



**Allan's Primary School  
Stirling Council  
30 March 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

---

<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.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

## **Contents**

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Allan's Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the areas of Top of the Town and King's Park in the town of Stirling. The roll was 168 when the inspection was carried out in February 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Polite, well behaved children who are achieving well in many areas of the curriculum.
- Very good learning experiences for children.
- Strong and productive links with a wide range of agencies and community groups which enhance children's learning.
- The management team's clear vision and effective leadership to improve children's learning.
- The impact of self-evaluation in improving the school.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Children are happy and settled at school. They enjoy learning and work hard on their class activities. They are enthusiastic and work well independently and together in groups. They particularly enjoy class topics where they can choose their own activities and find out information for themselves. They can talk about their progress and most know what they have to do to improve. Staff are aware that children now need more opportunities to identify their own next steps in learning. Children are becoming increasingly responsible and contribute to the life of the school in a variety of ways. For example, older children are buddies to younger children and organise playground games and wet weather activities.

Children achieve very well in a wide variety of activities including a range of lunch time and after-school activities. They have a clear

understanding of environmental issues and are working together to reduce the school's carbon footprint. As a result, the school has achieved its second green flag from Eco-Schools Scotland. The school has also gained awards for health promotion in recognition of its work. Children won two national awards for their work on values and children's rights. Those at P6 and P7 train as 'school citizens' and use a range of skills very effectively when dealing with younger children and in the playground. They are developing useful skills in enterprise by organising large-scale community events, for example, a Burns Supper.

Across the primary stages, children's progress in English language and mathematics is very good. In recent years, standards of attainment have risen steadily. Almost all children achieve national levels of attainment in listening and talking. Most achieve these levels in reading, writing and mathematics. A majority of children achieve these levels earlier than might be expected in reading, writing and mathematics. The school needs to ensure that these early gains are sustained as children move through the school. Children for whom English is an additional language are making good progress. In English, most children listen well to teachers' instructions and explanations. They talk confidently when discussing their work and are good at listening to others' points of view. At the early stages, children are making very good progress with reading. Older children read with fluency and expression, and many can name and describe the writing styles of their favourite authors. Children write enthusiastically and for a wide range of purposes. All children had produced imaginative, well-written stories, which were illustrated and published as part of a Christmas writing project. At all stages, children's spelling, handwriting and use of punctuation are very good. In mathematics, children at the early stages can add and subtract well. At the middle stages, children can estimate and weigh accurately and can work confidently with fractions and decimals. Children at the upper stages are accurate in mental calculations. They know the properties of three-dimensional objects, can use coordinates and draw nets of shapes as part of design activities. Across the school, children can display information accurately using bar graphs and spreadsheets.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff have made very good progress in reviewing the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. As a result, teacher's plans are more focused on outcomes for children. The school provides a broad and well-balanced range of experiences, and the curriculum is enriched by a range of visiting specialists. Staff are using more active learning approaches to enhance children's experiences. They make very good use of the community and its facilities as a learning resource. The school provides two hours of good quality physical education each week for all children. Those at P6 and P7 are learning French. At P7, staff develop children's personal and social skills well during a residential visit to Dounans Outdoor Centre. Staff at the early stages build on what children have learned in pre-school centres but there is scope to develop this further by providing more challenging play experiences. Staff have taken very positive steps to ensure continuity in children's learning as they move to secondary school.

Staff meet children's learning needs well. Most tasks and activities are set at the right level of difficulty. Staff are starting to take more account of children's interests when planning activities. Most teachers share the purposes of lessons well. Increasingly, staff are encouraging children to think and talk about their own learning and what to do to improve it further. This includes giving children written feedback on their work. Teachers give children an interesting range of homework tasks and this is encouraging them to develop positive attitudes to learning. Children who need additional help with their learning are identified early and supported well. The support for learning teacher and support staff provide well-planned assistance to children in small groups and in classes. Children who require them have individualised educational programmes, with clear learning targets, which are regularly reviewed. This helps children to make progress in their learning.

#### **4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

The school has strong and effective links with a wide range of agencies and community groups and uses them well to enrich children's learning experiences. Staff work well in partnership with professional agencies to support children and their families. The Parent Council is very supportive of the school and is successful in raising funds to buy classroom equipment. The school involves parents in a very wide range of activities. Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters, open evenings and an annual progress report about their child's learning. The school consults parents about aspects of school life and is good at dealing with any concerns. Almost all parents are very positive about the school and its work. Most parents feel that the school takes sufficient account of their views. Staff continue to extend parental involvement in the life and work of the school.

#### **5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

Teachers ask children for their views on how to improve the school and try to take account of their suggestions and ideas. Children take on important roles in the school. For example, through the pupil council, children have a say in improving areas such as the tuck shop and playground. The headteacher has increased the active involvement of staff in improving the school. Teamwork is strong and staff work very effectively together to share practice and take forward new ideas. Staff are committed to improving their knowledge and understanding, and many use their skills and talents to lead curriculum developments in the school. They are encouraged to reflect on their classroom practice and are continually looking at ways to improve it. The headteacher is working with staff to improve self-evaluation in a few classes. This will ensure that the best practice seen in most classes becomes more consistent across the school.

## **6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

Staff have created a warm, caring and supportive ethos in the school. Children are polite and well behaved. Staff are aware of their responsibilities for keeping children safe. They know children very well and ensure they are treated fairly and with respect. They have increasingly high expectations of what children can achieve and are giving them greater responsibility for their own learning. The school promotes diversity well and there are good opportunities for religious observance. Staff celebrate children's achievements through the 'Golden Book', achievement boards and regular assemblies.

## **7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

The whole school community, led by the headteacher, has developed a shared vision for the school. The headteacher is held in very high regard by children, parents and staff. She has inspired staff to work very effectively together. The depute headteacher supports teachers very well and has successfully taken forward key aspects of the school's work. The principal teacher provides a high level of support and her teaching is a model of good practice. Teamwork is effective and staff are enthusiastic about ongoing improvement. Under the headteacher's leadership and with the continued commitment of the staff, the school is very well placed to improve further.

## **8. What happens next?**

The inspection team was able to rely on the school's robust self-evaluation. As a result, it was able to change its focus during the inspection to support further improvements within the school.

The school provides a very good quality of education. Therefore, we will make no further visits in connection with 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 school.

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

- Continue to develop children's learning and achievement, and develop ways to involve children more in planning their own learning.

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 Allan's Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>very good</b>

**HM Inspector:** May Geddes  
30 March 2010

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

If you would like to find out more about our inspections or get an electronic copy of this report, please go to [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation, or if you wish to comment about any aspect of our inspections. You can contact us at [HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

Crown Copyright 2010  
HM Inspectorate of Education