

**Albyn School
Aberdeen
5 September 2006**

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1. Background

Albyn School was inspected in April 2006. The inspection covered key aspects of the school's work at all stages. It evaluated the quality of the curriculum and pupils' achievements, including their performance in examinations (see Appendix 3). Inspectors also evaluated the quality of learning and teaching and pupil support, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation, and its overall effectiveness and capacity for improvement. In the Lower school, there was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics. In the Upper school, the subjects included in the inspection were English, mathematics, physics and Upper 1 and Upper 2 science and art and design. Unless otherwise stated, the evaluations in this report apply to provision in both the Upper and Lower schools.

The work of the nursery class was not included in this inspection.

HM Inspectors observed learning and teaching and examined pupils' work. They analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents¹ and pupils and to all staff. They interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Board of Governors, representatives of the parent association and a group of parents.

The school is an independent day school situated in central Aberdeen. The stages of the school from Lower (L)1 to Upper (U)6 correspond with primary and secondary stages from P1 to S6. Formerly a school for girls, the school admitted boys from L1 to L5 in August 2005, as the first stage of providing coeducation throughout the school. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 394, with 34 in the nursery, 167 in the Lower school, and 193 in the senior school.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The high standards and range of pupils' achievements, including their attainment in national examinations.
- Very skilful teaching across the school.
- The strong ethos of the school and its courteous and very well behaved pupils.
- High quality pastoral care for pupils at all stages.
- High expectations of pupils' achievements.
- Very positive relationships with parents.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher.

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

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

Overall, almost all parents were very satisfied with the work of the school. Almost all believed that their child enjoyed school and was treated fairly and that the school was well led. Overall, most pupils were very pleased with almost all aspects of the school's provision. Almost all enjoyed school and thought that teachers helped them when they were having difficulties. A significant minority of pupils in the Upper school thought that they got too much homework and that not all pupils were treated fairly. Most pupils in the Lower school thought they had a say in improving the school. All teachers and ancillary staff in the Lower school and most of them in the Upper school were very pleased with almost all aspects of provision. All liked working in the school and believed that pupil success was regularly celebrated. All in the Lower school and most in the Upper school thought that the school was well led. About a third of teachers in the Upper school expressed concerns about the lack of effectiveness of communication between senior managers and staff. However, in discussion, most teachers believed that overall communication was good. Most believed that the time for continuous professional development was increasingly being used effectively. More than half of ancillary staff in the Upper school did not think that they had good opportunities to be involved in decision making and half thought that staff training time was not used effectively.

Further details about what most pleased parents, staff and pupils, and what they would most like to see improved, can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

The curriculum, learning and teaching

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. The curriculum in the Lower school provided pupils with a broad experience, which included good provision for their spiritual, personal and social development. Pupils benefited from a range of specialist teaching in music, art and design, physical education, French and information and communications technology (ICT). Teachers used play well at L1 to develop pupils' skills in working together. However, they did not always ensure progression across the Lower school in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in environmental studies, health education and drama. Both the Lower and the Upper schools placed a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' wider achievements across the curriculum. Pupils in U1 and U2 followed a broad range of courses. All pupils had good opportunities to develop skills in languages by learning either French and German or French and Latin. At U3 and U4, almost all pupils followed a broad range of courses, studying English, mathematics and six other Standard Grade or equivalent courses. However, options in technology were limited. In U5 and U6, courses offered at Higher, Intermediate 2 and Advanced Higher enabled pupils to continue their study at appropriate levels in almost all subjects taken in U3 and U4. Pupils were able to broaden their options at U6 through an Intermediate 1 course in Spanish and a certificated course in ICT. The school placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' fitness and skills through core programmes in physical education and games at all stages. However, pupils gaining Standard Grade physical education in U4 were unable to progress to national qualifications in U5 and U6. In addition to school-based programmes in personal and social education and religious, moral and philosophical studies, all pupils at all stages in the Upper school were able to follow a core programme in music. Personal and social education was compulsory up to U5, but there was no programme for U6. There were no courses in drama, although pupils were able to participate in drama through extra-curricular activities and school productions.

The quality of teaching was very good across the school. Teachers ensured pupils were clear about the purpose of lessons and used questioning very effectively to check their knowledge and understanding. They interacted very well with pupils to encourage them to reflect closely on the content of the lessons. Teachers used a wide range of teaching approaches, including setting group and individual tasks which were well matched to pupils' needs. They made good use of homework to support pupils' learning.

