



**St Joseph's Primary School  
Busby  
East Renfrewshire Council  
2 March 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> 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](http://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.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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### **1. The school**

St Joseph's Primary School is a denominational school, situated in the village of Busby. It serves the Busby, Clarkston, Waterfoot and Eaglesham districts of East Renfrewshire. The roll was 348 when the inspection was carried out in January 2010. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

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

- Articulate, confident and happy children who show enthusiasm for learning.
- Attainment and achievement across a wide range of subjects and experiences.
- The range of approaches in place to meet children's learning and emotional needs.
- The impact of self-evaluation activities in improving learning experiences for children.
- The leadership of the headteacher.
- The engagement of staff and children in the life and work of the school.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, children are very well motivated and engaged in their learning. They feel safe and happy, and are proud of their many achievements. Children are gaining excellent citizenship and enterprise skills through their involvement in initiatives such as buddying younger pupils and achieving success in local competitions. They are developing a very good range of healthy living, creative and physical skills by taking part in lunchtime and after-school clubs, including chess, debating, cheerleading and arts and crafts. Portfolios of achievement provide individual records of success for every child. Across the school, children are engaged in active, purposeful learning.

They display confidence and enthusiasm and work together very well, for example to discuss ideas, solve problems, and create displays. Several times a year, children engage in high-quality discussion with their teachers about their achievements and next steps in learning. Arrangements for recording these targets would benefit from being reviewed to match the active learning approach used in classes.

Across the school, children achieve very well in a range of subjects. In science, their investigative and recording skills are developing well. For example, P2 children are able to talk about properties of different materials and record their findings. In music, children are developing confidence and skills in playing tuned and untuned percussion instruments and reading simple musical notation. A large number of children benefit from musical tuition. At all stages, children are enhancing their learning and skills through the use of information and communications technology. At P1 children were able to use a video camera to record their drama work and to use this evidence as a basis for discussing their learning. In French, almost all children are developing skills in speaking and understanding simple phrases. By P6 and P7, most are able to extend these skills to reading and writing in French.

In reading and writing, almost all children achieve appropriate national levels and a significant number achieve these standards earlier than might normally be expected. Almost all children listen very well and share their ideas confidently during discussion. They work exceptionally well in groups and are skilled at taking on different roles. At the early stages, children read with increasing confidence and fluency. They enjoy reading and are able to make links to other areas of the curriculum. By P7, children are very skilled in discussing texts and in researching and presenting information. Across the school, children write very well for different purposes and are making very good progress. At the upper stages, they produce very high-quality writing, often of a good length. Almost all children are achieving or exceeding appropriate national levels in mathematics and are very secure in all aspects of number, measurement, data handling and shape. They are able to relate work in mathematics to real life

contexts. At P7, children are confident in working with percentage interest rates. Those at P5 are able to apply problem solving strategies to their project work, for example, when building models of Roman aqueducts. At all stages, children are making very good progress with their skills in performing mental calculations. They are becoming increasingly confident at manipulating numbers. The standard of presentation of jotter work is extremely high throughout the school.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff have developed the curriculum very effectively to provide all children with opportunities to achieve success and develop skills for life. Very positive progress has been made with regards to implementing *Curriculum for Excellence* and in planning for curricular change. At all stages, children benefit from a balanced curriculum which extends the depth and breadth of their learning and builds on what they already know. Staff plan carefully to ensure the content of lessons takes account of children's interests. They make learning meaningful by linking different aspects of the curriculum. At the early stages, staff plan active learning experiences which provide children with opportunities for choice. Literacy and numeracy are very well planned and taught across all stages of the school. Children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Highly effective use is made of outdoor areas within the school grounds to develop children's physical skills. Children have very productive opportunities to develop their enterprising skills within meaningful contexts across the curriculum.

Across the school, staff know children very well and are sensitive to their learning and emotional needs. They make classrooms interesting and fun places to learn. Tasks and activities are at the right level of difficulty for almost all children. Resources are used effectively to motivate and inspire children to learn. For example at P1, children were learning how to use an electronic microscope. Children are supported in reaching their full potential as learners and there are outstanding measures in place to support higher-achieving children.

The school's recent focus on developing homework has led to varied and creative ways of supporting learning at home. Children and teachers use technology well to support learning, including interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and portable media players. Teachers work very effectively with partner agencies and pupil support assistants. They provide a high quality of support for children who are experiencing difficulties with their learning. These children are making very good progress towards meeting their personal learning targets. The school's 'rainbow room', which supports the development of children's social and emotional skills, provides an outstanding level of support for a few younger children. They benefit greatly from the sensitive care and encouragement they receive. This, in turn, helps them make progress in learning.

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

A good range of external agencies work very effectively with the school to support children's learning. There are productive partnerships with, for example, psychological services and speech and language therapy service. Commendably, the school involves these agencies in evaluating the effectiveness of its work. There are very productive partnerships with parents. The Parent Council gives considerable support to the school. Parents are directly involved in shaping school improvement through involvement in the 'sub groups' of the Parent Council. Recently, one such group was involved in reviewing and developing a strategy to encourage reading at home. This has resulted in improved motivation and attainment. The school keeps parents well informed through regular newsletters, parents' meetings, curriculum workshops and the school website. Children take responsibility for organising learning 'showcases' for parents. There are robust procedures in place to deal with any complaints and the school asks regularly for parental feedback. Parents are consulted about sensitive health education issues. Very good arrangements are

in place to support children moving from nursery to P1 and from P7 to St Ninian's High School.

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

Children and staff play the central role in improving their school community. Everyone is involved and feels part of the process. Children have an outstanding range of opportunities to take responsibility. These include leading a variety of school initiatives and lunchtime clubs such as the 'Litter Picking Association'. Children develop their organisational and leadership skills through developing action plans, liaising with other groups, planning competitions and taking minutes of meetings. The school has a range of very effective approaches to monitoring and evaluating its work. As a result, learning in all classes has become active and stimulating. All teachers play a key role in developing learning through leading working groups. Pupil support assistants are fully involved in taking forward the school's priorities for improvement. The management team checks the quality of the school's work in a number of highly effective ways, including meeting with groups of pupils from each class. The school is very well placed to maintain and extend its very high quality of provision.

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

Across the school, children are confident in all aspects of their learning and development. They are very proud of their successes and achievements as learners and good citizens. Staff set high standards for behaviour and children behave with courtesy and respect towards adults and to each other. Children report that they feel valued and that they are treated equally. The school has sound procedures in place to make sure children are happy and safe and children can name adults they can turn to for extra support. Staff are confident in their knowledge of child protection procedures. The school encourages

children to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Children have a sound understanding of their own and other faiths. There are strong links with the local parishes and this helps to promote a strong Catholic ethos.

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

The headteacher is an outstanding leader. In recent years, she has led the school from strength to strength and has gained the trust of children, staff and parents. She identifies and nurtures individual talents amongst the staff and this leads to a positive culture where everyone feels valued. She is very well supported by a depute headteacher and three principal teachers. The work of promoted staff has direct impact on the continuous improvement of learning experiences for children. All staff demonstrate an exceptionally high level of commitment and expertise and help to ensure the school is continually improving. Leadership at all levels across the school is very strong.

## **8. What happens next?**

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits in connection with 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 school.

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

- Continue to maintain the pace of curricular development, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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 Joseph's Primary School.

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

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>excellent</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>excellent</b>

**HM Inspector:** Carole McKenzie  
2 March 2010

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](http://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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