

**Inveravon Primary School
Ballindalloch
The Moray Council**

11 November 2003

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Inspection of Standards and Quality in Inveravon Primary School Ballindalloch The Moray Council

1. Introduction

Inveravon Primary School was inspected in June 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 how well pupils were performing, the effectiveness of the school and how well the school was managed.

HM Inspectors evaluated learning, teaching and attainment, examined pupils' work and interviewed staff and pupils. They assessed the school's processes for self-evaluation and development planning. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language, mathematics and drama.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents and staff and a sample of pupils. The chairperson of the School Board expressed his views about the school and its links to the Board in writing to the inspection team. A member of the inspection team met a group of parents, including representatives of the parent teacher association (PTA).

2. The school

The school serves the rural area of Ballindalloch near Aberlour. At the time of the inspection the roll was 33.

Parents' views

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were very pleased with the work of the school.

Almost all thought that:

- their children enjoyed being at school and found school work stimulating and challenging; and
- the school was well led and had a good reputation in the community.

About a third of them did not feel that the school had given them a clear idea of the priorities for improving the education of their children.

Ethos

The school had a very positive ethos. Staff and pupils were very welcoming to parents and other visitors, and were very proud of their school. Relationships among them were very good. Pupils were open, courteous and very well behaved. They were actively involved in making important decisions about improving the school through the pupil council. Teachers used praise and reward schemes very effectively to encourage pupils to produce their best work. Regular assemblies provided very good opportunities for religious observance and to celebrate success. Pupils were treated fairly and with respect and felt genuinely valued. Their attendance at school was above the national average.

School and community

The school had established very good links with parents, the local playgroup and other schools, educational support services and the wider community.

Notable features included:

- very effective communication with parents through an attractive handbook, regular newsletters and reports on their children's progress;
- clear, written information for parents on the school's priorities for improvement;

- extensive consultation with the School Board and strong support from the PTA for the work and life of the school;
- very good curricular links with the associated primary schools and secondary school; and
- valuable links with local businesses through a pupil enterprise activity, and with the church, police and other appropriate external agencies.

Accommodation

Overall, the quality of the accommodation was very good. Classrooms were bright and spacious and very well maintained. They were decorated with attractive displays of pupils' work. A spacious hall was used well as a general purposes room and also provided appropriate dining facilities. The authority had clear plans to provide a toilet for disabled pupils. The school was set in very attractive grounds.

Staffing and resources

The school was well staffed. Ancillary staff made a valuable contribution to the work of the school. Visiting specialists contributed effectively to the school's programmes. However, there was no specialist support for learning teacher. The provision of resources was very good overall. The supply of modern computers was very good and pupils made very effective use of them. The headteacher managed devolved funds very effectively. She had used them well to improve the library stock and the accommodation.

3. How well are pupils performing?

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good. Almost all pupils performed well in their coursework. They listened closely to their teachers' questions and instructions and to the views of their classmates in groups. They responded clearly, politely and well. Pupils in P1 and P2 were making very good

progress in their learning. Almost all by P3 could confidently read simple unfamiliar texts. By P7 they could demonstrate a good understanding of appropriately demanding texts. Pupils read widely for enjoyment. They could express their ideas confidently and accurately when writing for a wide range of purposes. Some conveyed their ideas and feelings with considerable skill in their writing. Almost all pupils at each stage were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in *listening, talking, reading* and *writing*, and some were exceeding them.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. Pupils performed well in their appropriately challenging coursework. Almost all interpreted graphs accurately, and had developed appropriate skills in using computers to handle data. Skills of measurement and mental calculation were very well developed. Pupils showed confidence in working with fractions and decimals. They had very good knowledge of shapes and symmetry, although a few older ones found difficulty in using compass directions. Across the stages, almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in *information handling, number, money and measurement*, and *shape, position and movement*. Some were exceeding these levels. In *problem solving and enquiry* pupils tackled problems systematically and successfully.

