

**Inverlochy Primary School
Fort William
The Highland Council
14 June 2005**

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1. Background

Inverloch Primary School was inspected in March 2005 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent, teacher and friends' association (PTFA), and a group of parents.

The inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of the school meals provision.

The school serves the village of Inverloch in Fort William and the surrounding area which includes the communities of Claggan, Glen Nevis, Torlundy and An Aird. At the time of the inspection the roll was 178, including 26 children in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

The nursery class was inspected at the same time and is the subject of a separate report.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Very well behaved, enthusiastic and courteous pupils.
- The quality of much of the teaching and the high expectations of the staff.
- Attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher.
- The commitment and teamwork of all the staff.
- Very supportive parents who helped the school in a number of ways.

3. What are the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Almost all parents and carers, pupils and staff were very positive about the school. Parents and carers believed that the school was well led and that communications with the school were very good. They felt welcome in the school and were aware that any concerns they had would be dealt with satisfactorily. They believed that their children enjoyed being in the school and were treated fairly. Staff felt that they operated very well together as a team and that they were well supported by the headteacher. They believed they showed good levels of care for their pupils and expected them to achieve well. Pupils enjoyed being in school and were enthusiastic about their work. They felt safe and knew what to do if they were upset. They also believed that teachers helped them when they were having difficulties.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was very good and was well designed to ensure pupils made appropriate progress. The headteacher and staff had improved a range of teaching programmes which ensured that the curriculum had sufficient breadth. Staff used time effectively to place additional emphasis on key aspects of the curriculum which had been identified as areas for improvement in the school development plan. This good use of teaching time ensured that pupils made particularly good progress in reading. A few staff also linked different areas of the curriculum very well. For example, linking writing in English language to their historical studies. At the middle and upper stages pupils' knowledge and understanding in several aspects of the curriculum were enhanced through visits to places of interest and by input from visitors. The overall quality of teaching was very good. Teachers interacted with pupils very effectively to extend their knowledge and develop their skills. Teachers were very well prepared for their teaching, and reviewed work done to ensure that pupils understood what had been taught. They used questioning skilfully to extend pupils' learning. They also used praise effectively to motivate pupils to do well. Homework was set regularly and, in the best practice, was sufficiently varied to encourage pupils to learn.

Almost all pupils were enthusiastic in class and keen to learn. They were making very good progress and both boys and girls were achieving well. Pupils were actively involved in their learning and throughout the school worked very well in pairs or in groups to complete tasks. Pupils at the middle and upper stages had a good knowledge of aspects of science and responded very enthusiastically to a range of experiments. They were developing a good knowledge and understanding of plant growth and electricity. Across the school pupils used information and communications technology very effectively for a range of purposes including reinforcing aspects of mathematics, word processing and researching through the Internet.

Pupils achieved success in several other areas. With support, pupils in all classes organised a range of enterprise activities which helped develop their organisational skills and their understanding in this area of the curriculum. Pupils at P7 raised considerable funds from their organisation of 'Santa's Grotto'. The strong emphasis on health promotion had helped pupils through their participation in the well-planned healthy eating programme, and through increased opportunities for physical exercise. Many pupils achieved very well in a range of extra-curricular sporting competitions such as football, netball and shinty. Pupils at P6 visited the Scottish Parliament as a result of winning a writing competition. Many also achieved success in a local music festival in solo verse, Bible reading and Bible dramatisations.

English language

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was very good. In recent years there had been noticeable improvements in the standards of attainment in reading and writing in all classes. Almost all pupils were attaining national levels of attainment in reading and writing and many were exceeding these. Able children and those with special educational needs were making appropriate progress. Almost all pupils listened attentively to teachers and participated enthusiastically in small group discussions. Throughout the school they responded well to teachers' questions and recalled key facts confidently. Older pupils conveyed information and expressed their views very clearly. At all stages almost all read regularly for enjoyment and showed a good understanding of the key features of books that they had read. Pupils had very good opportunities to write at length, in a range of styles and for a variety of purposes. They produced high quality pieces of writing in the context of topic work. Standards of presentation in English language jotters were very good.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. In recent years there had been a significant rise in attainment. Almost all pupils were meeting national expectations of attainment in most aspects of mathematics. Staff successfully built upon the very good progress made by pupils at the early stages and, as a result, many pupils throughout the school were exceeding national expectations. Able pupils and those with special educational needs were making appropriate progress in their coursework. In information handling pupils had a good understanding of graphs and how to interpret them. Some used computers to draw them, but older pupils had not yet used databases and spreadsheets. Pupils had benefited from the school's increased focus on interactive mental mathematics and were accurate in their number work. They also had a good understanding of a range of shapes and their properties. Pupils were regularly involved in problem-solving and enquiry and most were aware of the range of strategies they could use. They now required more practice in deciding which strategies to use to tackle problems from real life situations.

5. How well are pupils supported?

Staff knew their pupils well and were sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils and for identifying and responding to pupils' concerns were very good. All staff were trained in child protection issues and

knew what action to take should it prove necessary. The school had taken positive action to avoid incidents of bullying but, when incidents did take place, responded quickly and effectively. Very good and effective procedures had been put in place to promote positive behaviour. The school also made appropriate provision for drugs education and for improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of personal relationships. It gave very good attention to promoting healthy eating.

