

**Portknockie Primary School
The Moray Council
3 October 2006**

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 Portknockie Primary School in October 2004. 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 June 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 headteacher, working with staff, had brought about a number of improvements to the school's provision. The school had achieved a Bronze Eco School award for its work in raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues. Pupils now experienced a wider range of visits and activities including a helpful residential visit to an outdoor education centre. The headteacher had devised an informative booklet for parents whose children were starting school. She had worked well with parents to improve resources within the school and to develop the school grounds.

There had been no clear improvement in standards of attainment in English language and mathematics. At the time of the inspection in June 2004, most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In June 2006, only the majority of pupils were attaining these levels.

The school had experienced significant staffing difficulties, including long term absence and the transfer of staff from the school. The resultant staffing changes had limited the capacity of the school to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. The headteacher had been successful in improving some long standing weaknesses in the school's provision, but much remained to be done. She will require the continued support of the education authority to ensure that she has the capacity to improve the school further.

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in October 2004 identified five 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 curriculum.

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

The headteacher and staff had improved aspects of programmes in a range of curricular areas. These included improvements to the programme for Religious and Moral Education (RME). School staff now used new resources for RME effectively and a new policy gave helpful guidance to staff on what pupils were expected to learn. Staff had improved the programme

in mathematics to give pupils more opportunities to develop skills in mental calculation and to solve problems. Pupils were using information and communications technology (ICT) for a wider range of purposes, including practising number skills and using the Internet for research. The school had not yet devised a structured programme in ICT to ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills. The programme in art and design had been recently improved but these improvements had not yet had time to have significant impact. As a result of the improvements made to the curriculum, pupils now had more opportunities to develop a wider range of knowledge, understanding and skills.

3.2 Improve aspects of teaching.

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

Teachers now shared the purposes of lessons more effectively with pupils and gave them more feedback on what they wanted them to learn. Homework tasks had improved and were now matched more appropriately to pupils' needs. Teachers had used new resources well to improve the range and challenge of tasks set for pupils in English language and mathematics. The school had undergone a period of disruption to staffing which had resulted in a number of short term changes in teaching staff. This had hindered the school's efforts to ensure greater consistency in pupils' learning experiences. For a few pupils the pace of learning had been too slow. While some useful progress had been made there was still a need for greater consistency in pupils' learning experiences.

3.3 Ensure that pupils' needs are met.

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

The school had improved the arrangements to ensure that pupils' physical, social and emotional needs were met. The headteacher, working with staff, had recently devised and put in place a helpful policy on improving behaviour and discipline. This policy included useful advice for staff to ensure that procedures in areas such as child protection and anti-bullying were consistently implemented. A few pupils benefited from attending the school's newly introduced breakfast club. School staff had assisted a small group of pupils to improve their confidence and self-esteem through working in the community with the school's Community Task Force. The headteacher had increased the frequency of consultation between teachers and support for learning staff. They now met regularly to plan the work of pupils who required additional help, and to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. As a result of the improvements made, pupils' needs were now met more effectively.

3.4 Establish appropriate arrangements for monitoring and self-evaluation.

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

The headteacher now monitored teachers' plans more effectively and commented in writing upon the quality of planning. She had successfully sought pupils' views on the work of the school through the Pupil Council. Teaching staff were now more involved in evaluating their work and the quality of the school's provision. The headteacher had visited classes to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and had shared her written comments with

teaching staff. These visits were not yet sufficiently systematic and rigorous and did not result in agreed action points which were then evaluated. The headteacher had begun to track pupils' attainment more effectively, but the progress of most pupils was not yet sufficiently well monitored. There had been some improvements in the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. These arrangements were not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure that all pupils were making appropriate progress.

3.5 Attend to the accommodation and resource issues contained in the report.

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

The school's security arrangements had been improved. There was now an effective secure entry system and visitors were required to sign in and wear visitors' badges. The school had not yet fitted emergency lights at the fire exits. The headteacher, in consultation with staff, had improved learning resources in a number of curricular areas, including English language and mathematics. The school had purchased a range of new books which had extended the variety of modern fiction available to pupils. The headteacher had put in place a range of helpful resources to assist pupils with their work in problem solving in mathematics. As a result of the improvements made, pupils were safer while in school and were now using a broader range of newer resources.

4. Conclusion

The school and education authority had made good progress in meeting three of the main points for action. They had made adequate progress in addressing two points for action. HMI have asked the education authority to provide, in October 2007, a report on the school's progress in improving aspects of teaching and the arrangements for monitoring and self evaluation. Parents will be informed of the progress made by the school.

Robert D Barfoot HMI
District Inspector

3 October 2006

How can you contact us?

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