

**Cathkin Primary School and Nursery Class
Rutherglen
South Lanarkshire Council**

21 October 2008

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1. Background

Cathkin Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in June 2008 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated nursery children's and pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined the quality of the children's experience in the nursery, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met a group of parents¹. There was no Parent Council.

The school serves the areas of Cathkin and Fernhill in the town of Rutherglen. It forms part of the Cathkin Learning Community. At the time of the inspection the roll was 274, including 55 children in the nursery class and 30 pupils in the additional support needs (ASN) department. Pupils attended the ASN department from within and outwith the school's designated catchment area. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well above the national average. Pupils' attendance was below the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The caring ethos and effective pastoral care of children and pupils.
- The range of opportunities for pupils in the additional support needs department and in primary classes to learn together.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles across the nursery and primary classes.
- Effective partnership with parents of the nursery children.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in [Appendix 2](#).

Parents were positive about the work of the nursery and primary classes. They stated that their children enjoyed being at school. They recognised the strong care and concern shown by staff. A few parents felt that poor behaviour was not dealt with effectively. Parents of children in the ASN department were particularly appreciative of the way staff worked to meet the individual needs of their children. A few parents of nursery children would have liked more regular information about their development and progress. Most pupils enjoyed being at school. They felt that teachers knew them well and expected them to work hard. They enjoyed the after-school clubs. Some expressed concerns that the school did not deal effectively with bullies and thought that pupil behaviour was not good. Staff enjoyed working in the school and thought that pupils were keen to learn. They felt that pupil success was regularly celebrated. A small number believed that poor behaviour was not dealt with effectively. Staff in the nursery did not always feel fully included in the life of the school.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The overall quality of the curriculum was weak. There were important strengths in the nursery. Staff in the nursery provided a broad range of play experiences across all key aspects of children's learning and development. They took account of children's interests and were beginning to involve them more in planning learning activities. Across the primary stages, staff provided a broad curriculum for pupils. At the early stages, staff had recently introduced a more active approach in delivering the curriculum. Further work had been undertaken to develop pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT) and their knowledge of health education. At the upper stages, pupils benefitted from the study of French. In the ASN department, pupils had some opportunities to learn within mainstream classes. All pupils benefited from two hours of physical education every week. However, they were not making sufficient progress and developing appropriate skills in many important areas. Programmes of study in English language and mathematics often lacked progression and were too closely tied to commercial resources. Pupils did not have sufficient opportunities for imaginative cross-curricular work or to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. They had limited opportunity to develop their skills in citizenship, enterprise or technology in a planned coherent way. Teachers' use of increased flexibility within the curriculum was not sufficiently monitored and had not resulted in improved pupil attainment. The quality of teaching for effective learning was satisfactory. Staff in the nursery interacted well with the children and encouraged them to develop more independence. Across the primary classes and ASN department, teachers promoted a positive ethos within their classrooms. Most gave clear explanations and instructions and a few used questioning effectively to extend and develop pupils' thinking. The majority of teachers were sharing the purposes of lessons with pupils. Overall, lessons were too teacher-directed with little opportunity for pupils to be active and take responsibility for their learning. Teachers were not using ICT effectively on a regular basis to enhance pupils' learning.

Most children in the nursery class responded well to the play experiences offered. They made independent choices and were motivated in their learning. Most concentrated well on their chosen task but a few needed more support to help them. Learners' experiences at the primary stages were satisfactory. The majority of pupils were motivated and wanted to learn. They responded positively to opportunities to be more actively involved in learning. Pupils at P2 worked independently on simple writing tasks. At P3, pupils were encouraged to comment constructively on each other's work in art and design. From P4 to P7, they showed some awareness of their progress in learning and how to improve their work. Pupil learning was enhanced by educational trips and outings. Across the school, however, pupils were often too passive in their learning. This prevented them from developing good skills as successful, independent learners. A small number of pupils across all stages were restless and disengaged from learning. Most pupils in the ASN department were confident learners. They interacted well with pupils in primary classes during joint learning activities. They were not given sufficient choice in their learning and needed to be more involved in assessing their own performance. They needed more opportunities to develop and use their skills in active meaningful learning situations

Improvements in performance

Overall, improvements in performance were satisfactory in the nursery class and weak in the primary classes.

Children in the nursery class were making satisfactory progress in communication and language. Most children listened well and could follow simple instructions. They could recognise their name and some were attempting to write simple words in play situations. They were confident in talking to one another and adults during play activities. A few children accessed the book area but the majority of children needed more encouragement to use books.

