



**Glassford Primary School  
Strathaven  
South Lanarkshire Council  
22 June 2010**

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.

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

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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### **1. The school**

Glassford Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Glassford and the surrounding local area. The roll was 66 when the inspection was carried out in April 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. The headteacher had been in post since January 2010.

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

- Confident and articulate children.
- The work of the eco committee in promoting environmental awareness and improving the school.
- Care and concern shown to others through raising funds to support a range of good causes.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, the majority of children are motivated and engaged in their learning. Children work well together in pairs and small groups. They are becoming confident in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support their learning. The school has begun to take some positive steps towards improving children's learning experiences. Across the school, children are increasingly involved in planning what they will learn in their topic work. They are beginning to learn to work in a more active way. Children are not always clear about what they are learning or the relevance of school work to everyday life. At all stages, children are not yet clear enough about what they need to do to improve their learning.

Many children demonstrate responsible citizenship skills. They are enthusiastic about recycling, saving energy and play a part in promoting sustainability through their eco work. Children have an understanding of the needs of others, both locally and across the world, through fundraising for several charities. All children develop their confidence through organising and taking part in school concerts, displays and other events. They are becoming increasingly aware of

how to keep themselves fit and healthy. There are a variety of opportunities for children to extend their learning through participation in out-of-class activities such as athletics, netball and football. Those at P6 and P7 benefit from a bi-annual residential trip which helps develop personal and social skills through outdoor education.

Overall, children, including those with additional support needs, are making satisfactory progress in English language and mathematics. In reading and mathematics, most children achieve appropriate national levels of attainment and the majority do so in writing. In recent years, standards of attainment in these key areas have declined. Children talk to others confidently and articulately. Most children are good at discussing texts, read fluently and with expression and write for a range of purposes. They need more practice in using their writing skills in real-life contexts and across curricular areas. In mathematics, most children carry out written calculations neatly and accurately. They are developing speed and accuracy in mental calculations. Most have a good understanding of shape and angles. A few children are not certain about aspects of measurement. Children in the middle and upper stages are good at describing and using strategies to solve problems. Across the school, children need to make more use of ICT to develop skills in making graphs.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The school provides a broad curriculum. Staff have made a start in developing aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. This includes planning for links between different areas of learning, particularly through class topic work. Overall, teachers need to rely less on commercially produced resources, and provide children with more opportunities for learning in real-life contexts. Greater attention needs to be given to programmes of study that motivate and challenge children appropriately and consistently. Visiting specialists, trips and guest speakers enhance children's learning. At all stages, all children have the opportunity to benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Their fitness also benefits from activities organised by the Active Schools coordinator.

Staff know children well and are sensitive to their needs. Across the school, tasks and activities are not always stimulating or at the right level of difficulty to meet children's needs. This leads to some children finding their work too easy or difficult and classwork does not always maintain their interest. If given more challenging activities, some children are capable of progressing at a faster pace. There are suitable procedures in place to make sure that children who need extra help with their learning are identified and supported. The headteacher has worked hard to secure extra resources for those in need of additional support. Teachers work very well with specialist staff to support groups and individuals with additional needs. Homework is set regularly and is increasingly becoming more varied.

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

The school links well with a range of specialists to support learning. This includes the educational psychologist, speech therapist and visual impairment services. The Parent Council is supportive of the work of the school. It is keen to work more closely with the staff and children on wider aspects of the life of the school. An active parent-teacher association raises funds to support school activities. Several parents come into classes regularly to help support learning. The school provides parents with helpful progress reports and information, for example on sensitive health issues. It has appropriate procedures in place to deal with complaints. There are appropriate arrangements to support children as they move from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Strathaven Academy.

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

Children enjoy positions of responsibility such as serving on the pupil council or on the eco committee. Children in P6 and P7 act as lunchtime and playground buddies or support younger children with

their reading. 'Eco defenders' help to maintain the attractive and peaceful school garden. Staff are very keen to improve the school and have all taken on key areas of responsibility. They are increasingly reflecting on, and evaluating their own practice. Staff are not yet using information about children's learning to track their progress effectively enough. Staff have a range of approaches for monitoring the work of the school. These include, reviewing teachers' forward plans, and observing learning and teaching. Overall, these approaches and the school improvement plan, do not yet have enough impact on improving the quality of children's learning experiences. The school needs to increase the ways in which it seeks and uses the views of children, parents, staff and partners in planning for improvement.

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

Staff show care and concern for children's wellbeing. Most children feel safe and well cared for. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. The school celebrates achievement well through 'Star Spot' and 'Boaster' boards, newsletter articles and assemblies. Staff do not have high enough expectations of what children can achieve in their learning. The school has appropriate procedures in place for religious observance. The local chaplain has strong links with the school and plays an important role in the delivery of assemblies. The recently introduced positive behaviour system is showing promising early signs of improving behaviour. It has not yet had time to impact fully. Staff need to make sure it is used consistently and fairly across the school to achieve maximum effect. Children understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has been correct in identifying strengths and areas where the school needs to do better. She has gained support and respect from staff. She has put in place several measures which are helping to move the school forward. Staff

welcome the opportunities they have to be involved in developments. They are keen to develop their expertise. The headteacher now needs to set clear expectations for staff and to provide direction to improve further children's learning and achievement. Working closely with, and supported by the education authority, the school 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.

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Continue to develop the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Ensure tasks, activities and the pace of learning, meet the needs of all children.
- Use self-evaluation to monitor children's learning and progress more effectively.



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 Glassford Primary School.

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

**HM Inspector:** Marie McAdam  
22 June 2010

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](http://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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