

Wiston Primary School, Biggar 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

Wiston Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Wiston and the surrounding area. The roll was 12 when the inspection was carried out in May 2011. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010. This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of Libberton Primary School which shares the same headteacher.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning.
- Children's motivation and positive attitudes to learning.
- Stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences which help children achieve.
- Joint work with Libberton Primary School, leading to improvements for children.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

All children are enthusiastic in their learning. They are motivated, purposeful and well behaved. Children recognise that staff know them well and that they are valued. Across the stages, children respond well when they are involved actively in their learning, for example, during language activities. They work very well independently, in pairs, and together in small groups. Children are demonstrating good skills as learners through the use of peer and self-assessment. They are gaining confidence in using ICT to extend their learning. Increasingly, children are receiving helpful feedback about their learning from staff. There is scope to provide a few children with more meaningful activities that engage them fully in their learning. Children are developing a secure understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and participate in a range of activities which promote healthy choices. They develop a sense of responsibility and awareness of others through fundraising activities. Children's achievements are celebrated well through displays of work and regular assemblies.

Older children take part in a residential visit which helps to develop their skills in problem solving and teamwork.

Most children are making appropriate progress in English language and mathematics. They are developing confidence in listening and talking and are able to express their ideas well in class. They are able to talk confidently to the whole class. Children show a positive interest in reading and almost all read with fluency and expression. They can talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and what makes a good story for them. Children write well for a range of purposes, including writing factual reports as part of their research on inventions. They enjoy writing thank-you letters after visits. In mathematics, almost all children's skills in mental and written number calculations are strong. Children have a secure understanding of the properties of shape. They use computers very successfully to create charts and graphs for a range of purposes. Children are confident in identifying and using problem solving strategies.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children experience a broad curriculum. They are developing their confidence in working with the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence in a variety of curricular areas. Children use their unique outdoor location well to learn about the environment. Staff have plans to develop this further. Working with Libberton Primary School, staff are taking increasing account of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff have begun to design a whole-school plan for all curriculum areas. Within this, teachers need to ensure there is continuity and progression in children's learning at all stages and across the curriculum. Children receive two hours of physical education each week, although there is scope to make this more challenging for a few children.

Across the school, staff work together effectively to meet the personal, social, emotional and learning needs of all children. Teachers match tasks well to meet the learning needs of most children. A few children need greater challenge in their classwork and a faster pace of learning. The support assistant liaises very well with teachers and provides high-quality support to children. The school has well-developed approaches for identifying children who need help with their learning. Staff work with a range of professionals to provide well-targeted support. The support for learning teacher provides effective advice to staff regarding children with additional support needs. Individualised support plans help children who need additional support to achieve and make progress. There is scope to improve these plans further by improving targets to help measure progress in learning. The teacher manages to meet the challenges of a P1 to P7 multistage class well. He gives clear instructions and explanations. He encourages children, as far as possible, to reflect on their learning and explain their thinking to other children. Homework is regular and appropriately 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. Staff have established very good links with Libberton 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?

Children are involved actively in helping to improve their school community through, for example, the Junior Road Safety Officers and pupil council. They have been involved in planning and developing the grounds in the new school. Children could now be more involved in evaluating and improving learning experiences. Staff use a variety of approaches well to identify the strengths of the school and what it needs to improve. They take good account of the views of parents and children when planning school improvements. Staff should take forward plans to track children's progress and attainment. 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 has high expectations of children's behaviour and engagement with learning. Children, parents and staff are proud of their new school. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and as a result of this, children's behaviour is very good. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements. They are knowledgeable about child protection and take appropriate action to ensure children are safe and well looked after. Children feel the school deals very well with any instances of bullying. They are confident that they are treated fairly and that if they have concerns these will be acted upon quickly and effectively. Children have regular opportunities to take part in religious observance. The school should look to now provide more planned opportunities for children to learn about equality and diversity.

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

The headteacher knows the school well. She is successful in building an atmosphere of teamwork across the school and with Libberton 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 now to focus more on working with the school community to shape a vision for the curriculum in Wiston Primary School. The headteacher is well supported by the class teachers and principal teacher, who reflect 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 schools 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 Wiston Primary School.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Improvements in performance | good |
| Learners' experiences | very 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: 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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^[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.