

**Falla Hill Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Fauldhouse  
West Lothian Council  
2 September 2008**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Key strengths</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. How good is the environment for learning?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7. Leading and improving the school</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Indicators of quality</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>How can you contact us?</b>	<b>11</b>

## 1. Background

Falla Hill Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected in April 2008 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated nursery children's and pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined the quality of the children's experience in the nursery, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves an area of Fauldhouse. At the time of the inspection the roll was 187, including 40 children in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was below the national average.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Friendly and confident children and pupils who were proud of their school and eager to learn.
- The commitment of the headteacher in developing interagency working to support vulnerable pupils.
- The approach adopted by the school to healthy eating and developing enterprise skills.
- Strong partnerships with parents and members of the community in the life of the school and nursery class.

## 3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

Parents appreciated the school's open door policy and felt that all staff made them feel welcome. They welcomed opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, for example, as parent helpers. They were confident their concerns would be dealt with promptly. Parents considered there was an inclusive ethos in the school. Pupils enjoyed being at school and felt they had a say in making the school better. They enjoyed contributing to assemblies and taking responsibility for mentoring new pupils. Staff considered there was a positive ethos in the school. Teachers felt there was a strong sense of teamwork.

#### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

##### **Learners' experiences**

The overall quality of the curriculum was weak. While children in the nursery had good experiences, these were considerably weaker in the primary classes. In the nursery class, children had learned about colour and pattern and enjoyed using percussion instruments to create sounds. They were learning about seasonal changes and could explain the conditions needed for plants and seeds to grow. Most used the computer confidently but would benefit from access to a wider range of equipment. Children were becoming increasingly confident in climbing, sliding and balancing while using large physical equipment. In the primary classes, pupils had good opportunities to develop enterprise skills. They were learning French but there was no clear programme in place to ensure that their skills were developed in a continuous and progressive way. Overall, pupils' knowledge and skills were not developed systematically from stage to stage due to a lack of continuity and progression in several curricular areas. Teachers did not make sufficient use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning. A visiting specialist teacher helped ensure that pupils received good learning experiences in physical education. The school now needed to review arrangements at all stages to ensure that all pupils had sufficient access to high quality physical education. The quality of teaching was too variable and was weak overall. In P1, staff had begun to consider how they could reintroduce more active approaches to learning to ensure continuity of approach between the nursery and the primary school. Teachers were not always effective when sharing with pupils what they expected them to learn. In a few instances teachers used questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to develop their thinking. This was not yet common practice across the stages. In a significant number of lessons learning activities did not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils. In a few instances teachers used assessment strategies well to check pupils understanding. At a few stages, homework tasks lacked variety and challenge.

Learners' experiences in the nursery class were good. Children were happy, settled and secure in the playroom routines. They participated enthusiastically and actively in learning activities and were making good progress in their learning. They played very well together and shared their toys with each other. Children accessed resources independently and moved confidently between the playroom and the outdoor area. Learners' experiences at the primary stages were satisfactory. Pupils were well motivated and interacted positively with each other. Across the stages, they listened to teachers' instructions and responded well to positive feedback. In a few lessons they worked effectively in pairs and small groups. As yet, opportunities to develop skills in independent and cooperative learning were limited.

## **Improvements in performance**

Improvements in performance were good in the nursery and satisfactory in the primary classes. The improvements in recent years had not been sustained.

In the nursery class, children were making good progress in communication and language. They had very good opportunities to talk and share their ideas in small groups, and many spoke confidently. They were less skilled at listening in small groups. Many showed interest in books and enjoyed having stories read to them. A number of children could write their name and recognise alphabet sounds. They made good use of the writing table but needed more opportunities to write for a range of purposes in play contexts.

The overall quality of attainment in English language was satisfactory. The school had made progress in raising levels of attainment in recent years but this had not been sustained. The majority of pupils were attaining appropriate national levels. Strong attainment at the early stages by a few pupils was not sustained as they moved through the school. Most pupils who had not yet attained national levels were making suitable progress in their classwork. At the early stages, pupils were making a good start to developing literacy skills. Across the stages, most pupils listened well to adults but did not always listen well to each other. Most expressed their views clearly and confidently and shared their ideas and opinions well. At P7, pupils talked confidently about books they had read. Across the stages, most pupils read for a variety of purposes. They were not always fluent and a few lacked skills in comprehension. Higher achieving pupils were capable of responding to more challenging and varied tasks. At most stages, pupils produced some good examples of imaginative writing. There were insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes in a range of contexts. The presentation of pupils' work was variable.

In the nursery class, children were making good progress in their understanding of early mathematics. They enjoyed simple counting games and puzzles and many were learning about two- and three-dimensional shapes. Most could identify chains which were longer and shorter. Most children could sort, match and count. They would benefit from access to a wider range of mathematical equipment. Opportunities to use mathematical ideas in play contexts were limited.

