



**Dunbarney Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Perth and Kinross Council  
23 August 2011**

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**

Dunbarney Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Bridge of Earn. The roll was 212, including 40 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in May 2011. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010.

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

- The high quality of children's learning in the nursery class.
- Confident, friendly and articulate children who contribute to the nursery's and school's positive ethos.
- Staff teamwork to improve the school and ensure all children make progress in their learning.
- The quality of relationships between staff and children, contributing to the creation of a stimulating learning environment.
- Leadership of the senior management team in supporting staff to improve the quality and the consistency of their practice.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Most nursery children are confident, friendly and independent. They are engaged actively and absorbed in their learning. Children move confidently around the nursery, accessing resources and children to play with. They particularly enjoy role play in their newly developed 'garden centre'. Children have regular opportunities to discuss and plan future learning, for example they participate in weekly 'look back, look forward' sessions. At the primary stages, most children work confidently in groups, pairs and individually and help each other to complete tasks. They are motivated well and listen attentively to staff's helpful explanations and clear instructions. Most children participate confidently in lessons by answering questions correctly and asking enquiring questions. They are increasing their independent learning skills well when completing class activities and projects. The

school should enhance children's learning experiences further with more demanding activities, challenging all children and extending their skills. Staff use questioning effectively to confirm children's understanding and to summarise the main points of lessons. They praise children frequently for their work and ideas. Most teachers and children are using information and communications technology (ICT) and interactive whiteboards successfully.

In the nursery and primary classes, children are improving their school and community environment successfully by recycling, tree planting and growing vegetables. They participate enthusiastically in the village's 'Brig in Bloom' project by planting new flowers and reusing old ones within the school grounds. These and similar activities have helped the school gain two green flags from Eco-Schools Scotland. Many children are members of school committees, for example the pupil council, health committee, eco committee, web team, and the travel team. Through committee activities, children are improving the school. For example, the pupil council organised successful charity events and the 'Travel Team' organised a 'Walk to School Week'. The health committee monitor the success of 'Fruity Friday' where all children eat a fruit snack together. These and related activities develop children's leadership and interpersonal skills. Almost all children engage confidently in a wide variety of sporting activities such as football, netball and cross country. These are organised effectively by school staff and the Active Schools coordinator. Children's learning experiences are enhanced by educational visits to the Scottish Parliament and 'Amazonia'.

In the nursery, children are making very good progress in early language and mathematics. Weekly 'show and tell' sessions are supporting children in talking to an audience and developing their questioning skills well. Children use non-fiction books to deepen their knowledge about their interests, for example dinosaurs and butterflies. They count and recognise numbers to ten and are developing an understanding of money during role play activities in the garden centre. Overall, children are making very good progress in English language and mathematics. Most children attain national standards in

reading, writing and almost all do so in mathematics. Children requiring additional support in their learning are making very good progress. Children participate and cooperate successfully in a variety of conversations and discussions as part of their learning. They read confidently and fluently and talk well about their favourite author, the type of book and reasons for their choice. Children complete extended pieces of writing for a variety of purposes effectively. In mathematics, children perform mental and written calculations with confidence. They consolidate their number skills regularly through interactive activities, playing mathematical games and using ICT. Children use a variety of strategies skilfully to solve mathematical problems linked to their learning. They can relate mathematics to real-life situations, for example when measuring the circumference of a bicycle wheel.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff in the school use the experiences and outcomes (Es and Os) of Curriculum for Excellence to plan a broad curriculum well. They provide children with a variety of learning experiences and teachers take account of the Es and Os when planning their 'Learning in Context' sessions. Outdoor learning is being developed to enhance this aspect further. Staff are taking account of what children want to learn and include them in the planning of topics, for example by their 'big question' approach. The school should continue to review and refresh areas of the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all children. The school is developing a resilience programme as part of its health and wellbeing developments. Children experience two hours of good quality physical education each week. Transition arrangements for nursery to P1 and from P7 to Perth High School are very well organised.

In the nursery, most resources and tasks are very well matched to the needs of almost all children. Staff track children's learning to measure progress and identify next steps in learning. They identify particular focus groups, including language and mathematics, to provide additional support or challenge. In the primary, most children work on relevant and suitable tasks and activities that match their abilities.

Teachers are very aware of the needs of individual children and mainly plan group work accordingly. In most lessons, the pace of learning is suitable. Staff should continue to provide appropriate and relevant challenge for all children. The school has a clear system for identifying, reviewing and evaluating children's learning needs. It responds promptly to identified needs and where necessary works effectively in partnership with other services to establish plans to address these needs. Children's individualised educational programmes (IEPs) contain relevant short-term learning targets which are reviewed every term. Children's views inform the review of IEP targets and parents are consulted regularly. Support for learning staff assist children with additional support needs well. Staff work closely with other agencies, for example, the speech and language therapist, to support children and families. Children receive homework regularly which links well with their classwork.

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

The Parent Council and parents are very positive about the work and improvement plans of the school. Staff communicate very successfully with parents and encourage parents to be more involved in their child's learning. For example, the nursery is active in encouraging parents to share their skills in the playroom and come into the nursery to 'stay and play' alongside their child. At the primary stages, parents are asked to discuss the 'Snapshot' report with their child. Parent helpers work very well alongside staff to help children understand their tasks and accompany staff and children on education visits. The school has established strong links with a variety of community organisations. For example, the school invited a bank to talk to children about financial education. Children work successfully in partnership with the 'Brig in Bloom' project and the 'Bridge of Earn' Placecheck group to enhance the village's environment. These links help children to be more aware of sustainability issues and to become more responsible citizens. The nursery and school address any complaints and concerns very well.

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

All staff work very well together and with teachers in other schools, sharing examples of good practice. Staff are taking responsibility for leading developments, such as ICT. The headteacher and the depute headteacher use self-evaluation approaches very effectively to improve children's learning in the school. They have observed children's learning experiences, and reviewed teachers' forward plans and children's work rigorously to ensure consistency across the school. The senior management team has provided helpful feedback to teachers and, through professional discussion, agreed targets on how teachers can improve their practice. Members of the team work closely with teachers to monitor and track children's progress regularly. Teachers understand the purpose of self-evaluation and use it to plan future improvements. Children are self-assessing their work in a few areas of their learning. The senior management team has asked parents, staff and children about school matters and these are taken into account as part of the school's improvement plan.

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

The school has a very positive, caring and supportive ethos. Staff have high expectations of children's attendance, behaviour and attainment. They have created a stimulating and exciting learning environment in which children are encouraged to do their best. There are appropriate procedures in place to deal with child protection matters. All teaching, support and catering staff are knowledgeable about and have had training in child protection. The school tackles bullying and racist incidents sensitively and promotes anti-bullying approaches well. Equality and diversity are promoted through the curriculum and related activities. Children are increasing their understanding of disability, different cultures and religions through projects and cultural celebrations. Religious observance is provided regularly by the school chaplain.

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

The school has a clear sense of direction. The headteacher shows strong leadership in improving the school for all children. He carries out his duties in a thoughtful, caring and very effective manner. He is very well supported by the depute headteacher. Together they are improving the quality of children's learning experiences and staff's teaching strategies. The depute headteacher carries out her remit very effectively and supports all staff successfully. Staff work well together to provide children with relevant and exciting learning experiences. Children are taking on leadership roles and are improving many aspects of school life.

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

As a result of the very 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 curriculum to ensure depth and progression of children's skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Continue to ensure all children have high quality learning experiences consistently and meet their learning needs.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class no requirements and no recommendations were made.

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 Dunbarney Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>very good</b>

**HM Inspector:** Hakim Din  
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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