

**St Thomas RC Primary School
Keith
The Moray Council
12 June 2007**

Contents

Page

1. The inspection	1
2. Continuous improvement	1
3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action	1
4. Conclusion	3
How can you contact us?	4

1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of St Thomas RC Primary School in June 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 April 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 accommodation, including laying new flooring in the school gymnasium. The headteacher had arranged for interactive whiteboards to be installed in each class area. School staff were beginning to make effective use of these to enhance their teaching. Pupils had worked with a local artist to produce attractive paintings to decorate the dining area.

The school had gained an Eco School silver award in recognition of teachers' work in improving pupils' knowledge of environmental issues. Pupils had improved their writing skills and their knowledge of life in other countries through the school's continuing international links. This included helpful visits and correspondence with a range of schools, including schools in Pakistan, Ireland and Poland. School staff and pupils won a national award in October 2006 for their work in promoting international education.

The headteacher, with the support of education authority staff, had continued to improve the school's provision. He had provided parents with an informative summary of the school's standards and quality report, and plans for improvement. Working with pupils and staff, he had arranged for the development of a helpful website to further improve communication with parents.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in June 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 attainment in English language and mathematics.

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

School staff had improved attainment in aspects of English language. Attainment in reading and writing had steadily improved and most pupils were now achieving appropriate national levels in these areas. Pupils at all stages had responded well to increased opportunities to write at greater length and for a wider variety of purposes. A few pupils at the upper stages wrote imaginative stories and poems. Staff had not yet ensured that all pupils applied their

writing skills appropriately in all areas of the curriculum. In mathematics, pupils' skills in displaying and interpreting information had improved. Most pupils were now achieving appropriate national levels in mathematics. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was better.

3.2 Ensure progression of skills in information and communications technology (ICT).

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

Working with staff, the headteacher had devised and implemented a structured programme of activities to ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills in using ICT. Pupils had responded effectively and were using computers to develop their skills in a range of areas. These included using the Internet for research, producing graphs using computers, and linking to other schools by means of e-mail. Pupils were now using graphical presentation packages to enhance talks and were writing using word processing and graphics when appropriate. Teachers were effectively involving pupils in the use of interactive whiteboards in learning and teaching. As a result of the improvements made, pupils' skills in using ICT were now developing more effectively.

3.3 Improve the school's processes for self-evaluation in order to increase the pace and challenge of learning.

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

The headteacher, with the agreement of staff, now monitored the school's provision more effectively, as part of a structured programme of self-evaluation. He monitored teachers' written plans and offered helpful comments upon the quality of planning. The headteacher and staff met regularly to discuss the school's provision and had evaluated their work using nationally agreed quality indicators. The headteacher regularly visited classes to observe and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. He sampled pupils' written work and had devised a useful system to predict pupils' progress in key areas. These improved arrangements were mostly effective, but were not yet sufficiently systematic and robust. The predictions made by staff did not consistently reflect pupils' attainment. Classroom observations did not always result in agreed action to improve learning and teaching. Overall, as a result of the improvements made, pupils' attainment and learning experiences were monitored more effectively.

3.4 Address security arrangements in the school.

The education authority had fully met this main point for action.

The education authority had installed an appropriate secure entry system at the main entrance. This prevented unauthorised entry while pupils were in the school buildings. Additional fencing had been erected at the rear of the school to ensure greater security within the playing areas. As a result of these improvements, pupils were now safer while in school.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the school and education authority had made very good progress in addressing the main points for action. School staff now tracked pupils' progress more effectively and pupils' attainment in key areas had improved. Working with the continuing support of the education authority, the headteacher and staff had the capacity to improve the school further. HM Inspectors will make no further visits to the school in connection with the inspection report of June 2005.

Robert D Barfoot
District Inspector

12 June 2007

How can you contact us?

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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. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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