

**Craigellachie Primary School
The Moray Council
2 October 2007**

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1. Background

Craigellachie Primary School was inspected in June 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, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the village of Craigellachie and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 54. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.
- The quality of pupils' learning.
- Relationships within the school and the behaviour of pupils.
- Expectations of pupils' achievements and the ways of celebrating them.
- The quality of pastoral care.
- Close partnership working with parents to support pupils' learning.

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

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

¹ 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 and pupils and all staff were very positive about the work of the school. All parents thought that their children enjoyed school, found school work stimulating and challenging and were treated fairly. Almost all pupils enjoyed school and thought that they were treated fairly and were well looked after. A minority did not think they got the right amount of homework. All teaching and support staff liked working in the school and thought that pupils were enthusiastic in their learning.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The curriculum was good. Pupils had a broad and balanced educational experience. Health education, education for citizenship and enterprise education received appropriate attention. The school was making good progress towards providing appropriate time for physical education (PE) in line with the national target. The use of information and communications technology was increasing across the curriculum. At the early stages pupils had limited opportunities to learn through play. Programmes for religious and moral education and most expressive arts needed improvement. The quality of teaching was good and often very good. Teachers consistently shared with pupils what they wanted them to learn and explained new work clearly. They used a good range of teaching approaches to engage pupils in their learning. Teachers sometimes questioned pupils very skilfully to extend their understanding, particularly at the middle stages. In a few lessons, teachers' questions focused too much on factual recall. Overall, teachers interacted very well with pupils. Homework was regular, varied and appropriate.

The school encouraged pupils' broad achievements very effectively. Pupils had achieved success in a broad range of endeavours, including sporting, cultural and enterprise activities. Several had performed very well in badminton at a local level and one or two at national level. Many had enjoyed good success in football and cross-country running. Pupils practised and developed their artistic skills by participating in a local art competition, in which some were very successful. They enhanced their talents in music by performing concerts for the local community. Pupils developed their enterprise skills well in P4/5 by devising and making board games and in P6/7 by designing a Christmas card for a local business. Pupils at all stages developed their awareness of citizenship in a variety of ways. For example, they raised monies for charities and performed in concerts for senior citizens. Pupils in P6/7 developed their self-awareness and appreciation of others, as well as their skills in outdoor education, through a successful residential trip. Their understanding of what it means to be a global citizen was enhanced through their very well developed links with a school in Scandinavia. The school's Eco Schools (Scotland) group had recently won a silver award for caring for the environment.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking and reading and most were achieving these levels in writing. More than half the pupils were exceeding these levels in reading and writing. Pupils had consistently achieved these high standards of attainment in recent years. Those who required additional support were making good

progress. Almost all pupils listened and talked well in class lessons and small groups. Almost all read widely for enjoyment and showed a good understanding of reading materials appropriate for their age and stage. They used the Internet confidently to research aspects of their topic work. They wrote regularly for a good range of purposes and presented their written work well. At each stage, a few wrote impressive stories and reports.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics. Most pupils at the early stages achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Attainment had been consistently high in recent years. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress. At all stages, pupils were able to handle and interpret information accurately using an appropriate range of graphs and tables. They made effective and regular use of computer software to organise data. By P7, pupils were competent in written calculations. They were less confident in mental calculations. Almost all pupils were able to round numbers and use decimals accurately. They had a good knowledge of angles, shape and symmetry. They could identify correctly a range of shapes and discuss their properties. Pupils' skills in problem-solving and enquiry were developing well. They were able to identify and use a range of strategies to solve problems. Most were able to communicate their solutions clearly.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