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was satisfactory. In recent years, levels of attainment had remained steady. Across the school, most pupils attained national levels of attainment. At the early stages, pupils were making good progress in their understanding of mathematical concepts. By P2, many were achieving levels earlier than might normally be expected. This positive early start was not maintained as pupils progressed through the school, and overall, pupils' progress was too slow. Pupils who required additional support were making good progress. By P7, pupils had carried out a number of surveys and were able to interpret information in graphs competently. At P4, they were developing appropriate numeracy skills. Pupils in the upper stages did not always display confidence in some aspects of basic numeracy skills. They had yet to develop a good understanding of work involving fractions, decimals and percentages. By P7, pupils were able to identify types of angles and estimate their size. At all stages, they were able to use a range of strategies to

solve mathematical problems. Pupils had limited experience of using computers to support their learning.

In the nursery class children enjoyed using a wide range of materials and techniques in art and craft. They made three-dimensional models and used collage materials to create interesting pictures. They used props and costumes imaginatively in the “home corner”. Children were developing good control of their fingers and hands by using scissors, small construction materials and pencils. Most children enjoyed using large physical equipment and rode wheeled toys skilfully.

Across the primary stages, pupils were making good progress in developing informed attitudes to issues of equality. At P5/P6 they had a good understanding of ways in which they could tackle racism or other forms of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils were developing their understanding of anti-sectarian issues through their work with peers in a local school. Pupils were making good progress in physical education. At the upper stages, they were aware of their strengths and competently recorded their progress in athletics activities. Across the school pupils responded enthusiastically to opportunities to learn French.

The school took positive steps to help pupils develop their wider achievements. Pupils participated enthusiastically in a broad range of after-school activities including Spanish, homework and book clubs. Pupils had developed effective citizenship skills through participation in the pupil council. Those in the garden and litter groups were taking responsibility for aspects of the school environment. Senior pupils had enjoyed a residential trip to Dalguise and felt that it had enabled them to develop their team working skills. Pupils were knowledgeable about their health and the school had achieved Health Promoting Status. Most pupils had developed an awareness of the needs of others through activities such as fund-raising for a range of local and national charities. These included the Salvation Army, Cancer Research and a school in Malawi. They had worked collaboratively with pupils from a nearby primary school to plant trees and to tidy up the local cemetery. Across the school, pupils had developed effective enterprise skills, for example, pupils at P7 had run an art club for younger pupils. Commendably, the school had achieved a number of awards for enterprising learning.

The school had overtaken the priorities in the development plan. Whilst these had had a positive impact on pupils’ behaviour there was insufficient focus on improving pupils’ learning experiences. As yet, staff did not display a good understanding of their responsibility in ensuring continuous improvement. Nursery staff had successfully implemented an education authority priority to improve planning of children’s experiences.

## **5. How well are pupils’ learning needs met?**

Arrangements for meeting pupils’ learning needs were weak overall. In the nursery class, staff met children’s learning needs well. They knew children very well and took careful account of their needs and interests when planning activities. Children with additional needs were well supported by both nursery staff and support assistants. Across the school, staff had developed individual educational programmes (IEPs) for

those children who required them. They contained appropriate long-term and short-term targets and were reviewed regularly to ensure children were making good progress. The school needed to ensure better liaison for children who spent part of their time at Falla Hill nursery and part of their time at other pre-school centres. In primary classes, too many learning activities were not well matched to pupils' learning needs. Tasks and activities did not challenge pupils sufficiently. Opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in lessons were limited. Procedures for identifying and prioritising the needs of pupils requiring additional support lacked rigour. The support for learning teacher, who had been in post for eight months, provided appropriate support for individuals and small groups. Staff used IEPs well to help pupils achieve success in their learning. Pupils and parents were involved in reviewing targets in IEPs but not in the formulation of these targets.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>The school and nursery had very good arrangements in place for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. All staff were attentive to the physical, emotional and social needs of pupils. They had received training on child protection and were confident about what to do if they had any concerns about pupils' welfare. The headteacher had worked successfully with individual pupils to help them recognise their needs and to arrange appropriate support. The school had developed very good links with a range of local agencies. Professionals such as the health visitor and mental health worker regularly visited the school to provide advice and support for pupils and their families. There were very effective and sensitive arrangements in place to support vulnerable pupils moving into and out of the school. Pupils and parents had been appropriately involved in the development of the positive behaviour and anti-bullying policies. The school successfully promoted healthy lifestyles and encouraged pupils to respect the rights of others and to take their responsibilities seriously.</p>

