

24 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2022, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Whithorn School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Positive relationships across the nursery, school and the wider community. This supports children to learn and play well together in a caring culture.
- Within the nursery and at the primary stages there is a strong team approach to improving outcomes for children. The committed teachers, practitioners and learning assistants work well together in their teams, and all embrace opportunities for professional learning. The headteacher works well with the staff team and colleagues across The Machars to support improvement for all learners.
- Children across the school are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. They are keen, diligent learners who tackle all tasks and activities positively.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

- To support children's progress across the nursery and primary stages, continue to develop shared approaches across all stages.
- Continue to improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure all children enjoy consistently high quality experiences. Build on current practice to offer children increased opportunities to be creative and independent in their learning.
- Review and refresh the curriculum to offer children a wider range of relevant learning experiences in the classrooms and outdoors.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Whithorn School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Securing children's progress	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for the nursery class

Care Inspectorate standards	Grade
Quality of care and support	good
Quality of environment	good
Quality of staffing	good
Quality of management and leadership	good

Requirements/recommendations made by Care Inspectorate for the nursery class

None.

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page//?id=5191>

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dumfries and Galloway Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Susan Duff
HM Inspector

Mags Milloy
Care Inspector