

**Kinloss Primary School  
The Moray Council  
12 June 2007**

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## 1. Background

Kinloss Primary School was inspected in February 2007 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 innovation, and its 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 support group and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves the village of Kinloss and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 246, including three pupils in the autistic base and 20 children in the nursery class. The headteacher had been in post for four months. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

The school included a base for children with additional support needs arising from autistic spectrum disorder. Day-to-day management of the base was the responsibility of the acting principal teacher, under overall management of the headteacher. The base catered for pupils from across Moray. These pupils received specialist support in the base and, where appropriate, they joined their peers in mainstream classes. Placement in the base was by education authority referral.

The work of the nursery class was not included in this inspection.

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The very effective start by the headteacher in taking the school forward.
- Rich range of opportunities for pupils to be responsible citizens.
- Care and commitment of all staff to pupils' well-being.

## 3. What are the views of parents, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

Almost all parents indicated that their children enjoyed being at school. Most of them thought the school was well led. A quarter of parents would have liked more information about their children's strengths, weaknesses and progress. A third of parents wanted to have a clearer idea about the standard of work the staff expected from the pupils. Pupils were very pleased with their role in deciding how to make the school better. Almost all thought the school helped them to keep safe and healthy and teachers expected them to work hard. Almost half the pupils who responded thought that staff in the school were not good at dealing with bullying. A quarter of pupils thought that they were not treated fairly in the school. Teachers were positive about almost all aspects of the school. A few wanted better communication amongst staff. Support staff thought the school was well led and pupil success was celebrated regularly. Only half thought there was mutual respect between support staff and pupils.

#### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

##### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

The curriculum was adequate. It was suitably broad and balanced and in most areas of work, pupils' knowledge and skills were developed systematically. A few areas, like science, and personal and social development were less structured. Visiting teachers of art and design, home economics, music, and physical education effectively enhanced pupils' learning. Increased progress was needed towards providing all pupils with the recommended time in physical education. In most classes, the information and communications technology (ICT) programme was having a positive impact on pupils' skills. Too many pupils did not apply these skills more widely across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics. Staff did not provide enough planned experiences for pupils to develop their skills in enterprise and citizenship. The overall quality of teaching was good. Interactions between teachers and pupils were positive. Almost all teachers shared the purpose of lessons well, explained ideas clearly and provided clear instructions. Teachers did not involve pupils enough in discussions about their individual strengths and development needs. Most teachers encouraged pupils to contribute to lessons and valued their contributions to class discussions. Teachers made good use of praise to motivate pupils. They did not always use questioning effectively to extend and support pupils' learning. Homework was used effectively to support the work in class but was not varied enough.

Staff had established a positive climate for learning in all classes. On almost all occasions, pupils were well motivated and hardworking. Too many pupils spent too long listening to the teacher or undertaking repetitive written tasks, for example in mathematics lessons. The pace of progress in pupils' learning was often too slow. In the early stages, pupils engaged enthusiastically in activities which were, for the most part, interesting and were developing a broad range of skills. They did not benefit from varied and appropriate opportunities to learn through play. In a few classes across the school, pupils worked well together in groups and in pairs. Teachers did not provide enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in group working. Pupils did not consistently take enough responsibility for their learning or have sufficient opportunities to develop skills to learn independently.

The school took good steps to promote pupils' wider achievements. Pupils were appropriately confident. Most had learned to be courteous and respectful towards staff and one another. Those at P4 to P7 served responsibly on the pupil council. Together with house captains, they were responsible for promoting the new school rules. At P7, all pupils successfully acted as buddies to pupils at P1. One group of pupils enthusiastically managed the school's art club, whilst another group had learned the skills necessary to produce a regular pupil newsletter. Other pupils worked conscientiously as junior road safety officers. Helped by parents, pupils in the gardening club had developed a range of skills and created a very attractive school garden. Pupils' care for the environment was particularly notable. The Eco School committee was very active. Pupils had won a silver eco award for their activities in energy conservation, recycling and other ventures. Pupils competed successfully against other schools in a range of sports, including football, netball and cross-country.

