



**Westquarter Primary  
School and Nursery Class  
Falkirk Council  
25 May 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.

## **Contents**

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Westquarter Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Westquarter and Redding areas of Falkirk. The roll was 210, including 53 in the nursery class, when the inspection was carried out in March 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

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

- Polite, motivated and well-behaved children.
- The overall quality of learners' experiences.
- Children's use of information and communications technology in the nursery.
- Staff's commitment and teamwork in taking forward innovative approaches to the curriculum and learning.
- The vision, leadership and direction provided by the headteacher.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Children in the nursery are happy and confident and enjoy choosing their own play activities. Children share and take turns when role playing in the home corner. They are learning to be independent when self-serving at snack, washing their dishes and dressing to go outdoors. They are very confident in using a range of information and communications technology (ICT) independently to help them learn. Across the primary classes, children are well-behaved, enthusiastic and keen to learn, and have positive attitudes to their work. They are developing good skills in working with others through well planned cooperative learning activities. Children respond enthusiastically when given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. They are developing awareness of their own performance through self and peer assessment. All classes make effective use of the school grounds and the surrounding environment to enhance learning and

raise children's awareness of nature. Almost all children report that they feel very safe and well cared for and enjoy being at school.

Across the school, children have many opportunities to be successful in their learning and in a broad range of wider achievements. Almost all are actively involved and enjoy success in a wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs, including football, basketball, dodge ball, badminton, dancing, drama and the school website. Children are strongly encouraged to participate in school trips, musical and cultural events. They are developing skills as responsible citizens by taking on roles on the pupil council, and in the large number of citizenship groups. Older children take very seriously their roles as buddies and mentors for younger children. A wide variety of activities promote, support and encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles.

In the nursery, most children are making good progress in their learning and development. They listen well and are able to recognise their name cards in different areas of the nursery. A few children are able to identify sounds and rhyming words. Most are confident when counting and can identify numbers up to ten. In the primary classes, most children are achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Many achieve these levels earlier than would normally be expected. Children have very good skills in talking and listening and are confident in taking on group roles, enter into discussions and offer their opinions. Most children read well with expression and fluency. They write well for a range of purposes and audiences. Improved approaches are resulting in better and more extended pieces of writing. Children at all stages have a good understanding of mathematical shapes and are confident with calculations involving number, money and measurement. Their mental mathematics skills are improving as a result of regular daily practice. Children use mathematics successfully in a wide variety of contexts, including their work in social studies topics. Most children at the upper stages can describe the strategies they would use to solve mathematical problems. At all stages, their skills in using ICT are developing well. Teachers should continue to identify opportunities to stretch the most able children with suitably challenging tasks.

## Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The nursery curriculum is broad and balanced and is based on learning through play. Staff provide a good range of opportunities for children to develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Nursery staff recognise the need for a more flexible approach to the curriculum in order to provide children with more opportunities to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning. The school has made significant progress in developing the curriculum to take account of the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The changes already made are resulting in improved outcomes for learners. 'Rich tasks' provide very good opportunities to extend literacy and numeracy in suitable contexts. Visiting specialists provide good quality learning experiences in drama, French, music and physical education. Class teachers provide additional physical activities. However, not all children yet receive the full statutory requirement of two hours each week of good quality physical education. The school's programmes for religious and moral education, social studies and personal and social education promote aspects of equality and diversity. Children are supported well in making the transitions from the nursery to primary school and from P7 to Graeme High School.

In the nursery, staff know children very well and are responsive to their needs. They provide a stimulating learning environment and activities which offer most children good levels of challenge. At the primary stages, staff have a good understanding of children's pastoral support needs and how these affect their learning. Tasks, activities and resources are appropriate and meet the needs of almost all children. Increasingly, staff encourage children to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. At the primary stages, staff have effective approaches for identifying, monitoring and supporting children with additional support needs. Support for learning staff meet the needs of groups and individuals well. A specific focus on providing additional support for literacy development has led to improvements in reading attainment for some children with additional support needs. Targets set within individualised educational programmes help children to make progress in their learning. The school has developed effective

partnerships with a range of educational support agencies. Teachers use work in topics to set homework tasks which help develop independent learning.

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

The school has been successful in encouraging increasing numbers of parents to support the school and work alongside their children to help them with their learning. The Parent Council is active and very supportive of the work of the school. Parents are encouraged to visit the school and they support school trips and shows. Large numbers of parents attend school events. They contribute well to fundraising activities. The school communicates effectively with parents through regular newsletters, e-mail, reports on children's progress and the school's own website. Staff have strong and effective links and relationships with a range of appropriate partner agencies and local businesses. The school has productive links with other schools in the cluster and with Graeme High School. The school deals appropriately with any complaints and parents are consulted when relevant about aspects of health education.

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

All staff are strongly committed to improving their classroom practice and enhancing the quality of children's learning experiences. In the nursery, staff observe each other's practice and provide helpful feedback. They use a range of approaches to gather the views of parents and children. They have visited primary classes and other nurseries to help develop good practice. Across the school, staff regularly use quality indicators developed nationally to review their own work and to identify and undertake a range of appropriate training activities to support their own professional development. Teachers are increasingly successful in reflecting on their own practice and

evaluating the impact of new approaches that they have introduced. They respond well to suggestions and advice provided by senior managers following classroom observations. They are finding more opportunities to observe each other teaching and share best practice. The school uses effective systems to gather the views of parents and staff. Children enjoy opportunities for taking responsibility. Members of the pupil council take their responsibilities seriously and ensure that the views of all children are taken into account.

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

Across the nursery and primary stages, all children are treated equally and with dignity and respect. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of all children's learning, achievement and behaviour. The school celebrates children's achievements at regular assemblies, on attractive wall displays, in newsletters and on the school website. Children are proud of their school and their own achievements. They have high expectations of themselves and respond well to challenges and responsibilities. The school uses appropriate systems to ensure the care and welfare of children, including anti-bullying, child protection and safe Internet use. The school works with children to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school chaplain supports staff in providing appropriate religious observance.

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

The school is led very effectively by the headteacher. She strives to create a positive, purposeful environment for learning where everyone is welcome and feels respected, valued and included. She has a sound understanding of the strengths of her staff and aspects of the work of the school where further improvements can be made. She has identified a range of appropriate strategies to take these forward. She uses good interpersonal skills very effectively to help develop effective staff teamwork. There is a strong sense of common purpose and commitment to improvement amongst all staff. The headteacher is

very ably supported by the depute headteacher. Together, they have developed a very positive and inclusive ethos and have set high expectations for all members of the school community. The school is well placed to improve further.

## **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 schools.

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

- Increase opportunities for nursery children to develop more choice and independence in their learning.
- Continue to develop the curriculum as planned and raise levels of challenge for higher achieving children across the school and nursery.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements and no recommendations were made.

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 Westquarter 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>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>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>very good</b>

**Managing Inspector:** Jim Bruce  
25 May 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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