

**Conon Primary School
The Highland Council
18 December 2007**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Conon Primary School in December 2005. Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report.

HM Inspectors revisited the school in September 2007 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

2. Continuous improvement

The headteacher, with the useful support of education authority staff, had improved key areas of the school's performance. She had enhanced the provision for the continuing professional development of staff. All teaching staff had taken effective steps to improve their professional practice. These included attending helpful training events, organised by the education authority, on literacy and assessment procedures. Individual staff had led school initiatives as part of their own professional development. The headteacher met regularly with staff to offer advice, monitor the quality of the school's work and discuss pupils' progress. As a result of these developments the quality of aspects of learning and teaching had improved and leadership at all levels within the school had been developed.

Pupils had benefited from a range of helpful activities undertaken as part of The Highland Year of Culture. Visiting music specialists included Feis Rois tutors who enhanced pupils' experiences of traditional music. A wide range of cultural and sporting activities contributed positively to pupils' health and well being. The headteacher had further developed the already very good links with parents, and had effectively sought their views, for example, on homework and reporting formats. As part of the school's work on improving literacy, parents had attended information meetings about the new approaches being used. Parents were now better informed about the school's work and were actively included in aspects of improvement.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in December 2005 identified four main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

3.1 Improve further the quality of pupils' learning experiences and the meeting of pupils' needs.

The school had made good progress in addressing this main point for action.

Pupils were more actively involved in their learning. Their learning experiences had improved, particularly in English language. Pupils cooperated well together, sharing ideas in pair and group discussions, and in a range of contexts. At all stages, pupils had been

involved in identifying and reviewing targets for their learning. Teachers set out clearly for pupils what they expected them to learn and pupils were responding well. Pupils did not yet have sufficient experience in using information and communications technology across the curriculum. The headteacher had worked closely with staff to develop more effective approaches to meeting pupils' needs. She had regular discussions with staff about individual pupils' attainment and progression in learning. She monitored the strategies for improvement identified by class teachers and the impact on pupils' learning experiences. The use of support staff within the school had been reviewed and improved. As a result of the improvements made, pupils' learning needs were now met more effectively.

3.2 Ensure more effective learning and teaching.

The school had made good progress in addressing this main point for action.

Across the school, teachers had improved their teaching approaches, and there were some examples of very effective teaching. Teachers gave pupils helpful feedback on how to improve their work, particularly in writing. They made effective use of questioning to ensure that pupils had understood what had been taught. Teachers did not always use questioning well to extend pupils' learning. Staff effectively motivated pupils to learn together in pairs and small groups, for example, on social subjects, technology, reading and problem solving tasks. Teachers provided pupils with a wider range of homework, including personal projects, reading for enjoyment and information, presentations and practical mathematics activities. As a result of the improvements made, pupils were achieving better standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

3.3 Develop further the school's approaches to self-evaluation to ensure a positive impact on pupils' experience.

The school had made good progress in addressing this main point for action.

Teachers now evaluated their teaching approaches, shared good practice, and encouraged pupils to evaluate aspects of their learning. Staff sought parents' and pupils' views effectively and took them into account when planning improvements. Teachers monitored pupils' rates of progress and held regular meetings to review learning targets. The headteacher visited classes to observe and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. She provided focused feedback on teaching plans, classroom visits and sampling of pupils' work. Her work had helped to ensure more consistency in planning, and learning and teaching approaches used across the school. As a result of the improvement made, pupils now had better learning experiences in school.

3.4 Review the provision of toilets for pupils at the early stages.

The school and education authority had made weak progress with this main point for action.

The education authority had made limited improvements to the existing toilets for pupils at the early stages to make them more suitable for use. The provision of toilets remained insufficient to take account of the number and needs of pupils at the early stages.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the school and education authority had made good progress in addressing three of the main points for action. They had made weak progress in addressing one main point for action. Working with the continuing support of the education authority, the headteacher and staff had the capacity to improve the school further. HM Inspectors have asked the education authority to provide, in September 2008, a report on the school's progress in improving the provision of toilets for pupils at the early stages. Parents will be informed of the progress made by the school.

June Graham
HM Inspector

18 December 2007

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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 the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: ask@sps.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.sps.org.uk.

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