### **English language**

The overall quality of attainment in English language was adequate. Attainment in reading and writing was good but had declined over the last three years. Most pupils attained appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and writing, and a few had exceeded these levels. The school did not have a reliable approach to assessing pupils' listening and talking skills. Pupils who experienced difficulties in reading and writing were making appropriate progress, especially those for whom English was an additional language. Pupils talked confidently and responded well to teachers' questions. A significant minority did not listen well to information and instructions. At the early stages, most pupils were developing a good awareness and understanding of print and by P3 were reading with confidence. At the middle and upper stages, pupils lacked confidence in collating and selecting information from more than one source. Most understood the meaning and main messages contained in a range of texts and enjoyed reading for pleasure. Most pupils wrote for a variety of purposes. Too many did not write at sufficient length or with appropriate attention to detail. Across the school, standards of presentation of work were good.

### **Mathematics**

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was adequate. In the past three years overall standards of attainment had declined. Almost all pupils at the early stages, most at the middle stages and the majority at the upper stages were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. Pupils who had not yet achieved these levels were making adequate progress in their learning. A few pupils attained these levels earlier than would normally be expected. Pupils' progress in coursework was too slow. Pupils in P1 and P2 had made a good start to developing early mathematical skills. Across the school, most pupils were developing good information handling skills. At the upper stages, pupils were able to interpret and explain a range of graphs well. In P6 and P7, almost all pupils coped well with written calculations in number, money and measurement, shape position and movement. At P3 to P7, most pupils performed mental calculations well but showed weaknesses with fractions. They had developed good skills in written calculations but did not always work accurately. Pupils in the early stages were not confident using money in a practical situation. Across the school, pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems and use of a range of strategies to reach solutions were not well developed.

## 5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

The school's approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs were adequate. Most teachers matched tasks and resources appropriately to pupils' needs in mathematics and English language. A good start had recently been made to provide more challenging activities for a few higher attaining pupils. Teachers did not consistently provide sufficiently stimulating and challenging tasks to meet the needs of all pupils in all areas of the curriculum. They did not communicate learning targets to pupils or involve them in the process of identifying these. The support for learning teachers and auxiliaries provided good quality and well measured support for individual pupils and pupil groups. Individualised educational programmes (IEPs) were used appropriately to ensure that pupils who had additional support needs achieved success in their learning. Parents of those children who were experiencing difficulties in their learning were not well informed as to the progress their children were making.

The staff in the autistic base were very committed and sensitive to the social, emotional and educational needs of the pupils. The acting principal teacher, support for learning and class teachers planned well together to meet pupils' additional support needs appropriately. Staff provided pupils with effective support in the base and in mainstream classes when required. Most pupils in the base shared many of their learning and social experiences with mainstream pupils and were well included in several curricular areas. Helpful IEPs ensured teachers, pupils and parents were clear about pupils' specific learning targets. Pupils were making good progress in English language, mathematics and in their personal and social development. Teachers kept detailed records of children's achievements which they shared regularly with parents. Home/school diaries successfully fostered good two way communication about pupils' learning. Teachers did not always set effective long-term learning targets or clearly establish pupils' expected progress over the school year. Transition arrangements were effective, and pupils were very well supported as they moved between classes. Pupils did not access a sufficiently wide range of activities outwith the formal curriculum to appropriately support life skills.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	All staff showed high levels of care and commitment towards pupils. The new headteacher had recently introduced effective arrangements for child protection and to deal with any instance of bullying. Key aspects of healthy and safe living were covered effectively in the curriculum. The school was working towards becoming a health promoting school by the summer of 2007 and had gained a bronze award from Scotland's Health at Work. Well developed and effective systems were in place to support the transition of the high number of new pupils who enrolled and left over the course of each session. Transition arrangements for pupils entering the school from local nurseries into P1 were not well established. The transition arrangements for pupils at P7 entering Forres Academy were good.

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	Accommodation was weak overall. There were extensive outdoor play areas, including a well maintained garden which was used appropriately and well as a teaching area. Storage facilities in the hall and windows in parts of the building had been substantially improved. The classrooms were bright but some reorganisation of other teaching areas was required to support good learning and teaching. Some key aspects of school security required urgent review. Access to the building was difficult for disabled users.
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	Pupils identified strongly with their school. Almost all related well to staff and one another, and overall standards of behaviour were good. Staff morale was high. The pupil council was consulted effectively about planned improvements in the school. Pupils met with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and he responded very well in dealing with issues raised. Overall, teachers set high standards for pupils' behaviour but did not consistently set high standards for their progress and attainment. Teachers used praise effectively to motivate pupils. The school's new praise system was improving the way the school celebrated pupils' achievements. Most staff and pupils were treated fairly and equally. Pupils were not always effectively prepared for life in a racially diverse society. Assemblies provided weekly opportunities for religious observance.
Partnership with parents and the community	Too many parents and visitors did not feel welcome in the school. Overall, the range and quality of written information for parents was too limited. The headteacher's recent steps to develop a regular newsletter were beginning to keep parents better informed about aspects of school life. Reports on children's progress were helpful. There were no formal mechanisms to consult with parents on sensitive issues such as health education. In a short time, the headteacher had developed a good relationship with the active School Board and had helped to form a new parent support group. Several parents were engaged with the sports clubs organised by the school, including rugby, netball and cross-country. The school had effective links with the local community, the RAF base and the local secondary school. There were close working partnerships with other primary schools in the area.

