



**Bonnybridge Primary
School and Nursery Class
Falkirk Council
16 December 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

Bonnybridge Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Bonnybridge. The inspection was carried out in October 2008 at which time the roll was 372, including 59 in the nursery. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in session 2006-07.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Polite, well-behaved children who are enthusiastic about learning.
- Very effective approaches to meeting children's learning needs across the primary stages.
- High quality of interaction among staff and children in the nursery.
- Strong partnerships with parents, agencies and the community to support children's learning.
- The work of the headteacher and staff in creating a caring and supportive ethos.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery class are making good progress in all aspects of their development and learning. They are happy, confident and settled. Children listen well to stories and are keen to ask questions. They are developing an awareness of letters of the alphabet. Most can recognise their names and some are able to write them. Children are learning about number through a range of play activities, including using measuring tapes to measure pieces of furniture around the playroom. They play cooperatively with each other and use their imagination well when taking part in role-play activities in the imaginary pet shop. They are developing their understanding of living things and enjoy using magnifying glasses to look at leaves, berries and seeds.

The school has improved standards in listening and talking and, as a result, children are making very good progress. Children respond well to questions and express their own views and opinions clearly and with confidence. They are making good progress in reading and writing. They can read fluently and accurately and describe books they have read. Some children do not enjoy reading for pleasure and staff are looking at ways to address this. Staff are working hard to improve children's skills in writing. Children write for a range of purposes and are developing their skills in organising their ideas. They are benefitting from increased opportunities to link writing activities to other areas of the curriculum. Children are beginning to take some responsibility for their learning by setting targets in writing. There is scope to develop this across other areas of learning. Across the primary stages, children are making very good progress in mathematics. Over the last few years, the school has maintained a high standard in mathematics. Most children are confident in calculations involving number, money and measurement. They are skilled in solving mathematical problems. By P7, children can interpret information from a range of graphs and charts. Children demonstrate a range of skills through environmental studies topics. At P1, they can talk about people in the community who help them. In P4/5, children

are developing their knowledge and understanding of Scottish history through learning about Mary Queen of Scots. Children are developing their enterprise skills through a range of activities and, as a result, were successful in gaining a gold enterprise award. Most children have well-developed skills in the use of information and communications technology. Children across the school achieve in a wide range of activities. These include school shows, sports and residential experiences.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children in the nursery class and primary classes experience a broad curriculum covering the key areas of learning. Children in the nursery learn well through play activities. Across the school, staff are at the early stages of developing the curriculum in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. They have begun to identify ways for children to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Staff now need to organise the curriculum more flexibly to allow children to be more active in their learning. They have improved the programme for personal and social development and, as a result, children's skills in these aspects are developing well. For example, children in P7 are sensitive when discussing the feelings of others. Children do not yet take part each week in two hours of physical education. Visiting specialist teachers of music and art enhance the curriculum and children enjoy very good opportunities to be creative. Staff are beginning to give children at the early primary stages more opportunities to learn through play.

In the nursery class, staff know children well and take account of children's interests when planning activities. They interact very effectively with children to extend their learning. They respond sensitively to children and help them when they need support. Planned activities are not always challenging enough for a few nursery children. In the primary classes, staff plan activities and tasks at an appropriate level of difficulty for almost all children. At times, a few higher achieving children are not always challenged enough. Children are enthusiastic about learning and staff make their classrooms

interesting places in which to learn. They use questioning well to check children's understanding. In examples of effective practice within the school staff share the purpose of lessons with children and review learning at the end. Across the school, children will benefit from more opportunities to develop their skills to be independent learners and to work collaboratively with others. Staff are skilled in identifying and assessing what help is needed for children with additional support needs. They provide effective help to enable those children with additional needs to achieve their learning targets. Children complete a range of homework activities on a regular basis.

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

The support for learning teacher works very effectively with children who have additional support needs. She gives helpful advice to staff to meet children's learning needs. Support for learning assistants work well to support children experiencing difficulty. Staff have formed very effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies outside the school, such as educational psychology, speech and language therapy, social work, health services and local businesses. These partnerships have been successful in supporting children to make good progress in their learning. The Parent Council provides the school with very good support. The school communicates successfully to parents through newsletters and information evenings. Overall, parents are pleased about the work of the school. A few would like to have more meetings to discuss their child's progress. Staff prepare children well for their move from nursery to primary and from P7 to Denny High School.

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

Children are actively involved in helping to improve their school community through for example, the eco committee and pupil council. Children are aware of how to care for the environment and, as a result, were successful in gaining an Eco Schools Scotland green flag. The school uses a variety of approaches well to identify its strengths and where it needs to improve. Staff take good account of the views of parents and pupils when planning school improvements. Staff work well together to improve the work of the school. They are enthusiastic about taking part in working groups linked to the school improvement plan. They have started to talk about good practice in teaching with staff from Denny High School and other associated primary schools. Staff now need to build on this activity and share good practice with each other within the school. As a priority they need to assess children's progress more closely to help them improve performance in writing.

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

The school is very welcoming and provides a very high standard of care for all children. Staff create a happy and safe learning environment where all children are treated fairly and with respect. Children feel safe and well cared for. Staff have very positive relationships with children. They have high expectations of what children can achieve. The school successfully promotes healthy lifestyles and has achieved Health Promoting School status. Children's achievements are recognised on noticeboards and at assemblies. Staff are successful in promoting positive behaviour. They consistently follow agreed whole school approaches and, as a result, children respond positively. Children are polite, courteous and very well behaved. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and all have received training. Children are learning to respect and value other cultures. They regularly take part in religious observance through assemblies.

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

The headteacher is highly committed to the school and is well respected by pupils, parents and staff. He is well supported by the depute head teacher and principal teacher. Together they have carried out a range of activities to monitor classroom practice and children's progress in learning. The headteacher and management team work effectively together and know the school and pupils well. The depute headteacher has successfully developed aspects of the curriculum, including health education. The principal teacher has successfully promoted a strong sense of teamwork within the nursery. Staff are enthusiastic about improving learning and teaching. They are developing their confidence and expertise in implementing new approaches to learning and teaching, in line with national initiatives. As a result of good self-evaluation in the school, staff have identified appropriate areas for improvement. The school is well placed to take forward the development of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits following 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 schools.

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

- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Continue to involve children more actively in their learning by providing more opportunities for independent and collaborative working.
- Further develop self-evaluation approaches to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there was one requirement, which had been addressed. In addition, five recommendations were made, and these had all 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 Bonnybridge Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary School

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	very good

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

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

The curriculum	Good
Improvement through self-evaluation	Good

HM Inspector: Janie McManus
16 December 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

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