



**Bantaskin Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Falkirk Council  
22 December 2009**

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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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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.

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

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### **1. The school**

Bantaskin Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Camelon, Tamfourhill and Bantaskine areas of Falkirk. The roll was 399, including 60 in the nursery class, when the inspection was carried out in November 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

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

- Positive relationships between staff and children.
- Support for children from Windsor Park School for the Deaf.
- Polite, courteous, well-behaved children.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Children in the nursery class are eager to take part in a variety of well-planned activities. Children follow routines such as snack. They are learning to share and cooperate with each other while playing games and taking turns. They are not yet involved enough in talking about and planning their own learning. At the primary stages, almost all children enjoy their learning and are developing an understanding of what they do well. Most children respond eagerly to well-planned, interesting lessons. Children are not yet involved in setting targets to improve their learning. In most classes, they are beginning to work actively together in pairs and small groups.

In the nursery class, children show increasing confidence and independence in their play activities. Most children enjoy painting and choosing coloured paper to make pictures. They use the computer confidently, for example to make music. At the primary stages, children achieve beyond the classroom, for example, in a local debating competition and technology challenge. They have gained enterprise skills through organising the parents' open day and leading the school assemblies. Children take responsibility effectively as members of the pupil council and the eco committee. Those from P5 to P7 are positive role models to their younger peers through acting as school monitors and 'buddies' to children in the nursery and P1.

Most children in the nursery class are making good progress in early mathematics and early literacy. They are beginning to experiment with early drawing and writing. Most children recognise their own name. A few can write their name and show interest in exploring letters and sounds. Most children listen well and follow instructions. They are developing confidence in counting and a few can identify numbers up to ten. At the primary stages, progress is strong at the early stages but slow at the later stages. The school was unable to provide enough information to show that children with additional support needs were making appropriate progress as yet. Most children attain appropriate national levels in English language and mathematics. Standards have fallen in reading and writing but have held steady in mathematics. A few children are capable of achieving national levels of attainment in English language earlier than they do at present. At the early stages, most children listen well and talk confidently in groups. Most children read well with understanding and read for enjoyment. However, most children from P4 to P7 were not confident in discussing author's choice of language. They write for a variety of purposes and audiences but not at enough length. In mathematics, by P4 most children can perform mathematical calculations accurately. They are confident in using written calculations and in calculating mentally. However, by P7, children's skills in written and mental calculations are not secure enough. Across the school children are not confident in demonstrating their skills in problem solving, using graphs or measurement.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Across the school, staff have started to take more account of children's interests when planning daily activities. In the nursery class, staff plan a curriculum based on different play experiences taking account of children's interests. They provide opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy. They have made a good start to implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Across the primary stages, staff plan a broad range of experiences for children, including enterprise education. Visiting specialists, visits and visitors enhance children's learning. In the early primary stages, staff have made a start to developing children's learning through play. Staff do not build well

enough on prior learning, for example in environmental studies and information and communications technology (ICT). They do not yet develop children's skills in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum fully enough, in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school is working towards providing children with two hours of high quality physical education each week.

In the nursery class, all staff are sensitive to the needs of all children. Staff use their observations of children's learning to inform future planning and respond to children's interests. Activities are not consistently at the right level of difficulty for higher-achieving children. Overall, the school's approach to meeting the learning needs of all children is satisfactory. Most teachers use a good variety of learning and teaching approaches to motivate and encourage children in their learning. However, the level of work is sometimes too easy and the pace of learning too slow, especially for higher-achieving children. The school uses support assistants well in most classes to support children's learning. The learning support teacher provides helpful support, mainly out of class, to individual children and staff. Support plans are now in place for a few children who require them but staff do not involve parents and children regularly enough in setting short term targets. Children from Windsor Park School integrate well. Staff from Windsor Park School help children and staff across the school. Teachers explain lessons well and use questioning appropriately to find out what children know. In a few classes, homework is regular and varied, this needs to be developed further across the school.

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

Staff work well with support agencies to help children progress in their learning. These include staff from Windsor Park School, educational psychologists, health and social work. The school has improved its links with the local community, for example The Rotary Club organise the general knowledge quiz. The Parent Council supports the school well and the active Parent Teacher Association organises regular

fundraising activities. They receive helpful reports on their children's progress. A few parents do not think that the school deals promptly and effectively enough with complaints. Parents have the opportunity to view sensitive health education materials. Children transferring from nursery into P1, and from P7 to Falkirk High School, have appropriate support.

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

Children are able to influence aspects of the school community through the pupil council and the eco group. They help organise the outside play areas and the wet play games. They are happy with how staff respond to any concerns they raise. Parents, staff and children do not have enough say in decisions about learning or improving the work of the school. Staff do not have sufficient opportunities to share good practice to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The headteacher's tracking of children's attainment is not rigorous enough to ensure children progress at an appropriate rate. Approaches to self-evaluation have not focused clearly enough on improving outcomes for children.

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

The school is very welcoming. Staff treat all children fairly and with respect. Children are learning to respect and value other cultures. Staff have very positive relationships with children who feel safe and well cared for. They use notice boards and assemblies to recognise children's achievements. Expectations of children's attainment in some cases are not high enough. Staff are successful in promoting positive behaviour. Children are polite, courteous and well behaved. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and most have received training. The headteacher needs to improve the schools arrangements for keeping records of

vulnerable children. The school provides appropriate opportunities for religious observance.

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

The headteacher is approachable and has improved links with the wider community. He has not yet succeeded in sharing his vision for the school more widely and developing a culture of improvement. The pace of curriculum development has been too slow. The remits of promoted staff do not maximise their contribution to school improvement. The depute headteacher fulfils her remit well. The principal teachers make important contributions to improving aspects of the school's work. The education authority should continue to play a key role in developing leadership for learning at all levels within the school and in building the school's capacity to improve its work.

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

We will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, we may continue to check the improvements the school has made. We may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.

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

- Improve the curriculum across the school in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Raise attainment in English language and mathematics and ensure the learning needs of all children are fully met.
- Use self-evaluation, including monitoring children's learning and progress, more effectively.
- Improve leadership of improvement across the school.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements, five recommendations were made, and all had been addressed.

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 Bantaskin Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Sadie Cushley  
22 December 2009

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

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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.

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