HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents\(^1\), children and the local community know whether their school\(^2\) 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. 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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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\(^1\) Throughout this report, the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

\(^2\) The term ‘school’ includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.
1. The school

Kirktonholme Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the West Mains and Stewartfield areas of East Kilbride. The roll was 437, including 55 in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in November 2009. Children’s attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008. The school had moved into a new building immediately prior to the inspection.
2. Particular strengths of the school

- Very well-behaved children with a positive attitude to their learning.
- A wide variety of highly-effective approaches to supporting children with additional support needs.
- The friendly and welcoming atmosphere and staff’s commitment to children’s health and wellbeing.
- The high level of support to children transferring from the nursery to P1.
- Staff teamwork to improve the school and the effectiveness of senior staff.

3. Examples of good practice

- *Listen to Me* support programme for children with concerns and worries.
- Using MP3 players to help children with learning needs in reading.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

**Learning and achievement**

Children throughout the school have a very positive approach to their learning. Most support and encourage each other well when working together in pairs and small groups. In the nursery class, children are
gaining a high level of success in their learning. They enjoy choosing their own play activities. Most children concentrate well on their chosen activity. From P1 to P3, children benefit from regular *Flying Start* sessions where they develop their skills well through active play. Across the primary classes, children are often actively engaged in their learning, particularly when they are able to make choices in their topic work. They make regular use of information and communications technology (ICT), and can research appropriately using the Internet. In the nursery and primary classes, children are beginning to evaluate their own and other’s classwork. In the nursery and primary classes, children would benefit from more experience of identifying their own strengths and development needs and what they need to learn next. This would further strengthen their skills in independent learning.

Across the nursery and primary classes, children are developing effective personal and social skills. In the nursery, children are developing friendships and are learning to share and take turns. Children interact very well with each other in play situations. Most are confident when they are talking about what they are doing with adults. In the primary classes, children readily take on responsibilities. For example, children in P7 act as buddies to younger children and help build their confidence in learning. At all stages, children demonstrate initiative and develop life skills well through contributing to enterprise events and fundraising for charity. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Many have achieved individual and team success in a range of sports and fitness activities. Children have gained confidence from performing at assemblies and in school shows.

Across the school, children are making very good progress. Those with additional support needs are achieving in line with agreed targets. In the nursery, children perform very well in early mathematics and early language. Children listen well in group situations and most talk confidently to adults and other children. Children recognise their own name when written and most can make marks when writing letters and numbers. Most children count confidently within ten. They can sort, match and compare the colour and size of objects very well. At the
primary stages, high standards of attainment have been maintained over recent years. Almost all children achieve national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The majority attain these levels earlier than might be expected in reading and mathematics and more than a third do so in writing. At all stages, children are able to listen attentively and talk confidently in discussion and when giving presentations. They show interest in reading for pleasure and can write well for a variety of purposes. A few need to develop their skills in writing at greater length. Children show confidence in tackling written and mental calculations. They do not yet make enough use of ICT to collect and display information. They have a well-developed understanding of the strategies needed to solve a range of problems.

**Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The school has made a very positive start to developing the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the nursery class, children experience a wide range of activities which support their learning and development. Staff are working well to increase children’s knowledge and understanding of early literacy and early numeracy. The curriculum is enriched with good opportunities for outdoor play. Across the primary classes, children are benefitting from topic work which builds on their interests and helps them make links across curricular areas. Increasingly, they are applying their literacy skills across the curriculum. Staff should now develop more opportunities to extend and apply children’s numeracy skills. A broad range of educational outings helps extend children’s learning. The school puts a strong emphasis on developing health and fitness. Staff have established robust hygiene routines and children benefit from two hours of physical education each week.

Throughout the school, staff very effectively ensure that learning activities help children build on previous learning. In the nursery class, staff know children very well and are sensitive to their individual needs. In the primary classes, teachers set individual assignments and group tasks at an appropriate level to interest and challenge children.
The school has identified the need for a few higher-achieving children to experience greater challenge at times. Staff have developed a very comprehensive set of approaches to meet the needs of children with additional support needs. They use early intervention approaches well to identify promptly children in need of additional support. They deliver specific programmes providing very well-targeted support in English language and mathematics for identified children. A number of groups have been formed to enable children to help support each other. These groups are proving to be very effective, for example in helping develop children’s confidence and self-esteem.

5. How well do staff work with others to support children’s learning?

The school works very well with parents and a range of partner agencies. The Parent Council provides strong support and is consulted appropriately. Several parents regularly help at the early stages of the primary school. Parents receive regular reports on their children’s progress. They are kept well informed and consulted on a range of issues, including sensitive aspects of health education. There are suitable procedures in place for dealing with parental complaints. Staff work well with personnel from a range of support services. The Active School’s coordinator and the cultural coordinator help enrich children’s learning. The school has benefited from collaboration with other schools, for example in developing aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Children are well supported when they move from nursery into P1 where staff build very well on children’s prior learning. Well-developed procedures give valuable support to children transferring to Duncanrig Secondary School.

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

Children make a very positive contribution to the life of the school. They play an active part in the pupil council, in eco and enterprise
committees and as junior road safety officers and house captains. Their input has led to improvements in, for example, playground games and improving safe access to the school through the ‘park and stride’ initiative. Staff cooperate very well to improve areas of the school’s work with senior staff giving a strong lead. Members of a teaching and learning group have worked enthusiastically to pilot new teaching approaches. Senior staff now need to build on this work by evaluating the quality of learning in classes more systematically to ensure consistency of learning and teaching approaches across the school.

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

Staff have created a happy and safe environment. All children are treated fairly and with respect and are learning to support and help each other. They are very well behaved. Staff have built up very positive relationships with children and their families. Praise is used very well to recognise children’s achievements and motivate them. Children’s successes are celebrated in displays and at assemblies, which also provide suitable opportunities for religious observance. Staff place high priority on children’s wellbeing and operate well-understood procedures for child protection. Children have developed an awareness of equality issues, including racial equality. The school is beginning to strengthen its approach to promoting children’s wider understanding of diversity. Staff actively encourage children to take part in physical exercise and to make healthy eating choices including at school meals.

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

The headteacher is highly respected by the school community. She provides a clear lead and has successfully established a culture of continuous improvement. She is very well supported by highly-skilled depute headteachers, each of whom contributes very effectively in their particular areas of responsibility. Principal teachers also take on
important leadership roles. Staff work together very well to introduce developments and take forward agreed improvement priorities. Overall, the school has a high capacity for continued improvement.

9. 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 improve the quality of children’s learning experiences.
- Increase children’s awareness of their own strengths and development needs as learners.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. Four recommendations were made, all of which 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 Kirktonholme Primary School and Nursery Class.

**Primary school**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluations in performance</th>
<th>very good</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners’ experiences</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting learning needs</td>
<td>very good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Nursery class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluations in performance</th>
<th>very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children’s experiences</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting learning needs</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The curriculum</th>
<th>very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvement through self-evaluation</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HM Inspector:** Grant Mathison
22 December 2009
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 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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