

Report To: Education & Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 03 November 2009

Report By: Acting Director of Education

Report No: EDUC/87/09/AH

Contact Officer: Albert Henderson

Contact No: 01475 712761

Subject: HMle report on Earnhill Primary School

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of an HMle external evaluation of Earnhill Primary School.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Earnhill Primary School have received a very good report from the HMle. The report was produced on 22 September 2009. Members should note that the indicators of quality reflect very well on the school with one indicator of quality evaluated as 'excellent' and four as 'very good'. Members should be pleased that within Earnhill Primary, Improvements of Performance has been graded as 'excellent' by HMle.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee approve the report on Earnhill Primary School.

Albert Henderson
Acting Director of Education

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Earnhill Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) in June 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 in 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 22 September 2009. It has been issued to staff, parents, local elected members and the Convener and Vice-Convener for Education & Lifelong Learning.

4.4 Earnhill Primary School is inspected under the evaluation framework "How Good Is Our School 3?"

4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIe found one aspect of the work of the school to be 'excellent' and four to be 'very good'. The evaluations of the indicators for 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:

- Developing children's life skills through science and technology
- Children's awareness of their rights and responsibilities
- Planning for aspects of English language using the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes

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 Earnhill Primary School should be set in the context of Inverclyde. This is a very good report in the context of reports on Inverclyde schools.



**Earnhill Primary School
Greenock
Inverclyde Council
22 September 2009**

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.

Contents

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

1. The school

Earnhill Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the Larkfield area of Greenock. The roll was 117 when the inspection was carried out in June 2009. Children's attendance was below the national average in 2007/2008. The school is due to amalgamate with Ravenscraig Primary School during 2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children's attainment in English language, mathematics and their wider achievements.
- Children's understanding of the world of work through close partnership working with the local and wider community.
- Children's understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
- The teamwork of staff and their high expectations of children.
- The leadership of the headteacher in bringing about improvements in children's learning.

3. Examples of good practice

- Developing children's life skills through science and technology.
- Children's awareness of their rights and responsibilities.
- Planning for aspects of English language using the *Curriculum for Excellence* experiences and outcomes.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the school children are involved in active, meaningful and motivating learning experiences. At P2, they respond positively and make very good progress through the many worthwhile and interesting experiences in mathematics. In all classes, children are learning very well in pairs, groups and individually. Almost all children listen very well to their teachers and show high levels of respect for each other. They are making very good progress in knowing their strengths and next steps in learning. For example, in P7 children are able to ask questions of themselves, each other and their teachers when they set learning goals. In all classes children evaluate purposefully their own and others' work.

The school gained many awards for effectively developing children's wider interests. These include the Impetus award for good citizenship, the Rights Respecting School's advanced award and an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag. Staff support children in understanding the world of work, their rights and responsibilities and taking care of the environment through a wide range of activities. For example, all children are involved in developing an understanding of a range of occupations through the business engagement week. This includes older children organising a successful business breakfast. Successful whole-school initiatives in areas such as science, technologies and enterprise link very well with business. These projects help children develop their citizenship skills and knowledge very well. All children take on leadership roles which have a positive impact on the whole school community. They have a good understanding of their heritage through each class learning about a famous Scot and sharing this knowledge with each other. Children's knowledge of anti-sectarianism is very well developed through the highly effective links with Sacred Heart Primary School.

In recent years the school has made excellent progress in improving the quality of all children's attainment and achievement.