In both the Lower and Upper schools, pupils were well motivated, hardworking and confident learners. They stayed on task without close supervision. In the Lower school pupils were not always sufficiently encouraged to be responsible in their learning. In the Upper school pupils had some very good opportunities for research, note taking and conducting practical investigations. Pupils across the school, when they were given the opportunity, worked very well in groups. The pace of learning was consistently good across the school. Although there were many examples of good use, pupils did not consistently use ICT to support their learning. Across the school, teachers provided appropriate tasks and took good account of pupils' individual needs when selecting activities to support learning across the curriculum and the stages. Teachers knew their pupils well and supported them effectively in class. In the Lower school they provided pupils with suitably demanding work. In a few classes in the Lower school, pupils were beginning to evaluate and comment on their own work and had set their own learning targets. However, this good practice was not consistent across the Lower school. In the Upper school, teachers discussed with pupils how to improve their work and provided them with a very good level of challenge.

Achievement in English language and mathematics in the Lower school

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good. Attainment had been consistently high in recent years. Almost all pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing and many were exceeding them. Attainment had been consistently high in recent years. At L1 to L7, pupils listened and talked very well to staff and to one another. Pupils at L7 were very good at contributing to group discussions and appreciating the views of others. Standards in reading were very high. Pupils increasingly through the stages read a variety of texts for pleasure. They had a thorough knowledge of different authors and styles of prose. They used reference books and the Internet effectively for research. Pupils wrote very well for a wide variety of purposes. At L7 many pupils were writing to a very high standard.

Mathematics

The quality of pupils' attainment in mathematics was very good. Attainment in recent years had remained consistently high. Almost all pupils were attaining appropriate national levels and many were exceeding them. Pupils were able to present and interpret information from a variety of graphs and charts. From L5 to L7, they used computers effectively to create simple databases and spreadsheets. Throughout the Lower school, pupils performed mental and written calculations well. At all stages, pupils were developing very good skills in measuring length, volume and weight. They could recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and identify their properties. Most pupils had developed skills in using a range of problem solving strategies and were able to apply them in real-life situations.

Achievement in the Upper school

The overall quality of attainment in Upper 1 and Upper 2 was very good. Almost all pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in mathematics and many were exceeding them. Pupils were attaining very good standards in their coursework in English language and in the other subjects inspected.

The following comments are based on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) data, using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for the three year period (2003-2005) and also draw on the overall evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and meeting pupils' needs.

The overall quality of attainment at U3 and U4 was very good. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more credit awards at Standard Grade was consistently well above the national average.

The overall quality of attainment at U5 and U6 was very good. At Higher, the proportions of pupils at U5 and U6 attaining one or more, three or more and five or more A-C awards were consistently well above the national averages. Although pupils at U5 did not perform as well at Higher last session as they had in the previous two years, pupils at U6 performed better than they had recently. Almost all of the few pupils presented for Intermediate 2 attained A-C awards. At Advanced Higher, the proportion of U6 pupils attaining at least one award at A-C was consistently well above the national average.

Significant features of pupils' attainment in the subjects not inspected included the following.

- At Standard Grade, pupils performed better in French and music than they did in their other subjects.
- At Higher, pupils performed better in modern studies than they did in their other subjects.
- At Advanced Higher, all pupils presented for business management, chemistry, French, German, geography, Latin, modern studies and music in 2005 attained A or B grades.

Achievement across the school

Across the school, pupils were demonstrating high achievement in a wide range of contexts, and were making very good progress in developing their confidence, self-esteem and citizenship. Pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to learning and had high expectations for their academic and broader achievements. They showed concern for others through their involvement in very successful fundraising activities which raised substantial sums for charity. High numbers of pupils developed their talents, skills and self-confidence through participation in an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and other events. Many achieved considerable success individually and in teams in regional and national competitions in a wide range of sports. A high proportion of pupils in the Lower and Upper school were members of choirs and music groups, and many also benefited from instrumental and singing instruction. Many pupils were able to develop their musical abilities and performance skills further by taking part in well-received concerts and musical productions. Pupils participated very successfully in regional and national competitions and challenges, including those in mathematics, essay writing, chemistry, engineering, art, music and debating. Pupils at all stages gained valuable experience of business procedures and teamwork through their involvement in enterprise activities. The Young

Enterprise group in U5 and U6 regularly achieved success in regional competitions, reaching the national final in 2005 and 2006. A significant number of pupils in the Upper school demonstrated their enterprise skills, community awareness and teamwork within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and achieved bronze, silver and gold standards. Pupils at L7 and in the Upper school developed their self-reliance, self-confidence and their appreciation of others through participation in residential experiences and foreign visits.

