



**Lauder Primary School and
Nursery Class
Scottish Borders Council
1 June 2010**

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.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

1. The school

Lauder Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the town of Lauder and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 256, including 50 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in April 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. The school moved to a high-quality new building early in 2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The positive impact on learning of the very well-designed new school building and grounds.
- High levels of attainment have been maintained in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The purposeful learning atmosphere and welcoming ethos.
- Staff have high expectations and are committed to children's learning, care and welfare.
- Well-behaved and friendly children who have a strong commitment to and pride in their learning.
- Staff very effectively learn together and use self-evaluation to improve children's learning and achievement.
- High-quality leadership of the headteacher and many staff across the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children benefit from the skilful way staff interact with them in the nursery and primary classes. This ensures they understand what they are learning and why. Children learn in an active way in many lessons. The school is presently working to increase the frequency and consistency of this approach. Most children are well motivated, enjoy learning and respond very well to their teachers. Children have very positive views about learning and the way teachers give them

responsibility for their own work. At times, activities need to be more stimulating to ensure all children are fully engaged.

The school has a well-established approach to recording children's activities, experiences and achievements, both in the classroom and beyond. Staff now need to use this approach to inform their planning for groups and individuals. This will help to ensure that all children benefit from activities that will help them to develop personally. Children's confidence and personal skills benefit from the good range of wider learning opportunities provided by staff outwith class. These opportunities include sports, the school show, residential trips, enterprising activities and charitable work.

Children are achieving well at all stages. Many are doing very well. In the nursery children are confident, well settled and making good progress through play in language, mathematics and health and wellbeing. In the primary classes, children are making very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all children are achieving or exceeding appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has maintained these high standards over several years. Children write well, including extended and imaginative pieces, for a variety of purposes. At times, children need to pay more attention to aspects of the accuracy of their writing. All would benefit from an earlier introduction to informal writing through play in the nursery. Children enjoy reading and their skills are coming on well. Children listen attentively and talk confidently at all stages. Children have strong mathematical skills and understanding. They are confident with shapes and, as appropriate to their stage, secure with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Most carry out mental calculations very well and like to demonstrate their skills. Across other aspects of the curriculum including health and wellbeing, science, social subjects and music, children achieve well in classwork.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff have taken important steps to improve the curriculum using *Curriculum for Excellence* to guide them. This work has already had a

positive impact on children's literacy skills in different areas of the curriculum at the primary stages, but not yet in the nursery. Children's understanding of health and social subjects has improved, both in the nursery and in the school, as a result of *Curriculum for Excellence* being used for planning lessons. The school recognises that programmes for technology and religious and moral education need to be updated. The school has appropriate plans to implement sufficient time for high-quality physical education now that it has settled into the new accommodation.

Staff are meeting children's learning and pastoral needs well overall. All lessons are well organised. Children learn together in suitable groups when appropriate. Staff know what children's individual needs are and take steps to meet them. A few lessons need to be brisker with less teacher direction and more succinct explanations. Teachers need to improve the way they assess children's progress in listening and talking and, as they develop *Curriculum for Excellence*, in other areas of the curriculum. In the nursery, staff do not yet observe and record children's progress sufficiently or provide a wide enough range of activities. Across the school, teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching. Children need to be given better opportunities to use information and communications technology (ICT) as a daily tool for learning, for example to enhance their skills in redrafting their writing. Homework is used well. The team of classroom and learning support staff makes a particularly effective contribution for children who require additional support with their learning. Individualised programmes for children who require them are well designed. The specialist learning support service is well focused on teaching important skills. The timing and frequency of when children are withdrawn from classwork for support needs to be reviewed so that children do not miss key aspects of classwork.

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

The school has developed a range of effective partnerships to support children's learning. Staff liaise well with psychological services, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and health visitors to ensure that children are supported well in their learning. Parents are happy overall with the school. Nursery information is shared effectively with parents through regular newsletters and on notice boards. Home links are encouraged and parents also have two formal opportunities to meet with nursery staff to discuss their child's progress. In the primary classes, parents receive regular updates on their children's progress and helpful curriculum overviews which tell them what their children will be learning each term. The parent council makes a very positive contribution to the school. The school is well supported by the community, including through opportunities for visits and visitors to school.

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

Staff use very effective approaches to ensure the school improves. As a result, the school is doing very well by its children. Teachers learn new skills from each other by visiting classes across the school and the nursery. The school's senior managers carefully monitor progress and evaluate learning and achievement to keep up the momentum of improvement. For example, by analysing information about attainment, the headteacher was able to plan strategies to increase the scope for more children to attain national levels sooner than they had been. Staff invite children and their parents to contribute their views about how well the school is doing and what they would like to see improve. To increase impact on learning, staff now need to ask children and their parents better focused questions. Children enjoy taking representative roles, such as in the pupil council. The pupil council helps to plan improvements to the school environment but now needs to turn its attention to how children might help improve learning.

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

Children recognise that they are treated fairly and with respect. They are respectful of staff and value each other. The climate for learning in all classes is purposeful and interactions between children and staff are very positive. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, progress and achievement. Staff know about child protection and all will have been trained formally by the end of the current school session. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Staff use praise well and encourage children to strive to achieve their best, for example through celebrating their achievements at assemblies. The school has suitable arrangements for religious observance which involve the chaplain regularly. The school has a strong sense of equality but needs to do more through the curriculum to broaden children's understanding of equalities. The school deals with any complaints appropriately but needs to ensure parents receive appropriate feedback.

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

The school has a positive, clear sense of direction which is about promoting high achievement and continuous improvement. It is improving successfully. The recent move to the new school building was planned and executed very well, resulting in immediate improvements to learning. Staff at all levels have responded very positively to leading and learning from each other. Together with children, they apply the school's vision and values to very good effect. Staff have gained confidence and experience from making important improvements to the curriculum and, as a result, the school is particularly well placed to see through a full implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence*. All of these successes have been achieved under the thoughtful leadership of the highly-regarded headteacher with very effective support from the depute headteacher. Principal teachers have led important improvements, such as the newly

implemented health education programme and a course on financial awareness. The school has a strong capacity to continue to improve, and is set on doing so.

8. What happens next?

The inspection team was able to rely on the school's robust self-evaluation. As a result, it was able to change its focus during the inspection to support further improvements within the school.

The school provides a very good quality of education. Therefore, 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 school.

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

- Increase the impact and frequency of active learning and children's ownership and responsibility for their own learning.
- Increase the use of ICT as a daily, accessible tool for learning.

At the previous Care Commission inspection there was one requirement and two recommendations. The recommendation relating to the involvement of parents and children in evaluating the service has been met in full. The requirement and recommendation relating to the recruitment process is being addressed by Scottish Borders Council but outstanding issues remain.

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 Lauder Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Graham Norris

1 June 2010

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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