Drama

The overall quality of attainment in drama was good. Pupils were highly motivated in drama and were making good progress. They worked co-operatively and communicated effectively with others in a variety of appropriate activities. Most showed some skill in representing everyday actions and feelings through mime. Most used language appropriately in role play and some were highly imaginative in developing a role. Pupils at the later stages had contributed well in groups to writing their own drama scripts. Most reflected well on their drama lessons overall. However, they did not often

closely evaluate their own and others' contributions and justify their views.

4. How good is the curriculum?

The overall quality of the curriculum was very good. It was broad and balanced. Teachers carefully monitored the time spent on the different curricular areas in their own classes. Pupils studied French from P4 to P7.

English language

The programme for English language was very good. Teachers provided very good listening and talking activities across the curriculum. The programmes for reading and writing had recently been improved. Pupils had very good opportunities to develop their skills in reading and writing for a wide range of purposes.

Mathematics

The programme for mathematics was very good. It developed pupils' learning systematically, including skills in mental calculation, problem solving and the use of computers for handling data.

Drama

The school had recently adopted a new, good programme in drama. Teachers provided stimulating experiences for pupils in which they could express their thoughts and feelings through movement, mime and language. Insufficient emphasis was placed on developing pupils' evaluation skills.

Expressive arts

The overall quality of the expressive arts programme was good. The school was implementing good programmes of work in art and design, music and physical education. Specialist teachers of art and design, home economics, music and physical education visited the school for blocks of time. They worked well with class teachers to provide pupils with a variety of valuable experiences. The school had identified the need to improve its guidance for teachers on expressive arts to reflect current

good practice and provide a sound basis for further improvement.

5. How good is learning and teaching?

Teaching and learning had major strengths. Pupils responded very well to a range of stimulating and challenging activities. Some aspects of planning and assessment required improvement.

Features of learning and teaching were as follows.

- Teachers planned a good range of activities for groups and individuals in each class across the curriculum. While their plans for English language were very good, those for mathematics and drama did not always state clearly what pupils were expected to learn.
- Teachers explained new work clearly and made very good use of a range of teaching approaches. They questioned their pupils very skilfully to check and enhance their understanding, and regularly set appropriate homework.
- Pupils were highly motivated and focused closely on their work. They interacted very well with each other and responded successfully to very good opportunities for independent learning.
- Pupils' needs were very well met overall. They were regularly set challenging tasks which were well matched to their abilities, especially in English language and mathematics.

- Approaches to assessment and recording were good overall. Teachers assessed pupils' progress effectively in English language and mathematics. National Tests were used well to confirm teachers' judgements in reading, writing and mathematics. The arrangements to assess and record pupils' progress and attainment in drama were not fully developed.
- The quality of written reports to parents on their children's progress was very good. Teachers provided a valuable interim written report for parents on their children's progress in November of each year, and a further detailed report later in the session. They provided clear information on pupils' strengths and future development needs.

6. How well are pupils supported?

Care and welfare

Staff took very good care of the pupils. They knew them very well as individuals and were very alert to their needs. Arrangements for dealing with situations where pupils' health and safety might be at risk were very good. Staff were fully aware of the school's appropriate child protection policy and of measures to deal with bullying.

Personal and social development

The school gave very good attention to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils' showed genuine concern for and tolerance of others. They had very good opportunities to make decisions about the school and to take responsibility, and had raised money for various charities. Older pupils acted as 'buddies' to younger ones, taking very good care of them at breaks, and assisting them in their learning. At P4 to P7 pupils had learned about appropriate aspects of citizenship, and had enjoyed and benefited from the teamwork involved in a business enterprise project. Numerous opportunities were provided for pupils to work and compete in sporting activities with pupils from other schools. All key aspects

of health education were covered, with useful input from various outside agencies.

Support for learning

The overall quality of support for pupils' learning was good. Class teachers and classroom assistants supported pupils very well. The headteacher's relief teacher and a supply teacher worked closely with class teachers to provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties. However, they did not always set clear learning targets for pupils or provide detailed records of their progress.

Staff provided strong support for pupils with Records of Needs. Those pupils' needs were regularly reviewed in consultation with parents and appropriate support agencies. However, individualised educational programmes (IEPs) did not indicate long-term targets for pupils, or show their progress clearly enough against short-term targets. Pupils' Records of Needs required to be updated.

