

**Cauldeen Primary School
Inverness
The Highland Council
18 January 2005**

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1. Background

Cauldeen Primary School was inspected in October 2004 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 and the environment for learning. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed staff and pupils. They assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation. They 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. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA), and the pupil council.

The school serves an area in the City of Inverness. At the time of the inspection the roll was 258, including 36 in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well above the national average. Pupils' attendance was well above the national average. The school made provision for pupils with significant additional support needs, both from its own catchment area and other localities. In the last three years the proportion of pupils with additional support needs and those requiring individualised educational programmes had increased significantly. Records of Needs had been opened for 13 pupils.

An integrated inspection of pre-school provision was carried out at the same time by HMIE and the Care Commission and is the subject of a separate report, which will be published at the same time or shortly after the primary report.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Pastoral care linked to very good arrangements to support pupils with additional support needs.
- Relationships with parents and the wider community.
- A very broad range of achievement by pupils in enterprise and extra-curricular activities.
- The very good behaviour, courtesy and enthusiasm of the pupils and the relationships between them and their teachers.
- The commitment of all staff to ensuring that all pupils were included in the work of the school.
- Hard-working, dedicated senior managers and staff.

3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff

Parents and carers, and pupils were very positive about the school. They felt that it was very well led and that the senior management team and their staff were supportive and approachable. Many commented favourably about the school's work in including pupils with additional support needs. Parents and carers appreciated the school's quick responses to their concerns. A number wished further information on how to support their children's learning. Many commented on the deficiencies in the accommodation. Pupils thought the school was very good but some expressed concerns about bullying. However, in discussion with pupils during the inspection no significant cause for concern in relation to these responses was identified. Staff were very positive about the school, in particular its approaches to promoting equality and inclusion.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school provided a broad and well-balanced curriculum. This included very good use of visitors, members of the community and involvement in cooperative projects with other schools. A range of enterprise activities across the school effectively extended pupils' experiences from P2 onwards. Staff made good use of other curriculum areas to provide contexts for work in English language and mathematics. The provision for music, drama and art and design enabled pupils to develop good skills. Staff had effectively implemented revised approaches to health education, science, religious and moral education, and to raising pupils' skills in information and communications technology (ICT). Pupils with additional support needs were fully included in all aspects of the school's work. Most lessons were well-presented and teachers' explanations were clear. The contexts provided mostly reflected pupils' interests and future learning needs. Teachers paid appropriate attention to mental calculation from the early stages to ensure that pupils used numbers with confidence. Most, but not all teachers, shared the purposes of lessons and what was to be learned with pupils. Most teachers commented positively on pupils' written work but did not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how they could improve. Questioning was good but on occasion lacked depth and some teachers did not always build effectively on pupils' answers.

Pupils had good opportunities to think independently and when asked, worked well together. In P6/P7 pupils learned well from each other, for example through working in groups to consider aspects of the Ten Commandments. Almost all were keen and enthusiastic and remained on task, especially in the upper stages. However, they required further encouragement to develop more mature attitudes and good work habits in the early stages. In the early and middle stages the pace of learning was sometimes too slow and at these stages teachers did not always ensure that all pupils were fully challenged. In the upper stages pupils worked at a brisk pace and their needs were mostly well met.

Senior pupils actively supported those in P1 or who had newly joined the school. Many pupils went out of their way to befriend and help those with additional support needs in class and in the playground. Pupils took part in a good range of extra-curricular