Now most children achieve, or exceed, appropriate national levels in English language and mathematics for their stage. Almost all children, including those experiencing difficulties make very good progress in their learning. In English language, almost all children express their views clearly and can support their opinions with confidence. Most read fluently, with understanding and talk knowledgeably about books they have read. At all stages, children link their learning very well to other areas and write at length across a wide range of relevant topics. Their writing skills develop significantly from this approach. Children now produce clear, well-structured writing of high quality. In mathematics, children use their mathematical skills very effectively to solve real life problems. They develop skills important for life, learning and work. At P7 children use their mental agility and their knowledge of information handling and money to successfully budget their finances.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children benefit from a stimulating and relevant curriculum developed through a focus on the school's aims and values. The school is successfully taking forward key aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Activities are carefully planned to make links across areas of learning. Staff make very good use of information and communication technology to support and improve children's learning. For example, children use individual electronic devices very effectively to record their understanding of aspects of their work. This information is displayed on the class whiteboard and allows individuals to review what they learn with their peers and class teacher. Across all stages, children develop literacy and numeracy skills well through a range of challenging, enjoyable and meaningful activities. Children know and can make healthy choices. They are increasingly adopting healthy lifestyles. All children experience two hours of good quality physical education each week.

Across classes, staff work very closely with each other to meet children's needs very well. The well-planned tasks and activities provide the right support and level of difficulty for almost all children.

Children talk confidently about their strengths and their next steps in their learning. The school has appropriate and improving ways in place to identify and support children with additional support needs. Children are very well supported within their tasks and activities. Support staff work alongside teachers skilfully and help children make very good progress in their learning. Teachers give clear explanations and use questioning very well to check children's understanding and challenge their thinking. Teachers set regular and appropriate homework.

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

The school works very well with a wide range of partners to provide positive and relevant learning experiences for children. The supportive parent partnership group works closely with the headteacher on key aspects of the work of the school. Parents and members of the local community are kept very well informed about children's learning and achievements through helpful newsletters, information sheets and regular reports in the local newspaper. The school works closely with Ravenscraig Primary School on a range of planned activities to ease the transition for children when the schools merge. There are effective arrangements in place for children starting school at P1 and those transferring to Inverclyde Academy. Children's learning is enhanced through staff sharing their skills and knowledge to develop the curriculum from three to eighteen. The school is very good at dealing with complaints from parents. Appropriate arrangements are in place to inform parents about sensitive health issues.

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

The school has an effective range of ways to monitor and improve its work. These include a number of groups involving children and all staff which meet to review and make important changes to aspects of

the life and work of the school. Staff are involved fully in identifying the school's priorities for improvement. Their views are listened to very carefully and appropriate changes are made. Over the past few years the school has successfully made notable improvements to children's behaviour and attainment, as well as to their personal and social development and their wider achievements. The headteacher and staff are continually reviewing and improving their own work and the work of the school.

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

Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and what they can achieve. They know children very well and have positive relationships with them and their families. Children's wider achievements are shared and celebrated regularly in classrooms, on wall displays and at assemblies. Children are confident and are developing well as responsible citizens in school and in the local community. For example, they worked with a local company to plant trees to improve the local environment. Staff are aware of and implement child protection procedures effectively. Children feel safe and are very well looked after. They are confident that any incidents of bullying are dealt with well. There are regular opportunities for religious observance. Health promotion and equalities features very strongly in the life and work of the school. Staff, children and parents feel valued and treated fairly.

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

The headteacher is held in very high regard by staff, parents and children. She has provided strong leadership resulting in noteworthy improvements to the life and work of the school. The headteacher is very well supported by her depute headteacher. They work closely with the committed staff team to enhance children's learning experiences and ensure children develop important life skills. Staff are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development.

Many lead school improvement working groups with enthusiasm. This teamwork has helped the school implement many positive changes in a relatively short space of time. The school is very well placed to continue to improve further.

9. What happens next?

The school's self-evaluation is leading to improvements in children's learning. As a result, the inspection team was able to change its focus during the inspection to help the school plan to improve even more. There is a very good quality of education provided by the school and HMIE 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 area for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to build on the very effective practice and relevant experiences for learners.

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 Earnhill Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Elizabeth C Cole
22 September 2009

To find out more about inspections or get an electronic copy of this report go to www.hmie.gov.uk. Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team (BMCT) if you wish to enquire about our arrangements for translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at www.spsso.org.uk.

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