



Education
Scotland
Foghlam Alba



care
inspectorate



**Harmeny Education Trust
Centre
Balerno
14 May 2013**

Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland) inspect schools in order to let parents¹ and young people know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with staff how they can improve the quality of care and education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher/senior managers and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which young people are involved. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of care and education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of care and education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the service is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.educationscotland.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school

Harmeny School is a grant-aided school providing specialist education services, on both a day and residential basis, for children of primary school age up to S2. Children have additional support needs arising from difficulties with their social, emotional and behavioural development. The school provides its services on a national level and has capacity for 36 children. At the time of the inspection, the school provided care and education for 30 children. Six children attend on a daily basis. Children came from 14 different local authorities.

2. Key strengths of the school

- A vibrant community in which children and staff demonstrate positive relationships and children enjoy learning.
- Learning outdoors and extensive opportunities for wider achievement
- Highly effective approaches to meeting children's emotional, social and mental wellbeing.
- Strong productive links with the wider community and success in involving parents, carers and families.
- Leadership of improvement and change

3. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

Children and young people are benefitting from very positive learning experiences. Throughout the campus, staff have established a supportive and encouraging climate for learning. Children and young people feel safe, valued and included and respond well to the high expectations set for them. Overall, they are well motivated by stimulating activities that get them actively involved in finding things out for themselves. Children and young people are developing skills in working independently and with others. They have a good awareness of how well they are progressing and are proud of their successes. Across care and education, children and young people's achievements are recognised and celebrated.

Children and young people are achieving well across a wide range of areas and activities, including skills for learning, life and work. They are developing physical and sporting skills and confidence in tackling challenging activities. Many have achieved John Muir Awards for their successes in outdoor activities. Children are gaining appreciation for the environment and developing responsible attitudes in caring for it. Through children and young people's efforts, the school has been

awarded an Eco-Schools Scotland Award at silver level and a bronze medal from the Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society.

Children and young people are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Their literacy skills are developing well. They contribute positively to discussions, listening to others and expressing themselves confidently. They are enjoying reading and gaining skills in writing for a variety of purposes. They apply their literacy skills well across all areas of learning, in the classroom and beyond. Children and young people have a good understanding of number. They can use their numeracy skills in a range of different contexts. They know how to use charts and graphs to organise and present information. They have a good awareness of shapes and their properties. Children and young people are making very good progress in understanding how to maintain positive wellbeing. They are gaining confidence and self-respect. They are learning to recognise their feelings and to develop skills and strategies that help them cope with challenging situations. They know how to make positive choices to keep themselves safe and well.

4. How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?

The curriculum is broad and stimulating. The ethos and life of the school as a community gives children and young people very good opportunities to contribute and exercise responsibilities as members of the community. There is a strong focus on developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across all aspects of school life. Staff are confident in using Curriculum for Excellence guidance to plan suitable learning experiences in, and across, curricular areas. They should now put in place structured curricular programmes to ensure that there is suitable progression in children's learning in all areas. The wide-ranging programme of outdoor learning gives children and young people opportunities to achieve success in different areas of activity. The school has outstanding links with the local community that provide children and young people with extensive and enriching

learning experiences. Transition arrangements to support children move in and on from school are very effective.

The effectiveness of the school's approaches to supporting children's development and learning is excellent. All staff are fully committed to providing a caring, secure and nurturing environment for children. They know children and young people very well and have established positive and healthy relationships with them. Staff use nurturing approaches skilfully to help children build resilience and to explore and express their feelings. Care and education staff work well together along with therapists and other specialists. They have drawn up detailed profiles for all children based on appropriate assessments. Staff use the information very effectively to meet children's learning and care needs. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress and act well on information to address changing needs. There are very effective systems in place to ensure continuity and consistency in delivering support to children. All children have an integrated care/education plan and children, parents and those involved in supporting the young person are fully involved in reviewing progress. Children feel that they have a good say in planning their next steps.

5. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The Chief Executive and senior managers show a strong commitment to continuous improvement that involves all staff. There are effective systems in place to ensure that staff reflect on their own practice and a range of ways to support them improve. Staff have access to suitable professional learning opportunities. There are appropriate approaches for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching and developing system for tracking children's progress. Children, parents and stakeholders are involved in giving their views on the quality of the school's work. Overall, the school makes very good use of the results of self-evaluation activities to bring about improvements.

The Chief Executive provides highly effective leadership and strategic direction. He is well supported by the Head of Care and the Head of

Education. Together, they have ensured that there is a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school and associated services. There is a supportive work environment and staff demonstrate a collective sense of responsibility and effective teamwork. The Board of Trustees works closely with the Chief Executive and plays a key role in providing strategic direction and assuring high-quality provision for all children and young people.

6. What happens next?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The Board of Trustees will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the Board of Trustees' arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the schools.

We have agreed the following area for improvement with the school and board of governors.

- Staff should now put in place structured curricular programmes to ensure that there is suitable progression in children's learning in all areas.

Quality indicators help schools, board of governors and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*.

Here are the evaluations for Harmeny Education Trust Centre.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Improvements in performance | very good |
| Learners' experiences | very good |
| Meeting learning needs | excellent |

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| The curriculum | very good |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | very good |

HM Inspector: Norma Wright **Care Inspector:** Shelagh McDougall
14 May 2013

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

| | | |
|----------------|-------|---|
| excellent | means | outstanding, sector leading |
| very good | means | major strengths |
| good | means | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| satisfactory | means | strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| weak | means | important weaknesses |
| unsatisfactory | means | major weaknesses |

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at [Insert school link from website](#).

If you would like to receive this report in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.