

# Libberton Primary School, Carnwath South Lanarkshire Council

23 August 2011

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.

## 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**

Libberton Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Libberton and surrounding area. The roll was 40 when the inspection was carried out in May 2011. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2009/2010. This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of Wiston Primary School, which shares the same headteacher.

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

- Children's motivation and positive attitudes to learning.
- Stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences which help children achieve.
- Joint work with Wiston Primary School, leading to improvements in learning expectations of children.
- Use of the local environment and school grounds to promote children's learning.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, all children are motivated and keen to learn. They are polite and help each other well when working in pairs and groups. They are becoming more involved actively in planning aspects of their learning. Children respond maturely when given responsibilities. Teachers are using more active learning approaches and are developing helpful ways of providing feedback to children on their learning. There is scope to develop these approaches further to ensure consistently high-quality learning experiences across all classes.

Children benefit from many opportunities to develop confidence, skills and knowledge in wider areas of learning outwith classes. Children's achievements are celebrated well through displays of work and regular assemblies. These include sports, work to protect the environment and a residential trip. Children have begun to take responsibility for sustainability through making improvements to the school garden and by raising awareness of the damage caused by litter. As a result, they have achieved a silver award through Eco-Schools Scotland. Children are developing leadership skills through their role in committees, such as, the pupil council. Across the school, children use their enterprise skills to very good effect to organise events to raise money for charity.

Most children are making appropriate progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. In English language, most children have well-developed skills in reading and writing. They are developing confidence in listening and talking and are able to express their ideas well in pairs and in groups. Children are developing their reading well. By P7, most children can read with fluency and good expression. In groups they discuss competently features of the author's use of language. At the early stages, children are becoming increasingly confident writers. Children across the school write well for a range of purposes. They are proud of their writing and it is displayed well around the school to good effect. Recent changes to the writing programme are beginning to improve children's writing. In mathematics, most children can carry out written and mental calculations accurately. They are beginning to develop and explain their thinking in mathematics. A few

more able children would benefit from even greater levels of challenge in mathematics. Children who need additional support are making good progress in their learning.

### **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff have started to implement Curriculum for Excellence. Arrangements for planning are beginning to be reviewed. At all stages, children experience a broad curriculum and staff are starting to address issues of personalisation and choice. Staff are at the early stages of making links between different subject areas to make learning relevant and motivating. Well-planned literacy and numeracy activities now need to be a feature of planning. The curriculum should continue to be reviewed to take account of Curriculum for Excellence. Opportunities to learn from the outdoor environment are good and could become a greater feature of children's learning given the outstanding setting of the school. Some aspects of the curriculum, such as social studies, do not develop children's skills well enough across the school. The school makes regular use of a local sports hall and the outdoors to develop children's physical skills. However, they do not yet benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week.

Across the school, tasks are at the right level of difficulty for most children. The school has effective approaches for identifying children who need help with their learning. Individualised support plans help children who need additional support to achieve and make progress. There is scope to improve these further. In some instances, teachers need to personalise learning further in order to provide greater challenge. Most teachers give very clear explanations and share the purpose of tasks. Most staff use skilled questioning to encourage children to investigate and explore. For example, younger children were encouraged to observe eggs hatching in an incubator and draw conclusions. Older children were exploring strength tests on shopping bags to predict usefulness. Homework is regular and varied.

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

To help children progress in their learning, staff have developed effective partnerships with a range of agencies and individuals. These include, for example, the small schools planning group and pupil support services. The support for learning teacher provides effective advice to staff regarding children with additional support needs. Staff have established very good links with Wiston Primary School. These links help to develop children's wider friendship groups and learning opportunities. The school communicates effectively with parents through newsletters, parents' evenings and written progress reports. The school deals appropriately with parental concerns and complaints.

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

The school has a very positive sense of teamwork amongst all staff. They are increasingly active in improving the work of the school and work well with Wiston Primary School to make improvements across both schools. Staff are positive about the opportunities they have to talk about the work of the school and how they can improve. The views of children and parents are sought on a number of matters using surveys and other means. Children value their involvement in the pupil council and other committees. They are proud of the changes they have made to the garden and their growing of vegetables. The headteacher leads staff in evaluating the work of the school. She visits classes and provides valuable feedback on learning and teaching. Staff should take forward agreed plans to track

children's progress and achievement. This will help ensure children develop an appropriate range and depth of learning experiences and skills.

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

The school does have high expectations of children's behaviour and engagement in learning. Children are proud to attend the school. They have positive attitudes towards school and their own achievements. Children consider that they are treated fairly and equally. As a result, they behave well in school. The school should now provide more planned opportunities for children to learn about equality and diversity. Children have regular opportunities to take part in religious observance. Staff are committed to the wellbeing of all children. They are knowledgeable about child protection.

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

The headteacher knows the school well. She is building an atmosphere of teamwork across the school and with Wiston Primary School, within which children, parents and staff can contribute. The headteacher and staff have made important improvements to the quality of children's learning. She needs to now focus more deeply on working with the school community to shape a vision for the curriculum in Libberton Primary School. The headteacher is well supported by the class teachers and principal teacher who reflects well on their practice to ensure continuous improvement. The school, with the support of the education authority, has the capacity to improve.

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

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in learners' achievement.

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

- Improve the strategic development of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Continue to improve children's attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Improve further the school's approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in learning.

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 Libberton Primary School.

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

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:** Sadie Cushley  
23 August 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.