



**Bishopmill Primary School
Elgin
The Moray Council
17 February 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. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

1. The school

Bishopmill Primary School is a non-denominational school serving part of the east side of Elgin. The roll was 332 when the inspection was carried out in November 2008. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2006/07.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Approaches to developing children's wider achievements.
- Very effective partnership working with parents, agencies and businesses to support children's learning.
- Well-behaved and confident children.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the school, almost all children are achieving national levels of attainment in reading and mathematics. Most are achieving these levels in writing. Half are attaining these levels earlier than might normally be expected in reading. Higher-achieving children are capable of working at a more demanding level, particularly in writing. Children listen well to teachers and to one another. They work well together in groups, confidently sharing their views. Children are making good progress in developing reading skills. Their writing skills are not well enough developed. Children are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve their writing. The quality of their written work is not sufficiently high. In mathematics, children work well with numbers, both orally and in their written work. They are unsure of which problem solving strategies to use when tackling problems. Most children have a good understanding of shape. Records of a few children's attainment in mathematics are unreliable. In other curricular areas, children need to be more aware of what they require to do to improve their work. Staff do not assess children's attainment well enough to ensure that all children make appropriate progress. Children are developing a wide knowledge and a range of skills in science. For example, children in P4 have a good understanding of the properties of materials through working together

in practical activities. Across the school, children successfully participate in a wide range of sporting and expressive arts activities.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children experience a good curriculum which includes stimulating enterprise and global citizenship activities. Teachers are beginning to develop aspects of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. This work is beginning to improve children's experiences in a few classes. Children are making some good use of computers to improve their learning. The school has recognised the need to develop this further to provide consistently high quality learning experiences. Children are not having sufficiently well planned opportunities to develop their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. Overall, too many activities are based on textbook and worksheet activities which do not provide sufficient challenge. The school is working successfully towards providing all pupils with two hours of high quality physical education each week. With the help of visiting specialist teachers, children are developing good skills in art and physical education. Children's personal and social skills are very well developed. Staff are increasing children's understanding of diversity and are developing an ethos of respect very effectively. The school is developing learning through activity.

Staff are knowledgeable about the needs of the children they work with and, overall, provide well for their learning needs. They are successful in encouraging children to behave well. The school is very effective at identifying and meeting the needs of children who require additional support in their learning. Teachers plan tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for almost all children in most areas of the curriculum. Overall, children could be challenged further in areas of English language and mathematics. Almost all children are contributing well to their learning and work well in pairs and groups. Most teachers engage children well in their learning. They give clear explanations. In a few classes, questioning is used very well to check children's understanding and challenge their thinking. Teachers share the purposes of lessons with children. There is scope to develop this

further to ensure a consistent approach which leads to high quality learning experiences for all children. Most teachers use the ends of lessons to review what has been learned. The quality of this practice is not consistently effective across the school. Teachers set appropriate and regular homework tasks.

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

The school works closely with the supportive Parent Council. Support for learning teachers and assistants give very good support to individuals and small groups of children. Parents are very well informed about children's learning experiences in school. They are given very useful advice on how to extend learning at home. Staff work in very effective partnerships with a range of organisations. These include psychological services, health personnel and a range of businesses. These partnerships provide opportunities which are successful in improving children's learning experiences. Staff prepare children very well for their move from local pre-school centres to P1 and from P7 to Elgin Academy. They take very effective steps to treat all children equally and fairly. The school is good at sorting out complaints from parents and children.

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

Children across the school take up effectively the many opportunities of responsibility offered to them. Older children support younger children well and successfully organise events such as assemblies. Members of the school's active pupil council are part of the school's health promoting group, which also includes teachers and parents. This group organises very successful health promoting activities each term. Children are aware of how to care for their environment and are knowledgeable about recycling and saving energy. As a result, the school has been awarded a silver Eco Schools Scotland Award. Staff

and children have taken positive steps to increase the school's involvement in the local community. For example, children in P7 work with a local theatre group for young adults with health issues. Children are successful in taking on acting and production roles. Staff teamwork is good. There is a willingness to improve the school. Staff are beginning to reflect more deeply on how to further improve learning and teaching. This is an area for further development in the school.

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

Children and staff are very proud of their school and its achievements. Staff and children work well together. Children help each other in classes and in the playground. Staff have formed very good relationships with children. There is scope for staff to provide children with greater challenge in their learning. Children's wider achievements are recognised through displays and assemblies. Staff are very caring and concerned about the wellbeing of all children. All staff are knowledgeable about the school's child protection procedures, which they follow consistently. Children appreciate the concern shown by staff and feel valued and cared for. The school is very active in promoting equality and fairness through the positive inclusion of all children in all school activities.

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

The school's clear aims and values are shared by staff, parents and children. The headteacher has clearly identified areas requiring to be developed to improve children's learning. She now needs to ensure that these developments are implemented consistently across the school. The depute headteachers carry out valuable work in helping children to improve their learning. Together, with the principal teachers, they carry out their remits well. Staff are keen to work together to improve the school. They do not have enough opportunities to take a lead in developing the curriculum. There is

good practice in the school which should be shared among all staff. The school regularly evaluates its work. It recognises the need to develop the processes of self-evaluation to ensure improvements in standards of attainment and achievement. In particular, staff need to use more effectively the information from assessments to plan children's next steps in learning. With the continuing support of the education authority, the school is well placed to improve further.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits following this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

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

- Continue to develop the school's self-evaluation procedures to improve the quality of learning and teaching.
- Ensure that all children have consistently high quality, sufficiently challenging learning experiences.
- Improve staff's use of assessment information to ensure that all children make appropriate progress.

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 Bishopmill Primary School.

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

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: Peter Gollogly
17 February 2009

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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