

**Crossroads Primary School
Keith
The Moray Council
29 April 2008**

Contents	Page
1. Background	1
2. Key strengths	1
3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?	1
4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	2
5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?	4
6. How good is the environment for learning?	4
7. Leading and improving the school	6
Appendix 1 Indicators of quality	8
Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses	9
How can you contact us?	10

1. Background

Crossroads Primary School was inspected in January 2008 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 Parent Council and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the parish of Grange and the surrounding area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 24. 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.

At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for one week. The post had previously been filled on a temporary basis since October 2006 by an acting headteacher.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Pupils' achievements in physical education and music.
- Staff's successful promotion of health and wellbeing.
- Productive partnerships with parents and the local community.
- Positive relationships between the staff and the strong sense of teamwork.

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.

Almost all parents were very positive about almost all aspects of the work of the school. Parents felt very welcome in the school and they thought their children enjoyed school. They were very satisfied with the written reports which outlined their child's

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

progress in learning. A few parents were concerned about the lack of a safe dropping off place for pupils who were taken to school by car. They highlighted the lack of dedicated parking for staff and visitors. Pupils were very proud of their school. They appreciated the opportunities to be involved in making decisions and felt safe in school. They particularly liked their nutritious school lunches. Staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. They felt they made valuable contributions to the life of the school and that all pupils benefited from the school's approaches for promoting healthy living.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The curriculum was adequate. Overall, pupils had a broad and balanced educational experience. All pupils benefited from two hours of high quality physical education (PE) each week, in line with national recommendations. Visiting teachers provided pupils with valuable learning experiences in art and design and music. Approaches to developing pupils' health and wellbeing were impacting positively on pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Recent attention to enterprise education was improving pupils' skills and confidence in this area. Teachers did not ensure sufficient continuity and progression in pupils' learning in listening and talking and in aspects of mathematics. Additional time had been allocated to the teaching of English language and mathematics, but there had been insufficient improvement in pupils' attainment in these areas. The programmes for listening and talking, information and communications technology (ICT) and environmental studies did not yet fully ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills. Pupils had too few opportunities to apply their ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum. The arrangements for children transferring from the local nursery to P1 did not ensure continuity in their learning. The school had effective arrangements in place for pupils transferring to Keith Grammar School. A well planned project organised by the rural schools network of PE teachers helped to prepare pupils at P7 for the move to secondary school. Overall, the quality of teaching was adequate. There were some examples of effective teaching. Most teachers shared the purpose of their lessons with pupils and made good use of questioning to make pupils think and develop confidence. Staff used praise well to motivate pupils and had created a stimulating learning environment. Teachers did not always deliver well paced lessons and in too many lessons tasks were not well matched to pupils' abilities. Too many pupils were not challenged enough or given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Homework activities were well planned and varied.

The quality of pupils' learning was adequate. Almost all pupils were well motivated and keen to learn. They were confident, healthy and safe. They cooperated well with each other and most concentrated fully when completing tasks. When given the opportunity to do so, most pupils worked well with the minimum of supervision. In a gymnastics lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated a high level of skill and confidence in creating a series of moves across the apparatus. At all stages, a small number of pupils did not work effectively without supervision and this disrupted the learning experiences of other pupils. At the early stages a few pupils successfully programmed an electronic robotic turtle to move across the room. At the middle and

upper stages, pupils enthusiastically designed a set of pan pipes in a technology lesson. All pupils had positive learning experiences in music. Pupils successfully performed war time songs which they sang as a two-part round with an accompaniment on a range of percussion instruments. Across the school, pupils had limited active learning experiences. At the early stages, pupils did not engage often enough in purposeful play.

