

Using School Performance Data to Choose a School

When choosing a school for your child, parents/guardians should gather as much information as they can from the local authority, school handbooks, school standards & quality reports, school improvement plans and maybe a school visit. Performance information (attainment, attendance, exclusion, leaver's destinations, staying on rates etc.) and HMIE Inspection reports are another source of useful information. HMIE Inspection reports can be accessed at [HMIE Website](#). They may not tell you everything you need to know about a school, but can be useful when making a decision.

Finding out About School Performance

West Lothian schools publish their own School Handbook specifically aimed at parents with detailed information about attainment levels, attendance levels, and the school. Schools also publish an annual Standards & Quality Report which highlights achievements and performance in the last school session. Schools will also publish an annual Improvement Plan which highlights the priorities and targets for next session and how they will be achieved. All these documents can be provided by the school and some can be found online by clicking here [School Information](#). Select a town and type of school you wish information about.

West Lothian Council has also published a range of performance information which parents/guardians may find helpful in choosing which school to send their child to. This information can be found below. If you are considering a West Lothian school for your child, you might find this information helpful. However, the tables provide only part of the picture of each school's overall achievements.

School Attainment Tables

Every year West Lothian Council publishes information on the attainment of pupils in all schools. These tables provide a guide as to how well a school is doing. They list 5-14 test results and SQA exam results and show how they compare with other schools.

There are three main tables published each year:

- Primary 5-14 attainment levels
- Secondary 5-14 attainment levels
- Secondary SQA Attainment levels

Test results will not give you a complete picture of a school, but they may help you to form a fuller impression of a school you are considering. Consider attainment data for schools near you. You'll be able to see how each school near you compares with the average for the West Lothian area.

The School's HMIE Inspection Report

HMIE inspects all Scottish schools on a rolling basis. After the inspection is complete, HMIE publish a report. When assessing a school, inspectors consider evidence from a range of sources including:

- the school's self-evaluation (the school's assessment of its own performance)
- performance information
- pupils' work
- lesson observations
- input from parents
- discussions with pupils and staff

The inspection report includes an overall assessment of the school's effectiveness, along with specific judgments on:

- attainment and standards in numeracy & literacy
- pupils' personal development and well-being
- the quality of learning & teaching
- curriculum provision
- the care, guidance and support provided by the school
- the leadership and management of the school

The judgments are made on a six point scale – Excellent, Very Good, Good, Adequate, Weak & Unsatisfactory. Inspection reports also highlight what the school should do to improve. Where a school is asked to make improvement the school along with the local authority will prepare an action plan which indicates how they intend to meet the HMIE's recommendations. The school is expected to use HMIE's recommendations as a basis for making improvements as quickly as possible.

Further information of all schools in Scotland, including local authority and independent schools can be found at the Scottish Schools Online website. It provides contact details, links to school websites where available, and statistical and other information for every school. Scottish Schools Online website: www.scottishschoolsonline.gov.uk