At the primary stages, pupils' performance in English language was weak. Levels of attainment had fluctuated in recent years, with a slightly improving picture in the current session. At the early stages, a significant number of pupils achieved appropriate national levels earlier than might be expected. This success was not sustained as pupils progressed through the school. Across the school, a majority of pupils were achieving national standards in reading. Pupils' performance in writing had been consistently low for a number of years. Less than half of the pupils attained appropriate national levels. The overall performance of boys was well below that of girls in reading and in writing. The school did not formally assess pupils' listening and talking skills. The majority of pupils were confident when speaking to adults and to peers. A majority displayed good listening skills in following instructions and responding well to teachers' questions. They were not so skilled in working with a partner or as part of a group. Some pupils at P4 to P7 were able to talk about favourite authors, different styles of writing and explain what kind of books they liked. Those at the early stages were developing their writing skills. These skills were not well developed at the upper stages. Pupils were not consistently writing for a range of audiences or producing extended pieces of writing. Standards of presentation, spelling and punctuation were variable. There were some good examples of pupils developing their writing across the curriculum but this was not consistent practice across the school.

Children in the nursery class were making satisfactory progress in their understanding of early mathematics. Most children could sort colours and simple three-dimensional shapes. They could recognise numbers and count to ten. Some

children were using mathematical language such as 'bigger' and 'smaller' when building as part of construction activities. They could sequence boxes in order of size.

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was weak. Over the last three years there had been no significant improvement in attainment. The majority of pupils were achieving appropriate national standards. At P2, many pupils were achieving these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Progress was not sustained as pupils moved through the school. At P7, no pupils in the current session had achieved appropriate national standards. At all stages, pupils could understand and interpret information. At P7, pupils used computers to organise and display information. From P1 to P3, pupils were making good progress in developing skills in numeracy. They benefitted from stimulating active learning opportunities. At P7, most pupils were competent in written and mental calculations. They were not secure in such key areas of mathematics as measurement, percentages, decimals and angles. Across the school, pupils were confident in identifying two- and three-dimensional shapes. At P6 and P7, most pupils were unsure of strategies they could use to solve problems.

Most pupils in the ASN department were making satisfactory progress against their individual learning targets in English language, mathematics and personal and social development.

Children in the nursery class were making satisfactory progress in understanding the world around them. They investigated the properties of materials using magnets and could talk about the lifecycle of butterflies. They were developing appropriate skills on the computer. Most children engaged enthusiastically in making music using guitars and a keyboard. They enjoyed painting and using collage materials. They were gaining good hand and finger control using a wide range of resources, including jigsaws. Most children were confident in using the climbing frame indoors. They were also developing coordination in using bats and mini golf clubs outdoors.

Across the primary stages, pupils were developing their skills in other areas of the curriculum. They participated in regular health promotion activities. As a result, they had a good awareness of the need for a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. Senior pupils had been trained in food handling and prepared and distributed healthy snacks throughout the school. Pupils at P1 could demonstrate early musical skills in clapping rhythms linked to notes and creating simple scenes in drama. In science, pupils in P3/P4 clearly understood the water cycle and could use technical language to explain the process. At P7, pupils showed confidence in asking and answering simple questions in French. Most pupils at this stage were able to identify and translate simple French words.

The school had taken appropriate measures to promote pupils' wider achievements. Children in the nursery were developing independence in play activities and nursery routines. They were learning to work together and take turns in games. Pupils from P4 to P7 had good opportunities to be involved in out-of-school activities such as football, netball and running. Their achievements were valued and celebrated in displays in corridors. Pupils worked well together in regular school shows and gained confidence through performing before an audience. They used the suggestion box for the pupil council to contribute ideas to improve the school. The pupil council met regularly and reported the outcomes of their meetings by displaying minutes. Pupils in the upper stages, including those in the ASN department, took on leadership roles. These included roles as play leaders, dinner hall helpers and buddies to younger

pupils. The eco committee had raised pupils' awareness of global issues through a successful 'Fair Trade' coffee morning and an 'Eco Mania' week. Pupils at P6 and P7 developed their social and physical skills through a residential trip to an outdoor centre.