activities including sports and dance classes. At all stages pupils were enthusiastic about their highly successful enterprise activities. They readily grasped the opportunities provided to display and present the outcomes of their projects at conferences and special events outwith the school. The pupil council was active in suggesting improvements and had wisely suggested the purchase of outdoor seating. Attractive displays, informative and well-designed newsletters and the school's website extensively celebrated pupils' achievements. Pupils had won national awards for their enterprise projects and for the CD-ROMs and related websites they had produced. As part of their research they had visited the Imperial War Museum and interviewed World War II veterans. They had joined with other schools to produce an illustrated CD on the key attractions of eastern Loch Ness-side.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. Attainment in English language had fluctuated in recent years. Most pupils were attaining appropriate standards in listening and talking. The quality of discussion and free engagement in groups was very good. In reading, while there was slow progress in the early stages, P6 and P7 achieved very good standards. In writing, at the early and middle stages, handwriting and presentation was poor although the content of pupils' pieces was good. By the upper stages, pupils' handwriting was good. Many wrote interesting and informative pieces on a range of topics with good use of expressive language. Those in P6 and P7 had a very good grasp of English grammar. Pupils with additional support needs were making very good progress and almost all were achieving their individual targets. Pupils requiring Alternative and Augmentative means of Communication (AAC) were making good progress in their learning in relevant aspects of English language.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good and had improved in recent years through setting at the upper stages. From P2 to P6 most pupils had attained national levels of attainment. In P7 some were exceeding the national attainment levels for their stage. Most pupils coped well with classwork but at the early and middle stages some required greater challenge to make appropriate progress. At all stages pupils had good skills in mental calculations. At the upper stages pupils had a sound knowledge of the properties of two and three dimensional shapes. Most pupils were able to draw and interpret graphs and could use spreadsheets effectively to organise information. In the upper stages almost all had a good understanding of the links between fractions, decimals and percentages. In problem-solving and enquiry most pupils tackled problems systematically but a few were unsure of the strategy to select to solve mathematical problems. Pupils with additional support needs were making very good progress and almost all were achieving their individual targets. Pupils requiring AAC were making good progress in their learning in relevant aspects of mathematics.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The school had very effective arrangements for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. All staff, including support staff, had a strong commitment to ensuring pupils' wellbeing. They knew pupils and their families well and were sensitive and responsive to their individual circumstances. There were appropriate procedures in place to deal with child protection, bullying and any incidents involving health and safety were dealt with appropriately. The range of extra-curricular and enterprise activities contributed significantly to pupils' personal and social development. Staff effectively promoted healthy lifestyles and pupils understood the importance of diet and exercise. Pupils had a clear understanding of what to do if they had concerns about matters such as their personal safety.

Class teachers worked closely with support for learning teachers and support assistants to address the varying needs of a range of pupils. Pupils who were experiencing difficulties in learning were well supported as individuals or in small groups. These pupils made good progress. However, some higher attaining pupils in the early and middle stages required further challenge to enable them to progress more quickly. Not all pupils were clear about what strategies, such as setting personal targets, they could use to help them improve their work and overcome difficulties. There were effective arrangements for the transfer of children from nursery to P1 and from P7 to secondary school.

Pupils with a wide range of additional support needs were full members of classes. A willing and hard-working team of class teachers and knowledgeable support staff ensured effective partnership working with support agency personnel. Each made a significant contribution to ensuring that almost all pupils with significant additional support needs made steady and good progress in their learning. The School Liaison Group met every six weeks and ensured good inter-agency work which focused on the emerging needs of individual pupils. Good individualised educational programmes had been devised for pupils who required short- and long-term learning targets. These were extensively shared with parents. Very good attention was given to developing pupils' independence skills, developing their personal care and functional movement skills and to raising their confidence and self-esteem. Parents were fully involved in an annual review of their children's progress and in considering their next steps in learning. Good procedures were in place to support the transition of pupils from P7 to S1 when special arrangements were needed. Some aspects of legislation relating to the management of Records of Needs required to be reviewed by the education authority. Pupils with physical disabilities experienced a shorter school week than other pupils due to transport arrangements. Their curriculum time in classes was further eroded due to personal care requirements and support staff break entitlements. The education authority, working with the school, should seek to increase pupils' time in their classes.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of the accommodation and facilities was fair. The school was housed in three linked buildings and set in extensive grounds. Good sized classrooms and several general purpose rooms were complemented by a spacious hall. These rooms gave pupils good opportunities to work and learn through a variety of tasks and working arrangements. There was good provision of modern ICT equipment, including a computer suite, but many fiction and reference books were worn and out of date. The tables and chairs in upper stages classrooms were too small. A number of classrooms were either too hot or too cold and some had very serious water penetration. Some windows had been replaced and the education authority planned to continue upgrading. However, there were broken windows and ventilators which required urgent repair. Aspects of security required immediate review and many fire doors lacked smoke retarding strips. Arrangements to evacuate pupils with physical disabilities from the middle and upper stages classrooms and the infant block required to be re-assessed. A number of other health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the school. The provision of toilets, changing facilities and storage space for the aids and appliances required by pupils with physical disabilities was very limited. The education authority had plans to improve access for those with a physical disability.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>All members of the school community, given a strong lead by the headteacher, were fully committed to including everyone in the work of the school. Diversity was widely celebrated and the respect for difference effectively promoted. The school's policy on equal opportunities and anti-racism was very effectively implemented. There were very good arrangements to consult with and involve pupils in improving the school. Senior management played a significant role in fostering and maintaining happy and productive relationships. Pupil and staff morale was high. Staff and pupils had high expectations for behaviour, courtesy and good discipline. These expectations required to be extended to include all aspects of learning in the middle and early stages. Pupils showed great concern and understanding for each other and for those pupils with additional support needs. Staff provided extensive opportunities for pupils to achieve outwith the formal curriculum and their successes were well recognised and celebrated.</p>

