

**Balnain Primary School
The Highland Council
29 January 2008**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Balnain Primary School in March 2006. 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 December 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 school and education authority had improved aspects of the school's accommodation and resources. The dining area and the temporary classroom had been refurbished. The education authority had improved the traffic safety arrangements around the school. Pupils had improved their coordination and fitness through using a climbing wall, installed by the education authority. Teachers made effective use of improved resources, including an interactive whiteboard and three new laptop computers, to enhance their teaching and promote pupils' learning.

Pupils at the early stages had won an Inverness area Young Art competition for their effective painting and craft work. In the middle and upper stages class, pupils had effectively developed their skills in enterprise education through selling a DVD of the school Christmas concert.

The headteacher, with the support of education authority staff, had improved aspects of the school's work. She had improved the arrangements for recording incidents or concerns and had ensured that early stages pupils were now appropriately supervised during the lunch period. The headteacher had worked effectively with parents and had sought their views. Parents now supported pupils' learning in a number of ways, including assisting with cycling proficiency training and helping in the school library.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in March 2006 identified three 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 attainment in mathematics.

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

School staff had used new resources well to improve pupils' mathematical skills. Across the school, most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics. A few pupils at all stages were achieving these levels earlier than would

normally be expected. Pupils had responded well to a broader range of opportunities to develop their skills in problem solving. They were now more confident in tackling mathematical problems and finding appropriate solutions. Pupils were not yet appropriately aware of the range of strategies they could use to solve problems. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, pupils were now achieving better standards in mathematics.

3.2 Improve arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's provision to ensure that all pupils' needs are met more effectively.

The school and education authority had made adequate progress in meeting this main point for action.

The headteacher now monitored aspects of the school's work more effectively, as part of a structured programme of self-evaluation. She had visited classes to monitor the quality of learning and teaching and had provided written feedback to staff on her evaluations. The headteacher now made more effective use of assessment information to monitor and predict pupils' progress in key areas. These improved arrangements were not yet sufficiently robust. The headteacher and all staff had not yet worked together effectively to evaluate the school's provision and agree improvements for learners. The arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision in key areas, including how well the school met pupils' learning needs, were not yet well focused. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, staff monitored and evaluated the school's work more effectively. More remained to be done to ensure that these evaluations were appropriately secure, and resulted in sustained improvements.

3.3 Improve the quality of the accommodation.

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

The school, with the assistance of the education authority, had ensured that secure entry arrangements in the main building were now appropriate. The roof in the P1-P3 building no longer leaked and the classroom had been redecorated. The school had improved the stock of computers and related equipment, and pupils benefited from more consistent and reliable Internet connections. No action had been taken to improve access to the P1-P3 building for persons with restricted mobility. The education authority had not yet implemented plans to improve the P1-P3 pupils' cloakroom and toilet area. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, the learning environment for pupils was better and safer.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the school and education authority had made good progress in addressing the main points for action. Pupils' attainment in mathematics had improved and the accommodation was now brighter and more secure. The school and education authority had made some progress in improving the arrangements for evaluating the quality of the school's work, but more remained to be done. Working with the continuing support of the education authority, the headteacher and staff had the capacity to improve the school further. HMIE have asked the education authority to provide, in January 2009, a report on progress in improving the quality of the school's self-evaluation processes. Parents will be informed of the progress made.

Robert D Barfoot
District Inspector

29 January 2008

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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