



**Gilmourton Primary School  
Strathaven  
South Lanarkshire Council  
15 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**

Gilmourton Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the villages of Gilmourton and Drumclog. The roll was 33 when the inspection was carried out in April 2010. The school has two multi-stage classes. The headteacher has a shared leadership post with a neighbouring small school. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

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

- Staff relationships and the care and attention given to all children.
- Children's experiences in using information and communications technology across their learning.
- Partnerships with parents and other professional agencies.
- The enthusiastic staff team led well by the headteacher.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

In both classes, children benefit from good quality learning experiences. Most children are well motivated and keen to learn. They work well together in pairs and small groups. Children are becoming more independent and are keen to become more actively involved in their own learning. However, they need more help from staff to take responsibility for and understand what they need to do to improve their work. Children use information and communications technology (ICT) very well to research topics and practice aspects of their work, for example, in mathematics. They are also using ICT effectively to record aspects of their work for discussion with their teacher and others in the class. Children are making positive contributions to planning their topic work which is helping them make connections in their learning. Children are learning to be responsible by organising and taking part in charity fundraising events and through their work on improving playground games. Children are encouraged to participate in local authority events such as 'Artsnet', which emphasises the importance of being safe. The eco committee 'Green Team' lead initiatives on recycling, keeping their surroundings free of litter and the ongoing work in the eco garden.

As part of their work on enterprise, children in both classes helped publicise and design programmes and took part in the Christmas concert. Most children are developing their leadership and teamwork skills as buddies to younger children and as mentors to each other in the paired reading initiative.

Overall, children are making good progress in English language and mathematics. Standards of attainment have varied over the last three years. The majority of children achieve appropriate levels of attainment in reading and writing and almost all achieved these levels in mathematics. In both classes, most children listen well and take part confidently in class talks and discussions. Staff are improving approaches to teaching reading and providing more suitable resources for children. Children's writing skills are improving, particularly when linked to their topic work. In mathematics, children enjoy the active approach to learning mathematics and have improved their mental and written calculations very well. They are able to interpret information from graphs and charts and can discuss confidently the properties of shapes. Children can explain a range of problem solving strategies and can relate to these in their topic work and everyday situations.

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

Staff provide children with a broad and appropriate curriculum. Both classes are developing their planning of the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff need to ensure that in developing the curriculum, children are enabled to make consistent and good progress in their learning. Staff have begun to take account of children's views in interdisciplinary learning. As a result, children are particularly enthused about their topic work. Recent work on the 'Rainforest' improved children's knowledge and they produced an informative CD-Rom of this topic. Staff make good use of visits and visitors to extend children's learning. All children in both classes benefit from two hours of good quality physical education each week. Older children are enthusiastic about their residential experience with children from neighbouring small schools.

Staff take positive steps to meet the needs of all children in both multi-stage classes. Great care is taken to provide suitable tasks and activities to motivate children to learn. Teachers are developing their teaching approaches and are getting better at giving feedback to children about what they need to do to improve their work. This needs to be developed further in both classes. Teachers interact very positively with children, providing individual help and encouragement. Children who require additional help with their learning are well supported by teachers, a classroom assistant and the visiting specialist support teacher. As a result, children are enjoying learning more, working at the correct level and making good progress. Regular reviews with appropriate agencies, parents and children help staff in identifying the next steps in children's learning. Homework has been reviewed recently with parents and children. It is now more relevant and often includes research for topic work.

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

The school has helpful links with other professional agencies, such as the educational psychologist, the school nurse and specialist support staff, to support children's learning. Parents are very happy with almost all aspects of the school. They are kept well informed by newsletters, open evenings, and are involved in charity and fundraising events. The Parent Council has been involved actively in improving reading resources and providing funding to help improve the ICT suite. They are keen to extend their work and be more involved in helping the school progress *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school deals with complaints appropriately and consults parents on sensitive health matters. Transition arrangements for children moving to Strathaven Academy are well planned. For children coming to P1, transition arrangements from nursery could be more effective.

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

Every child in P4-P7 has a responsibility towards improving their school by taking part in the pupil council, eco and health committees or as Junior Road Safety Officers. They are proud of their silver health promoting schools award and have submitted information for their first Eco-Schools Scotland green flag. Children feel they could be more involved in making decisions and sharing their opinions and views. Staff work together in school to take forward priorities in the improvement plan to improve learning. As a result, reading and mathematics programmes have improved. The headteacher encourages staff to work with other staff from neighbouring small schools to develop, for example, approaches to assessment. This is helpful and has influenced some aspects of the work of the school. Staff are reflective about their practice. The headteacher is aware of the need to improve further monitoring and evaluating of the quality of teaching and the work of the school.

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

There is a positive ethos throughout the school. Relationships between staff and children are strong and based on mutual trust. All staff show care and concern for all children in the school. Staff expect high standards of behaviour and are raising their expectations of children's learning. Children's achievements are praised and celebrated regularly at assemblies, in newsletters and by certificates. Children feel they are safe and well looked after. Some attention should be given to making their playground area more secure. The school has appropriate systems in place if a child is absent from school without reason. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. Children have appropriate opportunities to participate in religious observance through regular assemblies and visits by the local chaplain. Children have an appropriate understanding of different faiths and cultures.

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

The headteacher and staff are highly committed to the care and welfare of all children. Staff, parents and children value their supportive approach. The headteacher has a strong focus on improving learning and teaching and developing the curriculum. This is shared by staff. The principal teacher offers valuable support to the headteacher and is developing ICT within the school very well. Staff work well together and everyone has a good understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas where improvement is required. The school is well placed to improve further by building on good practice.

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

We are confident that 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.

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

- Improve aspects of learning and teaching and extend opportunities for children to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Develop the curriculum and use this information when planning for children's learning.
- Improve monitoring and self-evaluation and involve all staff in this process.



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 Gilmourton Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>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>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**HM Inspector:** Elizabeth Paterson

15 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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