



**The Glasgow Academy and  
Nursery and Kindergarten  
Class  
Glasgow  
10 February 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school<sup>1</sup>. We describe how children and young people 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 parents<sup>2</sup> and services which support children and young people. We also comment on how well staff, children and young people work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report also describes the ‘ethos’ of the school. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the school, how well children and young people 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](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns and details about young people’s examination performance. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school and a report on the learning community surrounding the school.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class and primary and secondary departments.

<sup>2</sup> 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 and young people learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support the learning of children and young people?
6. Are staff, children and young people actively involved in improving their school community?
7. Does the school have high expectations of all children and young people?
8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

The Glasgow Academy is a non-denominational independent school with a nursery and kindergarten class. The school caters for children aged from three to 18 years old. It has three campuses across the city and serves a wide geographical area with children travelling from Perthshire, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, as well as Glasgow and the surrounding area. Each campus has nursery, kindergarten and preparatory classes and the main campus in Kelvinbridge also has senior classes. The roll is 1241, including 99 in the nursery and kindergarten. The inspection was carried out in November 2008.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Confident, articulate children who are eager to learn.
- The commendably high attainment and achievement of children and young people across a wide range of activities.
- The enriched learning experiences for children and young people within and beyond the school, including the outstanding opportunities for young people at S6.
- The high level of commitment of staff to working together to provide a stimulating and nurturing environment for learning.
- The impact of the rector's vision and values, and the effectiveness of senior staff on improving children's experiences.

## **3. Examples of good practice**

- How to keep safe on the Internet.
- Effective links across literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Outdoor education.

## **4. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Children in the nursery and kindergarten are enthusiastic, active learners. They know how to share and cooperate with each other. They are beginning to take more responsibility for their own learning through sharing experiences and ideas in their 'big books'. They are becoming more confident in making independent choices in their play. This effective practice is not consistent across all campuses. Throughout the school, children are highly motivated and take a very responsible attitude to learning. Almost all children feel safe and cared for and think that the school is helping them to become more confident. They enjoy taking part in school activities and clubs. At all stages, children work well together and are gaining important negotiating and decision-making skills. They carry out tasks and activities with enthusiasm, make suggestions, share their ideas and answer questions willingly. Many are skilled in using information and communications technology (ICT) to support their learning. A number of young people in the senior school carry out independent research into topics particularly well and produce work of outstandingly high quality. At the preparatory stages, children are very clear about how well they are getting on in their learning. For example, they talk confidently about how they can improve their story writing.

Across the school, children are developing very good social and personal skills. The school helps them to develop confidence and ambition. At all stages, they learn the importance of active and healthy lifestyles. They take part in a range of physical activities such as gymnastics, hockey, rowing and rugby. They understand the importance of helping others and many willingly take on extra responsibilities, including roles within the house system. They act as monitors and mentors, and work with younger children to help them in their learning. Children at all stages achieve success in a range of competitions, including enterprising mathematics, music, sport, chess and public speaking. Across the school, children have identified imaginative ways of raising significant funds for a number of worthy

causes, including national and international charities. In the senior school, a commendable number of young people have gained Duke of Edinburgh's Awards at all levels.

Across the three campuses, children in the nursery and kindergarten are making good progress in communication and language. They have a rich vocabulary which they use well to express themselves. They listen actively to well-read stories and use what they have heard to enhance their play. They need more opportunities to develop these skills in other areas of their learning. Children's progress in early mathematics is very good. Children are confident in their knowledge of number and use it well within their play. They can gather and display simple information in graph form and share their findings with others. At the preparatory stages, children's attainment in English language and mathematics has been maintained at a consistently high level. Children are making very good progress in reading, writing, talking, listening and mathematics. They produce high quality written work across their learning. Throughout the school, they have well developed listening skills and are able to express their opinions very clearly. They are extremely confident when presenting to groups and wider audiences. In mathematics, children are quick and accurate in both mental calculations and written work and are confident at solving problems. In the senior school, young people at S4 to S6 perform very well in national examinations. Their performance has been consistently well above the national average. In many subjects, almost all young people gain a Credit award. The proportion of young people gaining A grades at Higher has improved over the last five years. At the end of S6, a notably high number of young people go on to study at university or college. Across the school, children with additional support needs are making very good progress overall.

## Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff in the nursery and kindergarten provide a range of activities which reflects children's interests well. They need to continue to introduce more choice for children. Children have regular opportunities to enhance their learning through play outdoors and by taking part in specialist music, physical education and French activities. In the preparatory and senior school, children study a suitably broad range of topics and courses which help them to make progress in their learning. They enjoy opportunities to be enterprising and to solve problems in different contexts. Initiatives such as *Money Week*, *We're in Business*, *Polar Day* and *Modern Languages Day* help to make their learning motivating and challenging. Children have opportunities to make choices in their learning. At P5 to P7, for example, they choose activities from a well-planned range of topics including ecology, ICT, Spanish, dance and puppets. Across the school, children are developing creativity, citizenship skills and responsibility for themselves and others through a range of outstanding learning opportunities out of class. College and university links enable young people at S6 to study psychology, Mandarin Chinese, film production and sign language. The curriculum provides children at all stages with very good opportunities to develop personal and social skills, including residential experiences, enterprise activities and giving presentations and performances. The school has not yet looked closely enough at its programmes of work when children move from kindergarten to P1, P4 to P5 and P7 to S1. There is scope for teachers to build better on what children have already learned.

In the nursery and kindergarten, and across the school, staff set tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for almost all children. In the nursery, kindergarten and preparatory school, a few tasks do not provide higher achieving children with enough challenge to make them think deeply about their learning. Across the school, staff know children well and almost all provide a stimulating and supportive environment for learning. Staff in the preparatory school recognise that they need to review and improve the ways they support children with additional support needs and plan more systematically for them.

Across all stages of the school, children work very well with partners and in groups. They take responsibility for their learning and confidently discuss their work. They are developing good skills in working independently where they learn from one another. Children, particularly at the preparatory stages, discuss their work with each other and their teachers so that they understand clearly what they need to do to improve. Staff working in the libraries provide children with high quality support for developing literacy and research skills and personal development.

## **5. How well do staff work with others to support the learning of children and young people?**

At all stages, staff have strong links with parents and the community. As a result, children benefit from the increased opportunities to learn out of school, including through a number of successful trips and visits to places of interest and work experience. Links with a range of agencies help them to understand the importance of the environment and global citizenship. Parents contribute to learning in various ways including coaching, assisting with sporting and creative activities and giving talks about the world of work. The school has developed close links with a number of partners to promote health and wellbeing, enrich learning and develop personal and social skills. The school nurse and the police contribute to programmes on personal safety, drugs and alcohol.

## **6. Are staff, children and young people actively involved in improving their school community?**

Staff in the nursery and kindergarten are improving learning by planning with, and talking to, children about play activities. In the preparatory and senior school, children share their ideas for school improvement through committees and regular house meetings. They feel that the school could make better use of their suggestions. There is scope for the school to involve children further in improving aspects



of their learning. The school has carried out a survey of parents, young people in the senior school and staff. As a result, staff reviewed homework and plan to introduce drama next session. Senior managers meet teachers to analyse examination results and check on the progress and achievement of individual children, particularly in the senior school. They recognise that teachers in the preparatory school need to track children's progress better. Staff observe each other teaching to share good practice and take part in working groups to make learning better. They need to be involved more in identifying what improvements they need to make and in evaluating their progress.

## **7. Does the school have high expectations of all children and young people?**

The ethos of the school is very positive and welcoming. Staff know children well and are sensitive to their needs. The school has reviewed recently its arrangements for ensuring children's care and welfare. It encourages fairness for all and children and staff show care and respect for each other. They share high expectations of behaviour, progress and achievement. Teachers set appropriately high expectations for the amount and quality of work children should produce in lessons. The range of children's achievements, particularly those in chemistry, art, music and sport is commendable. The school community celebrates success well through assemblies, displays, concerts and school publications. There are suitable arrangements for religious observance.

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

The rector has a clear and well-judged vision for the school based on developing a 'can do' attitude, preparing children for life. He has high, realistic ambitions for their achievement and attainment. The recent appointment of senior staff in the preparatory school has led to staff in all three campuses working together more effectively. Through

discussion, the senior leadership team encourages and enables teachers to lead a number of initiatives and improvements. Staff have responded positively to this and many work together very well to improve the school. There is scope to develop this further. The school is well placed to improve further aspects of its approaches to self-evaluation and to build on existing good practice.

## **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 Board of Governors will inform parents about the school's progress as part of their arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the school.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and Board of Governors.

- Continue to develop the curriculum, particularly at points of transition to ensure that courses and programmes build appropriately on children's learning.
- Build on existing good practice to develop rigorous and consistent approaches to learning and teaching across the school which lead to engaging and motivating all children.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery classes three recommendations were made at the Dairsie campus and one at the Kelvinbridge campus. All had been addressed.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes 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*.

Here are the evaluations for The Glasgow Academy and Nursery and Kindergarten Class

Preparatory and Senior School

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

Nursery and Kindergarten Class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery and kindergarten class.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>good</b>

**Managing Inspector:** Eleanor Harkness  
10 February 2009







To find out more about inspections or get an electronic copy of this report go to [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at [www.spsso.org.uk](http://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