Learning, teaching and achievement in the inspected subjects in the Upper school

English

The quality of teaching and learning was very good. Teachers explained new work clearly and varied their approaches very effectively to engage pupils in their learning. They interacted very well with their pupils and questioned them skilfully to check and enhance their understanding. Homework was used appropriately. Almost all pupils were well motivated, hardworking and focused closely on their lessons. The pace of learning was good overall. Pupils worked very well with each other in groups. They took responsibility for their learning, reading widely for enjoyment and using ICT for a range of purposes, including making presentations. Pupils' needs were very well met. Teachers grouped pupils by prior attainment from U3 onwards very effectively to provide them with appropriate support and challenge.

Achievement

At U1 and U2 teachers did not use national attainment levels to measure pupils' progress or attainment. Pupils performed very well in their coursework in listening, talking, reading and writing. At U3 and U4 the proportion of pupils attaining Credit awards at Standard Grade was consistently well above the national average. At U5 and U6, the proportions achieving A-C awards at Higher and Intermediate 2 were above the national average. All pupils presented at Advanced Higher for the last three years attained A-C awards

Other features of pupils' achievement included the following:

- Pupils at different stages had had good success in regional debating competitions.
- Pupils at different stages were very successful in writing competitions and included the Scottish prize winner in the UK Parliamentary Press Group competition in 2005.

Mathematics

The quality of teaching and learning was very good. Teachers interacted very well with their pupils. Their questioning was skilful and helped pupils to think for themselves. They had high expectations of pupils and used praise well to encourage them. Suitable homework was set and marked regularly. There was little use of ICT, other than the appropriate use of graphics calculators. Pupils were hardworking and very well behaved. Many pupils answered teachers' questions confidently. The pace of lessons was appropriate. Teachers took very good account of pupils' prior attainment when setting them learning tasks. They provided pupils with appropriate support and challenge to meet their different needs very well.

Achievement

Almost all pupils were attaining appropriate national levels in U2, with around two-fifths exceeding them. At Standard Grade, the proportion of U4 pupils attaining Credit awards was well above the national average. At Higher, the proportions of U5 pupils attaining A awards and A-C awards were above the national average. Most of the small number of pupils presented for Intermediate 2 at U5 attained an A-C award. At Advanced Higher, the proportion attaining an A-C award was above the national average.

Other features of pupils' achievement included the following.

- A high number of pupils entered for the Scottish and UK mathematical challenges achieved notable success at gold, silver and bronze levels.

Physics and U1/U2 science

The overall quality of teaching and learning in physics and U1 and U2 science was very good. In U1 and U2, science was taught separately as biology, chemistry and physics. At all stages, teachers explained ideas and instructions clearly and used questioning very effectively. In science, they provided good opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills through well-organised practical work. The pace of learning was very good in U1 and U2 science and in physics. Pupils willingly took responsibility for their learning. Computer based resources were well used in physics lessons. In the sciences, generally, teachers were making increasing use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers supported pupils' learning very well and provided helpful feedback on written work.

Achievement

Pupils at U1 and U2 were making very good progress in science. They demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of their coursework and were developing appropriate skills in planning, carrying out and reporting on experiments. In physics at U3 to U6, pupils' performance in external examinations was well above national averages. At Standard Grade, almost all pupils attained Credit awards and a high proportion gained a grade 1. Almost all pupils presented for Higher and Advanced Higher over the past three years gained A-C grades. Of these, around two-thirds gained a grade A at Higher, and half gained a grade A at Advanced Higher.

Other features of pupils' achievement included the following.

- Several U1 pupils were winners of a regional chemistry competition in 2005 and 2006.
- Specific U6 pupils were awarded Engineering Degree Scholarships for Women in 2005.

Art and design

The quality of teaching and learning was very good. Teachers made very good use of practical demonstrations to introduce pupils to a wide range of media and skills. They regularly set suitable homework to reinforce learning. Pupils were well motivated, attentive and very well behaved. They were frequently encouraged to think independently. Pupils had recently started to make good use of newly installed ICT facilities. Teachers used a very good range of resources

and approaches to meet pupils' needs very effectively. They assessed pupils' attainment carefully and provided constructive comments on what they needed to do to improve.

