

**Botriphnie Primary School
Drummuir
The Moray Council
2 March 2004**

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1. Background

Botriphnie Primary School was inspected in December 2003 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 all parents, P4 to P7 pupils and staff. Information about responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board and a group of parents.

Botriphnie Primary School serves the village of Drummuir and the surrounding rural area. The roll had risen from 16 in 2000 to 31 at the time of the inspection. There were no pupils in P7. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals was above the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The behaviour and courtesy of the pupils and their efforts to look after one another.
- The high levels of care shown by the staff for the pupils.
- A high level of commitment of the headteacher and all of the staff to raising standards of achievement.
- The very good support to the school provided by parents and the School Board.
- Very good organisation of all resources.
- Very good attainment in reading and writing.

3. Views of parents and carers, pupils and staff

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, carers, pupils and staff. They also met the chair of the School Board, a group of parents and interviewed pupils and staff.

Almost all parents, pupils and staff were very positive about the work of the school. A number of parents commented on the high quality of education they felt their children received, and on the hard work and commitment of the staff. Teaching staff also

commented upon the efforts of the headteacher to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils to help them achieve high standards.

A small number of parents commented on the lack of adequate information given to parents of P1 pupils. Further information about responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The school was successful in achieving its aim of providing a curriculum in line with national guidelines. The class timetables were well organised to cover all aspects of the curriculum and time was used sensibly to help pupils achieve appropriate standards in literacy and numeracy. The school made good use of the local environment to support aspects of the curriculum, and this had been successful in helping to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. The headteacher was making good progress in devising and updating programmes of study for all areas of the curriculum. She should continue with these efforts to help ensure that pupils make appropriate progress, and that other staff continue to receive up to date advice.

The overall quality of teaching was good and at times very good. Pupils benefited from the clear focus on the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. All staff used praise very effectively to encourage pupils to give of their best and complete their work on time. They used questioning well to assure themselves that pupils understood what had been taught. They had agreed a policy for homework with parents but most homework set lacked variety. They required to readdress the issue of homework and agree a better programme.

Pupils were enthusiastic and achieved the tasks which were set for them. They completed their activities with care and were keen to do their best. They responded very well when actively involved in their lessons, for example, in science experiments. This approach should be used more throughout the curriculum. Younger pupils responded very positively to a very well taught lesson in physical education, which encouraged them to use their bodies in a range of ways. Older pupils also responded positively in drama and participated effectively in activities designed to increase their self-confidence. Overall, however, pupils relied too much on their teachers and required to be encouraged to think much more for themselves. Some of the activities which they undertook did not do enough to develop their knowledge, understanding or skills.

The staff had worked effectively to develop a number of key areas which had been identified as national priorities for education. They had improved standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy. They had placed considerable emphasis on developing pupils' healthy lifestyles and in this they had had some success. Pupils benefited from a greater emphasis on keeping fit. Pupils enjoyed badminton, regular Scottish country dancing, and swimming which was funded by the local community network. The school was well on its way to becoming a Health Promoting School.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. The school had successfully improved attainment in recent years and almost all pupils were making very good progress. Almost all achieved appropriate levels of attainment in reading and writing. Most achieved these in listening and talking. A small number achieved these earlier than expected. Those who had not attained national levels were making good progress in their coursework. A small number of these pupils required more targeted support in order to meet their specific needs. Pupils at the early stages had made a good beginning in reading and writing in particular and were making very good progress. At all stages most pupils listened and responded well to other pupils and adults. Most were confident in talking and offered their opinions effectively in class. Overall, however, pupils were not skilled enough in group discussion. Pupils had made very good progress with reading. Most were fluent readers who read enthusiastically for pleasure. They had also made very good progress with writing. They wrote successfully for a variety of purposes, paying very good attention to handwriting, punctuation and spelling. Pupils at the upper stages wrote poetry and imaginative stories which effectively captured the attention of their audience.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. The staff had worked hard to ensure that pupils achieved well in mathematics and had been largely successful. Throughout the school most pupils attained appropriate levels of attainment in information handling, number, money and measurement and shape, position and movement. The headteacher had deployed staff sensibly to ensure that mathematics was taught in a focused manner. She had recognised that pupils had to become much quicker at using their multiplication tables. Commendably she had introduced regular mental arithmetic to help pupils develop greater skills in using and manipulating numbers to answer questions. Pupils were confident in using a range of graphs and were aware of how to use ICT to create graphs, databases and spreadsheets. Pupils were accustomed to using a range of strategies in problem-solving and enquiry but some were less confident in reporting on how they had tackled problems. Overall, they required more practice in tackling real life problems using their knowledge and understanding of mathematics.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The headteacher had ensured that very effective arrangements had been put in place for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. Staff had received appropriate training on child protection and were confident about what to do should they be concerned about pupils' well-being. There were good procedures in place for the administration of medicines. Staff knew their pupils well, set high standards for behaviour, and were very aware of pupils' physical, social and emotional needs. Staff and parents worked well together to support children's well-being. Pupils felt safe and secure in the school and knew what action to take if they had a problem. Pupils confirmed that bullying was not a problem in the school and that they knew what to do if any incident occurred.