7. How well is the school managed?

Overall management and leadership

The headteacher provided very good leadership. She related very well to pupils and parents. She had developed very effective teamwork among staff and had been highly influential in developing the school's very positive ethos. The headteacher had recently worked closely with her colleagues to improve attainment in English language and mathematics. She had a clear vision for the future of the school and was committed to its continuous improvement.

The school's aims were clear and appropriate and were used well to guide improvements. Staff were closely involved in decision making. Their work was supported by a good range of policies. A few of these, including the new policy on learning and teaching, were in draft form. They were still to be discussed fully with teachers. The

school had clearly identified those policies which were out of date and had plans to review them.

Staff review and development

The arrangements for staff review and development were very good. Staff had benefited from a good range of development activities which were closely linked to plans for improvement. They had participated effectively in joint in-service training with teachers of the associated primary schools and the secondary school. All staff had had their work reviewed as part of the education authority's scheme for staff review and development.

Planning for improvement

Planning for improvement was good overall. The audit on which the school development plan was based had not been sufficiently rigorous. The action plan was well laid out. Most development projects were well specified but a few lacked sufficient detail to ensure their successful achievement. Recently completed developments had had a positive impact on the quality of learning and attainment.

Approaches to improving quality

The arrangements for quality assurance were good and were currently being improved. The headteacher evaluated teachers' plans and discussed them with staff. She sampled pupils' written work. The school had produced a standards and quality report but it had not clearly identified areas for improvement. The headteacher had recently introduced very good arrangements to monitor learning and teaching through focused visits to classes. These were currently being implemented to bring greater rigour to school audit and the reporting of standards and quality. Teachers carefully tracked the progress of individual pupils' progress at all stages. The headteacher had identified the need to use the available information to set appropriate targets for further improving attainment.

8. How well does the school perform overall?

Staff of Inveravon Primary School provided a stimulating learning environment in which pupils were open and confident. Pupils felt valued and were developing responsible and mature attitudes towards others. The quality of learning and teaching was high and the standards of attainment in English language and mathematics were very good. The headteacher was committed to implementing fully the good new arrangements to monitor classroom practice and the plans to set targets for individual pupils. By doing so, she and her colleagues should sustain and improve even further the high quality of provision and pupil attainment.

Key strengths

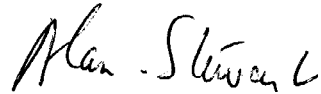
- The ethos of the school and the courteous and very well-behaved pupils.
- The communications with parents and links with the wider community.
- The programmes and the attainment in English language and mathematics.
- The high quality of learning and teaching.
- The effective approaches to pastoral care.
- The commitment and teamwork of staff and the leadership of the headteacher.
- The effectiveness of the arrangements for staff review and development.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should act on the following recommendations.

- The headteacher should provide improved guidance for teachers on the expressive arts, to sustain good practice and provide a sound basis for further improvement.
- Targets in IEPs should be more clearly stated and pupils' progress towards them fully recorded.
- The education authority and the school should update Records of Needs.
- The new arrangements to monitor learning and teaching and the plans to set targets for individual pupils should be fully implemented.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping underline.

Alan Stewart
HM Inspector
on behalf of HM Chief Inspector

11 November 2003

See Quality Indicator data overleaf.

Appendix

Indicators of quality

We judged the following to be *very good*

- Climate and relationships
- Expectations and promoting achievement
- Equality and fairness
- Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community
- Accommodation and facilities
- Provision of resources
- School management of finances
- Structure of the curriculum
- The teaching process
- Pupils' learning experiences
- Meeting pupils' needs
- Reporting pupils' progress
- Leadership
- Staff review and development

We judged the following to be *good*

- Provision of staff
- Courses and programmes
- Teachers' planning
- Assessment as part of teaching
- Learning support
- Implementation of legislation relating to SEN and disabilities
- Self-evaluation
- Planning for improvement

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

Quality of lessons observed

HMI also evaluated the quality of the lessons observed. The overall quality of lessons was very good in 60% of

cases and good in 40%. There were no fair or unsatisfactory lessons.

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, Longman Road, Inverness IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our web site: 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 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.

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