The school met pupils' learning needs well. Overall, teachers matched tasks and resources appropriately to pupils' abilities and aptitudes. They organised ability groups to provide work at appropriate levels in English language and mathematics. In a few lessons pupils were insufficiently challenged. Whilst teachers regularly discussed the progress of all pupils individually, they did not set clear learning targets for them. The visiting learning support teacher gave teachers very good advice in addressing pupils' learning difficulties. She interacted very well with pupils and prepared appropriate individualised education programmes (IEPs) for individual pupils and groups who required them. The IEPs set out clear targets for pupils' learning. Classroom assistants, auxiliary and outreach support staff worked well with class teachers and provided strong support for pupils. The school worked in close partnership with a range of external agencies to provide for pupils' specific needs.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Pastoral care	<p>The quality of pastoral care was very good. Staff were very sensitive to pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. Pupils felt they were treated fairly and that they could talk to any member of staff if they had a problem. Any concerns pupils expressed were noted and effectively resolved. The school had appropriate procedures for child protection and staff were confident in implementing them. Arrangements for the administration of medicines was well organised. Pupils' personal and social education covered important aspects of healthy and safe living, including personal safety, relationships and substance misuse. Pupils' access to the Internet was controlled appropriately. Pupils had a very good knowledge and understanding of how to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle. There were very good arrangements for transition from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Speyside High School.</p>
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The quality of accommodation was good. The main building, which housed the teaching areas for P1 to P5, offices and toilets, was an attractive A-listed building. A demountable unit housed the P6/7 classroom, a general purposes room and a quiet room. Pupils in P6/7 had no immediate access to toilets and had to use facilities in the main building. All teaching spaces, including the general purposes room, were bright and spacious. The reception area was open and welcoming. The extensive grassed area had many interesting features, including a quiet area. The buildings and the grassed area were very well maintained. The all-weather play area was of good quality. Overall, however, the hard surfaced play areas were limited in size. The school used the village hall nearby for dining and PE. The arrangements for security were appropriate. Despite the recent installation of a disabled toilet in the main building, access to the buildings for people with limited mobility was difficult.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>Staff and pupils warmly welcomed visitors. They identified closely with the school and were very proud of it. Relationships among staff and pupils were very good. Pupils were polite and very well behaved. They had contributed well to making important decisions through the pupil council but it had not met regularly this session. Staff and pupils had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements. Staff used praise very effectively to encourage pupils to work hard. Assemblies were very well used to foster a strong sense of community, promote and celebrate pupils' wider achievements and provide good opportunities for religious observance. The policy on racial equality was appropriate and all staff had been trained in implementing it. All pupils were treated equally and fairly. They showed a good appreciation of racial and cultural diversity.</p>
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The school had developed very good partnerships with parents and the community. Staff kept parents very well informed, through a detailed prospectus, regular newsletters, displays in public areas of the school and an active website. The School Board actively supported the school. Parents were provided with a helpful summary of the school's standards and quality report, which included details of the priorities in the next development plan. They were consulted annually on sensitive health issues. Written reports on pupils' progress were detailed but did not always identify their next steps in learning. The school involved parents very well in their children's education. Teachers and parents used the home-school diaries regularly to communicate on pupils' progress. Parents had been surveyed recently on their views of key aspects of the school's provision and appropriate action had been taken to address their one or two concerns. The school had formed good and improving links with local businesses. Important curricular links with local primary schools and Speyside High School had been established.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Craigellachie Primary School provided a very good education for its pupils. It had a very positive ethos within which pupils were successful learners. Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was very good. Staff promoted and celebrated pupils' broad achievements very effectively and ensured that they were well looked after. They had very good relations with parents to support their involvement in their children's learning.

The acting headteacher, who had assumed her post very recently, provided good leadership. She was highly regarded by pupils, parents and staff. Her teaching was a model of good practice. She had ensured that staff worked very well as a team and had accurately identified important areas for development. Teachers used quality indicators developed nationally to evaluate the work of the school. The standards and quality report was well set out and identified important areas for improvement. However it was not based on a rigorous audit of learning and teaching. Self-evaluation was weak overall. Teachers had not received written feedback on their forward plans. There were no systematic arrangements to monitor learning and teaching. The acting headteacher had already identified the need to develop self-evaluation, in order to sustain and enhance the high quality of education the school provided for its pupils. Overall, the school had a good and improving capacity for improvement.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve the curriculum and the arrangements for meeting needs. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- provide pupils at the early stages with more appropriate opportunities to learn through play;
- set learning targets for pupils and monitor their progress towards them; and
- improve the arrangements to evaluate learning and teaching.

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. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Alan Stewart
HM Inspector

2 October 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.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
Structure of the curriculum	good
The teaching process	good
Pupils' learning experiences	very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	very good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting pupils' needs	good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Pastoral care	very good
Accommodation and facilities	good
Climate and relationships	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	very good
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Leadership of the headteacher	good
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>What parents thought the school did well</p>	<p>What parents think the school could do better</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child enjoyed school, and found school work stimulating and challenging. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their child, who was treated fairly in the school. • The school was well led and had a good reputation in the local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.
<p>What pupils thought the school did well</p>	<p>What pupils think the school could do better</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They enjoyed school and got on well with other pupils. • Teachers told them when they had done something well and helped them when they had difficulties with their classwork. • They felt safe and well looked after in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About a quarter of them thought that they got too much homework.
<p>What staff thought the school did well</p>	<p>What staff think the school could do better</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff liked working in the school and thought that it was well led. • All believed that pupils were enthusiastic about learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.

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.

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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@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsso.org.uk.

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