



**Carronshore Primary
School and Nursery Class
Falkirk
Falkirk Council
24 August 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² 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. 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.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school

Carronshore Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Carronshore near Falkirk. The roll was 353, including 82 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in June 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. The school includes a base which offers enhanced provision for 18 children who need additional support with their learning.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Confident, happy and motivated children.
- The integration of children who require additional support within mainstream classes.
- The improving trend in attainment in writing.
- Children's high-quality artwork, displayed throughout the school.
- Teamwork amongst all staff in taking forward school improvements.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Almost all children are confident, happy and settled. In the nursery, children are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and engage fully with all activities. Although staff talk to children about their learning, they need to explain more clearly what they are expecting the children to learn and how. In the primary classes, most children feel safe and well cared for. Children are treated fairly by staff. They are developing confidence and a sense of responsibility through acting as playground buddies and helping in the day-to-day running of the school. Children supported in the enhanced provision are made to feel very much part of the school by their peers and school staff. Children's views are taken into account. For example, they have been consulted about the use of space within the school building. In most classes, children are well behaved and focus on their work. In most classes, discussions between teachers and individual

children about their learning focus on strengths and how to progress. In a few classes, children are not clear about their own strengths and what they need to do to improve.

Almost all nursery children are developing independence by joining in with daily routines. For example, they enjoy taking responsibility for picking up litter or organising art materials. Nursery children are involved in whole school activities and events such as the school's eco group. Staff need to encourage further children to be more independent. In the primary classes, children's confidence is being encouraged as staff recognise increasingly children's wider achievements. This is also increasing children's ability to achieve success in different areas. Children's achievements are celebrated in assemblies, newsletters and on the school website. Parents are becoming more actively involved in sharing children's success outside of school.

In the nursery class, almost all children are doing very well. They are developing a very good vocabulary through play. In group activities, children listen very well to staff. A few children have personal reading books that they have created for themselves and most are beginning to write. Almost all children use early mathematical language confidently in play activities. In the primary classes, overall attainment is very good with high standards being maintained. Almost all children achieve appropriate levels in reading, writing, listening and talking. This follows a sustained period of decisive improvement particularly in writing. Most children achieve appropriate levels in mathematics. The children supported by the enhanced provision are progressing well in language and mathematics. Many children across stages are achieving higher levels of attainment than expected in mathematics, reading and writing. The children in the older classes show a good understanding of how they should change their language to suit an audience or group. Almost all children hear and use Scots well in a variety of situations. Almost all children's reading skills are developing well. Children regularly write at a good length for a variety of purposes in different contexts. Children are confident in using numbers and solving problems when they have to apply what they have learned in

different areas of mathematics. Written work is well organised and well presented. Teachers and children use information and communications technology (ICT) very well to enhance learning. For example, children can use programmable toys to show they understand ideas such as clockwise and anti-clockwise.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

In the nursery, staff plan activities using the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Planning starts from the needs of the children and is firmly based on learning through play. Increasingly, activities are planned to provide experiences that reinforce children's literacy and numeracy. In the primary classes, good progress has been made in linking different areas of the curriculum together through themes and events. For example, an all-day event, *Create @Carronshore*, involved all children in a series of activities that promoted health and wellbeing, sustainability and expressive arts. Staff within the enhanced provision need to take more account of the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* when planning lessons. Children's learning in physical education, music and art is well supported by specialist teachers. The artwork displayed throughout the school is of a very high standard. The school does not yet provide two hours of high-quality physical education each week.

In the nursery, activities and resources are well matched to the learning needs and abilities of individuals most of the time. This strength needs to be built on further. The organisation of the nursery needs to be reviewed to ensure that all children are fully engaged all of the time. In most primary classes, tasks, activities and resources meet the learning needs of children well, but in other classes planning needs to be improved. This will help engage different ability groups of children better in their learning and meet their needs fully. Children who require additional support with their learning are well supported within the school and the enhanced provision. Steps now need to be taken to express targets for their learning in child-friendly language so that the children themselves can be fully involved in setting and reviewing them.

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

Across the school, staff have very positive relationships with parents and families. For example, *Parents at Carronshore Together (PACT)* encourages parents to become more involved in the life and work of the nursery. The school is well supported by the Parent Council and also welcomes families to support children's learning through volunteering. A group of 'granny helpers' help in school every week. Effective partnerships between the school and other services, such as speech and language therapy, are providing individual children with the support they need to make progress in school and in the enhanced provision. Support staff work very effectively with teachers to support children's learning throughout the school. Transition between the nursery class and the school needs to involve further opportunities for nursery and primary children to learn together. The transition between the school and Larbert High School is well developed. The school deals effectively with the few complaints it receives.

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

Children and staff are very much involved in improving their school community. They often work alongside parents and local groups to do this. Children take important leadership roles and have contributed to school improvement through, for example, the Eco-Schools Scotland scheme, where they have achieved two green flag awards. Staff and children identify strongly with their school and take great pride in being a part of it. Most staff take leading roles in school improvement and work very well in teams. Their views help shape future improvement priorities. They have made good progress in improving planning and making learning more meaningful for children. The school needs to involve all staff more fully in evaluating the work of the nursery and school. All staff need to be fully aware of school improvement priorities and the impact they are having. The headteacher seeks the views of parents and children on the work of the school. A few parents

are uncertain about how their views are taken into account by the school. Staff should look into how they might communicate more clearly in this area.

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

Throughout the school, staff, children, parents and other partners enjoy very good relationships. Staff promote strongly inclusive approaches for all children. Every child's care and welfare is central to the work of the school and all staff have been trained in child protection. Throughout the school, staff promote equality and diversity in a positive way. Most teachers have high expectations of children's academic work and behaviour. Almost all children respond well to staff and are well behaved and well mannered. Children recognise that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with fairly and resolved appropriately almost all of the time. Representatives of the local churches work closely with the school to support children's learning and development. The school has appropriate arrangements for religious observance.

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

The school has a clear sense of direction and focus on what it needs to do for children. The headteacher, who is highly committed to the school, has established very positive relationships with staff, children, families and other services. She ensures that all staff can contribute to school improvement through effective teamwork and by leading key areas themselves. Staff feel very well supported by the headteacher. The two deputies work very productively with the headteacher in taking the school forward. Children and their parents also contribute well to the school's sense of purpose and direction. Overall, the school is well placed to build on its strengths and continue to improve learning and achievement for all.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, 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 schools.

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

- Further develop all children's understanding of their strengths and targets for learning.
- In the primary classes, ensure that tasks are always appropriately challenging for all children.
- In the enhanced provision, use *Curriculum for Excellence* to improve learning.
- Improve self-evaluation to help prioritise areas for improvement and increase their impact on learning and achievement.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements and no recommendations made.

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 Carronshore Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Alasdair Eadie
24 August 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

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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 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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