

**Newmill Primary School
Keith
Interim follow-through
The Moray Council
29 January 2008**

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1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Newmill Primary School in February 2007. The report indicated that HM Inspectors would engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress and would publish an interim report within one year of the publication of the original report.

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 carried out an interim follow-through visit to the school in November 2007. The team assessed the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and evaluated progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

2. Continuous improvement

The headteacher at the time of the initial inspection had been on sick leave since January 2007 and had not yet returned to work. From January 2007 until April 2007 there was no promoted member of staff in school. In April 2007 two experienced teachers within the school took up the posts of joint acting headteachers. One acting headteacher retired in June 2007, leaving the present acting headteacher as the only promoted member of staff. During this period, education authority staff had provided helpful support and guidance to the school. The continuing uncertainty over the leadership of the school had limited the capacity of the school to improve.

The education authority had improved aspects of the school's accommodation. The office and reception area had been restructured to create a separate room for the headteacher to conduct private meetings. School staff, parents and pupils had refurbished the central garden area. The acting headteacher, working with staff, had extensively reorganised the storage and resources within school. The school won an Eco School bronze award for the pupils' work in developing their awareness of how to look after their environment.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in February 2007 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 the structure and balance of the curriculum.

The school had taken some helpful steps to address this main point for action, but much remained to be done.

The acting headteacher had improved the range of resources available to support pupils' work in reading and writing. She had ensured that staff now allocated appropriate time to all areas of the curriculum. In too many key areas, the curriculum was not yet structured effectively to ensure that pupils developed appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.

The programme for information and communications technology had not been further developed. It did not yet ensure that pupils progressed well and acquired a wide range of skills. There was no whole school programme to ensure the effective development of pupils' skills in listening and talking. Much remained to be done to ensure that the range of activities in school allowed all pupils to make appropriate progress in key areas.

3.2 Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning to ensure pupils' needs are met.

The school had made a useful start to meeting this main point for action.

The acting headteacher had met with teaching staff and support staff to discuss and share good practice in learning and teaching. There were examples of effective teaching in which teachers explained to pupils what they wanted them to learn. Most pupils understood their learning targets and responded well to them. For a few pupils, the tasks set did not build effectively on their prior knowledge. Teachers did not always make effective use of questioning to make sure that pupils had understood what had been taught. More remained to be done to ensure that aspects of effective practice in learning and teaching were maintained consistently throughout the school.

3.3 Improve pace and challenge in order to raise attainment in English language and mathematics.

The school had made an effective start to addressing this main point for action.

Teachers had made effective use of additional new resources to improve attainment in reading and writing. More pupils across the school were now achieving appropriate national levels in these areas. In mathematics, most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels. For a few pupils at all stages the pace of progress was not always well judged. In the early stages school staff had not yet set sufficiently demanding expectations for pupils' progress in key areas. Across the school, more remained to be done to ensure that pupils' learning needs were met effectively.

3.4 Improve leadership, including monitoring pupils' attainment, and evaluating and improving the work of the school.

The school had made a promising start to meeting this main point for action.

The acting headteacher had devised an annual timetable which set out clearly how the school would evaluate its provision. She monitored teachers' plans and commented in writing upon the quality of planning. The acting headteacher now tracked pupils' progress more effectively, using helpful materials supplied by the education authority. She had recently visited classes to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and had shared her written comments with staff. These arrangements were an effective start but were not yet well established. They did not yet ensure that strengths in learning and teaching were built upon, and appropriate action taken to remedy identified weaknesses. More remained to be done to ensure that the arrangements for self-evaluation were sufficiently robust to bring about sustained improvements.

4. Conclusion

The acting headteacher, working with staff and with the helpful support of the education authority, had made a useful start to improving the school. The continuing absence of the headteacher, and the subsequent temporary leadership arrangements, had slowed the school's progress in bringing about improvements. As a result of the absence of the headteacher, it was not possible to determine the school's capacity to ensure sustained and continued improvement. HMIE will continue to engage with the school and education authority and will provide another report on progress for parents and carers within one year of the publication of this report.

Robert D Barfoot
District Inspector

29 January 2008

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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 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.

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