The school improvement plan had made a limited impact on outcomes for pupils. Within the nursery, staff had taken forward health initiatives and these had made a positive difference to children's experiences. Nursery staff had not been fully involved in the process of identifying and implementing priorities for the plan. Across the school, the underachievement of pupils, particularly of boys, over a period of years had neither been clearly identified nor addressed. While there had been progress in some priority areas such as health education and child protection, very little progress had been made in others.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Arrangements for meeting the learning needs of children and pupils were satisfactory. In the nursery, staff matched nursery activities well to the broad needs of children. They made some observations of children at play and were developing their use of assessment information to track children's progress in learning. Individual plans were in place for those children who required them. At the primary stages, teachers knew their pupils well. They planned to meet the range of learning needs within their classrooms through attainment groups. Despite this, learning activities and teaching approaches were not always suitably matched to individual pupil needs. Staff did not monitor and track pupils' progress and attainment closely enough to respond effectively. The pace of learning and of pupils' progress was too slow. There were good processes and procedures in place for identifying pupils with additional support needs. Staff drew up and implemented appropriate group and individual support plans. Pupils experiencing behavioural difficulties did not yet have individual plans in place. Classroom teachers required to be more involved in drafting and reviewing the progress of individual pupils against their plans. The area support for learning teachers provided effective advice and support for pupils requiring additional help in their learning. Classroom assistants provided good individual support for pupils. Members of the senior management team also worked effectively with individuals and groups of pupils experiencing difficulties. The school worked in close partnership with a range of specialists within the learning community to provide additional support as required.

The department of additional support needs (ASN)

Within the ASN department, approaches to meeting the learning needs of pupils were satisfactory. Staff provided programmes of work which were well matched to the needs of most pupils. A few pupils would benefit from tasks being broken down into smaller steps to help them progress their learning. The pace of learning was too slow for a few pupils. Every pupil had an individual educational plan with long- and short-term targets. Staff reviewed long-term targets annually, usually with parents. Short-term targets were not reviewed regularly enough and were not always clear and specific. Parents were not yet sufficiently involved in agreeing the targets. Pupils were well supported by a range of staff. ASN assistants worked effectively with classroom teachers to help individual pupils make progress in their learning. Visiting specialists, including a support for learning teacher, speech therapist and educational psychologist provided well-targeted additional support for individual pupils.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>Arrangements within the school and the nursery class for the care and welfare of children and pupils were very good. Staff showed a high level of care and concern for pupils' well-being, health and safety. They had all received child protection training and were confident in applying school policy. Staff were alert and sensitive to the social and emotional needs of children. They worked in partnership with a range of council services and agencies to provide effective support, particularly to monitor vulnerable groups of children. The school was well supported in this work by the Home/School Partnership Officer. Staff were committed to promoting healthy lifestyles through their physical education programme and health promotion activities. The school and nursery had gained bronze awards in health promotion. Through the personal, social and health education programme pupils studied relevant topics to help them to live safely and well. This programme required to be updated. Pupils felt safe and secure at school, although some felt that more could be done to deal with bullying incidents. There were effective procedures in place to support children as they moved from nursery to P1 and for P7 pupils as they transferred to Cathkin High School.</p>
Management and use of resources and space for learning	<p>The school's management and use of resources and space for learning was very good. The newly-built accommodation provided a safe and pleasant environment. There was an attractive reception area with informative leaflets for parents and visitors and a pupil-designed stained-glass window. Pupils' learning was supported in bright classrooms, an ICT suite, library and well-equipped gymnasium. The sensory room was supporting the communication of children with additional needs. Pupils' class work and information relating to the pupil council and the eco committee were well displayed across the school. The school was not yet able to use the outdoor areas sufficiently to enhance learning. The school had appropriate security systems in place and there was suitable access to all parts of the building for users with restricted mobility. Procedures for access from the outdoor area back into the nursery needed to be reviewed.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness	<p>Staff were very committed to the school and were supportive of each other. They worked hard to create a caring ethos for children and pupils. Most pupils responded in a positive way and were cooperative and well mannered. The school needed more effective measures to address the behaviour of a small group of more restless pupils. Staff expected pupils to work hard but did not always have high enough expectations of what they could achieve. Pupils were not fully aware of their achievements and did not set high enough targets for themselves. The school had in place measures to recognise and celebrate achievements, including attendance at the weekly headteacher's Tea Party. The school's arrangements to promote equality and</p>

