



**Kirkhill Primary School
Newton Mearns
East Renfrewshire Council
9 June 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.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. Examples of good practice
4. How well do children learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

1. The school

Kirkhill Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Whitecraigs and Broom areas of Newton Mearns in East Renfrewshire. The roll was 575 when the inspection was carried out in March 2009. Pupils' attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Polite, articulate, well-behaved children and their very effective contribution to improving the school.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics.
- The impact of positive and effective approaches to active learning at the early stages.
- A wide range of activities which enhance children's learning out-of-hours.
- Very effective partnership working with other agencies and the considerable parental support given to the school.
- The commitment of staff to leading learning and improvement and in meeting children's needs.
- Strong teamwork amongst the management team, teachers and support staff in improving the school.

3. Examples of good practice

- Approaches to developing *Curriculum for Excellence* in active learning at P1.
- Supporting children to develop a healthier lifestyle through monitoring and tracking of out-of-school-hours activities.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are very well motivated and engaged in their learning. They are given a very good range of opportunities to embrace the wider curriculum. They are developing a very good range of healthy living and physical skills by taking part in the significant number of out-of-school-hours clubs. Enterprise and citizenship are important parts of school life and staff create a range of opportunities to involve children in these areas. At P4, children organised a very effective 'Fairtrade' sale and at P7, children organised a successful 'anti-litter' campaign over several months. Children are confident in applying their presentation skills to share their ideas at assemblies, using information and communications technology. For example, they have compiled a very detailed presentation in relation to their planned outdoor classroom. Children take responsibility for a number of aspects of school life. They support one another well as 'buddies'. They produce a termly school newspaper, and are involved actively in the pupil council and eco committee. Children achieve very well across this wide range of experiences. They are making very good progress in reading and mathematics. The school has maintained consistently high standards in recent years. Almost all children listen well and confidently share their ideas during discussion. They develop their listening and talking skills well through working together in groups, making presentations at assemblies and taking part in school performances. Children read with confidence and fluency. At the early stages, children are making very good progress in developing literacy skills across the curriculum. At P7, children are skilled in discussing texts and are successful in researching information. Across the school, children write well for a range of purposes and are making good progress. At the upper stages, a number of children produce high-quality writing. A few children would benefit from knowing what they specifically need to do to improve their writing further. Almost all children are achieving or exceeding national standards in mathematics and are very secure in all aspects. By P7, children are confident and quick in solving mental calculations. They are able to handle data well

and use spreadsheets to organise this. All are confident in sharing how they would solve problems.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children with an appropriately broad curriculum and all aspects are covered well. At the early stages, teachers have made a very good start to developing a number of aspects of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. At all stages, staff have taken productive steps to implement recent national guidance on science, technology and health and wellbeing. French is delivered across the school and P1 children are confident in their use of aspects of French. Teachers are developing effectively children's personal, social and citizenship skills through their enterprise activities and community involvement projects. They involve members of the community and parents in aspects of children's learning, including their health and careers days. All children benefit from more than two hours of good quality physical education each week, one session of which is outdoors.

Staff meet children's needs very well. Most teachers set tasks and activities at the right level for children. Support for children with identified additional learning needs is managed and led very effectively by a depute headteacher. Staff take very good steps to ensure that children with additional support needs are well included and achieve as well as they can. Children with English as an additional language are making very good progress. Support assistants work directly with children to assist them in their learning. Staff know children well and are focused on enabling children to be confident and successful in their learning. They involve children very well in their learning activities. Teachers share the purpose of lessons with children and check what they have learned. Children are very eager to learn. They are very well behaved and carry out tasks as instructed. A few higher achieving children could be challenged even further, by learning at a faster rate.

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

A range of external support agencies work very well with the school to support children's learning. There are very good and productive partnerships with psychological services, social work, health agencies, speech and language therapists, occupational health and outreach support. All staff work very well together to support children in their learning. The acting principal teacher, with responsibility for inclusion, is providing very effective support and advice to staff in relation to behaviour management. There are strong learning partnerships within the immediate school cluster and with the associated secondary school. Parents, including a very active Parent Council, give considerable support to the school. Open days and curriculum information events are very well attended. A number of parents are active in supporting the school on a daily basis through helping in classes, with active learning and in the library. The school keeps parents very well informed through regular newsletters, curriculum information leaflets, parents' meetings and annual progress reports. The school works well with others to give children a wide and varied experience of activities which often leads to continued involvement in local clubs. Effective transition arrangements are in place from the significant number of pre-school establishments to P1 and from P7 to Mearns Castle High School. The school follows the education authority's formal complaints procedure.

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

There is a very good range of opportunities for children to take responsibility within the school. Children carry out these duties with confidence and take their leadership roles seriously. They talk enthusiastically about their roles on the eco committee and in the pupil council. They are working well with Carts' Greenspace to design and develop their outdoor classroom. Children have supported a local National Trust garden to help restock their fishpond. Children's views

are regularly sought and acted upon. The management team have recently allocated time for teachers to meet individually with children to discuss their targets for learning. The school has gained a local award for health promotion. Staff have a strong commitment to ensure children have the skills and information they need to help them make healthy lifestyle choices, both now and in the future. Staff regularly discuss and share their practice. They have led a number of curricular developments and are keen to continue to improve their teaching. A number of teachers have successfully completed 'project leadership' courses. Staff have a strong commitment to supporting the children in the school. An effective range of approaches is used to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The management team check the quality of the school's work in a number of effective ways. Teachers visit each other's classrooms to observe learning and teaching and to share good practice. Senior managers should now improve how they use information about children's progress to help some children achieve even more.

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

The school is very welcoming. Staff are caring and supportive. Children are very eager learners who are polite and courteous and treat everyone with respect. They are very articulate and well behaved. Staff, parents and children have high expectations of attendance, achievement and behaviour. Children's achievements are recognised, celebrated and shared. They are encouraged to achieve in a wide range of activities. Staff are confident in their knowledge of the school's child protection procedures. Children feel that they are treated equally and fairly and that their views are valued. Assemblies and 'together times' take place regularly. Across the school, children are very confident in all aspects of their learning and development.

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

The school is in the process of reviewing its aims and values. Staff, children and parents will contribute to this review. This will give all involved with the school a shared and common goal. The headteacher and senior management team have worked together very well to take effective steps to improve the learning environment, and involve parents more fully in the life of the school. Together, they have improved aspects of the curriculum and children's success in wider achievements. The headteacher and depute headteachers gather the views of children, parents and staff about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The senior management team and principal teachers work very effectively to support and encourage staff in delivering school improvements. Morale in the school is high and all staff work very well together as a team. They have a shared commitment to helping the school to continue to improve. Staff are successful in promoting a positive ethos and strong sense of teamwork. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

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.

- Continue to review and develop the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Make more effective use of information about children's progress to increase pace and challenge for children.

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 Kirkhill Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Isabel Robb
9 June 2009

To find out more about inspections or get an electronic copy of this report go to www.hmie.gov.uk. Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team (BMCT) if you wish to enquire about our arrangements for translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at www.spsso.org.uk.

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

Crown Copyright 2009
HM Inspectorate of Education