



**Highdykes Primary School
Bonhill
West Dunbartonshire Council
1 February 2011**

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

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1. The school

Highdykes Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Braehead, Pappert and Beechwood catchment areas of Bonhill. The roll was 165 when the inspection was carried out in November 2010. Children's attendance was well above the national average in 2009/2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Well-behaved and polite children who are eager to learn and to work for the good of the school.
- The welcoming ethos, positive relationships and the high standard of pastoral care.
- Commitment of all staff to improving the work of the school.
- The leadership of the management team.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are motivated and eager to learn. They work hard to please their teachers. The school has a clear focus on developing children's life skills. Children are beginning to identify 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 assist in their learning.

Children develop social responsibility through working on the pupil council, eco committee and as House captains. They run clubs, such as the book group and 'Jumping Jacks' and undertake fundraising events. At the upper stages, they talk at length about the work they have undertaken in their Animation programme. At all stages they are using the Internet well for their research. Most children benefit from taking part in a range of out-of-class activities, including Jog Friday, football, netball and hockey. Children have well-developed skills in physical education, drama and music.

The school has maintained good standards in listening, talking, reading and mathematics. Whilst attainment in writing has been variable in recent years the school is taking steps to address this variability. Most children are attaining expected national levels. A number of children achieve these earlier than might normally be expected. Children with additional support needs are making good progress towards appropriate learning targets set within individualised educational programmes and personal learning plans. Across the school, children speak confidently and listen well. They read well for enjoyment. Children at the early stages have developed a very good understanding of number work. Children at the upper stages are confident and show agility in mental mathematics. Across the school, children can collect and organise information successfully. Their skills in problem solving are developing well at all stages.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff have made a very good start to using *Curriculum for Excellence* and are providing innovative projects which motivate children and help them make links in their learning. Overall, the school provides children with a broad and rich range of learning experiences. Staff use an extensive range of visits and visitors to enhance children's experiences. Increasingly, children have opportunities to develop their literacy skills across their learning. A start has been made to developing children's skills in numeracy across the curriculum. Children at P6 and P7 are developing a good range of vocabulary and can speak, read and write simple phrases in German. Staff promote health and wellbeing through a very full programme that includes a wide choice of physical activities. The school provides two hours of high-quality physical education each week for all children.

Staff know children very well and provide a purposeful learning environment. Staff ensure that tasks and activities are meeting the needs of children and that all are making appropriate progress. Staff provide varied learning opportunities which are active. The pace of learning is well judged and tasks provide children with appropriate challenge in most lessons. In classes, support from learning

assistants is very well judged and helpful. Their expertise is used very well by class teachers to ensure individual and group needs are met. Homework activities are regular and varied. The network learning support specialist works very effectively with children who have additional learning needs. Individualised educational programmes are well designed and help children make appropriate progress. Children and their parents are fully involved in reviewing children's progress and in agreeing future learning targets.

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

The school has very good links with a range of external support agencies which provide appropriate advice and direct support. The school has positive partnerships with individual parents and the parent group 'Families and Friends of Highdykes'. Staff make parents very 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 eco activities and on trips out-of-school. They receive helpful information about what their children will study through regular newsletters, parents' evenings and progress reports. The pupil council and eco committee have a strong voice in the school. Staff deal effectively with any parental complaints or concerns. The school has productive links with other schools in the cluster and with Vale of Leven Academy. Children are very well supported in making transitions from the local nurseries to P1 and from P7 to secondary school.

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

Children are proud of their school and their part in making improvements. They willingly take on responsibilities and support each other well. Older children act as buddies to children in P1 and take part in paired reading activities with younger children. Children

from P1 to P7 take an active part in the school Eco committee. The school uses a good range of outings and visitors to the school to make learning more interesting. Class teachers work well as a team. They are all strongly committed to improving the quality of children's learning experiences. They use professional review to identify and undertake appropriate training to support their own professional development. They regularly share the benefits of training with each other. Teachers have begun to encourage children to evaluate their own work. The headteacher and her depute visit classes regularly to observe the quality of learning and teaching and comment on teachers' written plans. They also track children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school uses a range of systems to gather the views of parents, staff and children.

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 effective use of praise and the school's system of rewards to celebrate children's achievements. They deal very effectively with any incidents which require adult support. They expect children to work hard and take responsibility for their own learning. Staff promote equality and fairness and have very high expectations of children's behaviour. 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 places a strong emphasis on equality and diversity and on developing children's understanding of healthy lifestyles. Arrangements for monitoring children's attendance are effective and managed well. With support from the local minister, the school provides appropriate religious observance.

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

The headteacher and her depute have a clear focus on improving learning and teaching. They know the strengths and development needs of all school staff. They are open to new ways of working, including the use of technologies. The headteacher encourages staff to be innovative in their teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic and energetic individuals who want to improve further the outcomes for children.

With the continuing effective support of the education authority, Highdykes Primary School has the capacity to improve further.

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 area for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to raise attainment across the school through a greater emphasis on personal learning targets.

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 Highdykes Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: David M Martin

1 February 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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