Achievement

At U1 and U2, most pupils were achieving very good standards in their course work. At U3 and U4, at Standard Grade, all pupils over the last three years had gained a Credit award. Pupils consistently performed better in art and design than in their other subjects. At Higher, all U5 pupils attained an A or B grade. At Advanced Higher, most pupils gained A-C grades.

Other features of pupils' achievement included the following.

- Senior pupils had designed and produced very attractive school Christmas cards.
- Senior pupils were planning an imaginative fashion show to display their course work.

5. How well are pupils supported?

The quality of pastoral care was very good. Staff knew individual pupils very well and were skilful and sensitive in meeting their emotional, physical and social needs. Effective procedures were in place for child protection, promoting positive behaviour and discouraging bullying. Pupils felt safe, knew how to raise concerns and were confident that any issues raised would be dealt with well. Pupils in the Upper school found guidance staff and subject teachers readily approachable and highly supportive. The small size of classes promoted successfully a warm atmosphere. Guidance staff had a good knowledge of pupils, assisted by an effective system of individual interviews and informal contacts. Procedures for first aid, the care of pupils feeling unwell, the administration of medicines and acceptable use of the Internet were appropriate.

Pupils' personal and social development was very good. At all stages, most pupils were confident, articulate, considerate of others and strongly disposed to learning. A rich variety of lunch time and after-school activities helped to develop pupils' personal skills, interests, creativity and active citizenship. Pupils in the Lower school benefited from a broad set of topics in personal and social education (PSE) which developed relevant skills and attitudes well. Good attention was given to personal safety and health promotion. In U1 to U5, pupils engaged in a planned programme which gave appropriate emphasis to health and safety matters, careers, personal development, social awareness and relationships. Pupils required more opportunity to evaluate the topics covered and to influence course content as a result of their feedback. At U6, pupils experienced some good activities to help prepare them for leaving school but a formal programme in PSE had yet to be put in place. There was scope to develop further the role of form teachers in the Upper school in contributing to PSE. Parents were suitably informed in both the Lower and Upper schools when potentially sensitive aspects of health education and personal relationships were to be taught. They had the opportunity to access the resources to be used but needed to be formally informed of their right to view these.

Very good arrangements were in place to support pupils entering the school and at key stages of transition, and for advising pupils and parents when making curricular choices. All pupils had benefited at U2 through their participation in the local 'Make it in Scotland' initiative and at U3 through a 'take your daughter to work' scheme involving good joint working by guidance and English department staff. At U4, all pupils took part in a well-organised work experience programme. The school made very good use of specialist assistance provided by the Independent

Schools Careers Organisation to support those at U5 and U6 applying for university and college places or seeking employment. Pupils' understanding of the demands of running a small business were enhanced through opportunities at U3 to participate in a mini-enterprise initiative. Others at U5 and U6 opted in to enterprise activities which were highly successful in developing pupils' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, including customer focus, team working, financial management and innovation.

The overall quality of provision for pupils with additional support needs was good. Teachers in the Lower and Upper schools worked hard to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The specialist teacher of learning support screened all pupils from L1 to U2 in aspects of literacy and numeracy to ensure that their learning needs were identified. She provided sensitive and well-judged support to individuals and small groups. Building on good practice already in place with the English department, she needed to work more regularly alongside pupils in their other classes to support more of them across the curriculum and across the range of ability. Individualised educational programmes had been devised for pupils with specific needs. However, short-term learning targets needed to be clearer and shared with pupils, teachers and parents. Many U6 pupils supported Lower school pupils through a successful paired reading programme. Pupils requiring extra assistance in SQA examinations were suitably identified but they required more time to practise working with assigned readers or scribes.

The support for pupils' team met weekly to review and plan its work. More effective systems for evaluating the work of the team had not yet been developed to ensure that the many strong features of practice were sustained and priorities for improvement identified and implemented.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The accommodation had some notable strengths. Classroom accommodation for the sciences and geography was of very high quality. The assembly hall and gymnasium, and the music and art and design rooms were spacious. The libraries were attractive and well stocked. The rooms for business education and ICT were well furnished. The school had ample hard surfaced play areas and high quality playing fields, to which pupils travelled by bus. Buildings were very well maintained and secure. The school had a clear accessibility strategy and a programme of phased developments was in place. However, some classrooms in the Upper school were small for flexible learning and some in the Lower school were cramped. Ventilation in the L7 rooms was poor. Some of the corridors were very steep and narrow. Overall, the quality of the accommodation was adequate. Work on a new building for the Lower school in the school grounds was to begin imminently and was scheduled to be completed for the start of session 2007-08.

