



**Newmill Primary School
Keith
The Moray Council
9 December 2008**

We published a report on Newmill Primary School in February 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action. We carried out a follow-through inspection in November 2007 and published a report on this visit in January 2008. This is the report of the follow-through inspection carried out in October 2008.

This follow-through report tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action. First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents¹. Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well children are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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1. The school

Newmill Primary School serves the village of Newmill and the surrounding rural area. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2008 and took up his post in August 2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Courteous, well-behaved and motivated pupils.
- Improved levels of attainment.
- The leadership shown by the headteacher and the support provided by a hardworking and caring staff.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Children are proud of their school and their achievements. They made good progress in listening, talking, writing, reading and mathematics. Attainment is now better, and most pupils are achieving appropriate national levels. A few pupils are achieving these levels earlier than would normally be expected. Children listen well in class and are confident in talking in groups. Children at the early stages are developing a good understanding of early number work. Across the school, children enjoy working together on stimulating team challenges. Staff are successfully introducing new programmes to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in information and communications technology, religious and moral education, and health. Children are showing good skills in art and design.

4. How well do staff work with others to improve children's learning?

Staff have successfully begun to develop aspects of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. Teachers now ensure children in P1 and P2 have opportunities to learn well through active play. Staff are making effective use of outings and visitors to the school to make learning more interesting. Children now have regular opportunities to work together with children from other classes. Across the primary

stages, tasks, activities and resources are now better matched to most children's needs. Staff give clear explanations, are skilled at questioning and share the purposes of lessons with children. Support staff work closely with teachers and provide well-judged help to individuals and small groups of children.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

The school receives very good support and help from the newly formed Parent Council. Children take active roles in the Pupil Council and the school Eco group which develop their confidence and sense of responsibility. Pupils at all stages work well together and are developing well as responsible citizens. The school has undertaken a range of health promoting activities. Children are now involved in decision making about health and are taking responsibility for promoting healthy lifestyles in school.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

All staff expect high standards from pupils in their learning, behaviour and attendance. All children are responding well. They are more willing to take on responsibilities and support each other. Children from P1 to P7 take an active part in the school Eco group and the Pupil Council.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The school is working well in taking forward improvements and is making effective progress. The headteacher has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. He recognises the need to continue to improve the good start he has made in meeting his vision for the school.

Overall, the school now performs much better and shows a strong capacity to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

There is clear evidence of improvement since the February 2007 inspection. The school now performs well overall. Children's learning experiences and achievements are now at a satisfactory or better level. With continued strong leadership, commitment of staff and support from the education authority, the school is well placed to continue to improve. HM Inspectors will make no further visits in connection with the February 2007 inspection report.

HM Inspector: David Martin

9 December 2008

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