



**Papa Westray Community  
School and Nursery Class  
Orkney Islands Council  
22 September 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school<sup>1</sup>. 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 parents<sup>2</sup> 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](http://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.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

<sup>2</sup> 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**

Papa Westray Community School is a non-denominational primary school with a nursery class. It serves the island of Papa Westray. The roll was seven, including two 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**

- Children's achievements across a wide range of activities.
- Children's learning experiences.
- Staff teamwork and relationships with children.
- Work with parents, the community and other schools to enhance children's learning.
- Contribution of the headteacher and staff to improving the school's provision.

## **3. Examples of good practice**

- Using *wikis* to develop an understanding of being a citizen of the world.
- Greenhouse project.
- Working with children on other islands.

## **4. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, children engage successfully in their learning. Children in the nursery class are happy and settled in their routines. They readily make choices and talk confidently about what they are

doing. Children are developing their independence well. They cooperate and take turns with each other and staff. Across the primary stages, children are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. They work very well together and show respect for one another's views and opinions. Children are active in their learning. They regularly review their work and identify targets to help improve their learning. They make very effective use of their skills in information and communications technology (ICT) to develop their understanding of other places and cultures. This includes using ICT like *wikis*, to create links with schools in Scotland, America and Poland.

Children achieve very well in a range of activities. In the nursery and primary classes, children are increasing their understanding of sustainability through activities such as recycling paper. They grow their own vegetables to use as part of school lunches. Children achieve well in physical education. They are developing effective skills in music. In the nursery class, children are confident in singing and keeping the beat in time to music. Those at the primary stages successfully use a range of instruments to accompany songs. All children play the fiddle and are improving their skills in playing the keyboard. Children have a sound understanding of environmental issues. As a result, they achieved a bronze award from the John Muir Trust. They are developing confidence and achieving success in performing to parents, the community and other schools. Children in the primary classes successfully performed in a mini-carnival parade along with other schools in Orkney. To do this, they wrote lyrics and music, designed costumes and created gymnastic routines. Through participating in a range of initiatives and projects, children are developing effective skills in being enterprising. Children gain confidence by creating a Viking museum and acting as guides to show parents their work and artefacts from Kirkwall Museum.

In the nursery class, children are making very good progress in early literacy and numeracy. They listen and talk effectively in different situations and can hold conversations about familiar experiences. They readily count while playing and are developing their

understanding of money by buying and selling items during role-play. Across the primary stages, children's progress is very good in listening, talking, reading and mathematics. Their progress is good in writing. Children achieve appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Children listen attentively to each other and staff and contribute confidently to class discussions. They enjoy reading and research information effectively using the Internet and non-fiction books. Children write well for a range of purposes and audiences. They create stories for children in the nursery and write instructions for children in America to perform a Scottish dance. Standards of presentation of written work are not always high enough. In mathematics, children are accurate in making mental and written calculations. They use their numeracy skills confidently in a range of activities, including using their skills in measurement to create a bird table. Children are secure in collecting information and presenting it in a variety of different ways using graphs and charts. They tackle problems with enthusiasm and success and are improving their skills in talking about how they solve problems.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Children are developing their knowledge and skills very well through a broad curriculum. Staff successfully use the experiences and outcomes described in the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence* to plan children's learning. In the nursery class, children benefit from a wide range of activities and experiences based on play activities. In the primary class, staff are effectively developing children's skills in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. They successfully encourage children to be creative. In art and design, children use fleece to make felt, and use the felt to create attractive wall hangings. The school develops children's fitness very well. It is working towards providing children with two hours of high quality physical education each week.

In the nursery and primary classes, staff meet children's learning needs well. They mostly set tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for children. On occasion, staff need to extend children's

learning further. Staff respond sensitively if a child is having difficulties with any aspect of their learning. They give clear explanations and instructions, share the purpose of lessons with children and review what children learned. Children carry out appropriate homework tasks which effectively support their learning in class.

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

Staff work effectively with the wider community, including the library service and visitors from local organisations, to support children's learning. The Parent Council is highly supportive of the school. Parents actively contribute to their children's learning. The school consults them appropriately about sensitive health issues and their child's progress in learning. Staff make effective use of workshop events to share with parents aspects of the school's work. Parents attend school events and assist in school activities, including a greenhouse project. The school has appropriate procedures in place for dealing with complaints. Staff deal very well with any concerns from parents or members of the community. The school uses strong and highly effective links with other schools in Orkney to extend children's learning. Children benefit from taking part in a variety of joint activities, including sports, music and drama events. The school has very effective transition arrangements to help children prepare for the move to P1. These arrangements include regular opportunities for nursery children to learn with children in the primary stages. There are well-planned arrangements in place for P7 children transferring to Westray Junior High School.

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

Children respond well to opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school. They contribute to decision-making in a variety of ways, including through the pupil council. They select the focus of their

learning in social studies and evaluate activities using 'learning logs'. Staff work very well as a team and are highly committed to improving the school's provision. Despite constraints of transport, staff regularly meet to reflect on the work of the school. They attend activities to improve their professional skills and use what they have learned to improve children's experiences. The headteacher is improving arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and has introduced approaches to tracking children's progress. Staff are appropriately working to strengthen these approaches and extend ways of gathering parental views to ensure continued improvement.

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

Staff create a positive learning environment and make everyone feel welcome. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve. Children enjoy school and feel safe. They know what to do if they have any concerns and are treated fairly and with respect. Children are courteous, polite and very well behaved. They help each other in class and in the playground and work very well together. They are developing a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles. They are aware of the importance of healthy eating and have prepared healthy lunches for members of their family. Staff consistently recognise and celebrate children's successes. Children learn about other cultures through the programmes for religious and moral education and social studies, and through links with schools in other countries. Staff help children extend their understanding of equality and fairness through class activities. There are appropriately frequent opportunities for religious observance.

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

The headteacher, along with staff, is highly committed to improving the work of the school. She has a clear vision for the school and, together with staff, children and parents is implementing shared school values

and aims. The headteacher identifies key priorities for development and introduces changes which improve learning and achievement. Staff feel encouraged to try out new ideas and initiatives and are taking responsibility for bringing about improvements. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## **9. What happens next?**

The school's use of self-evaluation is leading to improvements in children's learning. As a result, the inspection team was able to change its focus during the inspection to help the school plan to improve even more. We will make no further visits following publication of this report. The education authority will let parents know about the school's progress. They will do this as part of its normal arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

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

- Take steps to ensure planned experiences consistently extend children's learning.
- Continue to strengthen approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class, there was one recommendation which is being 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 Papa Westray Community School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>excellent</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:** Janie McManus  
22 September 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