	<p>fairness were good. Children and pupils learned at an early age to understand and respect others. They had opportunities to learn about diversity through the study of aspects of other cultures and religions. More work was needed to extend pupils understanding of issues like racism and sectarianism. The school had good links with the local church and was supported in ensuring religious observance.</p>
<p>The school's success in involving parents, carers and families</p>	<p>Overall, the school had good approaches to involving parents, carers and families. Partnerships with parents in the nursery were particularly strong. They were regularly consulted and participated in the nursery health committee. They had good opportunities to discuss their children's progress through meetings and open days. They valued the information leaflets they received. Parents of primary-aged pupils welcomed the school's open door policy and thought most staff were approachable and helpful. Reports provided detailed information on pupils' progress and were followed up by useful parents' evenings. Newsletters and class bulletins were regular and informative. There was scope for involving parents more in supporting their children's learning, through sharing learning targets and areas for improvement. The Home/School Partnership Officer provided an effective bridge between parents and the school. Parents had the opportunity to view any sensitive health education materials, but did not receive sufficient information on the whole-school programme on these topics.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Cathkin Primary School and Nursery Class provided a caring environment for learners in the new, purpose-built accommodation. Staff worked hard to provide an inclusive ethos. They organised opportunities for pupils within the ASN department and mainstream classes to learn together. Pupils within the ASN department were well supported and were making satisfactory progress. In the nursery and at P1 to P3, children were making satisfactory progress in their learning but this was not sustained as they progressed through the school. Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was weak. Boys in particular, were underachieving. The curriculum needed to be updated to provide more appropriate and stimulating learning opportunities. Pupils were not sufficiently involved in their own learning. Overall, there were important areas requiring improvement.

The headteacher was committed to the school and had a genuine care and concern for pupils and staff. She had formed good relationships with parents and useful links with external partners to support the school. She had not yet put in place clear and effective planning to address weaknesses in areas such as pupil underachievement and school self-evaluation. Staff had not been sufficiently supported or challenged to bring about improvement in their classrooms. The two depute headteachers worked hard in their remit areas and provided good support for the ongoing management of the school. They had not had sufficient impact on the strategic leadership of

improvement and change. The principal teacher worked hard but had a very limited area of responsibility. Further work was required to review the remits and improve the teamwork of promoted staff in order to make a stronger impact on outcomes for pupils. All staff needed to be more effectively supported and involved in taking forward initiatives for improvement. The school's approaches to self-evaluation were weak. Senior management had put in place some measures to monitor the work of the school. These included monitoring teachers' plans and sampling pupil work. Senior staff did not make sufficient use of the information gathered and did not effectively monitor pupils' progress. Staff were not regularly evaluating their classroom practice. The views of pupils and parents were not sufficiently taken into account in improving the work of the school. There had been some good practice in this area in the nursery.

Nursery staff were aware of the implications of the Scottish Social Services Council Codes of Practice and had registered with the council.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were six recommendations. Appropriate action had been taken by the nursery in addressing the recommendations.

Main points for action

The school and education authority, in liaison with HM Inspectors, should take action to ensure improvement in:

- pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics, taking particular account of the underachievement of boys;
- approaches to self-evaluation to enable all staff to identify and address priorities for action in the curriculum, learning and teaching;
- strategic leadership and teamwork in identifying priorities and involving all staff in taking them forward; and
- meeting pupils needs more effectively including taking more account of pupil's prior learning.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. HM Inspectors will engage with the school and the education authority to monitor progress. They will publish a report on progress within one year of the publication of this report.

Mairi Timmons
HM Inspector

21 October 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However,

aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	weak
Teaching for effective learning	satisfactory
Children's experiences (nursery class[es])	good
Learners' experiences (primary stages)	satisfactory
Improvements in performance (nursery class[es])	satisfactory
Improvements in performance (primary stages)	weak
How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs (nursery class[es])	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	satisfactory
How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	very good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	satisfactory
Expectations and promoting achievement	satisfactory
Equality and fairness	good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	good
Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	weak
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	weak
Leadership of improvement and change (across the school)	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

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

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the	What parents think the school could do better
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school did well	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment. School reports gave helpful information about their child's progress. School buildings were kept in good order. Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents thought the school could deal more effectively with inappropriate behaviour. A few parents of nursery children thought that the school could provide more regular information on children's progress.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers knew them well. Teachers checked homework. Teachers expected them to work hard. The school helped them to keep themselves safe and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deal more effectively with bullies. Ensure all pupils are treated equally. Improve the behaviour of some pupils.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil success was regularly celebrated. Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards set for pupil behaviour could be more consistently upheld. Indiscipline could be dealt with more effectively.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Executive Director (Education Resources), local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our website <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/>.

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/>.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/>.

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Footnote

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