



**Our Lady's RC Primary
School and Nursery Class
Perth and Kinross Council
26 April 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

Our Lady's RC Primary School is a denominational school with a nursery class and a nurture class. It serves an area in the north of Perth. The roll was 266, including 39 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in February 2011. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010. There have been significant changes in management and staff over the last two years.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Improvement in attainment in English language and mathematics.
- The leadership of the headteacher and depute headteacher in identifying and prioritising areas for improvement.
- A strong Roman Catholic ethos where children feel secure and work well together.
- The success of staff in working with other agencies to support children and their families.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class children are happy and play well together. They are familiar with nursery routines and rules and are developing independence when choosing activities and tidying up. In the nurture class, children are learning to focus on tasks and are developing a range of life skills. Across the primary stages, most children are motivated and focus well on their learning. They work well together and take account of each others' views when working in groups. Children are involved in planning their learning and decide what they want to find out about the topics they are studying. Staff should now increase opportunities for children to be involved in making decisions about their learning. Children are developing skills in assessing their own work. They are learning how to research information from a variety of sources. At a few stages, children use the school grounds and local environment to enhance their learning. Staff provide children with appropriate feedback in order to help them improve their work.

Across P4 to P7, children participate in school action groups. Through their involvement in these groups children are producing a school newsletter and improving the school grounds. The pastoral action group organised a Mass and a range of Advent and Lenten activities for the school community. Members of the learning council have worked with staff and parents to revise the homework policy. At P6, children train as buddies in order to support younger children. Across the school, children take on leadership roles when they prepare and present class assemblies to children, staff and parents. Children participate enthusiastically in a range of sporting activities including rugby, netball and cross country running. At P7, children develop their personal and social skills through participating in a residential experience. There is scope to increase opportunities for children to achieve through out-of-school activities.

In the nursery class a few children use story books independently and the majority of older children can recognise their names. Most children can match and sort objects by shape, colour and size. At the primary stages, children are attaining national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Children have made significant progress in developing their writing skills. They should now use these skills across all areas of the curriculum. Children who require additional support are making appropriate progress. When working in groups, children listen well to their teachers and to each other. They share and discuss their ideas with confidence. At the early stages, children show an interest in writing and are developing skills in using capital letters and full stops when writing sentences. By P7, children are able to discuss their favourite authors. Across the school, children use their literacy skills well. For example, at P5, children are able to identify fact and opinion when carrying out research for topic work. Staff should continue to encourage all children to read a wide range of texts. Children use information and communications technology well to support their learning in mathematics. For example, they carry out surveys and use the information to produce spreadsheets and graphs. By P7, children tackle problem-solving challenges in mathematics and topic work confidently.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

In the nursery class the curriculum is broad and staff provide a range of learning experiences. Staff are developing their understanding of how to use experiences and outcomes when planning the curriculum. Across the primary stages, staff have made a good start to developing the curriculum taking account of Curriculum for Excellence. From P1 to P7, the curriculum supports children's development of skills and knowledge very well. The school provides all children with two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Staff enable children to use their skills in literacy and numeracy across most areas of learning. Visiting specialist teachers are helping children to develop skills in music and physical education. Outings and visitors to the school enrich children's learning. Children have regular, appropriate homework.

Staff in the nursery class know the children well and have positive relationships with them. They now need to use information about children's learning to provide more challenging and appropriate activities for all children. In the nurture class, staff provide high-quality support for individual children and their families. Across the primary stages, most tasks and activities are well matched to the needs and interests of children. In some lessons, teachers use timed tasks well to ensure a brisk pace in learning. Staff should now explore ways of providing increased challenge for higher attaining children. There are appropriate procedures in place for identifying and supporting children's needs. A range of professionals work very effectively with staff to support individual children. The support for learning teacher works well with groups and individuals who require additional support to succeed. Individualised educational programmes (IEPs) help children who need additional support to succeed. Parents and, where appropriate, children are involved in developing and monitoring IEP targets.

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

Staff have developed very effective partnerships with a range of individuals and agencies to help children progress in their learning. These include community link workers and health and social work professionals. The effective Parent Council supports the school well and includes a sub group which works with staff to take forward improvements. Parents have worked with staff and children to revise the homework policy. In the nursery class, parents are involved in their children's learning during 'stay and play' sessions. Across the school, parents attend 'meet the teacher' events and open afternoons. The school uses text messages effectively to remind parents about school events and to monitor children's absences. The school and Parent Council should now explore ways in which they can increase opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. Parents can view materials used for health education. There are appropriate arrangements in place for children transferring to P1 from the nursery class. A range of professionals work together effectively to support children transferring from P7 to St John's Academy.

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

Children enjoy taking responsibilities across the school. Members of school action groups, with support from members of the community, have built a bottle greenhouse. Children are also developing the school website. Across the school, staff have worked successfully to improve the work of the school. For example, they have improved programmes in English language which have helped to raise children's attainment. Teachers discuss aspects of learning and teaching and share good practice in order to improve the school. Staff have organised events to raise funds for enhanced reading resources. The headteacher and depute headteacher use a range of approaches to evaluate the work of the school. For example, they visit classes providing high-quality feedback on learning and teaching. The school

tracks children's progress very effectively and this has had an impact on improving attainment.

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

Staff promote a culture of achievement and success is celebrated in wall displays and in assemblies. Children's achievements are recognised with star of the week awards. The school has embarked on rights respecting work and this is helping children to understand equality and diversity. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures, including Internet safety. There is strong Roman Catholic ethos and children have regular opportunities to take part in religious observance in school and in the parish church. The parish priest has worked positively with staff to develop the religious life of the school.

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

The school has clear aims and values. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership in taking forward improvements in learning. She has worked with staff to identify the strengths and areas in which the school needs to improve. She has established a clear lead for the school including increased expectations of its future performance. The recently appointed depute headteacher works very effectively with the headteacher. She is working closely with nursery staff to take forward identified areas for improvement. Across the school, staff are clear about areas of practice that need to be improved. They should now take opportunities to lead improvements to learning and teaching. As a result of these effective arrangements, the school is well placed to improve further.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the 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.

- Improve opportunities for children in the nursery class to develop independence and to be challenged in their learning.
- Continue to develop the use of self-evaluation in the nursery and school to further improve outcomes for learners.
- Take forward plans to increase opportunities for staff to take responsibility for leading developments in implementing Curriculum for Excellence.
- Work with the Parent Council to increase opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning and the life of the school.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. One recommendation was made and this is being 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 Our Lady's RC Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Jacqueline Horsburgh
26 April 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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Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation, or if you wish to comment about any aspect of our inspections. You can contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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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