

South Park Primary School and Nursery Class

East Kilbride

South Lanarkshire Council

26 April 2011

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² 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.

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

South Park Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Murray, Westwood and Greenhills area of East Kilbride. The roll was 255, including 32 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in March 2011.

Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The welcoming, caring ethos created by the headteacher and staff.
- Well behaved and respectful children and their engagement in the life of the school.
- The impact of opportunities for children to take responsibility in developing their skills and capacities.
- The positive relationships and team work amongst staff which have brought about improvement.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery are confident and friendly. Most share and take turns in play. Children enjoy choosing activities and need more opportunities to organise their own play. At the primary stages, children behave well and are eager to learn. In most lessons they work things out for themselves in practical activities. They are good at helping each other to understand by explaining their thinking. Their understanding is deepened through assessing their own and each other's work. Children know what they are expected to learn and they reflect regularly on their success in lessons. They are not fully aware of their learning targets or what they must do to achieve these.

Children in the nursery are learning about healthy eating and their environment by recycling and growing vegetables in a 'secret garden'. Across the school, children are learning how to be responsible citizens by running a wide range of committees. The Health Committee has earned the school 'Health Promoting School' silver status and the nursery has achieved the bronze award. Most children can describe a balanced diet, and know how to keep themselves safe from danger in the community and online. Their understanding of environmental issues are enhanced by the school grounds projects organised by the nursery and the eco committee who have helped the school to achieve an Eco-Schools Scotland bronze award. The ambitious extra-curricular programme has developed children's talents in sports, music and drama.

Children in the nursery enjoy singing songs and rhymes. Most can recognise their name in print and a few write letters and numbers on shopping lists. Most can count coins in the play shop. Across the primary stages, most children attain appropriate standards in reading, talking, listening and mathematics, and a majority do so in writing. Staff have raised the standard of children's writing in recent months. More able children develop their skills well at the early stages, but by P7 a few have not maintained appropriate progress in their learning. Children in P1 learn to read quickly and write words and phrases. By P5, most can use their reading skills to find out information for personal projects. At P3, children write well structured, imaginative stories, but by P7 they need to improve their skills in writing in different styles. Children express their views confidently and older children choose appropriate language to give advice to each other about their work. Those at P3 can measure a

range of angles in their circus topic. By P7, children use their mathematical skills to solve unfamiliar problems involving negative numbers. At all stages, children can draw graphs to display data, but have not yet done so in electronic spreadsheets.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The nursery provides a broad range of activities for children. Visitors and outings add interest to children's learning. Staff from a local bakery taught the children to make sandwiches. Staff plan activities for children at all stages to develop their skills taking account of Curriculum for Excellence. Interdisciplinary topics are beginning to help children to understand how their learning in different subjects is connected, and to use their literacy and numeracy skills for a range of purposes. Staff now need to ensure that these topics are building further on children's existing skills, particularly in science. Staff ensure that all children are supported well when they transfer from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Duncanrig Secondary School. At the primary stages, teachers need to plan more effectively with nursery and secondary staff to ensure that learning experiences at each stage build effectively on children's prior learning. Children benefit from two hours of effective physical education each week. They do not have enough opportunities to develop their information and communications technology skills.

Staff at all stages plan activities which capture the interest of children. A few tasks for children in the nursery are too adult led and do not encourage children to think for themselves. Nursery staff observe and record children's learning, and now need to use this information to plan activities to challenge them further. Teachers at the primary stages use questions and discussion well to support and challenge children. The specialist support teacher and the visiting autism support teacher give good advice to teachers on strategies which help children to make progress. Skilled and knowledgeable support staff provide strong support to teachers and children. A few more able children are not making sufficient progress because some activities do not provide enough challenge. The resources and programmes used to help children who have difficulty with basic skills need to be monitored more closely. Changes should be made if these are not helping children to make progress in their learning. Homework is regular and appropriate.

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

Local health partners contribute to lessons which help children to take a healthy approach to their everyday lives. The sports coordinator arranges events which support children's transition to secondary school. The activities of the eco committee are supported well by local environmental organisations. Staff work closely with partner agencies to support children and their families. Parents are very positive about the school. Parents of children in the nursery help with a lending library. Staff now need to involve them more in making decisions about what children learn. Parents of children at the primary stages particularly appreciate monthly reports on their children's progress. Parents help to build a record of children's achievements, and their role in their children's learning is valued by the school. Staff inform parents about activities, events and sensitive health education matters and deals well with any parental concerns. The Parent Council and PTA support the school well through consultative meetings and helping with school events.

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

Senior managers monitor the work of the school closely. They give teachers helpful advice which is improving learning and teaching. They have identified the school's strengths and most aspects which need improvement. Staff are developing ways to track individual children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence. The school takes good account of pupils' and parents' views when planning improvements. The children on the pupil council have a strong voice in bringing about change. All teaching staff are involved in improving the school through committees, and a few are leading initiatives. The high turnover of staff has slowed the pace of improvement in the school because some new staff have needed time to develop their skills further. Senior managers need to ensure that changes are effective in raising standards.

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

All staff know children and their families well and take prompt action to address any concerns about attendance, achievement or behaviour. Everyone understands their role in safeguarding children and who to speak to if they have a concern. Staff encourage children to work hard and reward their achievement in a way that helps children to value their own efforts. Children are beginning to develop views about global and moral issues, including equality and diversity in society through special events and committee activities. Religious observance is provided through assemblies and is supported well by local church partnerships. Supervisors and buddies help to ensure that bullying is rare, and addressed effectively when it occurs.

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

The majority of staff are new to the school, but have quickly become an ambitious team who know what the school is trying to improve, and their role in supporting this. The headteacher has established a shared vision for an inclusive school with a caring and nurturing climate. The school has continued to provide a good standard of education through a period of significant staff turnover. This is because the headteacher has built an effective team by valuing and building on the skills of all staff. In her short time in post, the deputy headteacher has supported the headteacher well by leading several successful initiatives which are improving children's learning.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the 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.

- Continue to raise attainment, particularly in writing.
- Develop more opportunities for children to take responsibility for their

learning both in nursery and across the primary stages.

- Improve the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for more able children.
- Continue to develop systems to ensure children make progress over time in building their skills in each curriculum area.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. In addition, one recommendation was made, and this is in the process of being 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 South Park Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	good

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Jacqueline Sinclair

26 April 2011

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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Footnotes

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.
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