

**Auldearn Primary School  
The Highland Council  
27 February 2007**

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## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Auldearn Primary School in March 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 December 2006 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. A new computer suite had been established to assist the further development of pupils' skills in the use of information and communications technology. The school had purchased helpful new reading materials and additional resources to improve pupils' skills in mathematics.

School staff, with the valuable support of education authority staff, had improved aspects of the school's curriculum to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Pupils had worked effectively with an Active Schools Co-ordinator, as part of an initiative to improve their physical fitness. They were developing their awareness of the need to care for the environment through a range of effective school-based projects. These included projects to promote recycling and the efficient use of resources, and work with local forestry staff to plant trees.

The headteacher, working together with the principal teacher, had continued to develop the work of the school effectively. She had improved the arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress. Education authority staff had provided valuable support and challenge. The headteacher and principal teacher, working with the continuing support of the education authority, had the capacity to improve the school.

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

The initial inspection report published in March 2005 identified six 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 English language and mathematics.**

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

School staff, working with education authority officers, had improved overall attainment in English language. They had made effective use of new resources to improve pupils' skills in reading. Pupils at all stages had responded well to more frequent opportunities to write at greater length and for a wider variety of purposes. Most pupils were now achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and writing. In mathematics, most pupils were now achieving these levels. School staff now provided pupils with more frequent and

systematic opportunities to tackle a wider range of mathematical problems. Most pupils had responded well and were aware of an appropriate range of problem solving strategies. Staff had not yet ensured that all pupils applied these strategies effectively. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, pupils were now achieving higher standards of attainment in English language and mathematics.

### **3.2 Improve procedures to monitor and evaluate learning, teaching and attainment.**

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

The headteacher and principal teacher now monitored the quality of learning, teaching and attainment more effectively. They scrutinised pupils' written work across a range of areas and provided useful written feedback on teachers' forward plans. The headteacher and principal teacher had visited classes regularly to observe and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. They had shared their evaluations with teachers. These classroom visits and evaluations appropriately recognised key strengths in aspects of learning and teaching within the school. They were not yet sufficiently well focused on agreeing areas for improvement and ensuring that these were implemented consistently. Overall though, as a result of the improvements made, staff monitored the quality of pupils' learning experiences more effectively.

### **3.3 Improve the use of assessment information to plan next steps in learning.**

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

Teaching staff had received a range of useful training, organised by the education authority, to assist them in using assessment information more effectively. Staff had responded well and now shared with pupils what they wanted them to learn in key areas. They offered pupils useful feedback on their written work and planned pupils' next steps more effectively. Most teachers made effective use of questioning to ensure that pupils had understood what had been taught, but this practice was not yet consistent. As a result of improvements made, pupils were clearer about what they had to learn, and staff planned pupils' progress more effectively.

### **3.4 Improve the procedures for tracking and predicting pupils' attainment at all stages and meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils.**

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

The headteacher and principal teacher had improved the arrangements for analysing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. They regularly examined the quality of pupils' written work as part of a well organised programme. Teachers now predicted pupils' expected rate of progress and recorded and shared these predictions effectively. The headteacher and principal teacher regularly discussed with teachers their predictions of pupils' progress, including those for higher attaining pupils. Most teachers used national assessment materials effectively to confirm pupils' levels of attainment in English language and mathematics. The headteacher and principal teacher recognised that these improved arrangements were not yet sufficiently robust. The arrangements did not yet ensure that the predicted rate of progress was appropriate for all pupils. For a few pupils the pace of

progress was either too fast or too slow. As a result of the overall improvements made, pupils' progress was now monitored more effectively.

### **3.5 Improve communication between senior management and staff.**

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

The headteacher, working with the principal teacher, now provided staff with a range of helpful information which was updated regularly. She made effective use of email, staff bulletins and new information boards within the staff room to ensure that all staff were aware of developments within the school. The headteacher sought the views of staff very effectively through termly written questionnaires, the results of which were collated and shared with staff. All staff now met more frequently to discuss their practice and agree future action. As a result of the improvements made, communication between senior management and staff was now significantly more effective.

### **3.6 Improve the provision for clear guidance and pathways for future development to which staff and pupils can aspire.**

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

The headteacher and principal teacher had formed an effective team. They had worked well with staff to improve the school's provision, and in doing so had developed more effective school teamwork. The headteacher had continued to involve pupils in discussing possible improvements to the school. Almost all teachers had introduced useful structured whole class discussions to allow pupils to put their views or talk about concerns. The procedures for involving staff in determining priorities for improvement were now clearer and staff were responding well to being consulted more effectively. The headteacher now had a clearer vision for the school. She and the principal teacher recognised the areas in which they needed to take further action in working with staff and pupils to implement this vision.

## **4. Conclusion**

Overall, the school and education authority had made good progress in addressing the main points for action. Communication between staff and senior management was significantly better and pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics had improved. HM Inspectors will make no further visits to the school in connection with the inspection report of March 2005.

Robert D Barfoot  
District Inspector

27 February 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).

### **If you wish to comment about follow-through inspections**

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.

### **Our complaints procedure**

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 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. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail [ask@spso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spso.org.uk](http://www.spso.org.uk).

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