



**Lochinver Primary School
The Highland Council
25 August 2009**

We published a report on Lochinver Primary School in September 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in May 2009. It 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.

A copy of this report has been placed on the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk. Where applicable, you will also find descriptions of good practice in the school and analyses of questionnaire returns.

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

Lochinver Primary School serves the village of Lochinver and the surrounding area.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The teamwork of staff in bringing about improvement.
- Very supportive learning links with the local community.
- The positive atmosphere in school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

The school is making strong progress in helping children to learn and achieve. Staff are improving the curriculum and giving children more interesting and enjoyable tasks. Children are more involved in their learning and they know what they are expected to learn. They answer confidently and share their ideas with others in group activities. At P1 and P2, children need more opportunity to learn through play activities. Staff are improving the teaching of reading and children's skills are improving. Most teachers now give children more help with developing their writing skills. Children's writing skills are still developing too slowly at the early stages. At P6 and P7 children are benefiting from taking part in a greater number of practical activities in mathematics lessons. This good practice should now be extended more widely across the school.

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

The headteacher now provides more effective help to staff in identifying children who need support with their learning. Staff share their ideas and discuss their teaching more regularly. This is helping them to improve children's learning experiences. The school is maintaining strong links with the Lochinver community. These links provide a wide range of learning opportunities in the local environment. In particular, staff make good use of community resources to provide children with a full range of physical education activities. Staff from other council services and outside organisations help teachers to improve learning. Children enjoy helpful opportunities to learn together in cross-stage groups.

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

Staff are increasingly active in improving the school and are now playing a leading part in some developments. The Parent Council have consulted widely to make sure the school's aims take account of everyone's views. Teachers keep parents informed about their children's learning. Staff work closely with teachers in Ullapool High School. Together, they make sure that children continue to learn well after they transfer from P7 to S1. Children are thinking more about how they can improve their own learning. They now have regular opportunities to make important decisions about matters that affect them.

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

The headteacher, with the helpful assistance of the education authority, is giving strong support to staff in improving learning and teaching approaches. Staff now feel more positive about their work. More purposeful learning is taking place in classrooms. Teachers now set appropriately higher standards and children are achieving more success as a result. Children find working on practical activities more rewarding and can explain how working with others helps them to produce better work. They now have more positive attitudes towards their own achievement.

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

The headteacher has taken significant steps to develop her capacity to improve the school. She is now providing strong leadership to staff and has begun to model good practice in her own work. All staff have become more reflective, and their work is more focused on improving children's learning. The headteacher now monitors children's learning more effectively. She is beginning to involve the whole school community in deciding how the school needs to improve. She still

needs to track children's learning more carefully to identify where staff can further raise standards of achievement. With support from the education authority, Lochinver Primary School shows a strong capacity to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

There is clear evidence of improvement since the original inspection report. The school now performs well overall. With the clear commitment of the headteacher and staff to securing further improvement, the school is well placed to continue to improve. Attainment, leadership, self-evaluation, and the arrangements to meet learning needs are now at a satisfactory level or better. We will make no further visits in connection with the September 2007 inspection.

HM Inspector: Jacqueline Sinclair
25 August 2009

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