
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	17 March 2009
Report By:	Corporate Director Education & Social Care	Report No:	EDUC/21/09/IF
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Subject:	HMle report on King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of a HMle external evaluation of King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class have received a very good report from the HMle. The report was produced on 17 March 2009. Members should note that the indicators of quality have been amended by the HMle. New reports issued by the HMle are intended to be more readable, are shorter to reflect more focused process and now contain 5 indicators of quality. This report includes an evaluation of the work of the nursery class. Two of the indicators of quality are evaluated as 'very good' and five as 'good'.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class.

Ian Fraser
Corporate Director Education & Social Care

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in January 2009. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages, identified key strengths and main points for action using the following six-point scale:

- 6 - Excellent – excellent
- 5 - Very Good – major strengths
- 4 - Good – important strengths with some areas for improvement
- 3 - Satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- 2 - Weak – important weaknesses
- 1 - Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses

4.2 HMIE assessed and reported on the views of parents, pupils and staff, the quality of learning and teaching, how well the school was raising achievement for all pupils, achievement in national examinations, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, the school's capacity for improvement.

4.3 The report was published on the 17 March 2009 and will be circulated at the meeting. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.

4.4 King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class is inspected under the evaluation framework "How Good Is Our School 3?"

4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIE found 2 aspects of the work of the school to be 'very good' and 5 to be 'good'. The evaluations of the indicators of quality can be found on page 8 of the report.

4.6 Members should note that HMIE comment on examples of good practice. The report indicated that three examples of good practice were:

- The variety and quality of learning experiences in music
- The experiences of children in the nurture class

4.7 The school has devised a school improvement plan and the authority will work closely with the school to ensure its continued progress.

4.8 The report on King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class should be set in the context of Inverclyde. This is a very good report in the context of reports on Inverclyde schools.

Primary school inspection



A report by
HM Inspectorate of Education

King's Oak Primary School
and Nursery Class
Greenock
Inverclyde Council
17 March 2009

HMIe
improving Scottish education

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school¹. 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 parents² 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 The term 'school' is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

² 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

King's Oak Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the east end of Greenock. The roll was 349, including 40 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in January 2009. Children's attendance was below the national average in 2006/2007. The headteacher had been in post for nine months and the depute headteacher had very recently taken up appointment.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Well-behaved, polite children who are keen to learn both in the school and the nursery class.
- Children's involvement in and contribution to the life and work of the school.
- The quality of learning experiences in music.
- The very positive approach and support given by the nurture class.
- The leadership of the headteacher and well-developed teamwork across the school.

3. Examples of good practice

- The variety and quality of learning experiences in music.
- The experiences of children in the nurture class.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Staff in the nursery class provide a range of learning experiences that help children to achieve well. Children confidently decide what they want to do and play well on their own and with others. They concentrate well on their chosen activity. Children are learning to share and take turns. Most children talk confidently to staff and to

each other. They are successfully developing early writing skills through play and show a keen interest in books. Most children confidently count to ten. They are developing problem solving skills through a range of activities and can successfully sort and match objects. Children successfully express their own ideas through painting, collage and when using their imagination in different play situations.

Across the primary stages, children are progressing well in their learning. They are achieving success in a wide range of activities such as enterprise, eco school, health, music, sporting and charity events. Children are developing a wide knowledge and range of skills in environmental studies. Those in P6 showed a clear understanding of the solar system. Across the school, children are achieving very good success in music. For example, in P2 they are developing very good skills in pitch and rhythm through investigating musical patterns. Children are making good progress in their reading, writing, listening, talking and mathematics. Over the last few years the school has maintained good standards in reading and writing. Standards of attainment in mathematics have improved. Almost all children listen well and clearly share ideas in discussions. Children at all stages enjoy reading and most are developing good literacy skills. Across the school, most are developing the skills needed to write well for a range of purposes. In mathematics, children are competent in solving problems. At the early stages, children show a good understanding of the properties of shape and can display information on a bar chart. At the upper stages, children are confident in using decimal calculations. They can discuss compass points and angles accurately.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The nursery curriculum offers a broad range of learning activities. Staff plan a varied play curriculum. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices at snack time and they understand the importance of washing their hands. They should be given more opportunities to play outside. Staff provide good opportunities for children to learn about different cultures and to celebrate a variety of festivals. In the primary

classes, staff provide children with an appropriately broad curriculum. Teachers are at the early stages of taking account of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. They are developing more active approaches to learning across the curriculum. This work is beginning to improve children's learning experiences in the classroom. Children use computers effectively to support their learning. This has increased children's enjoyment of the curriculum. Music lessons provide stimulating, varied and challenging activities for children. Staff successfully promote an ethos of respect and very effectively develop children's personal, social and citizenship skills. The school has made a good start in developing learning across the curriculum. For example, in P7, children are creating and performing African rhythms which link to their project about Africa. At all stages, children are given good opportunities to develop their enterprise skills. All classes took part in a 'World of Work Week'. Children should be given more opportunities to learn about other world religions and festivals.

