



**Dedridge Primary School
Livingston
West Lothian Council
25 May 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

Dedridge Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Dedridge East area of Livingston. The roll was 231 when the inspection was carried out in March 2010. This included 30 in the Resource for children from across the local authority with communication and language difficulties. There are 12 children full time in the Resource and 18 on shared placements. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. The number of pupils registered for free school meals was well above the national average.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Happy, confident children who are positive about their learning.
- The strong collegiate approach of staff to supporting all children and improving their learning experiences.
- The use of outdoors to enrich children's learning.
- Partnerships with parents and the local community.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children engage well in their learning and almost all are motivated and try to do their best. They work well with each other in pairs and in groups and are involved increasingly in active learning. They enjoy learning outdoors, using the school gardens and local area. They use information and communications technology effectively and independently. Children are beginning to evaluate their own and others' work but are not always clear enough about how to improve their own learning. Children in the Resource respond well to a range of learning activities and enjoy using their timetables with visual supports to help them make choices in their learning experiences. Most work well together and respect and trust staff. Children feel safe and cared for in school.

Across the school and Resource, children broaden their learning and achievement through out-of-class activities. Children are proud of their achievements, including winning prizes and receiving commendations in the West Lothian Stellar and Celebrating Success Awards. They have also enjoyed success as national finalists in gymnastics competitions and recently won the prize for best play at the French

Institute. They are developing citizenship skills through a variety of learning opportunities, for example, by taking on roles in the pupil council and health/eco group, as litter busters and playground friends. They broaden their learning experiences through taking part in educational trips to places of interest, both locally and further afield. Most children take part in after-school clubs which cater for interests in sports, art, dance and music. They are developing confidence as they take part in a range of opportunities for performance, both to their peers and wider audiences. Children have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living.

Across the school, most children are making good progress in their learning. Most have attained appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last few years, there have been no clear trends in attainment. In English language children are developing their skills well in presenting talks to an audience. Most children listen well to each other and their teachers. By P7, most children are enthusiastic and confident readers. New approaches to teaching writing are having an impact and are raising attainment. Across the school, most children write well for a variety of purposes. In mathematics, most children can do written and mental calculations accurately. They can display and interpret information from graphs. They would benefit from more help to understand when and how to apply problem solving strategies. Teachers now need to check regularly that all children are making appropriate progress in their learning. Children in the Resource are developing literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts. They are developing their confidence and self esteem by participating in a range of activities as part of the school community.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children at all stages have opportunities for learning in a broad range of curricular areas. The outdoor learning environment is used well to deliver aspects of the curriculum, particularly in health and wellbeing. Children have opportunities to develop skills in art. Those in the upper stages benefit from learning German or French. Children from P1 to

P5 have opportunities for learning in aspects of other European languages. Teachers are planning programmes of learning linked to *Curriculum for Excellence* and are developing children's literacy skills across areas of the curriculum. There are effective and developing transition programmes with the neighbouring nursery school. Children visit the nursery to lead story telling sessions and P6 act as buddies to the younger children. Children in P7 benefit from learning with visiting teachers from the local secondary school. This helps them transfer with confidence to James Young High School. All children do not yet benefit from two hours of good quality physical education each week, in line with national expectations.

Staff know children well. In most lessons, staff meet children's needs through well-planned and motivating learning experiences. Most tasks are set at an appropriate level but do not always make children think deeply enough about their learning. Sometimes children are capable of learning at a faster pace. Most teachers use an appropriate variety of teaching approaches. They give clear explanations and share with children what they expect them to learn. Staff should involve children more in reviewing their progress and in identifying the next steps for their own learning. Teachers should plan to provide further activities which help children to become more independent learners and to think for themselves. Teachers provide regular homework although this needs to be more varied and made more interesting. The school has very effective approaches for identifying, monitoring and assisting those children with additional support needs. Children with individualised educational programmes have appropriate learning targets which are reviewed regularly with parents. Support for children in the Resource is well planned and responsive to their needs. Pupil support workers provide children with effective encouragement and support.

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

Staff use effective partnerships with support agencies, including educational psychology, speech and language therapists and outreach services to support children's learning. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about school events. They receive helpful and informative reports on their children's progress. Parents enjoy the opportunity to take part in 'busy start' when they share learning activities with their own children in class. The Friends of Dedridge support the work of the school. They run a monthly Fairtrade café for parents and have been successful at fundraising. The school consults with parents over sensitive health issues. The Resource has very strong partnerships with parents. Families think that communication between the Resource and children's homes is very good. Parents are involved appropriately in setting learning targets for their children and participate fully in reviews. The school deals effectively with any concerns or complaints raised by parents. The school has good links with the local community. This includes children being actively involved in the Dedridge Environmental Ecology Project (DEEP).

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

Children are proud of their school. They enjoy taking responsibility on the pupil council and health/eco group. At each stage, they take their responsibilities seriously including as health and safety representatives, managing the library and acting as hosts at school events. The pupil council has elected members from across the school and the Resource. They are proud of their role in enhancing the playground with artwork and choosing appropriate playground equipment. The health/eco group is working towards achieving a second Eco-Schools Scotland green flag award. The school has a well-planned approach to evaluating the quality of education it provides. The headteacher and other members of the management team visit classes to observe learning and provide staff with useful

feedback. They monitor the work of children to ensure they are making appropriate progress. Teachers act as critical friends and share classroom experiences with each other to improve children's learning.

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

Staff have very positive relationships with children and are highly committed to their care and welfare. They know how to keep children safe and follow child protection procedures. Children's achievements are celebrated in and beyond the school through assemblies, high quality displays and in the local press. Children have regular opportunities to participate in religious observance. Appropriate arrangements are in place to respond to any incidents of bullying and children are confident that their concerns are acted upon. Children learn about valuing and respecting different races and cultures. They feel that they are treated fairly in school.

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

There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school and Resource provision. Staff work well together in a professionally and personally supportive manner. The headteacher is well respected by the staff and wider community. She has developed a strong collegiate approach and is well supported by the very effective work of the principal teachers. Distributed leadership is evident in the variety of roles and responsibilities across staff. The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school is a very positive feature. Teachers and pupil support workers lead a wide range of activities beyond the classroom, including after-school activities, which help to build a strong school ethos. Children take on leadership roles and eagerly engage in activities to improve their school.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

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

- Continue to develop learning activities which help children to become more independent learners and to think for themselves.
- Develop further the approaches for tracking the progress of all learners to ensure improvements in attainment and ensure children understand what they need to do next to improve their learning.
- Continue to help children learn how to work together more effectively by involving them in activities which develop appropriate skills.

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 Dedridge Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Carol McDonald
25 May 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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