Aspect	Comment
<p>Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality</p>	<p>The school had a very strong ethos. Staff and pupils warmly welcomed visitors. Relationships among staff and pupils were very good. Pupils were courteous and very well behaved. Boys at L1 to L5, were very well integrated within the coeducational provision and enjoying school. Almost all pupils were very proud of their school. Upper school pupils participated in making important decisions through their school council. There was no Lower school council. Teachers and pupils had high expectations of pupils' achievements. Teachers used praise very effectively to motivate pupils. The school celebrated pupils' successes very well, through assemblies, award ceremonies and displays. Regular assemblies also provided very good opportunities for religious observance. Teachers treated pupils equally and fairly. However, a substantial minority of Upper school pupils believed that a few teachers favoured some pupils more than others. The headteacher recognised that the school needed to address these perceptions. Pupils demonstrated a sensitive appreciation of gender, ethnic and cultural diversity. The school was currently developing a race equality policy.</p>
<p>Partnership with parents and the community</p>	<p>Partnerships with parents and the wider community were very good. Communications with parents were very well established. These included an informative and attractive prospectus, regular newsletters and weekly electronic mail to inform parents of imminent events. The Board of Governors worked closely with the headteacher and met regularly with staff. The parents association was very active. The Former Pupils' Club was very supportive of the school. Once the decision had been made to adopt coeducation in the school, the headteacher and the Board fully consulted parents on its implementation. Each year, teachers provided two detailed and helpful written reports for parents on their children's progress. The reports for pupils in the Upper school provided good advice on the next steps in pupils' learning. Very productive relationships had been established with local businesses to support enterprise activities in the school and through the work experience programme for U4 pupils.</p>

7. Improving the school

Albyn School provided pupils with a very good education, successfully encouraging them to achieve high standards academically and in a broad range of enterprises. It had a very positive ethos and provided a high level of pastoral care. Attainment was very good in the Lower and Upper Schools. Teaching was of a high standard across the school. Pupils were keen to learn at all stages and, particularly in the Upper school, were encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. The learning needs of individual pupils were well met.

Before the headteacher assumed office in 2002, the school had experienced instability in management. It was now very well placed to move forward. The headteacher had managed, with assurance, key and very sensitive changes to the school's estate and to the range of its provision, including the successful move to coeducation. Parents and staff acknowledged that he had played a large part in developing their firm confidence in the future of the school. Overall, the headteacher provided very good leadership. He was open and approachable. He listened to any concerns before taking decisions, which he communicated clearly to staff. He was very highly regarded by pupils, staff and parents. He was improving the arrangements for staff development across the school. He had developed and was beginning to implement useful procedures for evaluating learning and teaching in the Upper school and had firm plans to extend their use to the Lower school. The senior management team worked closely with the headteacher and were fully consulted on all major decisions taken in the school. In the Upper school, the depute and the seconded depute carried out their individual management duties very well. However, their responsibilities were largely for administrative and operational matters. The headteacher had identified the need to review their responsibilities, to engage them more in the management of learning and create more opportunities for teamwork. The heads of departments provided effective leadership. The bursar carried out his duties very efficiently. The headteacher met regularly with the head of Lower school, to oversee the quality of the Lower school's work and to guide and monitor developments. The head of Lower school was highly respected by all in the school community. She taught regularly in Lower school classes and her teaching was a model of good practice. She had ensured a very good team spirit among staff. She had introduced a number of improvements to teachers' planning, resources and the curriculum. She had an extensive remit which also included management of the school's nursery provision. She carried out all of her current duties diligently and effectively. The headteacher had identified the need to provide additional promoted staff for the Lower school.

In the Lower school, staff were at the early stages of evaluating the quality of their work. They had begun to use national indicators of quality to monitor learning and teaching. The head of Lower school scrutinised teachers' plans but did not give them sufficient feedback. Formal observations of classroom practice had not yet taken place. The head of Lower school was in the early stages of tracking pupils' progress across the curriculum. In the Upper school, staff regularly discussed pupils' progress and attainment across the curriculum. The headteacher ensured that appropriate action was taken if there were any concerns. He reviewed examination performance with individual heads of department but did not record the action to be taken as a basis for monitoring progress in making improvements. A helpful system of departmental reviews had been introduced. It engaged departments in using national quality indicators to evaluate provision, and classroom observations by the headteacher and senior management team to moderate those evaluations. It had not yet been fully implemented. The school had confidently planned and implemented key developments to its estate and to the range of its provision. However, the school and department development plans did not yet draw on systematic audits of learning and teaching to identify appropriate areas for improvement.