Staff in the nursery class know their children well and have very positive relationships with them. All children are treated with respect. Staff effectively observe children at play. As a result, children who need extra help or challenge with their learning receive very useful support. In the primary classes, teachers plan tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for children in most curricular areas. Overall, children could be challenged further in English language and mathematics. Staff identify and meet the needs of children requiring additional support very well. They plan carefully and set appropriate targets. Children are given carefully chosen activities well matched to their needs. The school's work on dyslexia had led to achievement of a Dyslexia Friendly Schools award. Children with individualised educational programmes are making good progress in their learning. School staff successfully encourage children to behave well. Staff in the nurture class set very clear targets for children which are appropriately challenging. They effectively support children to develop social skills and provide very good support to families. Almost all children work well in pairs and groups. Teachers make their classrooms interesting and stimulating places to learn. They engage well with children. Teachers give clear explanations and use

questioning well to check children's understanding and to challenge their thinking. Across the school, teachers consistently share the purposes of lessons with children. They use strategies at the end of lessons to review what has been learned. There remains scope to develop this further. Teachers set regular and varied homework tasks across the school.

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

The school works closely with the supportive Parent Council. Staff work well with each other to support children's learning and provide a high quality of pastoral care. They have formed very effective partnerships with a range of visiting specialist teachers and with psychological, health and social work staff. These partnerships have been very successful in supporting children with a range of difficulties and allowing them to make good progress in their learning. Pupil support assistants provide high level quality support to pupils both within and outwith the classroom. Parents work well with the school to help their children achieve. They feel that staff value their opinions. Very good business links with the local community have been formed. Regular visits from businesses help to support the work of the whole school and individual classes. The school has effective procedures in place for sorting out any complaints from parents and children.

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

Children are proud to attend King's Oak Primary School. They are given very good opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of school life. They feel they are making a real difference to the school community. Children are actively involved in school grounds group, eco committee, Malawi group, health group and pupil council. They speak confidently about their roles and responsibilities. Older children act as buddies to help to build the confidence of younger children.

They welcome visitors and confidently provide information about the school. Teachers and children work well together to support a range of charities. Enterprise education is embedded in the work of the school. Staff teamwork is very strong within the school. Staff are beginning to reflect more deeply on how to improve learning and teaching further. The school recognises this as an area requiring further development. Staff working parties are now established. Staff willingly give of their time to run a variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs including a very well-attended music club.

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

Staff set very high standards for children's behaviour. Children are courteous, respectful and confident. They help each other out in the playroom, classroom and in the playground. The school, under the leadership of the new headteacher, has successfully introduced strategies to promote positive behaviour. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children being excluded from school. Children's many achievements are recognised in attractive wall displays and at assemblies. The school works well in partnership with the school chaplains. Children have good opportunities to participate in religious observance and worship through regular assemblies. Staff do not always have high enough expectations of children's attainment. They now need to increase the pace of learning and provide more demanding tasks for some children. Staff across the school have formed very good relationships with children. They are highly committed to children's care and welfare and sensitive to their needs. They are well trained in child protection procedures, which they follow consistently. Children feel safe and well cared for. The school provides a very high standard of care for all.

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

The school has a very clear sense of direction and has shared its aims with staff, parents and children. The headteacher is providing very

strong leadership. She has clearly identified the need to further improve learning and teaching across the school and is beginning to take effective steps to bring about improvement. She has given staff helpful feedback on how to improve their teaching. She now needs to monitor that the improvements made to teaching lead to better learning experiences for all children. The recently-appointed depute headteacher is working well with the headteacher to support school improvement. Staff are enthusiastic about taking responsibility for developing the work of the school. The school is very well placed to continue to improve.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits following 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.

- Identify and share the most effective practice in teaching and learning to improve pace and challenge.
- Continue to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make more rigorous and robust use of information to ensure all children achieve well.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements or recommendations.

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 King's Oak Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	very 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: Peter Gollogly
17 March 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

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ISBN 978-0-7053-7748-5



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