

Kirkfieldbank Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

23 August 2011

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.

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1. The school

Kirkfieldbank Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Kirkfieldbank and its surrounding areas. The roll was 62 when the inspection was carried out in May 2011. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010. The school moved into a new building in August 2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Motivated, enthusiastic children who show care and concern for others.
- The role of the headteacher in establishing a supportive caring environment for children, staff and parents.
- Teamwork and commitment of all staff in improving the life and work of the school.
- Innovative use of the move to the new building to stimulate children's learning and enhance the school's reputation in the community.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are happy at school and enjoy their learning. They are well behaved and supportive of each other. At most stages, children are clear about the purpose of their lessons and can talk about what they are learning. They particularly like topics which link different areas of their work together. For example, children in P3/4/5 became more enthusiastic writers through a study of pirates. They enjoyed learning about grid references using treasure maps. As children move up the school, they are becoming clearer about their strengths and about how they can improve their work. Staff should continue to develop approaches to give children more responsibility for their learning.

Most children are achieving well in and outwith the classroom. The recent closure of the old school building provided a very good opportunity for children to develop and display a range of their achievements. Children researched and put on a performance for the local community about the history of the school. They wrote and published poems, designed collages and made mosaics about 'The School on the Hill'. The children are developing their confidence well. Older ones give presentations at assemblies and children from P3 to P7 represent their classmates confidently on the pupil council. Children show a real care and concern for others and raise funds for more disadvantaged communities. This year the children decided to learn more about and support 'Mary's Meals'.

Children are making good progress in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Most children speak confidently and are eager to give their views. Most listen attentively when others are talking. Children at the early stages are making steady progress in their reading. Most children in P3 to P7 are confident and keen readers and can talk about their favourite authors. Standards in writing have improved in recent years. As children move through the school, most are producing more extended writing with good standards of spelling and punctuation. Most children are confident in their number work and mental calculations. They are using correct mathematical language and show a good understanding of measurement. For example, at the early stages they could talk about the growth patterns of the beans they had planted. Children across the school are familiar with

appropriate methods for collecting, organising, displaying and interpreting information. At the upper stages, they are beginning to use information and communications technology well in this work. Children show a good understanding of a healthy diet. They are aware of important aspects of safety education, including road safety and use of the Internet.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school has introduced new learning approaches and new programmes of work taking account of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff are planning more active learning opportunities with greater links across the different subject areas. For example, children developing their literacy and numeracy skills in a whole-school topic about 'Earth and Space'. Staff are also using the local and wider community well to support the curriculum. For example, visits to local businesses and to the Burrell Collection. All children benefit from two hours of quality physical education each week. A new health programme 'Proud to be Me' is supporting their personal and social skills. There are planned programmes in place across most curricular areas. However, the headteacher and staff need to ensure children experience a broad general education covering all aspects of the curriculum. Programmes in science and in religious education need to be developed further.

Staff know the children well. In most lessons they match the learning activities to the children's needs. They plan homework which is varied, relevant and well organised. At times, the pace of learning is too slow and not challenging enough for individual learners. Staff should continue to develop approaches to tracking children's progress to ensure they meet their individual needs. Staff are alert to children experiencing difficulties in their learning. The school puts in place appropriate plans to support children requiring additional help, drawing on advice from more specialist staff. Parents are consulted about the support plans for their children. Staff should review these plans on a more regular basis. Classroom assistants provided effective and valuable support to children in and out of class. Staff work effectively with other colleagues to ensure that children are supported well as they transfer from nursery into P1 and from P7 into Lanark Grammar School.

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

Staff work well with a range of people to support children's learning. These include the educational psychologist, local minister, dance specialist and community artist. The TAG theatre group worked very effectively with staff and children on 'The School on the Hill' project, linked to the closure of the former building. Staff also work very effectively with parents. The Parent Council was involved actively in decisions about the new school building, helped to draft the school homework policy and reviewed the new health programme. Staff engage with the wider parent body through regular newsletters, open evenings and surveys of parental views. The school deals well with any complaints that arise. Parents are extremely positive in their evaluation of the work of the school.

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

Through the pupil council and focus groups, children are encouraged to express their views on many aspects of school life. Children are very aware of how their views have influenced decisions made. For example, in relation to the purchase of resources and topics for study. The headteacher and staff work very effectively as a team and are committed to ongoing improvement. Staff respond positively to feedback from the headteacher on how they might improve their learning plans and classroom practice. They participate in professional development activities and look for examples of good practice. Staff have been successful

in introducing more active learning and in increasing children's achievement. As they move forward with Curriculum for Excellence, the headteacher and staff need to monitor and evaluate more closely the impact of changes they introduce.

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

Staff have created a very caring, welcoming atmosphere across the school. They set high standards for behaviour and work and children respond very positively. The children are proud of their school and are keen to talk about their achievements. For example, the school has gold status in health promotion and the Eco-Schools Scotland silver award. More individual achievements are recognised effectively and celebrated at assemblies. Children feel they are listened to and treated fairly and with respect. They have a good general awareness of equality issues. They would benefit from learning more about diversity and about the different religions and cultures within Scottish society. They have regular opportunities for religious observance.

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

The headteacher has engaged very well with staff, children and parents to develop and share the vision for taking the school forward. She has established a very consultative approach to managing and leading the school. Staff have responded well to the trust she has placed in them and work hard to take forward new approaches and ideas. As the school moves forward, the headteacher should develop further her role in leading the school community to ensure greater consistency and high level practice across the stages. This school is well placed to continue to improve.

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 develop the school taking account of Curriculum for Excellence, ensuring children's knowledge and skills are developed across all curricular areas.
- Continue to develop active learning approaches and help children take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Continue to develop self-evaluation approaches to measure more effectively the impact of new approaches and change.

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 Kirkfieldbank Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Mairi Timmons
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.