



**Kilpatrick School  
Dalmuir  
West Dunbartonshire  
Council  
25 August 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school. 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>1</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> 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**

Kilpatrick School is a non-denominational school. It provides education for children and young people who have moderate or complex learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorders. It is situated in Dalmuir and serves all of West Dunbartonshire, with a few children and young people attending from neighbouring authorities. The roll was 118, when the inspection was carried out in May 2009. Pupil's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008. At the time of inspection there was an acting headteacher who had been in post for less than a year.

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

- The effective use of a wide range of experiences to develop the confidence of children and young people.
- The use of information and communications technology to motivate and support children and young people with their learning.
- The transition arrangements made for children and young people moving from nursery to primary, primary to secondary and secondary to post school.
- The meaningful involvement of older pupils in their reviews through the creative use of interactive technology.
- Staff commitment to the care and welfare of children and young people.

## **3. Examples of good practice**

- ‘Pupil-Centred Visual Reviews’ using interactive technology.
- Sexual health website produced by the young people for young people.

## **4. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Children and young people are very polite and keen to please adults. Across the school, children and young people are beginning to be more involved in managing their own learning. A few are being encouraged to think about what they need to do to improve their learning, and to plan their next steps in learning. Some children and young people should be given a wider range of opportunities to work on their own or with others to solve problems and share their learning. Children and young people are using information and communications technology (ICT) effectively to help improve their understanding. In the primary stages, children use the sensory room, soft play and outdoor play areas to enrich their learning experiences. These activities are not always used effectively to further their learning. Children and young people enjoy regular outings to local shops, garden and leisure centres. From these outings they learn how to communicate, work with others and improve their personal and social skills. The achievements of children and young people are recognised and celebrated in assemblies and in class. Many young people are successful in local and national sporting events. A few young people are involved in the John Muir award programme. Some have completed course work for the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) but have not been entered for the awards.

Most children are achieving their learning targets in English language, understanding and relating to the environment (URE) and mathematics. Staff now need to focus on setting targets which relate to specific skills so that they can measure improvements in learning more effectively. Across the school, learners can read sentences and paragraphs, and identify characters from the stories they are reading. A few young people can read simple story books and everyday reading material such as newspapers. Overall, children and young people show a wide range of writing skills, from making simple marks on paper to writing sentences, paragraphs and pieces of extended

writing. Children in the primary stages are learning about the environment and some are completing early number work. In the secondary stage, young people are able to use ICT, for example to draw bar graphs. Seniors are learning to use their numeracy skills in real-life situations, such as using calculators to add up the money made in the café and through the sale of enterprise goods. Young people attain a wide range of units in National Qualifications at Access 1, 2 and 3. They are not able to progress beyond Access because Intermediate courses are not available. Staff should now provide these more advanced units and courses.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Children at the primary stages experience a suitable range of activities within and beyond the classroom. Across the school, children and young people follow a well-designed personal, social, health, and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme. Similar breadth, depth and progression in other key areas of the curriculum such as English language and communication, and URE and mathematics should now be developed. At the secondary stage, children experience a broad range of courses and are able to choose from a number of subject options. A few are able to spend time in their local mainstream school to help develop their social skills and curricula skills, for example, practical craft skills. A few staff are developing children's literacy and numeracy skills effectively in other subject areas, such as in enterprise activities. The school should now build on this work to take forward the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. The majority of young people benefit from good advice from Careers Scotland to help them plan their post-school placements. This should be available to all young people.

In most classes across the primary and secondary stages, tasks and activities are well matched to learners' needs. Staff in the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) classes use successful approaches to meeting the needs of learners with ASD. Most staff adapt their questioning and the materials they use to meet a wide range of individual needs. However, some children and young people engage

in too many routine activities which do not progress learning. Across the school, children and young people's needs are well identified. They all have individualised educational programmes which are reviewed regularly and adapted to meet changing needs. Seniors are well supported to help them make meaningful contributions to reviews of their learning and progress. Children and young people are well supported when they join the school and as they progress from stage to stage.

## **5. How well do staff work with others to support the learning of children and young people?**

The school has developed good working relationships with a range of professionals to support children and young people's learning. They provide helpful advice at their reviews and contribute to their learning targets where appropriate. For example, the educational psychologists provide useful advice about individual children and young people, and advise staff about areas for improvement. Children and young people with visual impairments receive good support from specialist authority teachers. Strong partnerships with training providers and local shop owners enhance the skills for work programme for senior pupils. Many young people use the voluntary information service 'Y-Sortit' to obtain information about local events and activities. Parents are actively involved in their children's regular reviews and have frequent informal discussions with staff. They would like to play a greater part in their children's learning. The Parent Council provides very good support to the school through fundraising events.

## **6. Are staff, children and young people actively involved in improving their school community?**

The pupil council meets regularly to discuss issues such as lunchtime activities. The council represents the whole school but does not as yet have any members from the primary stage. Pupils feel that their views

are listened to but are not sure if these make a difference. All staff are involved in evaluating the work that they do and that of the school. This year they feel that the process has been better and has meant more to them. However, these reviews have not always resulted in school improvement. Staff now need to focus on targets within the school improvement plan which bring about improvements to the experiences and achievements of children and young people.

## **7. Does the school have high expectations of all children and young people?**

Staff have very positive relationships with children and young people. Across the school, children and young people behave well and treat one another with respect. Staff use positive approaches to managing their behaviour. They need to raise their expectations of learning for some young people with complex learning difficulties. All staff understand their responsibilities for keeping children and young people safe. They respond sensitively to areas of concern and look after children's and young peoples' general health and wellbeing. The school provides a very caring environment where children and young people are treated with respect and dignity.

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

The acting headteacher has provided a clear sense of direction for the school. Together with her depute headteachers she has worked well with staff to produce a shared vision, values and aims for the school. The senior management team are beginning to have more of an impact on learning and teaching. All staff now need to take more responsibility for school improvement.



## 9. What happens next?

We are confident that 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 following this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

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

- Improve the attainment of all children and young people by providing them with access to appropriate qualifications.
- Improve courses and programmes for young people in understanding and relating to the environment, mathematics and communication and language.
- Use the information obtained from evaluating the quality of lessons to improve teaching and learning.

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 Kilpatrick School.

|                                    |                     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Improvements in performance</b> | <b>satisfactory</b> |
| <b>Learners' experiences</b>       | <b>good</b>         |
| <b>Meeting learning needs</b>      | <b>good</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>satisfactory</b> |

**HM Inspector:** Laura-Ann Currie  
25 August 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                                    |