programmes were in place and learning targets in these were regularly reviewed with parents and pupils. The school had very good arrangements to support pupils at points of transfer from nursery into P1 and from P7 into Bo'ness High School.

The Support Base in Kinneil Primary School provided well-judged programmes and activities to support the learning and emotional needs of a minority of pupils. Targeted support was carefully organised to help them improve their learning and increase their confidence. Sensitive and unobtrusive support was effective by the skilled staff in the base. The support for learning teacher, staff and headteacher regularly planned, monitored and evaluated the progress of pupils. As a result pupils achieved more and their confidence, attitude to work and behaviour had improved. The Support Base was well organised with distinct work areas and appropriate resources. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning activities in the Support Base and supportive relationships featured strongly.

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

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>The school had very good arrangements in place for ensuring the care and welfare of nursery children and primary pupils. Staff were caring and committed. Pupils felt safe and well looked after, and reported that staff took seriously any concerns they might have. The school had an appropriate policy for the protection of children and all staff were suitably trained and fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Clear procedures were in place to monitor pupil absence. Pupils knew what to do if they were upset or being bullied. Older pupils supported younger ones well in the playground. The school had a strong commitment to health promotion through a range of cross-curricular activities. Children in the nursery class enjoyed a range of healthy snack options and took part in the daily toothbrushing programme.</p>
Management and use of resources and space for learning	<p>The school's management and use of resources and space for learning was good. The accommodation had been upgraded and refurbished and provided an attractive learning environment. The nursery class had a separate secured entry and had the exclusive use of a fenced garden area. At all stages, pupils' learning was extended in the recently developed outdoor learning area and grounds with a designated friendship stop and benches. They were learning to care and be responsible for the planted areas and the friendship stop offered an inviting area to meet and make friends. The school entrance was bright and welcoming with a range of displays celebrating the work of the school. Pupil work was displayed well throughout the school and was clearly linked to curricular activities. Pupils benefited from new resources in the ICT suite and in some classrooms. The school had appropriate security systems in place but there was limited access for users with restricted mobility.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness	Staff, pupils and parents had a very strong sense of identity and pride in their school. Relationships throughout the school were very positive. Staff and pupil morale was very high. The headteacher had worked tirelessly to create a climate of mutual trust and respect. Strong teamwork was evident among all staff. Teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attainment. Pupils and children behaved very well and were considerate to each other and staff. The establishment of the Support Base had had a positive impact on behaviour management throughout the school. Pupils responded well to the effective praise and reward schemes. Achievements, both within school and out of school, were recognised and recorded. Pupils had very good opportunities to participate in religious observance through regular school assemblies. Pupils were developing a strong sense of equality and fairness and showed respect and tolerance for others.
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school was very effective in engaging parents, carers and families in the life of the school. Staff communicated regularly and engaged in dialogue through weekly diaries, class and school newsletters and the website. Parents participated well in regular planned afternoons with their child and teacher to discuss progress through a review of personal learning planning and examples of classroom work. Many parents were actively involved through membership of the Parent Council, the PTA and as parent helpers throughout the school including the nursery class. Parents had very high levels of satisfaction with the educational provision within the school. Links with local businesses and organisations enhanced pupils' understanding of citizenship and enterprise.

## 7. Leading and improving the school

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

Kinneil Primary School and Nursery Class provided high quality education for its children and pupils. The school had a very positive ethos and all staff were strongly committed to ensuring the care and welfare of children and pupils. Pupils were confident and motivated and most attained very well in English language and mathematics. Nursery staff interacted very well with children to provide high quality learning experiences. The Support Base provided effective assistance to pupils with significant difficulties.

The headteacher led the school very well and provided very good leadership. She was enthusiastic and provided a clear direction and vision for the school. She had introduced a stronger focus on attainment and initiated a restructuring of curricular programmes to ensure a high standard of education for all pupils. She was aware that the school needed to have a further focus on reading and mathematics to meet the needs of pupils, particularly at the middle stages of the school. The school's achievements were high due to her drive and determination. She encouraged staff to take on additional responsibilities relating to the school improvement plan and to take forward development of the curriculum through their curriculum coordinator roles. The two part-time depute headteachers and principal teacher provided very good support to the headteacher and enthusiastically embraced new developments in the school. The school's approaches to self-evaluation were comprehensive and included reviews of teachers' plans, questionnaires to pupils and parents and classroom observations. The school had also developed pupil interviews to gather their views on the life and work of the school. There was a need to sharpen the focus on self-evaluation to ensure that teaching approaches met the needs of all learners. The quality of leadership and the involvement of all staff in the improvement planning process had shown that the school had a strong capacity to maintain high standards for children and pupils.

Nursery staff were fully aware of the implications of The Scottish Social Services Council's Codes of Practice and registration with the organisation was underway. At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were five recommendations and one requirement. One recommendation had been met and the remaining recommendations and requirement placed upon the provider were being addressed through Falkirk Council.

### **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:

- further develop approaches to active learning across the school; and
- improve pupils' attainment in English language, particularly in reading.

### **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.

Elizabeth Paterson  
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.

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

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting learning needs (nursery class)	very good
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	very 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	good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very 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	very good
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	very good
Leadership of improvement and change (across the school)	very good
Improvement through 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
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>• All parents felt welcome in school.</li> <li>• All felt the school helped their child work to the best of their ability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</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>• All children enjoyed school.</li> <li>• Most pupils felt they got the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</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>• All staff felt very happy with all aspects of the life of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</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.

In 2003 the challenging behaviour and poor attitude of a number of pupils attending school was giving cause for concern to staff, pupils and parents. The headteacher took effective steps to establish a Pupil Support Base to address these particular issues. Funding for three support for learning assistants was allocated from Bo'ness Integrated Learning Community and the school's own devolved budget supported and resourced the Base classroom. Initially the Support Base provided emergency help for pupils struggling to cope. Sensitive support was carefully managed by support staff and the headteacher. The base has had a positive impact for pupils and has improved behaviour, staff-pupil relationships and has supported attainment for a significant number of pupils. The base provides a respite support and outreach service to other schools in the Bo'ness cluster.

## **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 Education, 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee DD1 4QB or by telephoning 01382 576700. 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 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@sps.org.uk](mailto:ask@sps.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.sps.org.uk](http://www.sps.org.uk).

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