



**Denny Primary School
Falkirk Council
25 August 2009**

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

Denny Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the centre of Denny. The roll was 213 when the inspection was carried out in June 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for around 15 months.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children who are happy and confident and who engage enthusiastically in their learning.
- Strong staff teamwork and contribution to improving education.
- Work with parents, agencies and businesses to extend children's learning.
- The headteacher's leadership of learning and development of a culture of improvement.

3. Examples of good practice

- Development of community links.
- Partnership working with speech and language therapists.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are motivated and engage enthusiastically in tasks set by their teachers. They work very well on activities without close supervision from an adult. Children respond well to very good opportunities to work with one another. They contribute confidently to discussions and work very well with each other during group tasks. They engage in discussion about their work and receive clear feedback on tasks. In most classes, they have opportunities to be

active in their learning. This good practice is being developed at the early stages with support from the education authority.

Across the school, children are developing personal and social skills well, for example through involvement in the *Creating Confident Kids*' programme. They are gaining responsibility and increasing their active citizenship skills, for example, as members of the pupil council. Children are learning how to keep safe and healthy through activities including a 'health' week. They are making good progress in developing their skills in information and communications technology (ICT) which they use across their learning. Children are developing enterprise skills through a range of initiatives and projects including the production of a class magazine at P5/6. At P7, children are making good progress in developing skills in French and are confidently able to order refreshments in a café. Children benefit from regular opportunities to achieve success in and out of school. Those in the drama group recently presented a successful production of *The Wizard of Oz in Denny*. They enjoy working as helpers and serving on school committees such as the eco committee and the pupil council. Children can describe how they have developed confidence and friendships during a visit to Dalguise outdoor centre. The school now needs to track children's achievements more systematically to help ensure children develop an appropriate range of skills.

Attainment in reading has improved in recent years but attainment in writing and mathematics have been variable. Children are now progressing well in all aspects of English language and mathematics. At all stages, children listen well to others and contribute confidently to discussions. At P7, children read fluently with expression and can describe key features of different types of books. By P7, children can write well for a range of purposes. In mathematics, children can do written and mental calculations and problem solving well. At all stages, children take part enthusiastically in mental mathematics. They use ICT regularly to collect, organise and display information.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum. Children have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills across other areas of learning in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. For example, children at the early stages were writing fairy stories and creating a castle as part of their topic work. Staff now need to revise the environmental studies programme as it does not yet give children enough opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills in different contexts. The school is working towards providing two hours of physical education (PE) each week for children. Visiting specialists provide good support for children in drama and PE. Staff use visits and visitors to the school to enrich children's learning.

Overall, children's learning needs are well met. Tasks and activities, including homework, are at the right level of difficulty for most children. Teachers give clear explanations and share the purpose of lessons. They plan a range of stimulating activities which encourage children to be actively involved in their learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend and challenge children's thinking. They provide clear feedback to help children understand what they need to do to improve their learning. Teachers now need to use assessments better to ensure an appropriate pace of learning for all children. The school has well-developed and effective approaches for identifying, monitoring and supporting children with additional learning needs. Well-planned individualised educational programmes help children to achieve success. The support for learning teacher provides effective help for children needing either extra help or opportunities to extend their thinking. Children receiving support from other agencies need more coordinated provision to help them progress.

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

The school has developed successful partnerships with a range of agencies, most notably speech and language therapists, to support

children's learning. Staff from Glasgow Metropolitan College have worked very effectively with children to help them learn about the world of work. Parents of children requiring additional support for learning contribute to reviewing their children's learning targets. Helpful newsletters keep parents informed about the work of the school, and text messages remind them about meetings. Parents regularly receive information on children's progress at parent consultation meetings and in informative annual written reports. Staff now plan to develop ways of involving parents more fully in their children's learning. Appropriate procedures are in place for dealing with concerns and complaints. Arrangements to support children moving from nurseries to P1 and from P7 to Denny High School are well planned.

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

Children enjoy taking responsibility across the school. They take their duties seriously when presenting at assemblies and acting as playground buddies. The school has achieved a silver Eco-Schools Scotland award and a Level 1 Enterprise award. Children have worked successfully with local conservation groups and an artist to improve aspects of the local environment. Staff discuss aspects of learning and teaching and share good practice in order to improve the school. The headteacher seeks and takes account of the views of children, parents and staff when making decisions about the school improvement plan. The plan contains priorities aimed at improving aspects of children's learning, for example, improvements in writing and the promotion of positive behaviour. Working together in development groups, staff are improving aspects of the work of the school. The headteacher, depute head and principal teacher lead staff in monitoring the work of the school. They use the information they gather to ensure that children have high quality learning experiences. They now need to use this data to ensure an appropriate pace of learning and progress for all children. The headteacher and senior management team are clear about areas of practice which the school needs to improve.

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

The school is welcoming and children enjoy learning at school. They are polite and very well behaved. They believe they are treated fairly and with respect. Along with adult members of the school community, they identify strongly with the school. Staff have very positive relationships with children and have high expectations of behaviour and achievement. They are highly committed to children's care and welfare. The school has an appropriate policy for child protection and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Children feel safe and well cared for in school. Equality and cultural diversity are promoted well throughout the school. Staff regularly share children's achievements through assemblies and high quality displays. The school successfully promotes healthy lifestyles. Appropriate procedures are in place to monitor and encourage children's attendance at school.

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

The headteacher, along with staff, is highly committed to the school and the children. All members of the school community have worked together to develop a clear vision for the school. Staff take opportunities to lead work related to improvement priorities. They are developing their leadership roles through taking responsibility for coordinating aspects of the work of the school. Teachers and learning assistants feel they are able to try new approaches in their classrooms. The school is well placed to improve further.

9. 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.

- Increase the pace of learning to ensure that all children progress at an appropriate rate.
- Further improve attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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 Denny Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

Managing Inspector: Jacqueline Horsburgh
25 August 2009

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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