



**Douglas Primary School
and Nursery Class
South Lanarkshire Council
21 September 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² 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.

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.

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1. The school

Douglas Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the town of Douglas in South Lanarkshire. The roll was 188, including 47 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in June 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Polite, well-behaved children who are keen to learn.
- The quality of relationships between the children and all staff.
- Staff teamwork.
- Concern shown by staff for the care and welfare of all children.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery are forming friendships with one another and developing independence when using jigsaws and games. Children are engaged when participating in craft activities, such as, making models. Staff take account of children's views when providing activities. They should involve children more in talking about their learning. Across the primary stages, almost all children are polite, motivated and keen to learn. They work well on tasks without close supervision. Children feel safe and well cared for. They collaborate well but would benefit from clearer roles when working in groups. They should have more responsibility for planning and improving their work. The school needs to develop further its use of information and communications technology (ICT) to help children advance their research skills and share learning ideas. Children develop their learning and confidence well by participating in the eco group and the health and wellbeing group.

In the nursery, the majority of children are developing coordination and balance playing outdoors. They can use scissors well. During role-play activities children enjoy arranging and selling flowers. Most children are confident in using paint. In the primary classes, children's

confidence and sense of achievement is developed through participation in regular school assemblies and a school show. Children develop leadership skills through their involvement in the enterprise group, the pupil council and by fundraising for selected charities. Children develop their physical abilities well by taking part in sports activities. The school should now seek to broaden the range of after-school activities available, particularly for younger children.

Almost all children in the nursery are making satisfactory progress in their development. The majority explore early writing. They need more encouragement to use and enjoy books. Children are making satisfactory progress in early mathematics and show a growing awareness of number. They need more help to develop a wider range of skills and use mathematical language in their play. Across the primary stages, the school is showing a stable pattern of attainment in reading and mathematics. In writing, attainment decreased substantially in 2008 but this has been addressed and is now stable. Most children achieve national levels of attainment. At the early stages, most achieve these levels earlier than might normally be expected. However, this early success does not always continue at the later stages. Most children listen carefully to teachers and respond confidently during classroom discussions. A few children do not enjoy reading. In writing, children take pride in the presentation of their written work. Most children write well for a range of purposes. In mathematics, children can calculate quickly and explain clearly how they reach their answers. Children at all stages show a good understanding of shape. By P7, children have a useful understanding of the strategies needed to solve a range of problems. They would benefit from more opportunities to apply these in real-life situations. Across the school, however, they do not make enough use of ICT to develop mathematical abilities, for example, in displaying information. Children are achieving well in areas beyond language and mathematics. Those at P6 and P7 are making good progress in listening and speaking in German. Children are developing skills in science and ecology through work on a trout breeding project.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum in the nursery class is based on play. Staff should continue to develop how they plan learning to ensure that children make continuous progress across a range of areas. In the nursery and primary classes, the school has begun revising its curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the primary classes, most children are benefiting from topic work which builds on their interests and helps them make links across curricular areas. They are beginning to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. There remains too much emphasis on routine exercises in English language and mathematics. Staff should now extend opportunities to develop and apply children's literacy and numeracy skills as part of topic work. Links with local and council bodies, such as Artsnet, help enrich the curriculum. All children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week.

Staff in the nursery provide an appropriate range of resources to suit the age of the children. They are sensitive to the children's needs but should intervene more to support and extend children's learning during play. Staff complete folios recording the children's progress. In the primary, staff know children very well and are sensitive to their needs. A few children have specific difficulties which impact on their learning and development. The school should improve the record keeping for vulnerable children and those with additional support needs. Teachers organise tasks and activities which suit the learning needs of most children. However, in most lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and the level of work is too easy for a majority of children. The support for learning teacher works well with class teachers to provide advice and support for children with additional support needs. Classroom assistants provide very good support for children and staff. Children have regular homework but this should be more varied to support children's learning.

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

The school works with a range of partners, including health professionals, to support children's learning. In the nursery, staff encourage parents to participate in their children's learning. The Parent Council is strong and they are taking an active interest in the building of the new school. There is an effective parent-teacher association which assists with fundraising. Parents have a positive view of the school and are keen to develop further partnerships with the headteacher to assist school improvement. Parents are informed about the work of the school through a newsletter. They receive information about their child's progress through parents' meetings and two progress reports each year. Parents are consulted about sensitive health issues. The school deals effectively with any concerns or complaints. There are appropriate arrangements in place for children moving from nursery to P1. The school works well with staff from Lanark Grammar School to support children as they move from primary to secondary. The school should seek links with local business partnerships to enhance children's experience of skills for work and skills for life.

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

Children enjoy opportunities to be involved as leaders. In the nursery class, staff act on feedback from parents. Across the primary stages, the pupil council have a say in making the school better. Older children help younger children in the playground. A few have trained as members of a junior road safety group. The school achieved a gold award for health promotion. Children demonstrate a knowledge of what is necessary for a healthy lifestyle. The school should work to develop a healthy tuck shop facility to encourage healthy snacks at playtime. Non-teaching staff contribute well to the wider life of the school. Staff work very well together as a team. They are involved in school improvement groups. The headteacher has arrangements in

place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Staff have improved children's learning experiences by their work within the school improvement plan. The headteacher, principal teacher and staff lead improvements across the school. All teaching staff should take responsibility for school improvements as leaders of learning.

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

Children are friendly and polite and almost all are very well behaved. The nursery has a welcoming ethos. At the primary stages, staff have very good relationships with children, and children feel safe and valued in the school. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and attendance. Nursery and primary staff are aware of how to keep children safe. Children's achievements are celebrated in assemblies and displayed around the school to enhance the learning environment. Teachers have high expectations of children's efforts but there is scope to raise expectations of what children can achieve in their learning. The school promotes and celebrates equality and diversity through work in religious and moral education. For example, in school programmes of study the children learn about anti-bullying. There are regular opportunities for religious observance.

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

The headteacher, principal teacher and staff have a clear vision for the school. The headteacher is very well supported by an able principal teacher who leads a number of key developments. Together with all staff they are beginning to develop the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. After a period of the school experiencing significant staff absence, the headteacher has shown he has an accurate view of the way forward for the school. The local authority and the staff have been highly supportive of the management in what has been a challenging time. With the continuing support of the authority, the school is well placed to make further improvement.

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' achievements.

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

- Continue to improve attainment, especially in reading and writing and notably at P6/P7.
- Continue to develop the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Improve the record keeping for vulnerable children and those with additional support needs.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were four recommendations, three of which had been addressed. One outstanding issue regarding the need for staff to consult children is carried forward in this report.

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 Douglas Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Aileen Monaghan
21 September 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 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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