All staff worked hard to support children’s learning and showed a clear commitment to the pupils. They had established a good system to reward pupils for good behaviour and effort, and encouraged pupils to celebrate their successes. The headteacher had developed systems to identify concerns about pupils’ progress at an early stage. The support for learning teacher had also created individualised educational programmes to identify the support required for individual pupils. However the school had not discussed these programmes with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. A small number of pupils had specific needs which had not yet been well enough addressed by the school and education authority working in collaboration with the parents.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The overall quality of the accommodation was good. The headteacher and staff had created a well-organised and stimulating environment for pupils. They had made very effective use of pupils’ work to encourage pupils to give of their best and be proud of their achievements. In this they had been successful. The headteacher had successfully organised resources to ensure they were easily accessed by staff and pupils, but the overall provision of storage was limited. The play area was well organised for pupils’ games but the lack of separation of the car park from the play area constituted a safety hazard for pupils. The headteacher and authority also required to examine the safety issues connected with the use of tall free-standing bookcases in the classroom.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The school was a very friendly and welcoming place for pupils and adults. Pupils were very polite and friendly towards others and visitors. They were proud of their school and cared for one another. As part of the on-going life of the school older pupils looked after younger ones to ensure they were safe. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils were very good. Teachers were aware of the need to raise the levels of pupils’ attainment and generally were being successful. Pupils enjoyed participating in the pupils’ council, which had been helpful in making decisions that affected the life of all pupils. Pupils were treated fairly and all were encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. They were very aware of the needs of others, and had raised considerable funds for local and international charities. Arrangements for religious observance were good and the school was very well supported by its chaplain who led assemblies and end of term services on a regular basis. Pupils clearly enjoyed these assemblies which they felt were interesting.</p>

Partnership with parents and the community	The school was very well supported by its parents and the School Board. Parents showed a clear willingness to support the school in a number of ways, including fundraising. A number had served on working groups which had been established to develop aspects of school policy and this helped overall communication between the school and parents. The staff had organised a number of evening events to explain improvements being made in English language and mathematics and these were appreciated by parents. Teachers completed a well written annual report on children's progress, and also met parents on three occasions per year to discuss children's progress. The headteacher had identified in the school development plan that parents of children entering P1 required better information on the school and what they should expect of their children.
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7. Improving the school

The headteacher was an effective and very hardworking leader of the school who had been successful in ensuring that Botriphnie Primary School provided a good standard of education. In some aspects it was very good. She had effectively placed an important emphasis on raising levels of attainment. She had developed programmes of study, improved resources and also ensured that the school was a very welcoming place for adults and pupils. She had developed and maintained very good relationships with the parents, staff and pupils who all made significant efforts to improve the school.

In her time as headteacher she had implemented a number of priorities through the development planning process which had had a positive impact on pupils' experience. She now required to build on this success and be more systematic in identifying where improvements were required. She had a good knowledge of pupils' progress and had put in place appropriate procedures to monitor the progress of pupils and the work of staff. She had still to develop more systematic systems for predicting the attainment of pupils and recording their needs.

The school and education authority should take action to ensure further improvement in the work of the school and to raise achievement for all its pupils. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- address the safety issues identified in this report;
- work with the school and parents to ensure that appropriate programmes are established for all pupils with special educational needs; and
- improve procedures for quality assurance and ensure that tasks set for pupils are appropriate.

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.

Dr R Duncan
HM Inspector

2 March 2004

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be very good

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

We judged the following to be good

- Structure of the curriculum
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Pupils' attainment in English language
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Accommodation and facilities
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Leadership
- Self-evaluation

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.

<p>What pleased parents and carers most</p>	<p>What parents and carers would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoyed being in school, found the work challenging and were encouraged to work to the best of their ability. • Teachers set high standards for pupils and made these clear to parents. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils, consulted parents on decisions which affected their children and acted if a matter of concern was raised by parents. • Parents were welcome in the school and were given good information about their children's progress. • The school was well led and had a good reputation in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents expressed concern at the lack of sufficient information given to the parents of children of P1.
<p>What pleased pupils most</p>	<p>What pupils would like to see improved</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers told pupils when they did something well and helped them when they were stuck. • Pupils had a say in deciding how to make the school better and teachers listened to what they said. • Teachers expected them to work as hard as they could and checked their homework. • The behaviour of pupils was good. • The school helped them to keep safe and healthy. • They enjoyed being in school, were listened to by their teachers, and were treated fairly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils had no significant concerns they wished to see developed.

What pleased staff most	What staff would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment, showed concern for the care and welfare of the pupils and liked working in the school. • There was mutual respect between teachers and pupils, standards for pupils' behaviour were consistently upheld and the school dealt effectively with any instances of bullying or indiscipline. • Pupils were enthusiastic about their learning and their successes were regularly celebrated. • There was good communications amongst staff who worked hard to promote and maintain good relations with the local community. • Teachers gave both pupils and parents good feedback about pupils' progress. • The school was well led and there was good communication between staff and the headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff had no significant concerns they wished to see developed.

How can you contact us?

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.

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report, you should write in the first instance to Frank Crawford, HMCI at HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from that office and on our website.

If you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman directly or through your member of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government Departments and Agencies. She will not normally consider your complaint before the HMIE complaints procedure has been used. Instead, she will usually ask you to give us the chance to put matters right if we can.

Complaints to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman must be submitted within 12 months of the date of publication of this report.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Professor Alice Brown
The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
23 Walker Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7HX

Telephone number: 0870 011 5378
e-mail: enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk

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