The school took some good steps to help pupils achieve in a number of out-of-school-hours activities. This resulted in pupils developing good levels of self-esteem and confidence. Pupils were knowledgeable about recycling and the need to look after their environment. As a result, they had gained a Silver Eco School Scotland award. Almost all pupils were motivated by the lunchtime clubs, such as the 'Stay and Play' and by musical activities. Pupils had successfully designed and created a memorial garden and helped to maintain it with help from parents and local community members. Pupils learned about the needs of others through their enterprise and fundraising activities. They generously supported the charity UNICEF and sponsored a guide dog for the blind. The strong focus on health promotion resulted in pupils being well informed about the need for a healthy lifestyle and a well-balanced diet. All pupils enjoyed energetic play at break times and most participated in the Saturday football club.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was good. The majority of pupils were achieving national levels of attainment in listening and talking, almost all in reading and most in writing. A few pupils were gaining these levels in reading and writing earlier than might normally be expected. These early gains were not sustained and as a result, a significant minority of older pupils were capable of achieving higher standards. Those pupils experiencing difficulty with aspects of their English language work were making adequate progress with their learning. Most pupils listened well to teachers' instructions and explanations. A few found it difficult to listen to each other and to take turns in small group discussions. They were not always respectful of other's opinions and found it difficult to accept a different point of view. Almost all pupils read fluently and with very good expression. Pupils at the middle and upper stages could identify characters, discuss the main ideas and make predictions. By P7, pupils were confident in using reference books to obtain information, use an index correctly and knew the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. A few upper stages pupils did not read widely enough for pleasure. By P7, pupils were writing well and a few more able pupils would benefit from further opportunities to write at length. Across the school, the standards of presentation of written work were high.

Mathematics

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was adequate. The school had made some effective progress in raising levels of attainment. Across the school, most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. At the early stages, pupils had made a good start to the development of their mathematical skills. At all stages, pupils were capable of achieving more, including those who received additional support with mathematics. Most pupils could collect, present and interpret data appropriately using a variety of charts and graphs. At the upper stages, pupils' skills in using line graphs were

not well developed. Pupils in the upper stages were less skilled at written and mental calculation. Those in P4 showed a good understanding of the strategies to be used in mental calculation. Across the school, pupils were not always confident in applying their mathematical skills in practical and meaningful contexts, for example in measuring and giving change using money. Pupils in P6 and P7 showed good understanding of the properties of shape. At all stages, pupils' ability to solve problems was too variable.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

The school's approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs were adequate. In the most effective lessons, most teachers matched tasks and activities well to the needs of pupils. This good practice was not consistent. In too many activities, tasks, particularly in mathematics were not well matched to pupils' needs and often lacked challenge. The pace of learning was too slow for some learners. Visiting staff and classroom assistants made positive contributions to supporting pupils' learning. Effective extended induction arrangements were in place for a small number of pupils moving to secondary school. The school had correctly identified those pupils who required additional assistance with their learning. Support staff were not always deployed effectively to meet learners' needs. Teaching staff had some knowledge of current legislation. They would benefit from further training, for example, in developing coordinated support plans and guidance on record keeping. Teaching staff had successfully involved parents in the development of individualised educational programmes. Staff had not yet involved pupils sufficiently in this process.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	The school had good arrangements to ensure the care, welfare and protection of pupils. Staff were caring and responsive to pupils' social and emotional needs. They knew what to do in relation to safeguarding pupils. Pupils had a good understanding of issues such as personal safety, bullying and substance misuse. They knew who to contact if they had any concerns and they felt safe and well looked after in school. The school had made a very good start to attaining the status of a Health Promoting School. Staff successfully promoted pupils' health and wellbeing through the health education programme. The school cook worked closely with pupils and staff in developing the healthy tuck shop. As a result of tasting sessions pupils were keen to try a variety of unfamiliar foods.

