

Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	07 September 2010
	Corporate Director Education and Communities	Report No:	EDUC/39/10/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712761
Subject:	HMIe report on Sacred Heart Primary School		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of a HMIe external evaluation of Sacred Heart Primary School.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Sacred Heart Primary School has received a very good report from the HMIe. The report was produced on 15 June 2010. Members should note that the indicators of quality reflect very well on the school with four indicators of quality evaluated as 'very good' and one as 'excellent'.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

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

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education & Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Sacred Heart Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in April 2010. 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 the 15 June 2010 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 Sacred Heart Primary School is inspected under the evaluation framework "How Good Is Our School 3?"
- 4.5 In assessing the indicators of quality, HMIE found four aspects of the work of the school to be 'very good' and one to be 'excellent'. The evaluations of the indicators for quality can be found on page 7 of the report.
- 4.6 The report lists one area for improvement:
- Continue with current plans to improve the school
- 4.7 The report on Sacred Heart Primary School should be set in the context of Inverclyde. This is a very good report in the context of reports on Inverclyde schools.



**Sacred Heart Primary
School
Greenock
Inverclyde Council
15 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.

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1. The school

Sacred Heart Primary School is a denominational school. It serves the Larkfield area of Greenock. The roll was 114 when the inspection was carried out in April 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. The school is due to amalgamate with another school in August 2011.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Highly-motivated children who are enthusiastic in their learning.
- A curriculum which takes account of children's interests.
- Outstanding partnership working to meet the needs of all learners.
- Staff who provide children with high-quality learning experiences.
- Leadership for learning and the commitment of the acting headteacher to further improve the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Throughout the school, children are enthusiastic, highly-motivated learners. They are valued and nurtured by all staff. As a result, they feel very happy and cared for in school. Children enjoy being actively involved in their own learning. They work very well together in groups and take responsibility for completing activities. They are confident in using information and communications technology (ICT) to extend and present their learning. Children are becoming more confident in setting their own learning goals. They understand the effort they need to put in to successfully achieve their next steps in learning.

Children achieve success in all aspects of school life. Through their work with Eco-Schools Scotland, they have attained a silver award. Children demonstrate a good understanding of electricity and different forms of sustainable energy through technology activities. Their efforts to improve the school gardens have been as a result of an award from The Royal Society. Children have received recognition for their

singing at local music festivals. In school shows, they use their skills in drama, music and art creatively to celebrate their confidence in learning. Children show responsibility by caring for younger children. They particularly enjoy supporting local nursery children in their learning.

Children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved in recent years. Most children attain appropriate national levels in reading and writing and almost all do so in mathematics. Greater numbers of children are attaining these levels earlier than might normally be expected. In English language, almost all children listen attentively across the school. They take part in discussions and debates on important current issues. Children at the early stages use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unfamiliar words. At the middle stages, most children are gaining confidence in reading aloud with more expression. Older children read a variety of authors for pleasure. Children across the school are improving their writing. They write for a variety of purposes and are experimenting with language to create more interesting stories and poems. In mathematics, children in all classes count confidently. They complete mental calculations well and can explain their answers clearly. Almost all children at the early stages use the correct mathematical language to tell the time. At the middle stages, children discuss different strategies to solve problems successfully. At the upper stages, children use ICT very well to handle data across their learning to present information and make conclusions.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff continue to develop and refresh the curriculum effectively to ensure all children achieve success. Staff are making very positive progress towards implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Opportunities for children to extend their literacy and numeracy skills across all areas of learning are planned effectively. Staff take increasing account of children's interests, particularly when planning topics of interests. They make very good use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum, for example, in science. As a result, children

are highly motivated by scientific enquiry. The curriculum in the nurture room is flexible and supports children very well socially and emotionally. Staff use enterprise creatively to motivate children and extend their learning. As part of the school's programme in health and wellbeing, all children receive two hours of good quality physical education each week. Staff are successful in encouraging children to extend their knowledge about healthy food choices and food hygiene.

Across the school, children's learning needs are very well met. All teachers plan stimulating activities which are closely matched to children's abilities and stages of development. Children take part in activities which extend their learning in almost all lessons. All teachers share the purposes of lessons very clearly. Their questioning skills are highly effective. As a result, children think deeply about their learning. Homework tasks are varied and link closely to classroom activities. Those children who need extra help in their learning are supported very effectively. Children in the nurture room benefit from outstanding support which meets their emotional and social needs. Individualised education plans are agreed through consultation with children and parents. The inclusion of outside professionals to guide the work of the staff in supporting children's learning is highly successful.

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

Staff work very well with parents to support children's learning across the school. Parents speak very highly of the individual support they receive from staff. They feel very welcome in school and, in particular, enjoy taking part in the 'Hands On' sessions. The school communicates clearly with parents in a variety of helpful ways, including regular reports which detail the progress of individual children. The school deals well with any concerns and is responsive to suggestions from parents. Parents are informed about the policy and resources for sensitive health and relationships. The acting headteacher works closely with the parent council and supports the new chairperson well. The work of the school with an extensive range

of partners to support children's learning is exemplary. For example, children work closely with others from a school for the deaf. As a result of their shared commitment and enthusiasm, the school has made a significant and positive impact on the lives of children and families. Staff support children very well as they move from nursery into P1 and from P7 into St Columba's High School.

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

Children speak enthusiastically about their involvement in school life and the way in which staff value their views. Children contribute very well to discussions about effective learning and teaching in the classroom and when representing others on pupil groups. Staff work very successfully together, alongside the acting headteacher, to improve the school. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and take appropriate action when there is room for improvement. Staff focus rigorously on improving outcomes for all children. They share good practice regularly and extend their own knowledge through seeking relevant training to support new developments. For example, the successful approaches in the nurture class are now being embedded across the school.

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

The ethos of the school is outstanding. Children know they are central to the school community. They show by their actions that they understand fully why they are a successful 'UNICEF Advanced Rights Respecting' school. Children can discuss the values and cultures of others both locally and globally. Staff demonstrate clearly a whole school approach to the care and welfare of all children. They know how to keep children safe from harm. Staff promote positive relationships effectively and have the highest expectations of children's achievements. As a result, children are ambitious in their learning. Staff and children work well together to promote healthy

lifestyles. Children enjoy attending the breakfast club which provides a very positive start to their day. They take part in regular religious observance and are supported well by the school chaplain.

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

The acting headteacher knows the school very well and is held in high regard by all within the school community. She has a clear vision which is focused on improving the outcomes for all children. This is shared by all who work with the school. The acting headteacher is supported ably by a skilled acting depute headteacher whose responsibilities include ensuring children's learning needs are met. The staff team are enthusiastic, skilled practitioners. Alongside the management team, they lead and support learning successfully. They continually seek new approaches which make a difference to children's lives.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, 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 schools.

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

- Continue with current plans to improve the school.

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 Sacred Heart Primary School.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Shona E S Taylor
15 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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