



**Tinto Primary School and  
Nursery Class  
Symington  
South Lanarkshire Council  
21 April 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school<sup>1</sup>. 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 parents<sup>2</sup> 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](http://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.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

<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.

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### **1. The school**

Tinto Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Symington and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 162, including 36 in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in February 2009. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

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

- Confident, articulate well-behaved children.
- The support given by parents to extend children's wider learning opportunities.
- The effective partnership working which supports children with additional learning needs.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Staff in the nursery class are providing a range of learning experiences for children. However, experiences are too adult directed and structured. Children have too few opportunities to make choices or decisions in their play. As a result, they are not sufficiently motivated or fully engaged in their learning. Children are making satisfactory progress in their development and learning. They are learning to share and take turns. Most talk confidently to staff and to one another. They are developing early writing skills. Most children confidently count to ten. Overall, they do not have enough opportunities to develop their imagination or creativity. Across the primary stages, children respond positively to the many opportunities to accept responsibility. Older children support younger ones well and contribute successfully to assemblies. Children at all stages are actively involved in the pupil council as well as the health, junior road safety and eco groups. They are aware of how to care for their environment and are knowledgeable about recycling and saving energy. As a result of children's achievements in this aspect of learning, the school has been awarded an Eco-Schools Scotland Silver Award. Children are developing knowledge and skills in aspects of science and those in P2 are developing an understanding of their

senses through tasting activities. Children are also developing a range of skills in art and design and those in P5/P4 have been making Viking chess pieces from clay. In recent years, standards of attainment in reading and writing have varied. Most children are now attaining national standards in reading. The majority attain these in writing. The school has maintained standards in mathematics with most children continuing to achieve appropriate national levels of attainment. Most children listen well to their teacher and to one another. They read well for understanding. However, they find it difficult in discussions to respond to the views of others. They are not given enough opportunities to write extended pieces or write for a range of purposes. In mathematics, children are competent in their written and oral calculations. At the early stages, they show a good understanding of graphs. At the upper stages, children are competent in solving problems. Overall, children have too few opportunities to use number in real life situations.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

There are important weaknesses in the school's curriculum. In the nursery class, literacy and numeracy are not being fully developed across all areas of the curriculum. Children participate well in physical activities, but the programme is not developing a wide enough range of physical skills. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to explore, investigate and solve problems and to develop their understanding of early science and technology. In the primary classes, the curriculum does not offer sufficient challenge or choice. Too many activities are focussed on books and worksheets. Children have few opportunities to use computers to support their learning. Teachers are at an early stage of taking account of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. This development has yet to impact on children's learning experiences in the classroom.

Staff have established positive relationships with children and are kind and caring. However, the pace of the nursery session and the activities offered are not always set at the right level for children. They do not provide enough challenge to ensure children progress as they

should. Staff are at an early stage of involving children in planning. Children are not involved in reviewing their learning. In the primary classes, most teachers give clear instructions. A few make good use of questions to check children's understanding. Teachers do not regularly share the purposes of lessons with children. They need to help children to be more aware of their learning and what they need to do to improve it further. Tasks and activities are not always at the right level of difficulty for all children. Teachers set regular homework but tasks lack variety. Overall, children could be challenged further in English language and mathematics. Staff identify and meet the needs of children requiring additional support well. Children with individualised education programmes are making good progress in their learning.

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

The school works closely with the very supportive Parent Council. Parents have successfully raised significant funds to support a variety of activities for children. This includes a successful after-school club which is run by parents. Nursery staff have established open and friendly relationships with parents. There are good arrangements to support children moving from P7 to Biggar High School. The effectiveness of transfer arrangements from the nursery class have been affected by poor staff relationships. The school has formed effective partnerships with visiting specialist teachers and with psychological, health and social work staff. These partnerships have been successful in supporting children with a range of difficulties and allowing them to make good progress in their learning. Parents work well with the school to help their children achieve. The school is good at sorting out complaints from children. A few parents feel their complaints have not been resolved satisfactorily.

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

The school has appropriate arrangements in place to evaluate the quality of its work but these are not yet resulting in sufficient improvements in children's learning. The headteacher visits classes to observe the quality of learning and teaching. Staff have opportunities to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, teamwork is not well established and they are not working together effectively to secure improvements in key areas of the school's work. All staff need to demonstrate stronger commitment to school improvement and carry out self-evaluation activities more thoroughly. There is scope for children and parents to have more opportunities to give their views on the quality of the school's work.

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

Staff are committed to children's care and welfare. They have positive relationships with children and are effective in meeting their emotional, physical and social needs. They have received suitable training in child protection procedures. Children feel safe and well cared for. Staff set high standards for children's behaviour. Children behave very well in classes and around the school. They are courteous, confident and respectful. Children's wider achievements are recognised effectively through wall displays and assemblies. The school works well in partnership with the school chaplain. Children have good opportunities to participate in religious observance and worship through assemblies and visits to the local church. Staff do not always have appropriate expectations of children's attainment. They need to increase the pace of learning and provide more demanding tasks for some children.

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

The headteacher has shared the school's aims and values with staff, parents and children. She has clearly identified areas for improvement that are necessary to improve children's learning. She now needs to build teamwork and promote a shared sense of responsibility amongst all staff to ensure high-quality provision. The principal teacher gives valuable support to the headteacher. She needs to have a clearer role in supporting staff with improvement activities. The school's approaches to self-evaluation have had limited impact on improving learning and teaching and achievement for all children. The school requires the support of the education authority to develop further.

## **8. What happens next?**

We will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, we may continue to check the improvements the school has made. We may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.



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

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provide more challenging learning experiences for all children.
- Develop strategies to give children greater responsibility for their learning.
- Continue staff teambuilding to ensure better working relationships.
- Further develop the school's self-evaluation procedures to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. In addition, four recommendations were made and all had 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 Tinto Primary School and Nursery Class.

#### Primary school

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>weak</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

#### Nursery class

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

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>weak</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Peter Gollogly  
21 April 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