

**Glenlivet Primary School
The Moray Council
2 September 2008**

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1. Background

Glenlivet Primary School was inspected in May 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 inspection team also evaluated aspects of the school's progress in implementing national recommendations related to improving aspects of school meals provision.

The school serves the communities of Glenlivet and Glenrines and the surrounding rural area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 29. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was in line with the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average. The headteacher had acting shared leadership responsibilities for Tomintoul Primary School.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Pupils' achievements in enterprise in education activities.
- The quality of care and welfare for pupils and the school's approaches to the inclusion of pupils with additional support needs.
- Very effective management and use of resources and space for learning.
- The commitment and engagement of the headteacher and staff in the life and work of the school.
- Productive and successful partnerships with parents and the local community.

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

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.

Parents, pupils and staff were very positive about almost all aspects of the work of the school. Parents thought that their children enjoyed being at school and that staff demonstrated concern for their children's care and welfare. They felt that school buildings were kept in good order and that the school had a good reputation in the community. Pupils thought that the school helped them to keep safe and healthy. They felt teachers praised them for doing well and gave them assistance when they were having difficulty with their school work. A few were concerned about the lack of variety in homework and thought that they were given too much at the upper stages. Staff liked working in the school which they felt had a happy, family atmosphere. They thought that the school was well led and that staff morale was high.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. There was a strong focus on the development of pupils' personal and social skills. Pupils' citizenship and teambuilding skills were developing well through a stimulating range of whole-school enterprise activities. Visiting specialist teachers enhanced pupils' experiences of music. The specialist teacher, Active Schools Coordinator and 'Stay to Play' after school club trainer ensured all pupils had sufficient access to high quality physical education. Recent improvements to the literacy programme had been successful in promoting pupils' positive attitudes to reading and discussing texts. The planning and assessment of pupils' curricular experiences was not always sufficiently consistent across the school to fully ensure progression in learning. The arrangements for children transferring from the nursery to P1 provided effective continuity in their learning. Pupils' transition to secondary education was well supported through an effective programme involving staff from Speyside High School. The quality of teaching was good. Teachers interacted positively with pupils, gave clear explanations and made good use of praise to build pupils' self-confidence and reward their achievements. Teaching approaches, particularly in reading, health and enterprise education, successfully encouraged pupils to be active in their learning. Teachers used effective questioning to check pupils' understanding. In a few lessons, they did not make consistent use of questions to extend pupils' responses. Staff shared with pupils what they were expected to learn from their lessons, especially in writing and mathematics. They set regular homework tasks but these were not sufficiently varied, and occasionally too lengthy for pupils at the upper stages.

The quality of learners' experiences was good. Almost all pupils were well motivated, enthusiastic and able to work with the minimum of supervision. Pupils were safe, confident and responsible. Pupils applied themselves effectively in a range of learning situations, including when working in pairs and groups. They responded very well when cooperating with others on a range of practical activities, including physical education, problem solving and writing. At P4 to P7, pupils had made effective use of their computing and enterprise

skills to organise, and produce a well attended Burns' Supper for the community. The pace of learning was not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for higher achieving pupils. Teachers did not encourage pupils to take enough responsibility for their learning.

Improvements in performance

The school had successfully improved its performance in some important areas. Overall, this amounted to a satisfactory improvement in performance.

In English language, pupils achieved satisfactory standards and there were signs of improvement. Most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking, and reading. The majority were achieving these levels in writing. Many attained these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils who had not yet attained national levels were making increasingly appropriate progress in their learning. Almost all pupils listened attentively to their teachers and were able to follow instructions. They were confident when speaking to adults and to one another, expressed their ideas clearly and were eager to give their opinions and views. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrated a positive approach to reading. Most read fluently and regularly for pleasure. At the early stages, most pupils read confidently and could extract information from texts well. Pupils were making very good progress in developing literacy skills. From P4 to P7, pupils did not write sufficiently at length for a wide enough variety of purposes. Pupils' presentation of written work and spelling, from P4 to P7, was not of a consistently high standard.

