



**Moncreiffe Primary School
and Nursery Class
Perth and Kinross Council
22 March 2011**

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

Moncreiffe Primary is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Moncreiffe and Upper Craigie areas of Perth. The roll was 199, including 27 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in January 2011. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2009/2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Enterprising and articulate children who play a key role in improving the life and work of their school and nursery.
- Innovative approaches by staff to implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- The quality of care and support for children and their families.
- Partnerships with parents, agencies and local businesses to enhance children's learning.
- Staff teamwork and the headteacher's leadership of improvement.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the school, children are motivated and eager to learn. In the nursery they enjoy making their own choices about where they want to play and choose confidently from a wide range of activities and resources. At the primary stages, children have a clear understanding about what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. They are developing very well their skills in using information and communications technology to support their learning.

Nursery children help to plan their learning using 'big books' and mind-mapping techniques. Almost all children have formed friendships and can play and interact well together. Across the primary stages, all children develop a sense of belonging, teamwork and social responsibility through membership of a pupil council. Through the work of these groups, they demonstrate important enterprise skills to

organise visits to a local senior citizens' care home and to arrange and lead school assemblies. The skills and talents that children bring to school are recognised, celebrated and valued. Most children benefit from taking part in a range of out-of-class clubs and activities, including football, hockey, dance and the school website. Children have well-developed skills in physical education, art and music.

In the nursery, children listen well to adults and to one another. They talk happily about what they are doing while they play. Almost all children recognise their name in print and a few can write their own names and stories. Almost all children enjoy playing counting games and can recognise numbers. They use appropriate mathematical language when comparing sizes of objects they find in the playroom. At the primary stages, almost all children make very good progress in their learning. Whilst attainment in English language and mathematics has fluctuated in recent years, the school has taken positive steps to address this variability. Most children are attaining appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. The majority achieve national levels in writing. At all stages, a high number of children achieve these earlier than might normally be expected. Children with additional support needs are making very good progress towards appropriate learning targets set within individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and personal learning planning. Across the school, children speak confidently and articulately and listen very well. They are encouraged to read for enjoyment and can discuss a range of authors and poets. Children at the early stages have developed a very good understanding of number work. Those at the upper stages can talk widely about how they use mathematics and numeracy skills in real life situations. They show agility and accuracy in mental mathematics. By P7, they use computers independently to produce a range of graphs, charts and tables to display information they have gathered.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school provides children with a broad and rich range of learning experiences. In the nursery, staff provide a curriculum based firmly on

learning through play. They provide a variety of stimulating opportunities across almost all aspects of children's development and learning. They plan closely with colleagues at the early stages of primary to ensure progression in learning. At the primary stages, staff are using the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* very effectively to plan children's learning. They design innovative projects which motivate children and help them make links in their learning. Staff have developed productive partnerships with local businesses to enhance the curriculum and help children learn about the world of work. For example, a chef works closely with the school to develop the programme for health and wellbeing. At all stages, children have very good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across their learning. Children at P6 and P7 are developing a good range of vocabulary and can speak, read and write simple phrases in French. Staff promote health and wellbeing through a very full programme that includes a wide choice of physical activities and range of health topics. The school provides two hours of high-quality physical education each week for all children.

In the nursery, staff know children well as individuals. All children, including those new to nursery, are happy, settled and gaining confidence. Overall, tasks, activities and resources are matched appropriately to the needs of most children. Nursery staff need to use assessment information and their observations of children more effectively to meet the differing needs and abilities of children. At the primary stages, staff provide varied learning opportunities which are active. The pace of learning is well judged and tasks provide children with appropriate challenge in almost all lessons. Homework activities are regular and varied. Staff are skilled in providing all children with strategies to overcome or cope with barriers to their learning. The learning support specialist works very effectively with children who have additional learning needs. Her expertise is used very well by class teachers and support staff to ensure individual and group needs are met. Children who require additional support are involved fully in agreeing future learning targets within their IEPs.

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

The school has very good links with a range of external partners and support agencies which provide appropriate advice and direct support for children and families. The school has positive partnerships with the Parent Council and the parent group, 'Friends of Moncreiffe'. Staff make parents welcome and provide opportunities for them to be involved in supporting children's learning. Parents are supportive of the work of the school and provide practical help with activities and on trips out-of-school. They receive helpful information about what their children will learn through regular newsletters and leaflets, class "learning trees", parents' evenings and progress reports. Overall, staff deal effectively with any parental complaints or concerns. Children are very well supported in making transitions from home to nursery and from nursery to P1. There are effective systems in place to ensure that children in P7 make a smooth transition to secondary school.

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

The ethos and spirit of team working within the school is excellent. All children contribute to improving the school through their roles on various pupil councils. For example, through the eco group, children make important decisions about what happens to the school environment. As a result of their efforts, the school has achieved an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag. All staff give willingly of their own time to maintain the school's high reputation within the community. Staff are reflective, outward looking and share best practice with each other on a frequent basis. Very effective approaches to self-evaluation have led to innovative developments in curriculum planning and improvements in learning and teaching. Children's and parents' views are actively sought and acted upon by staff.

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

All staff have very positive relationships with children. They show great care and concern for children's wellbeing. Teachers make very effective use of praise to celebrate and build on children's achievements, including children's successes outwith school. Staff promote equality and fairness and have very high expectations of children's behaviour. They expect children to work hard and take responsibility for their own actions. Children respond very positively to this and make the most of their learning experiences. The school has appropriate systems and policies for children's care and welfare, including anti-bullying and safe Internet use. All staff are trained in child protection. The school is successful in developing children's positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles. Arrangements for monitoring children's attendance are effective and managed well. With helpful support from local ministers, the school provides very good opportunities for religious observance.

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

Staff are clear about their vision to ensure that every child is equipped with skills for learning and skills for life. Children play an important part in helping the school achieve its aims. The headteacher knows the school very well and provides strong leadership for improvement. She provides scope for staff to take responsibility for developing areas of the curriculum and improving aspects of school life. As a result, the school is successful in developing responsible and articulate children who are ready to take on challenges. The school is very well placed to continue to deliver high quality education.

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.

- Ensure that the needs of all children in the nursery class are met more fully.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class, one recommendation was made. This had been addressed.

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 Moncreiffe Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	excellent
Meeting learning needs	very good

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Lesley A Allan
22 March 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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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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