



**St Ninian's Episcopal  
Primary School  
Perth  
Perth and Kinross Council  
10 June 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school<sup>1</sup>. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents<sup>2</sup> and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the ‘ethos’ of the school. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the school, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school’s aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school’s success in achieving these 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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this report, the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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### **1. The school**

St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School is situated in Perth. Almost all children attend as a result of placing requests. Children of members of the Episcopal Church have an automatic right of entry to the school. The roll was 117 when the inspection was carried out in April 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

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

- The bright and stimulating environment in which children learn, including the attractive outdoor space.
- The friendly and welcoming ethos in the school and the commitment of staff to the care and welfare of children.
- Children's skills in working together in groups.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Overall, children are keen to learn and work hard. They contribute effectively in lessons and interact well with each other and their teachers. From the early stages, children work effectively together in pairs and groups. They share ideas well and are skilled at undertaking different responsibilities in their teams. Many children are learning to take responsibility by becoming class helpers, and those at P7 take on the roles of house captains and monitors. On a monthly basis, children from P1 to P7 meet in their house teams to learn in enterprising ways. They successfully organise and take part in concerts and fundraising events. Children experience success by taking part in a range of sporting tournaments and cultural activities. At a recent 'Homecoming Scotland' celebration, children across the school improved their skills in talking, writing, music and drama. They shared confidently and successfully what they had learned about Scotland with parents and members of the community. Most children understand the importance of staying healthy. They now need to be more fully involved in health promotion work in the school. Across the school, children are making very good progress in physical education. From the early stages, children use information and communications technology well to learn new computing skills. In P6/P7, children

successfully used these skills to produce a short animated film about the Loch Ness monster. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in English language and mathematics. Most children achieve appropriate national standards in reading and mathematics and a majority achieve these standards in writing. Attainment in English language and mathematics has fallen slightly in recent years. Most children at the early stages achieve national standards earlier than might be expected. However, this early progress is not maintained as children move through the school. In English language, children listen well to their teachers and, from the early stages, can follow directions and instructions correctly. At P7, children can read and discuss unseen text well. They are not confident in discussing the styles of different authors. Children make good progress with spelling and grammar, but do not have enough opportunities to write at length. In mathematics, children cope well with their classwork. They work accurately with numbers but need to further improve their skills in mental calculations. Across the school, children have a good understanding of shape and measurement and they work confidently with graphs. In problem solving, children can discuss how they reach their answers and can apply their skills very well in practical activities.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The school provides children with a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff have begun to make positive changes in line with the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*. They are beginning to link areas of the curriculum to make learning more meaningful for children. In a few classes, children are learning to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of learning. This practice is not yet consistent across the school. The school has developed initiatives to encourage children to read more widely but these have yet to have a clear impact. Staff are aware of the need to develop children's skills in writing, talking and listening more systematically. Visiting teachers are successfully building children's skills in music, physical education and art. At all stages, staff plan programmes for religious and moral education and personal and social development to ensure that children learn about other cultures and beliefs. In most classes staff plan

activities to ensure that children are active during lessons. At the early stages, children learn through play but there is scope to make this more purposeful. Teachers share the purpose of lessons with children and check that they understand what has been taught. They need to make it clearer to children what is expected of them as learners and give them useful feedback about how to improve their work. Children receive regular homework but it does not always support their learning in class.

The school meets the pastoral needs of children well but their learning needs are not well met. Teachers need to plan tasks and activities that are better matched to the needs of individual children. Their expectations are too often the same for all children in the class. Higher achieving children find some activities too easy and the pace of learning for a few groups of children is too slow. A visiting teacher helps children who require additional support with their learning. Together with class teachers, the visiting specialist draws up individual support plans, containing agreed learning targets, for a small number of children to help them make good progress. Some of the targets set need to be more specific. This will ensure that children can see more clearly the progress they are making and can understand more fully their next steps in learning. Support staff provide high quality assistance to children who need extra help with their work. Overall, the school needs to review its arrangements for assisting children with additional support needs.”

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

The school has developed productive partnerships with parents and the wider community. Parents appreciate the regular, relevant information they receive on their children’s progress. They find staff approachable and feel welcome in the school. The Parent Council supports the school very well. The school deals effectively with complaints and any concerns from parents. Children regularly attend services at St Ninian’s Cathedral and the school chaplain visits classes

to work with children. Established links with local police and health visitors enhance health education in the school. The school is sensitive to the needs of vulnerable children and their families. It needs to involve professionals from other agencies more consistently to support children who require additional help with their learning. The school provides good support for children transferring from nursery to P1 and from P7 to local secondary schools.

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

Staff are committed to the school and provide a high level of care for children. Teachers are supportive of each other. Support staff willingly undertake additional duties and provide strong support for school initiatives such as concerts. The pupil council has recently become more active and the eco committee has helped the school achieve an Eco-School Scotland award at silver level. A small group of children and parents have worked together to develop the attractive outdoor space. Older children successfully run the school tuck shop and the library. Overall, children would like to be more involved in making decisions about improving their school. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning by visiting classes and by meeting with teachers to discuss their learning plans. Some teachers have visited each others' classrooms and other schools to share and develop their practice. They should build on this practice and become involved in a wider range of self-evaluation activities which improve children's learning experiences and attainment. The school should gather more systematically the views of staff, children and parents and use these to bring about improvements for children.

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

The school provides a safe and welcoming environment for its children. Staff take their responsibilities for the welfare of children seriously and the school has appropriate arrangements to keep

children safe. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and attendance. Children are polite, helpful and proud of their school. They are motivated by the 'Good to be Green' initiative to promote good behaviour, which is helping to reduce the number of exclusions from school. Teachers encourage good learning and behaviour through rewards such as house points and appropriate use of praise. They need to raise expectations of what children can achieve in their learning. Assemblies provide good opportunities for religious observance and the celebration of children's achievements both in and out of school. The school has established links with a school in India which helps children's understanding of diversity.

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

The school has a clear set of aims which underpins its work. The headteacher is highly committed to the school and to the care and welfare of the children. She is well supported by the principal teacher who, at the time of the inspection, was leading the school in the headteacher's absence. Together, the headteacher and principal teacher have produced a plan to improve aspects of the school and teachers have been invited to comment on this. Teachers are not yet fully involved in developing key aspects of the work of the school. The school should work with the education authority to develop its capacity for improvement.



## 8. What happens next?

We will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, we may continue to check the improvements the school has made. We may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.

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

- Raise children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve children's learning by sharing with them targets for their learning and ways in which they can improve their work.
- Continue to review as a staff how to meet the learning needs of all children more effectively.
- Develop leadership throughout the school and more rigorous approaches to self-evaluation to guide future improvements.

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 St Ninian's Episcopal Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>weak</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Elaine Merrilees  
10 June 2009

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses