



**Badcaul Primary School
and Nursery Class
Dundonnell
The Highland Council
19 May 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school¹. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents² and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the ‘ethos’ of the school. By ‘ethos’ we mean the relationships in the school, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school’s aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school’s success in achieving these aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

¹ The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

² Throughout this report, the term ‘parents’ should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. Examples of good practice
4. How well do children learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

1. The school

Badcaul Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Badcaul and the surrounding area. The roll was 17, including four in the nursery class when the inspection was carried out in March 2009. Children's attendance was below the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Enthusiastic, well behaved children who are keen to learn.
- Arrangements for children in the nursery class, P1 and P2 to play and work together to develop aspects of their learning.
- Positive relationships between children, parents and staff and increased involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher in improving the quality of active learning experiences.

3. Example of good practice

- Improved transition through shared learning in the nursery class, P1 and P 2.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery are progressing well in all aspects of their learning. They listen attentively to stories and talk confidently about what they are doing. They recognise their names in print and are learning to write them. Staff encourage them to learn about letters, numbers and shapes during play activities. Children enjoy playing outdoors and are learning about the natural world and how to care for it. They are very involved in the day to day activities of the school. They join in with visits and are contributing to the work being done by

the school towards gaining a silver Eco-School Scotland award. They benefit from well planned opportunities to develop early science skills together with children in P1 and P2.

Across the school, children are keen to learn and are becoming confident, independent learners. They are developing very good skills in working with others and evaluating their own work and that of others. Most make effective use of information and communications technology. Children achieve well in music and physical education and are developing positive attitudes to keeping safe and healthy. They are developing an awareness of biodiversity through a Scottish Fisheries programme about the life cycle of salmon. Children are learning about sustainability through their topic work on water and paper. They use their knowledge to good effect in school. Children in the nursery and the primary class achieve success and develop their personal and social skills in a wide range of activities. They participate in sporting activities, community projects, school clubs and performances. Children from P4 to P7 spoke positively about developing their independence and self-confidence through a very popular residential experience. Across the school, children regularly raise funds for charities. Older children help younger children to feel confident, safe and successful in school.

In the primary class, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have remained high in recent years. Almost all children read with understanding and enjoyment and write well for a variety of purposes. They listen attentively and talk confidently about their activities and opinions. By P7, children are confident in carrying out mental and written calculations and in interpreting graphs. They can calculate angles accurately and enjoy discussing the strategies they use to solve problems. Children develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of interesting contexts. For example, they used their reading skills and knowledge of shape to research and appreciate the work of a well known artist and then create their own artwork.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff in the nursery and the primary class provide a broad and stimulating variety of activities. They are developing the curriculum in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. As a result, there is a successful focus throughout the school on making learning challenging, meaningful and enjoyable. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of experiences, including recently, a visit from the Scottish Dance Theatre and a visit to a local riding stable. In the nursery, staff make good use of the garden and the local environment to develop children's knowledge of the changing seasons. They encourage children to be creative through role play and art and craft activities. Children in nursery, P1 and P2 work together both in the nursery and school classroom on planned learning activities, such as using computers to create patterns, baking and learning about planting and growing. In the primary class, teachers plan lessons which allow children to apply and extend their knowledge in activities which are enjoyable and meaningful to them. For example, in a mathematics lesson, children were learning about fractions and percentages by working out how to share the segments of their oranges. Staff are good at making links between areas of learning, such as linking work on literacy, science and caring for the environment with practical activities in the school garden. In the primary class, children in P1 to P3 have good opportunities to learn through well planned play activities. Children benefit from two hours of high quality physical education each week and those in P4 to P7 are making good progress in learning French. Staff and children make effective use of information and communications technology to support learning across the curriculum.

Staff know individual children very well and support them sensitively. They make imaginative use of resources to provide motivating contexts for learning and activities which are suitably challenging for all children. Children are making appropriate progress from their prior learning. Teachers set appropriate homework tasks which link well to class activities. All staff work well together to support children who need additional help. They involve parents and children in creating

individualised educational programmes with clearly identified learning targets. Progress towards these learning targets is carefully monitored. Support staff give valuable help to children and teachers.

5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

Relationships between the school, parents and the local community are positive. Parents appreciate the information they receive about events in school and their children's learning. Parents find the reports on their children's progress helpful. They feel welcome in school and find staff very approachable and helpful. The Parent Council actively supports the school. Parents help in class and contribute to a range of activities such as gardening, cooking and helping with visits. The school liaises effectively with other professionals to support children and their families. Children are very well supported as they transfer from nursery to P1. The school works effectively with Ullapool High School to ensure children in P7 have a positive introduction to secondary education.

6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Children are successful in taking on a range of responsibilities and feel they have a voice in making the school better. They all belong to the pupil council and the eco committee and confidently contribute their ideas for improving their school. Recently they instigated tree planting in the school grounds. They look after the school garden and help with recycling and composting. Older children act as energy monitors and nursery buddies. Teachers and support staff discuss their work with the aim of improving children's learning experiences. They are committed to supporting the work of the school and willingly take on additional responsibilities to enable children to benefit from many out of class activities. The headteacher leads staff in monitoring the work of the school. She uses the information gathered to plan

improvements. The headteacher understands the need to involve staff more in systematically identifying priorities for improvement.

7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

The school has a very friendly and inclusive atmosphere. Children feel safe and happy and are confident they will be helped if they are having any difficulties. Relationships between children and staff are characterised by mutual respect and good humour. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Children feel they are treated equally and fairly and that their opinions are valued. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and achievements.

Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies and through attractive displays. Regular assemblies provide opportunities for religious observance. The school has appropriate arrangements for dealing with any complaints from children, parents or members of the local community.

8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The headteacher provides strong, clear leadership and direction to the school. She is well liked by children, parents and staff. She has established very good teamwork among staff. She has a clear vision for the school which emphasises making learning meaningful and successful for all children. Her own teaching is a model of good practice and she has implemented significant improvements to learning and teaching. She has fostered positive relationships with parents and the community and involved parents more in their children's learning. Overall, the headteacher and staff work hard to ensure children succeed in their learning and are well supported in this by parents and the local community. The school is well placed to continue to improve the quality of its work.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits following this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Continue to improve approaches to self-evaluation, involving staff in the process, in order to identify how children's learning experiences can be developed further.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Badcaul Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

Improvements in performance	very good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	very good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	very good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

Isabel Bolton
Managing Inspector
 19 May 2009

To find out more about inspections or get an electronic copy of this report go to www.hmie.gov.uk. Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team (BMCT) if you wish to enquire about our arrangements for translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

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 SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at www.spsso.org.uk.

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