



**Easdale Primary School
and Nursery Class
Isle of Seil
Argyll & Bute 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

Easdale Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the communities of the Isle of Seil and Easdale Island and is located near the village of Ellenanbeich. The roll was 47, including ten children in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in June 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Motivating learning experiences for children in the nursery and at the early stages in the primary.
- Care and welfare provided by staff across the school.
- Effective teamwork amongst staff and good links with parents and the wider community to enhance children's learning.

3. Examples of good practice

- Effective continuity and more active learning in the nursery through to the early stages in primary.
- Developing children's skills in citizenship through working together on environmental and community projects.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery class are happy and making good progress. They engage very enthusiastically in their learning and are confident in making choices in their play. Most concentrate well on their chosen activities. They enjoy shared learning experiences with children at P1/P2. At the primary stages, most children are motivated and keen to learn. Most cooperate well with their teachers and with each other. They like learning outdoors, for example, when cleaning the local beach and learning about the environment. Children, particularly at

the early stages, are actively engaged in talking about what they are learning. They are beginning to have clearer ideas about how to improve their work and have begun to keep learning diaries.

In the nursery, children play well together and enter imaginatively into role-play activities. Children across the school are progressing well in art, music and physical education. They have achieved success as individuals and groups in choirs and in local music and dance festivals. They are developing their skills in sports and games in after school activities. Children work as responsible citizens, planting flowers around the village hall and fund raising for a range of charities. Children at P7 willingly take on roles of responsibility such as looking after younger peers and organising clan challenge events. Through their 'eco-clan' committee, children have worked well with staff to gain a silver award from Eco-Schools Scotland.

In the nursery class, most children are able to recognise numbers and are beginning to solve simple problems. All children can recognise their own name in print. A few older children are starting to write their own names. Most children talk clearly and with purpose. At the primary stages, children are making good progress in English language and mathematics. Most children are achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. A number of children achieve these levels earlier than expected. Most children listen well to the teacher and to each other. Children can talk confidently to their peers and individual adults but are less skilled in talking to larger audiences. Most children enjoy reading and can explain why they like their favourite books and authors. Children at the early stages are developing very good writing skills. Children at P4-P7 are writing for real audiences. For example, they have produced a book of their poetry, including some in the Scots language, for sale to parents. However, their writing, including spelling and presentation, is not consistently of a high enough standard. In mathematics, the majority of children are good at mental and written calculations. Most children are able to use information and communications technology (ICT) to present their work in graphs and tables. However,

children are not always good at explaining how to solve problems in mathematics.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff in the nursery and primary classes plan effectively for children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. They have made a good start in devising new approaches in line with national advice in *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff have begun to develop children's skills in literacy and numeracy across all areas of their learning. They have recently introduced new approaches to developing their skills in listening and talking. Across the school, staff make good use of the local environment, for example the seashore, to support children's learning. The school is developing children's skills in enterprise and citizenship well, particularly through the '*Working Together*' (WOTOG) programme. Staff promote healthy lifestyles and provide all children with two hours of quality physical education each week.

In the nursery class, staff know the children well and match activities to their individual needs. At the primary stages, staff plan tasks and activities to meet the learning needs of the majority of children. They share the purpose of the learning with children and provide good explanations. At times, teachers are not taking sufficient account of assessments of children's progress when planning learning. Sometimes they set the same task for all children with the result it is either too difficult or too easy for a number of children. Staff are skilled in identifying children who require additional support in their learning. They work well with the Area Network Support (ANS) teacher and other specialists to plan activities to meet children's specific learning needs. The ANS teacher, in partnership with the class teacher, works effectively with individuals and groups of children to help them make progress. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress in their learning. Support and classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to meeting children's learning needs.

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

Staff work very effectively with a number of people to support children's learning. These include the educational psychologist, the speech therapist and staff in Oban High school. Children receive very effective support in transferring from the nursery class into P1 and from P7 into secondary school. Volunteers from the local community help children in their gardening work and give talks about their experiences in events in the past. The school successfully involves parents in the life of the school. For example, parents participate in the WOTOG programme and in after-school sports. There is an active Parent Council. Parents find progress reports clear and informative. Staff are beginning to involve parents more actively in children's learning targets. The school deals effectively with complaints from parents and members of the community.

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

Through the eco-clan committee and the 'suggestion box' children can propose ideas for change. Children have contributed to improving the school grounds, the seating arrangements in the dining hall and the new learning diaries. They are beginning to have opportunities to influence learning within the classroom. Staff are strongly committed to improving the learning and are open to new ideas and approaches. The headteacher encourages and supports staff to lead these changes. This has resulted in more effective working between nursery and early years staff and more active learning at these stages. The headteacher consults with staff about priorities for improvement. In some areas, progress has been slower and the impact on children's learning not sufficiently strong. For example, children at the middle and upper stages are not yet benefitting sufficiently from more active approaches to engage them in their learning. The processes to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are not sufficiently

focused on improvements in children achievements and learning experiences.

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

Staff are sensitive to children's needs and provide high-quality pastoral care. They are alert to any concerns and fully aware of their responsibilities to protect children. Relationships are positive and most children behave well. The school recognises and celebrates children's achievement well at assemblies, through wall displays, at concerts and in regular newsletters. Staff expectations for children's attainment are not always high enough. Children have an appropriate understanding of their own culture. They are learning the Gaelic language and Scottish country dancing and they enjoy celebrating national festivals. They are also finding out about other cultures and religions. Children have a good awareness of how to live safe and healthy lives.

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

The headteacher is strongly committed to the school. She has developed effective relationships with staff and has involved parents and the wider community in the life of the school. She has supported change effectively and worked well with partner schools to develop aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff have willingly taken on responsibility for introducing new approaches. The headteacher needs to share more fully with staff, children and parents her vision for the school. Planning for improvement needs to focus clearly on improved outcomes for all children. With the continued support from the education authority, the school has the capacity to build on existing good practice and move forward.

9. What happens next?

We are confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in the light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits following 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.

- Use self-evaluation more effectively to focus on improving outcomes for children.
- Raise attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Extend active learning approaches across all stages to involve children more effectively in their learning.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there was one requirement. This has not been addressed. In addition, two recommendations were made, one has been addressed. The other regarding information to parents is currently being addressed.

Ongoing requirement.

'The provider must ensure repairs are made to the school wall to enable full use of the area for outdoor activities.'

SSI 2002/114 Regulation 10(1) (b)

Timescale : with immediate effect.

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 Easdale Primary School and Nursery Class.

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

HM Inspector: Mairi Timmons

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