Class teachers met the needs of pupils very effectively. Teachers tracked pupils' attainment, set appropriate targets for improvement and provided suitably challenging tasks to achieve the potential of all pupils. Staff used effective approaches to identify any difficulties which pupils had in their learning. Class teachers and support staff worked well together to provide individualised and group support on a daily basis. In consultation with class teachers, the visiting support for learning teacher planned appropriate work to help pupils who were experiencing difficulties in their classwork. Some pupils had individualised educational programmes which helped to ensure that they made good progress in their learning and development. Parents were appropriately involved in the consultation process and in setting individual learning targets for their children. The school worked closely with a range of agencies to ensure that the needs of individual pupils were effectively addressed.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The overall quality of the accommodation was good. Staff used the accommodation very well and made best use of available space. They displayed pupils' work effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements and encourage them to continue to do well. The extensive play area was well used and had been improved in recent years with the addition of picnic tables and a memorial garden. The perimeter fence was in a poor state of repair and as a consequence pupils had access to a railway line and nearby river. External paintwork and windows were in poor condition. Other issues of maintenance were brought to the attention of the education authority.
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	The ethos within the school was very good. Pupils were very polite to visitors and brought credit to themselves and their school. Relationships amongst pupils and between teachers and pupils were very good. Almost all pupils behaved very well both in classes and in the play area. The pupil council which met regularly was very successful and had been involved in making a number of improvements to the school. It had been very successful in introducing healthy choices to the school tuckshop. Pupils appreciated
Aspect	Comment

<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>the use of ‘Golden Time’ which encouraged them to do well. The use of ‘Circle Time’ also helped pupils in their own personal and social development. Staff had high expectations of pupils’ attainment and behaviour and these expectations were met by pupils. Staff included all pupils very effectively in the life of the school. New pupils were well integrated into the school and classroom activities and discussions raised issues of tolerance and respect for others. Cultural differences were discussed in classes but the school should do more to discuss matters related to promoting racial equality. The school used weekly assemblies well to celebrate pupils’ achievements. Religious observance took place regularly and was to be increased in frequency in line with national guidance.</p>
<p>Partnership with parents and the community</p>	<p>The partnerships between the school, the parents and the wider community were very good. The school had developed very good communications with parents. Teachers held two meetings each year to discuss pupils’ progress and these were very well attended. Parents were also given a formal opportunity once per month to visit the school in addition to being welcome to visit the school at any time. The school organised a very good induction programme for parents of children about to enter P1. Formal written reports to parents on their children’s progress were very informative and gave parents useful advice on how they could help their children improve further. Parents were also consulted on a range of issues in health education. Parent helpers provided valuable help for pupils and staff through, for example, organising a book fair and helping with school trips. The School Board met regularly and had been involved in a survey on bullying and in discussing homework diaries. The PTFA provided very good support to the school through fund raising to provide additional resources. The school had good links with the local secondary school and its associated primary schools. This linkage had helped improve the induction of pupils into S1 and the recording of the assessment of pupils’ progress in key areas. The school was also very well supported by external agencies and by the local Area Education Manager and her staff.</p>

7. Improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Inverloch Primary School provided a very high quality of education for its pupils. Pupils responded very positively to the very good teaching and were enthusiastic in their work. Standards of attainment in English language and mathematics were very good, and pupils presented their work very well. Pupils also achieved well in other areas of the curriculum and in a range of extra-curricular activities. Overall the headteacher, staff, parents and pupils worked very well together to ensure that the school was successful.

The overall quality of leadership and management in the school was very good. The headteacher was a very effective leader who had had a positive impact on the school. With very effective support from a committed and dedicated staff, she had improved policies and procedures which had raised pupils' attainment significantly. She had clearly earned the respect of parents, pupils and staff and had successfully raised overall expectations within the school. She had improved the curriculum, set targets for individual pupils and discussed pupils' progress with staff on a regular basis in order to meet the needs of pupils. The procedures for self-evaluation and quality assurance were very good. The headteacher had a very good knowledge of the pupils and their needs. She reviewed and discussed teachers' forward plans in order to meet these needs effectively. She visited classes regularly and monitored teaching and learning to improve provision in classes overall. She very successfully built upon the individual strengths of staff and was helped in this by the staff themselves who benefited from one another's experience. Overall, the system of monitoring and self-evaluation had helped raise levels of attainment. The priorities identified in the school development plan had been effectively implemented and had improved pupils' abilities in, for example, mental mathematics and reading. The school had clearly shown that it had the capacity to continue to improve.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- ensure all pupils are knowledgeable about matters of racial equality; and
- attend to aspects of health and safety as a matter of priority and improve aspects of maintenance.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents and carers. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents and carers.

Dr Roddy Duncan
HM Inspector

14 June 2005

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Structure of the curriculum
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Pastoral care
- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Leadership
- Self-evaluation

We judged the following to be good

- Accommodation and facilities
- Equality and fairness

We judged the following to be fair

- No aspects were found to be in this category

We judged the following to be unsatisfactory

- No aspects were found to be in this category

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What pleased parents and carers most	What parents and carers would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all parents and carers were very positive about the school. • Their children enjoyed being in the school and were treated fairly. • The school was well led and had a good reputation in the local community. • Staff made them feel welcome, and communicated very well with them on a range of issues. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their children and acted on any areas of concern they raised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About a quarter of parents did not have a clear idea of the school's priorities for improvement.
What pleased pupils most	What pupils would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all pupils were very positive about the school. • They enjoyed being in school, and teachers explained things clearly to them. • Teachers helped them when they were having difficulties, and told them how they were getting on with their work. • They felt they were treated fairly, were helped to keep safe and healthy and felt safe and well looked after. • They knew what to do if they were upset and teachers listened to them. • They got on well with other pupils and had a say in deciding how to make the school better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no areas of concern raised by pupils.

What pleased staff most	What staff would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almost all staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no areas of concern raised by staff.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

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