Standards in mathematics were satisfactory. A majority of pupils were consistently attaining appropriate national levels. Pupils at P1 to P3 were making very good progress in their learning. These early gains were not always fully sustained across the school. A few pupils required more challenge in their learning. At all stages, pupils handled information effectively using an appropriate range of graphs, charts and diagrams. From P4 to P7, pupils' skills in using information and communications technology to support their mathematical learning were not well developed. Most pupils were competent in mental and written calculation and worked practically and confidently with number, money and time. From P4 to P7, pupils' skills in practical measurement of volume, weight and length required further improvement. Across the school, pupils could identify a range of shapes and describe their properties effectively. Their skills in problem-solving and enquiry were developing well. Pupils did not apply an appropriate range of strategies in practical mathematical tasks in other areas of the curriculum.

Across the school, pupils' skills in physical education were good, particularly in team games. At P1 to P3, pupils demonstrated good understanding of pitch and rhythm in singing activities. Their skills in using musical instruments were not well developed. As part of their topic about France, pupils at P4 to P7 were knowledgeable about French lifestyles and occupations. Pupils at all stages had made good progress in aspects of health education and were able to discuss personal relationships well. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of issues related to healthy lifestyles, though some were unsure of basic nutrition requirements and food groups.

The school placed a strong and effective emphasis on developing pupils' wider achievements. Pupils were developing a sound awareness of environmental education

issues through their Eco-Schools Scotland work. This involved regular recycling activities. Younger pupils were becoming confident gardeners. They grew and tended their own organic vegetables in the school greenhouse. The stimulating “*What’s on Your Plate?*” initiative with a local farmer had ensured pupils were clear about the role and responsibilities of the farmer in providing food. The pupil council were developing their citizenship skills well through making insightful decisions to improve the school playground. They had successfully engaged the help of a group of army engineers to clear the rear playground to create a quiet area for pupils to rest. At P4 to P7, pupils acted as helpful buddies to younger pupils. They motivated younger pupils to read more in a shared reading project. As a technology challenge, pupils successfully built and erected a sculpture at the top of the Lecht. Across the school, pupils were developing their social, physical and games skills well through their regular engagement in cultural and sporting activities. Those at P4 to P7 had contributed very effectively to an army training session. Throughout the school, pupils had successfully taken part in a stamina building sponsored walk from the Tomintoul estate to Glenlivet. They had achieved success in writing creative poems for a Moray Council competition. In collaboration with a local photographer, pupils at P4 to P7 had created imaginative pop art style portraits. Pupils and staff made valuable contributions to the community through enterprise activities, charity fundraising and school productions.

The school had made good progress in overtaking the priorities in its improvement plan. Teachers had successfully implemented new approaches to reading and providing feedback to pupils in writing and mathematics. This had motivated pupils to read more and improved their understanding of what they needed to do to improve their writing and mathematics. Homework was an area which had not been improved sufficiently.

5. How well are pupils’ learning needs met?

The school’s approaches to meeting learning needs were good. Most pupils were provided with appropriate tasks and resources. In some lessons, the pace of learning was too slow for some learners, particularly higher achieving pupils. The school had correctly identified those pupils who required additional assistance with their learning. The visiting support for learning teacher contributed effective guidance and support in assessing pupils’ needs. Support staff provided valuable support for pupils experiencing difficulties with their learning and ensured they were fully integrated and included in all curricular areas. Teaching staff prepared individualised educational programmes (IEPs) which they shared fully with parents. Learning targets within these IEPs were well focused on pupils’ needs. The school had good links with support services such as speech and language therapy and educational psychology, which provided effective individual support.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>The school had very good arrangements to ensure the care, welfare and protection of pupils. Staff were caring and responsive to pupils' physical, social and emotional needs. They knew what to do in relation to safeguarding pupils. Staff followed comprehensive procedures for dealing with general medical care and the administration of medicines. The school placed an effective emphasis on protocols for pupils in the school to ensure their physical needs were well met. 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 cook interacted very positively with pupils to encourage them to develop a healthy and nutritious diet. Pupils had worked closely with her to make improvements to school meals and tuck shop provision. As a result, the school meals uptake and the consumption of fruit and vegetables had increased.</p>
Management and use of resources and space for learning	<p>The overall management of the school's resources and space for learning was very good. The attractive school garden and playground provided an area for pupils to work and relax. Teachers were increasingly using the outdoor space to enhance learning, particularly at the early stages. The school buildings were appropriately secure. Classrooms and teaching areas provided multi-purpose and stimulating environments for learning. Pupils' achievements were well displayed and celebrated in the corridors and reception areas. Resources were plentiful, well-organised and easily accessed by pupils. The newly created staffroom and office areas were bright and welcoming. There were high quality facilities and access for users with restricted mobility.</p>

