

**Kingussie High School  
The Highland Council  
26 June 2007**

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## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Kingussie High School in August 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 May 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 at the time of the inspection in April 2005 resigned in September 2006. A new headteacher had been in post for two weeks at the time of the follow through inspection in May 2007. The period of uncertainty before appointing the new headteacher had limited the school's capacity to improve.

The number of pupils achieving appropriate 5 14 national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics had remained steady, with the majority achieving these levels. By the end of S4, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more awards at SCQF<sup>1</sup> level 5 or better was consistently above the national average. Attainment at SCQF levels 3 and 4 had dropped significantly in 2006. Overall, the school continued to perform less well than schools with similar characteristics on almost all measures of attainment. On average, girls' attainment was significantly lower than that of boys.

School staff had improved the timetable structure. This allowed more varied teaching approaches, and caused less disruption between classes. Teachers now made effective use of recently purchased interactive whiteboards and data projectors to enhance their teaching and improve pupils' learning. Staff continued to provide pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular activities which successfully promoted pupils' wider achievement and personal development.

## **3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action**

The initial inspection report published in August 2005 identified five 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A C/CSYS at A C

6: Higher at A C

5: Intermediate 2 at A C; Standard Grade at 1 2

4: Intermediate 1 at A C; Standard Grade at 3 4

3: Access 3 cluster; Standard Grade at 5 6

### **3.1 Review the accommodation issues identified in the report, and address those which have implications for pupils' health and safety.**

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

The education authority had taken some effective action to improve aspects of the accommodation. These included replacing parts of the school roof to prevent water entry, renovating pupils' toilets, and building a new staff base in the physical education department. Access for persons with mobility difficulties had been significantly improved. The accommodation for music did not provide an attractive learning environment and had insufficient facilities for pupils to practise music. There had been no improvement to the poor condition of the games hall floor. Much remained to be done to ensure pupils' health and safety while they were in school. The school did not yet have a secure entry system. The arrangements to protect pupils from vehicles as they entered and left the school had not been improved and continued to pose a significant risk to pupils' safety.

### **3.2 Implement plans to further extend curricular provision at S3/S4 and S5/S6.**

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

School staff had improved pupils' choice of courses in S3/S4. Pupils were now able to study combinations such as three science subjects, two social subjects, or art and music together. In addition, pupils could study vocational subjects such as hospitality, media studies, and rural skills. A small group of pupils undertook a course which led to an award under the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. As a result of these improvements, fewer pupils had difficulty in choosing a group of subjects which met their interests and built on their prior attainment. Pupils could now progress more effectively from S4 into S5 and S6. Staff had widened the number of vocational courses available, which now included hospitality, travel and tourism, psychology and Spanish. There were now more opportunities for environmental work and participation in Duke of Edinburgh awards. This had improved the way the school met pupils' learning needs. The range of vocational courses in S3 and S4 was not yet extensive enough. There were not yet enough courses available at Intermediate 1 in S5 and S6. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, pupils' needs were now met more effectively.

### **3.3 Refine approaches to self evaluation, particularly the monitoring of learning and teaching, to ensure that they lead to improvement.**

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

School staff had reflected on their work, and had identified examples of best practice in learning and teaching within the school. Senior staff had improved their monitoring of pupils' levels of attainment in S2. Staff had made a useful start to using helpful self-evaluation materials recently provided by the education authority. These arrangements were at an early stage and had not yet been fully effective in ensuring that existing good

practice was implemented consistently throughout the school. Senior staff had not monitored learning and teaching sufficiently frequently. More remained to be done to ensure that the school's self-evaluation procedures were leading to improvements.

### **3.4 Ensure consistently high levels of expectations and attainment through the setting of targets for individual pupils.**

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

The school had raised its expectations for senior pupils. More S5 pupils now studied five courses, while S6 pupils studied at least four. Most departments had improved their procedures to monitor pupils' progress, but there was still too wide a variation in practice across the school. In a few departments, staff expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low and pupils were not sufficiently aware of what they needed to do to improve. There remained important weaknesses in the school's system for setting individual learning targets for pupils. There was no whole school tracking system which would allow guidance staff and senior managers to monitor the rigour with which targets were set. There was no means to track pupils' progress through the school across all their subjects. Much remained to be done to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress.

### **3.5 Improve the structure and delivery of the personal and social education (PSE) programme, ensuring that it takes full account of the need to improve approaches to equality and fairness.**

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

School staff had improved the PSE programme, following effective consultation with senior pupils. The programme was at an early stage of implementation and had yet to have significant impact. The course now took appropriate account of issues such as equality, fairness and diversity, and citizenship. Teachers linked the programme very well to whole school events, and were responsive to current world and local issues as they arose. A range of outside speakers made effective contributions to the programme. These included leading discussion on aspects of global citizenship at S1 and S2, and supporting transition to university at S6. The guidance teachers now taught the programme to pupils for whom they also had a pastoral responsibility, and this had improved its effectiveness. As a result of the improvements made, the PSE programme now took better account of the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.

## **4. Conclusion**

School staff were committed to improving the school, but uncertainty about the future leadership had limited their capacity to bring about these improvements. The school and education authority had made good progress in meeting two of the main points for action. They had made weak progress in addressing three main points for action. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and have asked the education authority to provide, in May 2008, a report on the school's progress in ensuring pupils' safety, improving self-evaluation and effectively monitoring pupils' progress. Parents will be informed of the progress made by the school.

Brian Stewart  
HM Inspector

26 June 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](http://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 Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e mail [HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://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@spsso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spsso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk).

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