



**Levenvale Primary School
Alexandria
West Dunbartonshire
26 May 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 parents¹ 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. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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

Levenvale Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Alexandria area of West Dunbartonshire. The roll was 163 when the inspection was carried out in March 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008. The headteacher had been in post for eight months.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children's recent progress in mathematics and writing.
- Courteous and well-behaved children.
- Whole school projects led by support staff which motivate children and develop their wider achievements.
- The strategic vision of the headteacher and depute headteacher for improving the school.

3. Examples of good practice

- The leadership of the learning assistants and their contributions to children's wider achievements.
- Approaches to raising attainment in mathematics.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children respond positively to the increased range of opportunities to develop their wider achievements. A number of these are led by learning assistants who are helping to develop children's confidence. All children are involved in, and enjoy, the creativity days and enterprise projects which help develop their understanding of the world of work. Older children develop good team building skills at the annual residential experience. They have very well developed public

speaking skills which enables them to be very successful in competitions. Across the school children are developing effective skills in science. For example, those at the early stages investigated whether changing the shape of materials would make them sink or float. They confidently made predictions and tested their designs. Most children achieve appropriate national levels of attainment in English language and mathematics. These levels have been maintained over the past few years. Most children have good skills in listening and talking but they are not yet using these skills well enough in other situations. In reading most children at P4 to P7 read confidently and can select appropriate information from their reading. Their skills in writing are developing well and they are writing for a variety of purposes and in a variety of styles. In mathematics, older children are making faster progress as a result of important changes to teaching approaches. However, at the early stages the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers plan lessons so that children are more active in their learning which builds on their previous knowledge. Most children are accurate in mental calculations and are developing appropriate skills in problem solving. There are less opportunities to develop skills in measurement through practical activities.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children with a broad curriculum. They are beginning to help young people make connections in their learning, in line with the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*. For example, the motivating work on the Titanic project has helped children to make links in their learning across history, science and technologies very well. Children benefit from many visitors and school trips which make learning more relevant. In the best examples, teachers provide high quality learning experiences which stimulate and involve children purposefully in their learning. At some stages children miss valuable learning time due to the way teachers, at times, manage timetabling arrangements. They do not all receive two hours good quality physical education per week. Overall, the curriculum does not always ensure appropriate progression in all children's learning.

There are some strengths in the provision to meet children's learning needs. The depute headteacher has developed very effective approaches to identify children who require additional support in their learning. Learning assistants and network staff work very well to support these children using individual plans. Across the school, planned tasks and activities are not always set at the right level of difficulty for all children across different areas of the curriculum. Teachers share the purpose of lessons, review what has been learned and use questioning well to check the understanding of a few children. They need to help children be more aware of their learning and what they need to do to improve. The school identified the need to include more variety in homework activities.

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

The Parent Council supports the school well and is pleased with the recent improvements. They are working closely with school staff to bring about much needed improvements to the school grounds. Parents feel they are kept well informed by the monthly progress reports, newsletters and curriculum information leaflets. Most report that the school is good at sorting out complaints. A few would like to be more involved in their child's learning at home. The school has successful partnerships with educational services and local schools. It is beginning to develop important links with the local community and businesses. Appropriate arrangements are in place when children move from nursery to P1. Staff prepare children well for their transfer from P7 to Vale of Leven Academy.

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

The school has an improved range of opportunities to develop children's responsibilities. Older children support younger children well and are involved in organising events through their enterprise activities. The current pupil council is looking at ways to ensure their work is understood and represents the views of the whole school community. Support staff use their strengths very well to improve children's learning experiences. Children are aware of how to care for their environment and are knowledgeable about recycling and saving energy. The school is working towards a Green Eco-Schools Scotland Award. Most children feel their views are listened to and acted upon. The headteacher and depute closely monitor classwork and give teachers helpful feedback about their teaching. Staff are beginning to review and share good practice of their own and others' teaching. These approaches and the recent gathering of children, parent and staff views have brought about positive improvements to learners' experiences.

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

Most children and staff are proud of their school. Along with parents, they are now building relationships and working more effectively together. This has improved morale and the sense of community. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and are beginning to set greater challenges for children's learning. They ensure that children's wider achievements are recognised. The school is more involved with the community. For example, parents, members of the community and children learn through a range of activities such as, the Science Fun Week, Levenvale Mini Olympics and visits by the school choir to a local care home. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection. Children know what to do in the event of concerns and most are clear about approaches to anti-bullying. Assemblies provide regular opportunities for religious observance. Across the school teamwork is improving. Staff at P4 to P7 now have higher

expectations of what children can achieve. As a result, children are becoming independent in their learning and taking more responsibility for their progress.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has set high expectations of what children and staff can achieve. He is very well supported by the depute headteacher. Together, they involve staff in an effective range of self-evaluation approaches which focus on making the school better for children. These include the significant improvements in children's learning experiences in mathematics and writing. Most support staff and a few teachers now lead projects. This promising start should be developed further in order to involve staff in developing more effective approaches to promoting learning and achievement. Working with the education authority, the school is well placed to continue to build on this very good start and improve further.

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.

- Continue to share good practice in learning and teaching in order to better meet the needs of all learners and ensure a challenging pace of progress.
- Continue to involve staff, parents and children more actively in the life and work of the school.
- Build on the good practice within the school to develop leadership at all levels.

Here are the evaluations for Levenvale Primary School.

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Learners' experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

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

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Elizabeth C Cole
26 May 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