Aspect	Comment
<p>Management and use of resources and space for learning</p>	<p>The overall management of the school's resources for learning was good. The school buildings were well maintained. Staff and pupils had worked well together to create a safe learning environment with attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school. Resources were very well organised and sufficient to support learning in almost all areas of the curriculum. Resources to support ICT and play at the early stages were more limited. The school had appropriate approaches to security in the main school building. The arrangements for managing the access of vehicles around the school posed a potential risk to children who were taken to school by car. The school buildings were not easily accessible by users and visitors with restricted mobility. Toilet facilities located in the gymnasium were in a poor state of repair.</p>
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>Staff, pupils and parents were very proud of their school. There was a strong sense of community and relationships were very good. Almost all pupils were well behaved and polite. The recently appointed headteacher had begun to review the school's approaches to promoting positive behaviour and celebrating achievement. Teachers' expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour were high but expectations of pupils' attainment by staff were not yet high enough. Pupils did not have sufficiently high expectations of what they could achieve. Almost all pupils took a pride in their achievements and demonstrated a sense of responsibility towards themselves and others. The school successfully recognised pupils' individual achievements at weekly assemblies, in school newsletters and in the local newspaper. Pupils had a good understanding of racial equality issues and the need to take account of individual differences. There were regular opportunities for religious observance through well-established links with the local church. The school chaplain visited weekly and worked alongside pupils in classes.</p>

Aspect	Comment
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	The school had successfully involved parents and the wider community in its work. Parents helped at school events, assisted in class and raised funds. The school valued the support provided by the Parent Council. Parents appreciated the regular informal and formal information the teachers provided on the progress of their children. They were positive about the helpful written report provided annually and the opportunity to meet twice each year with teachers to discuss children's progress. Curriculum information events were well attended by parents. Parents had been consulted effectively about sensitive health education issues. They knew how to raise concerns with the school and were confident that the school would respond to their concerns. Pupils benefited from the productive partnerships with local businesses and members of the farming community. They had a good understanding of the world of work.

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Crossroads Primary School provided a safe and caring environment for learning. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning experiences was adequate. Pupils were achieving very well in PE and music. Almost all pupils were confident and developing positive attitudes towards themselves and others. Too many pupils were not sufficiently challenged in their learning and arrangements to support pupils' learning were not effective enough. Staff, parents and pupils were very proud of their school. Staff worked very well as a team and showed commitment to improving pupils' education. During a period of staffing disruption the acting headteacher supported by the education authority had managed the life and work of the school well. More needed to be done to ensure the work of the school was effectively monitored and evaluated. The school's approaches to self-evaluation were adequate.

In the very short time since taking up post the headteacher had identified accurately areas for improvement. She valued the good levels of teamwork and very good relationships which existed between staff and parents. She recognised the need to improve attainment in listening, talking and mathematics. Teachers had been successful in developing the health education programme which helped pupils to achieve better in this area. They had implemented a system for promoting positive behaviour and the headteacher was now monitoring the impact of this development. There had been no significant involvement of staff in evaluating their own work. Pupils' work had been sampled and forward plans reviewed. These activities had not resulted in significant improvements in attainment in mathematics and to teaching and learning. The school improvement plan contained a manageable number of appropriate priorities. Some progress had been made in implementing these. The headteacher had

begun the process of involving staff in developing a vision for the school. With continued and focused support from the education authority the headteacher was well placed to build the school's capacity to improve.

Main points for action

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

- improve the curriculum and learners' experiences, addressing issues of pace and challenge in tasks and activities;
- improve attainment in listening, talking and mathematics;
- improve consistency of teaching approaches; and
- improve the arrangements to monitor and evaluate the work of the school to ensure learners' needs are met more effectively.

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 continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in a report to parents, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Marion Burns
HM Inspector

29 April 2008

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?	
The curriculum	adequate
Teaching for effective learning	adequate
Learners' experiences	adequate
Improvement in performance: English language	good
Improvement in performance: mathematics	adequate

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

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	adequate
Leadership of improvement and change (across the school)	adequate
Improvement through self-evaluation	adequate

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. Where any one group had five or less respondees then, in order to maintain confidentiality, the analysis is not provided.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoyed being at school. • Staff welcomed them when they visited the school. • Their children were treated fairly. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers explained things clearly and helped them with their work. • The school helped them keep safe and healthy. • Staff knew them and looked after them very well. • They had a say in how to make the school better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all pupils behave well.

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.

HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure

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 and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail 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.

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

Crown Copyright 2008

HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.