



**Shawhead Primary School
Coatbridge
North Lanarkshire Council
24 August 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMI) 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

Shawhead Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the area of Shawhead in Coatbridge. The roll was 104 when the inspection was carried out in May 2010. Children's attendance was 93.4% which is below the national average in 2008/2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children who have an enthusiasm for learning.
- Children's attainment in mathematics.
- The impact of the headteacher in supporting and developing a strong sense of community.
- Staff teamwork and leadership and their impact on children's learning experiences.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are well-motivated and enthusiastic learners. In almost all classes, children are learning to work together in pairs and small groups. Most work well on tasks and activities without close supervision. They are encouraged to consider points of view and give their opinions. Children feel safe and well cared for. Teachers share regularly, clear learning intentions with children and most children have a good understanding of the purpose of their learning. A few children are not sure what level they are working at or what to do to improve. Children would benefit from faster-paced and better-targeted activities. The school can further develop its use of information and communications technology (ICT) to help children advance their research skills and share learning ideas.

Almost all children achieve success through a range of after-school activities, including drama and sports. Children's confidence and sense of achievement are developed well through organising events such as the school show and through fundraising activities for selected charities. Children develop leadership skills through participating in

the eco group, the school council and by taking a leadership role in classroom activities.

Children are making very good progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing, talking and listening. A few children achieve these levels earlier than might normally be expected. In writing, children take pride in the presentation of their written work. However, a few children can be more secure at the assessed level in writing. Most children listen carefully to teachers and respond confidently during classroom discussions. In group discussions, a few children can develop further their listening skills. In mathematics, children can calculate quickly and explain clearly how they reach their answers. Children at all stages show a good understanding of shape, position and movement. They can tackle problems confidently. Children are achieving well in areas beyond language and mathematics. Children at P5-P7 are making good progress in speaking and listening in French. They are developing skills in science and using the learning to enhance their writing skills.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school has a very broad and balanced curriculum. Staff are reviewing the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. There is good emphasis on Scottish language and culture. The curriculum is widened by events such as the residential visit to the Kilbowie Outdoor Education Centre and from visits to the theatre. A business partnership is contributing to the health and wellbeing curriculum. Children's understanding about the world of work is developing through their enterprise in education projects. The school provides two hours of quality physical education each week. An Active Schools coordinator and specialist teacher for music help to enhance children's experiences.

Staff know children very well and are sensitive to their needs. The school works with a range of agencies to give additional support to children and their families when appropriate. Several children have specific difficulties which impact on their learning and development.

Teachers do not always receive appropriate advice from specialists to help them meet the needs of these children. Teachers organise tasks and activities which suit the learning needs of most children. However, in several lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and the level of work is too easy for a majority of children. Classroom assistants provide very good support to children and staff. Children have regular homework, but this is not varied or interesting enough. A few children experience difficulties in their learning. They receive a good level of support, but their progress needs to be monitored more closely to ensure that tasks set for them are set at the right level of difficulty. The open plan design of the school leads at times to a high level of noise that can distract learners. The school should consider how children can experience a less noisy learning environment.

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

Staff work with a range of partners to support children's learning. This includes health professionals and the community police. Children are developing the school garden in partnership with a local nursery. The Parent Council is highly supportive of the work of the school. Parents are kept informed through monthly newsletters. They receive information about their child's progress through parents' meetings and an annual progress report. Parents are consulted about sensitive health issues. The school deals effectively with any concerns or complaints from parents or members of the community. Parents make valuable contributions to the work of the school, including helping in class and after-school activities. There are appropriate arrangements in place for children moving from nursery to P1. The school works well with staff from Coatbridge High School to support children as they move from primary to secondary.

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

Children enjoy opportunities to be involved as leaders. The pupil council from P6/P7 have a say in making the school better. They were recently awarded a grant to improve outdoor learning. This should be developed to include children from other year groups. Older children help younger children in the playground. A few have trained as members of a junior road safety group. The school eco group has recently been awarded its first green flag. The school achieved a gold award for health promotion. The school should work now to develop a healthier tuck shop facility. Non-teaching staff contribute well to the wider life of the school. Staff work well together as a team. They are involved in a number of school improvement groups. The headteacher has arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Staff are committed to change and improvement. They have welcomed recent changes to learning and teaching. They are beginning to make a difference in raising attainment especially in mathematics.

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

There is a strong positive ethos in the school and staff have very good relationships with children. Children's achievements are celebrated regularly at assemblies and on wall displays. Children feel safe and well looked after and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. All staff are active in encouraging good attendance and take appropriate action if children are absent from school without explanation. The behaviour of a small number of children occasionally prevents children's learning. The school should work with partners to ensure good behaviour, supporting those few children experiencing difficulties. The school promotes and celebrates equality and diversity through assemblies and work in religious and moral education. There are regular opportunities for religious observance.

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

The headteacher, principal teacher and staff have a clear vision for the school. As a result of encouragement from the headteacher, the staff have taken on leadership roles to enhance children's learning.

Parents and children contribute well to the school's aims and play a part in improvements. Teaching staff are very supportive of the work of the senior management. The headteacher and principal teacher are highly regarded by children, staff and parents. The staff have made a positive start to developing the curriculum, taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school is well placed to improve further.

8. 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 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.

- Continue to improve attainment in writing and develop children's use of information and communications technology.
- Improve the monitoring and tracking of children's progress to ensure that the needs of all children are met.
- Develop further approaches to self-evaluation to ensure continuing school improvement.

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 Shawhead Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Aileen Monaghan
24 August 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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