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p>Management and use of resources and space for learning</p>	<p>The overall management of resources was good. The building was well maintained and clean. The school and nursery were enhanced by displays of pupils' work and achievements. The building was fully accessible to users with mobility difficulties. In some instances, teachers used shared learning areas to provide good opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning. As yet, this practice was not well developed across the school. Security arrangements were appropriate. Staff made effective use of a gymnasium to develop pupils' learning in aspects of physical education and drama.</p>
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>Staff and pupils identified strongly with the school. Nursery staff had fostered positive relationships with children and families. They made good use of praise and encouragement to build children's self-esteem. Pupils were courteous and polite. The school had worked with pupils and parents to develop arrangements which had successfully promoted good behaviour. Across the school teachers used an appropriate range of approaches to encourage good work and behaviour. Their expectations of pupils' attainment were not always sufficiently high. Regular assemblies provided appropriate opportunities for religious observance and to celebrate success. Most pupils responded with enthusiasm to the celebration of achievements at assemblies. The school had taken good steps to promote issues of equality and fairness including racial equality.</p>



Aspect	Comment
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school had developed good links with parents and carers. Nursery staff had very positive relationships with parents. They provided helpful information about the work of the nursery and children's learning experiences. Parents of nursery children had good opportunities to make their views known. Parents of pupils transferring to P1 had good opportunities to attend workshops to learn about transition arrangements. There was scope to develop the range of workshops to provide all parents with information about aspects of the curriculum. A helpful annual written report and meetings with teachers provided parents with information about their children's progress. Parents of senior pupils had been consulted on the sensitive aspects of the health education programme. The school had developed productive links with staff from a range of organisations in order to support and extend pupils learning. These included, for example, the Forest Ranger, Community police and local churches.

## 7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Falla Hill Primary School and Nursery Class provided a welcoming and caring environment. Pupils were eager to learn and were developing good personal and social skills. They were developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Improvements in performance in English language and mathematics had not been sustained recently. There were significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching. The school did not always provide a broad enough range of learning opportunities or match tasks and resources to pupils' needs. In particular, teachers did not always ensure that the pace of learning and level of challenge was appropriate for all pupils.

The headteacher had been in post for eleven years and during that time had made a number of improvements to the school's work. She was held in high regard by parents and members of the community. She worked very effectively with staff and colleagues from a range of agencies to ensure the social and emotional needs of pupils were well met. The headteacher was very well supported by the principal teacher who had taken forward a number of developments. These included the successful development of a positive behaviour policy. The headteacher had introduced staff to the use of quality indicators developed nationally. As yet, these were not used effectively to evaluate the work of the school. The lack of consistency in tracking pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics resulted in a slow pace of learning for a significant number of pupils. Arrangements for self-evaluation did not yet include a sufficiently strong focus on monitoring the quality of learning and teaching. The school had surveyed

parents' and pupils views on recent initiatives including the development of strategies to promote positive behaviour. A continued and strengthened focus on evaluating and improving learning and teaching was required to increase the school's capacity for improvement.

Nursery staff were aware of the implications of the Scottish Social Services Council's Code of Practice.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were two requirements and one recommendation relating to employment practices. The headteacher advised that the education authority had addressed these.

### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority should take action to:

- improve the balance and structure of the curriculum and make more use of information and communications technology;
- improve the pace, challenge the quality of learning and teaching in order to meet the needs of pupils more effectively;
- further improve attainment in English language and mathematics; and
- further develop the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and nursery class.

### **What happens next?**

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in a report to parents, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Jacqueline Horsburgh  
HM Inspector

2 September 2008

## Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
The curriculum	weak
Teaching for effective learning	weak
Children's experiences (nursery class[es])	good
Learners' experiences (primary stages)	satisfactory
Improvements in performance (nursery class[es])	good
Improvements in performance (primary stages)	satisfactory

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting learning needs (nursery class[es])	good
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	weak

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	satisfactory
Expectations and promoting achievement	satisfactory
Equality and fairness	good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	good

<b>Leading and improving the school</b>	
Developing people and partnerships	satisfactory
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

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

## Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

<b>What parents thought the school did well</b>	<b>What parents think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents felt that staff made them feel welcome in the school and that parents' evenings were helpful and informative.</li> <li>• Their children enjoyed being at school and found the work stimulating and challenging.</li> <li>• Their children were treated fairly in school and were encouraged to work to the best of their ability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents would like more information about the school's priorities for improving the education of pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>What pupils thought the school did well</b>	<b>What pupils think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils felt the school helped them keep safe and healthy.</li> <li>• They considered that teachers explained things clearly and expected them to work hard.</li> <li>• They enjoyed being at school and felt that teachers listened to their views.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few pupils did not consider that the behaviour of their peers was good.</li> </ul>
<b>What staff thought the school did well</b>	<b>What staff think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff considered the school was well led.</li> <li>• They felt that teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment.</li> <li>• Staff considered that they showed concern for the care and welfare of the children and pupils.</li> <li>• They felt that there was mutual respect between staff and pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</li> </ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education and Cultural Services, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA or by telephoning 01506 600351. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at the above address.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail [HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk). A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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 the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: [ask@sps.org.uk](mailto:ask@sps.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.sps.org.uk](http://www.sps.org.uk).

Crown Copyright 2008

HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.