## **7. Leading and improving the school**

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

The headteacher, staff and pupils at Kinloss Primary School had been involved in several recent improvements to the school's ethos and organisation. These were impacting positively on pupil and staff morale. Staff were caring and supportive, and almost all pupils responded to this with good standards of behaviour and a positive attitude to learning. Standards of attainment in English language and mathematics were adequate. There was scope to improve pupils' attainment by providing them with greater challenge and improving the pace of lessons. Pupils in the base were involved in all aspects of school life and were making good progress in their learning.

In a short space of time the new headteacher had made a very effective start to taking the school forward. He was very well regarded by parents, pupils and staff. His approachable and supportive management style had won the confidence of staff. Since taking post, the headteacher had carried out an effective audit of the school and identified several key priorities for improvement. He was working effectively to improve the remits of senior managers. He had improved communication with parents and pupils. He had recognised the need and acted decisively to improve the ethos of the school. The depute headteacher, principal teacher and acting principal teachers were starting to work together as an effective team. This would be aided by the new remits which had a more strategic focus. School self-evaluation was weak. The headteacher had introduced more focussed procedures for quality assurance, but these had not had time to impact effectively on the work of the school. Teachers had not been given the opportunity to evaluate their own work effectively. The headteacher checked teachers' plans and monitored aspects of classroom practice. He examined pupils' work and checked the progress of pupils through focused small group work. This range of approaches was not yet rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress. Overall, the school's capacity for improvement had improved. School staff will require the continuing support of the education authority to improve the school further.

### **Main points for action**

The school and education authority should take action to improve attainment, learning, aspects of meeting pupils' needs and school self-evaluation. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- raise attainment in English language and mathematics;
- increase the pace and challenge in pupils' learning;
- develop greater rigour in monitoring pupils' progress and in improving the quality of learning and teaching;
- take immediate steps to improve aspects of building security; and
- improve partnerships with parents and the wider community.

### **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. HM Inspectors will engage with the school and the education authority to monitor progress. They will publish an interim report on progress within one year of the publication of this report. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in another report to parents, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

David Gregory  
HM Inspector

12 June 2007

## Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
Structure of the curriculum	adequate
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	adequate
Pupils' attainment in English language	adequate
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	adequate

<b>How well are pupils' learning needs met?</b>	
Meeting pupils' needs	adequate

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Pastoral care	adequate
Accommodation and facilities	weak
Climate and relationships	good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	adequate
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	adequate

<b>Leading and improving the school</b>	
Leadership of the headteacher	good
Leadership across the school	adequate
Self-evaluation	weak

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

## Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

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

<p><b>What parents thought the school did well</b></p>	<p><b>What parents think the school could do better</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoyed being at school, were well looked after and treated fairly by staff.</li> <li>• The school was well led.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the amount of information on their children's progress and the standard of work the school expects from pupils.</li> <li>• Improve consultation on decisions which affect their children.</li> <li>• Provide better information about the school's priorities for improving pupils' education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What pupils thought the school did well</b></p>	<p><b>What pupils think the school could do better</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers explained things clearly, helped them when they found work difficult and checked their homework.</li> <li>• The school helped them to stay safe and healthy.</li> <li>• They had a say in deciding how to make the school better.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff could be better at dealing with any incidents of bullying.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What staff thought the school did well</b></p>	<p><b>What staff think the school could do better</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time for continuous professional development was used well.</li> <li>• Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils.</li> <li>• Pupils success was regularly celebrated.</li> <li>• The school was well led.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve discussion about how to achieve school priorities.</li> </ul>

## **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 Educational Services, 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 our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure**

#### **If you wish to comment about primary inspections**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management Unit, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also email [HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk). A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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 (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: [ask@spso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spso.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.spso.org.uk](http://www.spso.org.uk).

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