



**St Andrews Primary School
and Nursery Class
Toab
Orkney Islands Council
14 September 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.

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1. The school

St Andrews Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the wide rural area of East Mainland in Orkney. The roll was 184, including 47 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in June 2010. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2008/2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- High-quality learning experiences in most classes, well supported by the use of information and communications technology.
- Friendly and polite children who are keen to learn and discuss their progress.
- Positive relationships amongst almost all members of the school community.
- The impact of the leadership of the headteacher, with the strong support of the principal teacher and staff, in improving children's learning and achievement.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class children are confident, motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Most children share and work well together. Children make choices and decisions in their play. With the support of staff, children plan and initiate their own learning. Staff need to give children more opportunities to take on responsibilities and be independent. Across the school children are keen to learn. They are polite and confident, and speak very well about what they are learning. They work very well together in day-to-day activities and major class projects.

Almost all children benefit from after-school clubs such as the camera club, a wide range of sports activities, and in the community. Their skills in music are very well developed through music classes, instrumental tuition, and playing in the school band. Children's skills in using information and communications technology are strong,

particularly at P6 where they use the national Glow network effectively. Children are increasing in confidence and in their understanding of how to be useful citizens of the world, and are developing leadership skills.

Overall, children in the nursery are making good progress in their development and learning. They listen very well in group activities and talk confidently with their friends and familiar adults about nursery activities and personal experiences. Almost all children show an awareness of number in play situations such as number songs and rhymes. They count confidently and recognise digits. In the primary classes, almost all children attain appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. The majority attain these levels in writing. Almost all children are making very good progress in talking, listening and reading. Progress in writing had been limited but is now improving. Children listen very well to adults and peers and are able to express their own ideas clearly. They are confident in making presentations to other children in class and at assemblies. Most children read well and with expression and fluency. They enjoy reading and talk clearly about favourite authors and books. In some classes in the early years children need more opportunities to experiment with their writing. In other classes children develop their writing skills very well for a wide range of purposes, including poetry, letters, stories, and factual reports. Almost all children can work with numbers confidently and accurately in a variety of situations. Their skills in solving mathematical problems, and understanding the strategies they have used, are very strong.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum in the nursery class is appropriate and based on learning through play. Staff take good account of children's personal interests and *Curriculum for Excellence* when planning activities. They recognise that they need to develop how they talk to children about their learning and how this is recorded. Children are well prepared for starting nursery and moving from the nursery class to primary one. However, this could be improved further through better planning and

sharing of learning experiences between the nursery classes and primary one. The curriculum at the primary stages is broad and balanced. Teachers are planning activities using *Curriculum for Excellence*. Teachers are careful to make connections between different areas of learning. They have developed a number of high-quality projects such as the P6 Communication Project. These develop skills and knowledge in areas such as language and science, and show connections between them. Staff make very good use of the extensive school grounds in their outdoor curriculum, including the *wibbly wobbly wall* and *Victoria's Garden*. A range of trips and residential experiences further enhance the curriculum for children. While almost all children have a very active and healthy lifestyle, the school does not yet provide all children with two hours of high-quality physical education every week.

In the nursery and school, staff know children well, have very positive relationships with them, and are sensitive to their pastoral needs. Staff observe children and use 'learning stories' and progress folders to record and celebrate children's learning. These need to be used more effectively to support, extend and challenge children's learning and to ensure that all learning needs are met. Most activities in classes are very well matched to children's interests and abilities. In most classes, the pace of learning is appropriate and tasks are stimulating and relevant. Almost all teachers build very well on children's answers, including where difficulties arise. Staff ensure that children understand what they are to learn, and get them to think about their learning through personal learning planning. Support staff work effectively with individual children and groups. However, the school needs to improve how it organises and monitors the work of support staff.

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

Staff work very effectively with a range of partners and stakeholders. Almost all parents are positive about the school. Staff and families enjoy very positive relationships. Parents of nursery children can

access Positive Parenting Programme and Home Link support. The Parent Council is very supportive of the school, and fundraises to support purchases of computers and to develop the school grounds. Members of the Parent Council work alongside staff at open evenings. The Parent Council is working hard to engage more parents in its work. It is using *wikis* to foster debate and communication amongst parents. The school has many successful partnerships with specialist agencies to support children's learning. These include the school psychology service, the speech and language therapist, and the school chaplain. Links with organisations such as *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics* and *Highlands and Islands Enterprise* support children's learning. Specialist music instructors effectively support the life and work of the school. Visitors, including Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, are welcome in the school and broaden children's knowledge and experiences. The school communicates effectively and imaginatively with parents and the community. Regular school newsletters, mainly produced by the children, are attractive and informative. Teachers ensure that parents are well informed of their children's progress through the use of homework diaries and personal learning plans, and are able to help them learn. The school is developing the use of Glow to further involve parents. The school is working in an effective partnership with the East Mainland cluster in supporting the school's development of *Curriculum for Excellence* and transition arrangements to Kirkwall Grammar School.

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

The pupil council is actively involved in improving the school. It has a strong say in how the school grounds are developed, and members give support to fellow pupils. The pupil council recently met with the Parent Council to ensure that they were working together to improve the school. The Eco Group is very active in raising awareness of the need to save energy and recycle. They have a say in how the school grounds should be used. Individual children and groups, including

children in the nursery, have raised money for charities. The headteacher ensures that children, parents and staff are consulted about how to move the school forward. Children were recently surveyed about the quality of their writing. The headteacher monitors the quality of children's learning and progress through visiting classes and discussing children's work with them. She discusses teachers' plans with them.

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

The school has very high expectations for behaviour and achievement. Staff have very positive relationships with children throughout the school. Children behave very well and are polite to staff and visitors. Staff work hard to make sure that children are well looked after and feel safe in school. They are committed to the care and welfare of children, including their mental wellbeing. Staff understand child protection procedures. The school celebrates the achievements of children, including former pupils, very well in newsletters, in wall displays and at assemblies. Teachers offer many opportunities to make children aware of other faiths, cultures and beliefs. They now need to relate this work better to current world affairs. Children take part in religious observance regularly.

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

The headteacher has been in post for two years, and has set a clear direction for the school. Through her energetic and enthusiastic style, she has helped make sure that staff focus on the quality of learning and teaching, and improving standards in writing. She has led the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* very well, with support of staff. She has a very clear idea of the strengths and development needs of the school. The principal teacher has very successfully led developments in the use of Glow in the school. Staff are encouraged to take a lead in various school matters, including developing imaginative teaching approaches.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, 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 in connection with 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 quality of additional support to children, and ensure that this improves their learning and achievement.
- Increase the impact of self-evaluation in the nursery.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class one recommendation was made which has still to be fully addressed. Outstanding issues are carried forward in this report.

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 St Andrews Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	very 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	good

HM Inspector: Brian Stewart
14 September 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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