
HM Inspectors of Schools

Follow-up to the Inspection of

Portessie Primary School

The Moray Council

Main points for action

1. *National Tests should be used whenever a teacher believes that a pupil has achieved the appropriate level.*

The school had fully met this recommendation.

The school had adjusted its approach to the timing of National Tests. They were now implemented consistently and effectively in accordance with national guidance. The new headteacher monitored the results of National Tests to ensure that pupils attained standards in line with national levels.

2. *The school should improve its teaching programmes for writing in English language and for number and problem solving in mathematics.*

The school had made good progress in meeting this recommendation.

Staff had improved the programme for English language. They had also acquired enhanced resources for language. The new headteacher was developing the programmes further, to ensure that they gave full emphasis to writing. Pupils now had more opportunities to develop their skills in writing poetry and in imaginative writing. Attainment in writing at the middle stages had improved and was now good.

The mathematics programme had been improved by giving greater emphasis to developing mental skills in using numbers. The school had bought additional resources, enabling staff to introduce further practical mathematical experiences and improve pupils' ability in problem solving.

3. *Teachers should ensure that the pace and challenge of work is appropriate for all pupils, particularly at the middle stages.*

The school had made good progress in meeting this recommendation.

Staff had worked together to identify how the pace and challenge of lessons could better meet pupils' needs. The school now had clear expectations of pace in lessons and rigour in approaches to work, including forward planning.

4. *The school should develop and implement a policy to provide sufficient homework, across the curriculum, which is appropriately challenging for all pupils.*

The school had met this recommendation fully.

Teachers had carried out an audit of pupils' views on homework and had involved parents in drawing up a new homework policy. All pupils in middle and upper stages now had a homework diary. Teachers issued an appropriate amount of homework regularly. The variety of tasks had improved and work was now suitably challenging.

5. *The school should build on its programme for positive behaviour to raise expectations of pupils' attainment.*

The school had made good progress in meeting this recommendation.

The school had revised its aims to include specific reference to raising pupils' attainment. Following staff development, teachers were now much more aware of targets to be achieved and conscious of the need to strive to achieve them. They used praise effectively to encourage success and inspire pupils, who worked conscientiously on their tasks and showed good motivation.

6. *The school should extend its quality assurance systems by using performance indicators more effectively and by implementing its proposed scheme of monitoring classroom practice and sharing examples of good practice.*

Good progress had been made on this recommendation.

The previous headteacher had developed a range of effective strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. She reviewed and discussed teachers' plans, offering advice as appropriate. She evaluated aspects of teaching, learning and attainment through regular visits to classes and by working with groups of pupils. Staff had used national performance indicators to evaluate, for example, key features of learning and teaching in mathematics. The new headteacher had begun to use the quality assurance systems set up by her predecessor.

No further visits will be made to the school by HM Inspectors of Schools in connection with the inspection report of January 1998.