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

Main points for action

The school and Board of Governors should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- continue to improve the quality of the curriculum across the school;
- continue to develop systematic and rigorous approaches to improving the work of the school, to ensure that pupils' experiences are of a consistently high quality; and
- complete and implement the policy on racial equality.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the Board of Governors 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, the Board of Governors, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents and carers.

Alan Stewart
Managing Inspector (Senior School)

Lesley Brown
Managing Inspector (Junior School)

5 September 2006

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 in the Lower school	Good
Structure of the curriculum in the Upper school	Good
The teaching process	Very good
Pupils' learning experiences in the Lower school	Good
Pupils' learning experiences in the Upper school	Very good
Meeting pupils' needs in the Lower school	Good
Meeting pupils' needs in the Upper school	Very good
Pupils' attainment in English language in the Lower school	Very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics in the Lower school	Very good
Overall quality of attainment: U1/U2	Very good
Overall quality of attainment: U3/U4	Very good
Overall quality of attainment: U5/U6	Very good

How well are pupils supported?	
Pastoral care	Very good
Personal and social development	Very good
Curricular and vocational guidance	Very good
Learning support	Good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Accommodation and facilities	Adequate
Climate and relationships	Very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	Very good
Equality and fairness	Good
Partnership with parents, the Board and the community	Very good

Improving the school	
Leadership	Very good
Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities	Good
Self-evaluation in the Lower school	Weak
Self-evaluation in the Upper school	Adequate

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	excellent
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just out weigh 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
Parents expressed very positive views about almost all aspects of provision.	There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<p>Almost all pupils in the Lower school and most in the Upper school were very pleased with almost all aspects of provision.</p> <p>Almost all thought that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they enjoyed being at the school and got on well with other pupils; • teachers helped them when they got stuck; and • they felt safe and secure in the school. 	<p>About two-fifths of pupils in the Upper school did not think they got the right amount of homework or were treated fairly in the school.</p>
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<p>All teaching and support staff in the Lower school and most of them in the Upper school were very pleased with almost all aspects of provision.</p> <p>All staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liked working in the school; and • thought that pupil success was regularly celebrated. <p>Almost all staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believed that pupils were enthusiastic about learning; and • there was mutual respect between staff and pupils. 	<p>There were no significant issues amongst teaching and support staff in the Lower school.</p> <p>A substantial minority of teachers in the Upper school stated that they did not think there was effective communication between senior managers and staff or that the time for continuous professional development was used effectively.</p> <p>Only half of the support staff in the Upper school thought that staff training time was not used effectively. Less than half thought they had good opportunities to be involved in decision making.</p>

Appendix 3 Attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:

- 7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C
- 6: Higher at A-C
- 5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2
- 4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4
- 3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S4

		2003	2004	2005
<i>English and Mathematics</i> <i>@ Level 3</i>	Albyn School	97	94	97
	National	91	91	90
<i>5+ @ Level 3 or Better</i>	Albyn School	97	94	97
	National	91	91	90
<i>5+ @ Level 4 or Better</i>	Albyn School	97	94	97
	National	76	77	76
<i>5+ @ Level 5 or Better</i>	Albyn School	85	77	85
	National	34	35	34

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S5

		2003	2004	2005
<i>5+ @ Level 4 or better</i>	Albyn School	103	97	97
	National	78	78	78
<i>5+ @ Level 5 or better</i>	Albyn School	83	97	86
	National	45	45	45
<i>1+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Albyn School	81	100	77
	National	39	39	39
<i>3+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Albyn School	67	88	51
	National	23	23	23
<i>5+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Albyn School	47	50	26
	National	10	9	10

Percentage of relevant S4 roll attaining by end of S6

		2003	2004	2005
<i>5+ @ Level 5 or better</i>	Albyn School	112	94	100
	National	47	47	47
<i>1+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Albyn School	97	86	103
	National	44	44	43
<i>3+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Albyn School	88	75	91
	National	31	31	30
<i>5+ @ Level 6 or better</i>	Albyn School	65	61	79
	National	20	20	19
<i>1+ @ Level 7 or better</i>	Albyn School	50	56	68
	National	12	12	12

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headmaster and school staff, the chairperson of the Board of Governors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Greyfriars House, Gallowgate, Aberdeen AB10 1LQ or by telephoning 01224 642544. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you wish to comment about independent all-through inspections

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of independent all-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Kenneth Muir, HMCI, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2nd Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 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. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk

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