



**Carolside Primary School
and Nursery Class
Clarkston
East Renfrewshire Council
6 January 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.

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1. The school

Carolside Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the Clarkston area of East Renfrewshire. The inspection was carried out in October 2008 at which time the roll was 795, including 120 in the nursery. Across the different stages of the school, between 10 and 20 per cent of children attend Carolside as a result of parental placing requests. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2006-07.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Highly motivated children who enjoy their learning.
- Children's enthusiasm for writing, and the impact on their confidence and achievements of the school's approaches to developing their wider literacy skills.
- The school's approaches to developing its curriculum.
- The quality of teamwork across the staff and staff's capacity for taking forward school improvements, led well by the headteacher.
- The ways in which children take the lead in learning in lessons, and contribute to improving the school. The active role of staff at all levels in sharing leadership for learning.
- The contribution of the coordinated pupil support team, including pupil support assistants, to meeting learning needs.
- The impact of active approaches to learning in developing children's independence effectively.

3. Examples of good practice

- Active approaches to learning and teaching.
- Whole school approaches to developing the curriculum, involving children and staff at all levels.
- The school's partnerships with Williamwood High School and the other associated primary schools in the cluster.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class, children enjoy learning. They choose activities confidently, work successfully together and share their ideas well during play. They are particularly enthusiastic about learning outdoors where they invent play activities freely. The wide range of experiences they have is helping almost all children to make very good progress. They are developing their skills in listening, talking, reading and writing very well. In play activities and when they use computers, many count accurately and have a good understanding of mathematical shapes. They now need more chances to plan their own learning and to develop their own activities.

Across the primary stages, children are developing a very good understanding of what they do well and how to improve their work. As a result, they comment on their own and each other's work very helpfully. They take pride in their work, share their views confidently and feel that teachers value their suggestions. They told us that teachers encourage them and stretch them to work to the best of their ability. Children work together very well, for example to discuss ideas, solve problems, and create displays. They are making very good progress in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. The

school has maintained high standards of attainment. Many children achieve national levels of attainment earlier than might normally be expected. New approaches to learning writing skills are improving children's attainment and helping them be confident and successful writers. In mathematics, children tackle mental and written calculations and solve problems well. They explain their thinking clearly and the approaches they use to reach their answers. In science, they investigate evidence methodically, think things through well and report their conclusions clearly. Children have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and are making very good progress in physical education.

Across the school, children achieve in a wide range of activities and are developing very good personal and social skills. In the nursery class, children make good use of their observational skills when they paint pictures. They use props imaginatively during play activities. Across the school, children have worked hard with staff to achieve a second Eco-Schools Scotland award at green flag standard. They regularly work creatively to raise significant amounts for national and international charities. At the primary stages, they have performed in very successful school shows and some have achieved awards in the Glasgow Music Festival. Children are developing effective presentation skills, including using information and communications technology confidently. For example, last year, children in P6 successfully presented their work on a heritage topic at a local event.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Activities in the nursery class are well designed to support all children in making progress, particularly in early literacy and numeracy. They learn well through play. Children in the nursery benefit from specialist teaching in French and, across the school, from specialist teaching in music and physical education. At the primary stages, well-planned activities help develop a broad range of skills. Commendably, staff give children regular chances to use and extend their literacy skills in different areas of their learning. The school has outstanding

arrangements for developing its curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. Depute headteachers and principal teachers carry out their remit as leaders of curriculum developments and improvements very effectively. Principal teachers work closely with teachers and senior managers to help ensure children have opportunities to make choices about what they need to learn and how best to learn. They plan creatively to help children link what they are learning to their understanding of the wider world.

Across the school, staff know children very well and are very sensitive to their needs. They make classrooms interesting places to learn and respond to children's ideas and interests when they plan lessons. Tasks and activities are at the right level of difficulty for almost all children. Staff provide children with different ways to make progress by ensuring that they have a good balance of individual and group activities. Well-planned tasks help children to learn from and support each other. Teachers give children clear feedback to help them build on their strengths and improve their work. At the primary stages, children are developing confidence in using personal learning planning. Varied homework activities support what children are learning in lessons and help them prepare well for the next stage in their learning. Children and teachers use computers and interactive whiteboards well to support learning. Pupil support teachers and assistants respond to children's individual needs very well. They work closely with class teachers and partner agencies to provide a high quality of support for children experiencing difficulties with their learning. These children are making very good progress towards meeting their personal targets for learning.

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

Staff work closely with the active and very supportive Parent Council. Together they are planning improvements to the school's communications with parents, in particular to help parents support their children's work at home. Staff help children to make a confident move

from the nursery class into P1. At the primary stages, children benefit from the school's very effective links with Williamwood High School and associated primary schools. These links assist staff in sharing good practice in planning and teaching approaches, and support children very well when they transfer to secondary school. Successful partnerships with educational and health support services, the chaplains and local businesses help to improve the quality of children's learning experiences. A strong feature of the school is the way its partnerships help children to understand and experience their local and wider community. Examples include links with a local denominational school and visitors helping children learn about the heritage slavery project.

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

Many children take on extra responsibilities to help improve the school. For example, they take part in the eco or bio-diversity groups, or act as road safety officers, reading buddies and playground mediators. Most children think the school council is a good way to express their views and to help improve the school. The council influenced notable improvements to the playground, including a multi-use games area. Each year, the school surveys the views of groups of children on their experiences and what they would like to see improved. Teachers also ask children regularly for their views of their learning and use their ideas to improve the learning environment. Staff work very well together as a team. They keep parents informed about children's work and progress at curriculum meetings and parents' evenings and in a helpful annual report. The school encourages parental contact throughout the year. Some parents would like more regular reports and more time to discuss their child's work with teachers.

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

Children and staff have worked together very well to create an atmosphere of mutual respect across the school. Teachers explain clearly to children what they are learning and how to succeed. Skilful, open questions encourage children to think things through for themselves and staff value children's confidence and independence. They encourage all children to achieve in a wide range of activities. Staff plan well to meet children's health, emotional and social needs and are very clear about their responsibilities for child protection. The school has good arrangements for religious observance. Children behave very well. They are very proud of each other's successes which are celebrated in classrooms and at assemblies, and through attractive displays of their work around the school. Staff and children have worked very hard to promote a culture of 'zero tolerance' of bullying. Children told us that bullying was very rare and that staff dealt very well with any incidents that occurred.

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

The school has clear aims and values. The headteacher and depute headteachers involve children, staff and parents in discussions to agree the school's strengths and areas for development. The deputies monitor learning and teaching thoroughly and provide well-organised, detailed feedback for teachers. Senior managers and principal teachers work very well together to encourage and support staff to develop improvements. Staff do so energetically, through effective working groups and projects, including work with colleagues in the Williamwood High School cluster. Well supported by the headteacher, they have developed a clear understanding of how to use self-evaluation to improve learning and achievement. The school is well placed to build on existing good practice to take forward further improvements.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the very 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.

- Continue to share good practice in learning, teaching and meeting needs to help maintain consistent and appropriately high expectations across the school.
- In line with current school developments, build on existing good practice in the primary stages and involve children across the school in planning how to improve their learning.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there was one recommendation and it has been addressed.

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 Carolside Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	very 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	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Mary Ritchie
6 January 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