Aspect	Comment
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness</p>	<p>The atmosphere in the school was friendly and welcoming. Relationships between staff and pupils were very positive. Pupils were very well behaved and courteous, and responded well to teachers' high expectations of their attendance and behaviour. Teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment were not always sufficiently high. Pupils had good expectations of what they could achieve. Almost all 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 and in community newsletters. There was a strong sense of equality and inclusion within the school. Pupils demonstrated respect for staff and each other. Staff were developing helpful links with Tomintoul Primary School. Staff from both schools were working together on improving aspects of learning and teaching. This had begun to impact positively on pupils' learning. Pupils were acquiring a good understanding of racial equality. There were regular opportunities for religious observance through well established links with the local church.</p>
<p>The school's success in involving parents, carers and families</p>	<p>The school had very successfully involved parents and the local community in its work. Parents assisted on outings, raised funds and organised a cycling proficiency club. They had helped to decorate the attractive pupil toilets. The Parent Council provided effective support to the school. The headteacher ensured that parents could contact her easily when she was not in school. Parents were very positive about the information shared by staff and pupils on the electronic communication system. Parents received regular informal and formal information on the progress of their children. Most parents were positive about the helpful written report provided annually. They had the opportunity to meet twice each year with teachers to discuss their children's progress. Parents were 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 these appropriately. Pupils were learning about the world of work through productive partnerships with the farming community. Pupils' involvement in school concerts and fundraising enhanced the school's reputation in the local community.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Glenlivet Primary School provided a caring and supportive learning environment. The local community valued the contribution the school made to the life of the community. Parents responded well to the steps taken by the headteacher and staff to ensure the shared leadership arrangements were effective. The committed staff were developing into an effective team and were promoting pupils' skills in a number of areas. Pupils were well motivated and worked enthusiastically. The school was maintaining satisfactory standards of attainment in English language and mathematics but there was scope for further improvement.

The headteacher provided effective leadership. Her commitment to the school had earned her the respect of staff, children, parents and the local community. Her shared vision for the school was focused on the promotion of more active learning experiences for pupils. The headteacher ensured pupils with additional support needs were identified appropriately and supported effectively. She had successfully promoted recent positive changes to key aspects of learning, teaching and achievement. Pupils and staff recognised and responded well to these improvements and were becoming more actively engaged in their learning and teaching. The headteacher had successfully encouraged staff to take the lead in developing learners' experiences. The acting principal teacher was developing pupils' collaborative skills well through a range of stimulating enterprise activities. Staff were effectively involved in reviewing the performance of the school and setting effective priorities for improvement. The headteacher had well established arrangements to monitor learning and teaching and track pupils' progress systematically. These included providing teachers with helpful feedback on their plans and lessons, and sampling and commenting on pupils' work. More involvement of pupils and parents, and more challenge, in self-evaluation was needed to ensure further improvement in the quality of learning and teaching. With the continuing support of the education authority, the school had the capacity to improve further.

Main points for action

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

- ensure pupils take more responsibility for their learning;
- provide pupils with more pace and challenge in their learning; and
- involve pupils and parents more in self-evaluation to ensure continuous improvement.

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.

June Graham
HM Inspector

2 September 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	good
Teaching for effective learning	good
Learners' experiences	good
Improvements in performance	satisfactory

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

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

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

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
satisfactory	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.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school had a good reputation in the community and was well led. • School reports were helpful. • Children enjoyed being at school and found the work stimulating and challenging. • The school encouraged children to work to the best of their ability. • There was mutual respect between teachers and pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the school's priorities for improving the education of pupils. • Explain the standard of work expected from pupils.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helped them keep themselves safe and healthy. • Teachers praised them when they had done something well and checked their homework. • They were involved in deciding how to make the school better. • Teachers were good at letting them know how to improve their learning and expected them to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make homework more interesting and not too lengthy.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff liked working in the school and felt the school was well led. • Pupils were enthusiastic about learning and there was mutual respect between staff and pupils. • Teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment. • Staff worked hard to promote and maintain good relations with the local community. 	<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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