<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>Transport arrangements prevented pupils with physical disabilities being able to participate in breakfast club and after-school activities. There were regular opportunities for pupils to take part in religious observance.</p>
<p>Partnership with parents and the community</p>	<p>The school had very strong links with parents, the local community and the School Board. The School Board was regularly consulted on aspects of the school's work. The school and the Children's Services Worker had established very good and productive contacts with a wide range of other agencies which ensure effective support for pupils and their families. Parents regularly helped with a range of activities to support the school. A regular well-designed and informative newsletter and an easily accessed website kept parents and carers up-to-date with developments in the school. However, the school needed to involve parents further in raising their children's attainment. Further advice on homework and how parents could help their children's learning was required. Written reports to parents and carers did not always provide easily understood information on children's progress and attainment or their personal and social development.</p>

7. Improving the school

Cauldeen Primary School provided a caring and supportive learning environment to which pupils responded with respect and responsibility. There was a strong sense of mutual respect between pupils and staff. The school very successfully ensured that all pupils were fully included in its work. Pupils achieved widely outwith the formal curriculum and had gained a number of prestigious national awards. The school was well placed to extend its inclusive philosophy and to challenge pupils to attain more in English language and mathematics.

The headteacher provided very effective leadership. He was very committed to the school and its community and had served both for many years. He had been very successful in developing an inclusive school where diversity was celebrated and respect for difference promoted. The depute head ably managed a willing and hard-working team of class teachers and knowledgeable support staff and ensured effective partnership working with support agency personnel. The very effective partnership between the headteacher and his deputy made a significant contribution to ensuring that almost all pupils with significant additional support needs made good steady progress in their learning. Together they had successfully diversified the work of the school in

order to provide pupils with opportunities to achieve recognition and praise. Both were very well respected by staff, pupils and parents.

Overall arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school were good and showed clear signs of becoming more rigorous. Parents and pupils were regularly consulted on how to improve the school's provision. Senior management visited classes to monitor learning and teaching and sample pupils' work. They reviewed and commented on teachers' plans. All staff had had their work reviewed. The system for tracking and predicting pupils' progress was effective. Further analysis of the information gathered was needed to ensure challenge for all pupils and to improve the pace of learning in some classes. In collaboration with staff, senior management had identified appropriate priorities including improving reading and writing and were systematically implementing these. Senior management should now provide staff with more detailed feedback on their observations in order to effect improvement and ensure consistency across the school. The school was well placed to continue to improve.

The school and education authority should take action to improve the accommodation and aspects of learning and teaching. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- improve pace and challenge in the early and middle stages to raise attainment in English language and mathematics;
- further involve parents in their children's learning; and
- attend to the health, safety and accommodation issues identified in this report.

What happens next?

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 parents and carers will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Duncan MacQuarrie
HM Inspector

18 January 2005

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

- Structure of the curriculum
- Pastoral care
- Climate and relationships
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Leadership

We judged the following to be good

- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Self-evaluation

We judged the following to be fair

- Accommodation and facilities

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"> • The concern staff showed for the care and welfare of their children. • The inclusion of pupils with additional support needs. • The leadership of the senior management team. • The support given to pupils with additional support needs and their parents and carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer information about their children's progress. • Better information and clearer guidance on how they could support their children's learning. • Toilet and changing facilities for pupils with physical disabilities.
What pleased pupils most	What pupils would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of pupils with additional support needs. • Opportunities to use modern technology. • They got on well with other pupils and had a say in deciding how to improve the school. • Teachers listened to what they had to say and gave them responsibilities. • The challenging targets set by some teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor coverings, leaky and draughty windows. • More opportunities to practice sports.

What pleased staff most	What staff would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of pupils with additional support needs. • The supportive and approachable leadership style of the senior management team. • The support given to pupils with additional support needs and to their parents and carers. • The pupils' achievements in a range of enterprises and initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities for pupils with additional support needs. • Classroom furnishings and décor. • Floor coverings, leaky and draughty windows. • Ventilation in the infant block. • Aspects of security.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on the Care Commission website www.carecommission.com and the HMIE website www.hime.gov.uk.

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Our complaints procedure

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, T1 Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 0131 244 8468 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk and www.carecommission.com.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk

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