



**Newfields Primary School
and Nursery Class
Dundee City Council
8 December 2009**

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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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

Newfields Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the north-east area of Dundee. The roll was 211, including 26 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in October 2009. The school has an enhanced provision for children with a range of additional support needs. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Caring and supportive ethos that includes all children.
- Confident and happy children who enjoy their learning.
- The headteacher's leadership in school improvement.
- Teamwork of all staff.
- Staff support to parents and families.

3. Example of good practice

- Breaking down barriers to learning.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class, children are happy and settled. They are learning their simple routines. Children are becoming confident when choosing toys and making decisions when playing. All children are learning to form friendships, play together and to share and take turns. Staff recognise they now need to increase children's independence in learning. Across the primary classes, children benefit from stimulating learning experiences. Almost all children work very well together in pairs and small groups. They are motivated and eager to learn. Children are becoming more independent and can take on responsibility for their learning. At all stages, children are active in

their learning. They are identifying targets to improve their own work. Across the school, children are successfully planning aspects of their class topic work. In the enhanced provision, almost all children are motivated and on task. They enjoy a wide range of learning experiences which are set in meaningful contexts.

In the nursery class children enjoy using computers. They experiment with simple percussion instruments to create their own music. Children can talk about planting and growing as part of their interest in “Jack and the Beanstalk”. Across the primary classes, children achieve well both inside and outside the classroom. At P1, they are developing a good awareness of people who help them. At all stages, children achieve success in music and have used their musical skills to perform in the Dundee Arts Festival. Children can explain what they need to do to keep healthy. They talk positively about their work, for example on positive relationships and personal safety. In the enhanced provision, children are learning to name different fruits effectively. Across the school, children are developing a positive awareness of environmental issues. For example, children at P6 show good knowledge of renewable energy following a visit to Pitlochry Dam. Children participate successfully in a wide range of sporting events. They show positive skills in citizenship and raise money for several charities. Children are developing qualities of leadership through serving as members of the pupil council and eco committee, and as health assistants. They are developing good skills in enterprise and have used them to organise large-scale events such as the ‘Cheeky Monkey Marathon’.

In the nursery class, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning and development. Most can recognise their name. A few can choose books to read independently. Most children listen carefully during group activities and story times. Children in the enhanced provision are making appropriate progress in their learning. In primary classes over recent years, standards of attainment have improved in reading and mathematics. Staff have identified correctly the need to strengthen attainment, particularly in writing. Most children attain appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics and a majority

do so in writing. Standards in listening and talking are good. In English language, children listen and talk confidently to each other when working in groups. For example, at P1 children engage in high-quality discussions as they learn through play. At all stages, children can discuss books which they enjoy reading and describe what makes a good story. Most show an interest in reading and enjoy reading for pleasure. At most stages, children can produce some good pieces of writing although they need to write more frequently to improve their skills. This should include a greater focus on the structure of their written work. In mathematics, most children are confident in their work on number and money. They can recognise the properties of shapes, and interpret information from charts and graphs. Children can identify and use appropriate problem solving strategies effectively.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

In the nursery class, staff plan a curriculum based on national guidance. They provide a satisfactory range of activities and experiences. Literacy and numeracy need to be further developed across the curriculum. Nursery staff have built positive relationships with children but do not yet know them well enough as learners. Across the primary classes and enhanced provision, children experience a broad curriculum. Teachers are making a positive start to taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. They are helping children to work more independently and become actively engaged in their learning. At the early stages, active learning through suitably planned play is used well to enhance children's skills. At P6 and P7, staff develop children's social skills with a well-planned residential visit to Ardeonaig. Staff broaden children's learning through a wide range of clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school. In the enhanced provision, staff help children develop life skills very effectively. The school is working towards providing two hours of good quality physical education each week.

In the nursery, staff record observations of children's learning. They understand that they need to use this information more effectively to

plan what children will learn next. Staff work well with a range of other agencies to provide extra support for children when they need it. Across the primary classes, staff meet the learning needs of children very well. They involve children in planning their own learning targets and what they want to learn. In all lessons, well-planned activities help meet the needs of all children. Almost all teachers give children clear explanations and check their understanding at the end of lessons. They explain the purposes of lessons to children and give them useful advice on their next steps in learning. Teachers set an appropriate range of homework tasks. Children with additional support needs receive effective support from the learning support and support staff which helps them make appropriate progress. In the enhanced provision, staff have a very good understanding of children's needs. They use a broad range of resources and activities to ensure that the learning needs of children are met effectively.

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

The school works effectively with a supportive Parent Council. Parents support the school well through fundraising and attending school events. Staff keep parents well informed through newsletters, informative progress reports and the use of Glow. In the nursery class, staff use e-mail to keep parents informed about children's progress. The school actively seeks parents' views and almost all parents feel that the school listens to their views. The school consults parents about developments in the curriculum and sensitive health education issues. The school has appropriate procedures in place to respond to complaints. Staff provide valuable support to parents and families. The school has developed positive links with the local community. For example, children regularly make visits to Whitfield library to select their own books. Children's citizenship skills are enhanced through effective partnerships with Ballumbie Nursing Home. In partnership with the school, the Active Schools coordinator arranges a wide range of sporting activities. Children's skills in sport are further developed through visits from Dundee City Disability

Sports. Children are well supported as they move from nursery to P1. Effective and supportive links with Braeview Academy help P7 children to transfer easily to secondary school.

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

Children are positive about taking on responsibilities around the school. Children at P6 and P7 enjoy acting as buddies for children at P1 and in the nursery class. Across the school, children express their views well through the pupil council. Children can make suggestions or express concerns in the 'bubble box' in each class. Staff are very reflective about their work and have taken steps to share good practice to improve learning and teaching. In the primary classes and enhanced provision, effective strategies are used to monitor the quality of education, including learning and teaching and children's progress. In the nursery class, similar strategies are not well developed.

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

Children, parents and staff are proud of their school. Relationships are based on mutual respect and trust. Almost all children are well behaved. Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements at assemblies and through 'Newfields TV' in the entrance hall. Staff are well informed about child protection and take appropriate action to ensure children are safe and well looked after. Children talk positively about the way their school promotes healthy living through, for example, organising health days. They are consulted about the activities to be included on health days. Children feel the school deals well with any instances of bullying. They are confident that they are treated fairly and that if they have concerns these will be acted upon effectively. Staff actively promote equality and diversity through the very inclusive ethos within the school. Children learn about different cultures through their work on world religions.

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

All staff share the school's aims and values. Staff work very well together as a team to provide an improving quality of education for the children. The headteacher provides very strong leadership in taking forward the school's vision and providing high-quality pastoral care. She is well respected by staff and in the local community. She is ably supported by a depute headteacher. Newfields Primary School, with the support of the education authority, is well placed to go on improving.

9. 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.

- Improve children's learning experiences and progress in the nursery.
- Continue to improve attainment.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.

At the last Care Commission inspection there was one requirement which has been addressed. In addition, two recommendations were made which have been addressed.

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 Newfields Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Children's experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Alan Urquhart
8 December 2009

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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