



**St James's Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Renfrew  
Renfrewshire Council  
17 February 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.

## **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**

St James's Primary School is a denominational school with a nursery class. It serves Renfrew and Inchinnan. The roll was 507, including 85 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in December 2008. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2006/2007.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- High attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The welcoming ethos, very good relationships and the high standard of pastoral care shown by all staff.
- Inclusion of all children into the life of the school.
- Confident children who are eager to learn.
- The school's success in using self-evaluation to help bring about further improvement.
- Outstanding leadership of the headteacher.

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

- Use of self-evaluation, including the inspection process, to bring about improvement.
- Framework for supporting children's learning.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Children in the nursery class are making very good progress in their development and learning. They are confident when asking questions and are learning to take turns in conversations. They enjoy saying

rhymes and listening to stories. Almost all children can recognise their own name and are developing an interest in writing letter shapes. Most children are confident when counting to five and many can count beyond this. They are developing their problem solving skills by making models in the construction area. Across the school, children are enthusiastic and keen to learn. In the primary classes, children's skills in listening and talking are developing very well. Younger children are beginning to learn actively through play, building on their experiences in the nursery. Across the school, children speak enthusiastically about books they have enjoyed reading. They can describe how an author uses words to good effect. Children at all stages write creatively and present their written work very neatly. In mathematics, children's understanding is very good. At all stages, children can count accurately and understand shapes and angles. They are good at solving problems. Children at all stages have a very good understanding of Christianity within the Roman Catholic tradition and the need to learn about other faiths. They are knowledgeable about how to eat healthily. From nursery to P7, children enjoy learning Italian. By P7, they can describe Italian customs and speak Italian with a very good accent. Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained at high levels over several years. Across the school, most children are achieving national levels in reading and writing, and almost all are achieving these levels in mathematics. Increasing numbers of pupils at all stages are achieving national levels earlier than might normally be expected.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Across the school, the structure of the curriculum is good. The school is developing the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the nursery class, children are confidently using a range of technologies, including digital cameras and white board, to help them learn. They now need better opportunities to follow their own interests and play for longer periods at their chosen activity. Commendably, at the primary stages, all children receive two sessions of high quality physical education each week as well as additional sessions of physical activity. Children can read and write well, but do not yet use

these skills consistently enough in other areas of their learning. They need further opportunities to use computers to help them learn. Children's learning is enriched by a range of educational trips and visitors to the school. Many teachers provide lively, exciting lessons which enable children to learn very well from each other. A number of children have begun to take part in discussions about their own learning. Across the school, children work well on shared tasks and are becoming confident and independent learners.

Overall, children's learning needs are very well met. Younger children are able to choose what they would like to do in the nursery. Staff use questions very well to support and encourage children's learning. At all stages, staff are very sensitive to children's family circumstances. They ensure that all children, including those with significant learning and physical difficulties, are fully included in the work of the school. Children with additional learning needs are very well supported by class teachers and specialist staff. The depute headteacher very effectively organises a wide range of additional support for these children. School managers monitor rigorously the progress of all children to make sure that all children are learning as well as they can. Support assistants give very good help to children in the classroom and more broadly throughout the school. Teachers set a good variety of interesting homework tasks.

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

Staff in the nursery and across the primary school have developed very effective partnerships with a wide range of support services and other organisations. These include speech and language therapy, social work and educational psychology services. As a result, children with a range of difficulties are being supported very well. Partnerships with health professionals, active schools coordinator, catering assistants, local parishes and other schools have helped support

children's learning. When children move from pre-school into P1 and from P7 to Trinity High School, staff give them very good support. Staff treat all children equally and fairly.

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

The school works well with parents and the local community. The nursery is developing helpful links with community groups to help parents develop a range of skills. Staff have built effective links within the community and with other agencies. The school could further develop its business and community partnerships. Children, staff and parents work together to raise considerable funds for charity. The school keeps parents well informed about its work through helpful progress reports, parent-teacher meetings, regular newsletters, a range of information events and the school website. Children have good opportunities to become involved in decision making through the pupil council and the school's very active eco-committee. The school has successfully gained an Eco-Schools Scotland award at silver level, and has achieved the local authority's award as a Health Promoting School. The Parent Council and social events committee support the school very well.

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

At all stages, staff have very positive relationships with children. Almost all children are friendly and polite to staff and one another. Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies and in high-quality displays. Staff are very committed to supporting the care and wellbeing of children. They know about the school's child protection arrangements and what to do to keep children safe and well. Children respond enthusiastically to the high standards teachers set for their behaviour, attendance and achievement. The school building is spacious, well maintained and accessible to all people. The flat roof allows water penetration in several areas and some decoration

is needed. Teachers make very good use of available space to create interesting, attractive learning areas.

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

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. By improving teamwork and streamlining the school's monitoring systems she has enabled staff to improve children's learning. She has established very positive relationships with pupils, parents and staff. She has a clear vision for future improvement. Working in partnership with staff, the headteacher has been successful in improving many aspects of the school's work. The depute headteachers carry out demanding remits very well and give a high level of support to the headteacher. The principal teacher models very good teaching and is leading the pupil council very well. Staff work hard to develop their professional knowledge and skills and several are developing their role as leaders of learning. As a result of the very good self-evaluation in the school, staff meet children's needs very well. The school is very well placed to improve further.

## **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.

- Improve children's experience of information and communications technology in the primary classes, to increase their skills and help them learn.
- Continue to use self-evaluation to improve learning experiences for children.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class two requirements and five recommendations were made. All had 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 St James's Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

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

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

**HM Inspector:** Anne M McGachey  
17 February 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