



**Sidlaw View
Primary School
Dundee City Council
27 January 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

Sidlaw View Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Kirkton area of Dundee. The inspection was carried out in November 2008 at which time the roll was one hundred and twenty-eight. Pupils' attendance was below the national average in 2006/07.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The approach to active learning and purposeful play in the early stages.
- The warm, welcoming and friendly ethos.
- The commitment of the teachers to improving the life chances of the children.
- The very effective partnership for learning between children, parents, carers and staff.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are proud of their school and their achievements. The majority are making good progress in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last few years, the school has improved children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. A few children attain national levels significantly earlier than expected in reading. Most children read well and write for different purposes. Children listen well in class and are becoming more confident in talking in groups. Those at the early stages are developing a good understanding of early number work. Across the school, children collect and organise information effectively. Their skills in mental calculation and oral number work are not well developed. They understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating and keeping themselves safe. Children have good skills in information and communications technology (ICT), art and design and music.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Teachers provide a broad range of learning experiences for children. They are beginning to join up activities across the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. This is helping to ensure greater challenge and enjoyment for children. At the early stages, children have more opportunities to be active in their learning and respond with enthusiasm. The quality of their learning is improving through purposeful play activities. Staff are beginning to organise the curriculum more flexibly to respond to the needs and interests of children. All children are actively involved in enterprise education, which is helping to develop their personal and social skills. These skills need to be developed more systematically across the school. As part of this process, teachers should put in place a comprehensive personal and social education programme for all children. Almost all teachers use ICT to enhance their teaching. Staff provide a good range of out-of-school clubs which help children to develop their confidence.

Staff meet the learning needs of children well. Most tasks are planned at an appropriate level of difficulty for children. Some teachers need to use questioning more effectively to help children to think through their responses and develop their understanding. Staff are skilled in identifying and assessing what help is needed for all children with additional support needs. They now need to work with partner agencies to develop individual programmes for these children and targets to help them to improve. Everyone should then work together to regularly review the progress made by children against these targets. A few higher-achieving children receive additional challenge from support for learning staff. The 'purple room' provides a very high level of support for a few children who need extra help with their learning. Some other groups of children who need help to overcome barriers to learning would benefit from group learning in the 'purple room'. Homework has been improved and includes a range of challenges which most children enjoy. Staff use an agreed system to encourage acceptable standards of behaviour from all children.

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

The school has developed very effective partnerships with a number of parents. Staff offer a well-judged range of opportunities which allow them to work with parents and children in class. They have formed productive partnerships with a range of wider agencies and individuals outside the school. These include educational psychologists, the sensory support teacher, the community policeman and health and social work services. These partnerships have been successful in supporting children in their learning and wider achievements. Children are well supported when they enter the school from nursery, move from class to class and from P7 to Baldrigon Academy. Children are treated equally, fairly and with respect. Where appropriate, they are given specific individual support which allows them to make appropriate progress.

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

Children are good at taking on responsibilities across the school. Older children support younger children very well through being playground *Recess Rangers*. The school is working towards the Eco-Schools Scotland bronze award. Children are knowledgeable about planting bulbs, recycling and caring for plants. Staff work well with each other to improve the school. Some teachers ask children how their learning could be improved. At P2 and P4, parents attend sessions where they become actively involved in their children's learning. Parents enjoy school performances, contribute very well to fundraising activities and help with school functions. Most parents feel well informed through helpful meetings and written reports. Staff do not yet involve parents and children in personal planning arrangements. The recently-formed Parent Council is working with staff to involve other parents more in children's learning. The school is working appropriately with other services to help them involve parents who are harder to reach.

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

Sidlaw View Primary School is very welcoming and provides a good standard of care. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children's wider achievements are recognised through corridor displays, assemblies, and in the local press. All members of the school staff have very positive relationships with the children. They are knowledgeable about the child protection procedures used in the school. They show care and concern for children's wellbeing and deal effectively with any incidents which require adult support. All staff promote equality and fairness through their relationships with children in their classes. Children have regular opportunities to take part in religious assemblies.

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

The school has recently reviewed its aims and values. There is scope to further simplify these. All staff work hard with parents to help their children achieve. The headteacher knows the school well and has been instrumental in involving parents in working with their children in class. The depute headteacher works effectively with the headteacher and provides helpful support to all members of staff. School staff are very committed to their school and its community. They work very well together to address children's needs. Staff have begun to work together to share good practice and to give each other feedback on their teaching. They are very enthusiastic about taking forward aspects of their school development plan, for example, active learning. As a result of good self-evaluation in school, children's standards of attainment and achievement have improved. The school is well placed to continue to improve through building on existing good practice. The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and children are achieving well overall.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that 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 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.

- Continue to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Extend and further develop opportunities for children to be active and responsible for their own learning, particularly in the middle and upper stages.
- Continue to implement the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence* with a strong focus on personal and social development.

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 Sidlaw View Primary School.

Improvements in performance	Good
Learners' experiences	Good
Meeting learning needs	Good

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

The curriculum	Good
Improvement through self-evaluation	Good

HM Inspector: David M Martin
27 January 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

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