



**Bridgend Primary School
and Nursery Class
Alness
The Highland Council
3 November 2009**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its 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 from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school

Bridgend Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the west end of the town of Alness and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 254, including 54 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in September 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The headteacher and depute's leadership of improvement.
- Improvements in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A strong, caring ethos and positive relationships among staff, parents and children.
- Children who work collaboratively and responsibly.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class, children are happy and settled. They are successfully learning to form friendships, play together and to share and take turns. Children are developing confidence in choosing toys and making decisions when playing. They are not involved enough in planning their own learning and in developing their own interests. Across the primary stages, children are keen to learn. Almost all work well together and contribute positively when discussing their learning. In most classes, children evaluate their own work well and are clear about what they are trying to learn.

In the nursery class, children are making satisfactory progress in their development and learning. Children express their ideas readily through role-play. They enjoy selecting their choice of materials to make interesting collage pictures. Children are becoming confident in using computers to help them learn. They are able to use a range of wheeled toys in the outdoor area. They need to learn more about their outdoor environment. At the primary stages, children achieve success in their learning, within and beyond the classroom. Across the stages, they are developing skills of enterprise through a range of well-chosen

activities. At the early and middle stages, children enjoyed compiling books which they sold, and using their imagination to design mathematical games. At the upper stages, children have worked well with staff to organise a lively health week with a wide range of healthy activities and challenges. Those at P7 have learned successfully about rights and responsibilities and can discuss these well. Recently, children in the nursery and primary classes enjoyed showing their pictures to parents at a successful art exhibition.

Children in the nursery class listen carefully during story times and are becoming confident in talking to adults and other children. Most are able to recognise their names. A few are beginning to develop early writing skills, for example during role-play activities. Most children can recognise numbers and are developing confidence in counting. They are not yet developing skills in reading, writing and early mathematics consistently throughout the playroom. At the primary stages, children are making good progress in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved consistently over recent years and most children attain appropriate national levels. An increasing number of children exceed these levels. In English language, across the stages, children listen well to their teachers and to each other. They can talk well about stories which they have read. Most children enjoy reading and can identify the key features of text. Children write effectively for a variety of purposes and have a good understanding of how to improve their work. In mathematics, children at the early stages are learning to count successfully. Across the stages, most children are developing suitable skills in mental and written calculations and have a good knowledge of shapes. By P7, most children can identify and use appropriate strategies to solve mathematical problems effectively. Across the stages, children are not yet skilled enough in using information and communications technology.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

In the nursery class, staff provide children with activities and resources which take account of children's choices and interests. Staff encourage children to make healthy choices at snack time. They provide a wide range of technology, including digital cameras, to motivate children in their learning. Staff engage well with children during their play and talk with them at group and snack times. They do not use questions and discussions effectively enough to challenge children to think more for themselves. A few adult-led activities provide too little variety for children to be active learners. In the primary classes, staff provide children with a broad curriculum. They have started to take account of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff develop children's literacy and numeracy skills during cross-curricular topics. Children at P7 recently learned a wide range of skills, including important team skills, during a residential outdoor experience. Children do not yet take part in two hours of good quality physical education each week.

In the nursery class, staff work hard to provide a caring, welcoming environment. They observe children's learning but do not always use this information well enough to ensure that learning is set at a suitable level of difficulty. Activities and resources do not always fully meet children's learning needs. In the primary stages, staff know children well. In most lessons, staff match tasks and activities well to meet children's learning needs. In a few lessons, work is too easy. Children with additional needs receive helpful support. Staff should set clearer targets and review arrangements for children who require individualised educational programmes. Staff are beginning to identify children's interests and to match these to learning activities. Almost all teachers use praise well to encourage children. Most use questions effectively to check children's understanding. Teachers share the purpose of lessons well with children and make good use of homework.

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

Staff work well with parents to support children's learning. A few parents contribute to after-school activities. The Parent Council has successfully organised fundraising events to raise money for the school and to promote community involvement. Almost all parents are happy about the school and feel well informed about their children's progress. Staff provide parents with helpful information about the curriculum, including sensitive health education issues. Almost all parents feel that the school consults them well and takes account of their views. They are satisfied that staff deal promptly and effectively with any concerns or complaints. Staff have effective links with a wide range of agencies, including educational psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Children receive good support when moving from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Alness Academy.

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

Staff work well together to improve the school. Most staff contribute positively to after-school activities or in organising special events throughout the year. A few staff have additional responsibilities for curricular initiatives, such as the Highland Literacy Project and environmental education. Most staff feel that they can discuss the school's work and they are involved in setting priorities for improvement. Staff and children have suitable opportunities to contribute to school evaluations. Recently, children worked well with staff to review and update the school's vision and values. Children like discussing their learning with their teachers and with each other. They feel that staff listen to what they say. Children take responsibilities to support the overall life of the school seriously. For example, those in P3 help younger children in nursery move on to P1. Senior staff visit classes regularly and provide teachers with helpful suggestions for improvement. They monitor children's progress in the primary classes very effectively and this work has led to improvements in attainment.

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

The school is welcoming and children are polite and well behaved. Staff have high expectations for children's attendance, behaviour and progress. Children enjoy school and feel safe and well looked after. Most are confident that staff will deal effectively with any bullying. The school encourages children to be safe and healthy. Staff understand the school's child protection procedures. Staff celebrate children's achievements, including those taking place out of school, effectively at assemblies and by using individual achievement folders. Children are developing an awareness of the beliefs and customs of others. Staff should look for more opportunities to promote equality and cultural diversity across the school.

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

The school shares its aims and values well with staff, parents and children. The headteacher is well supported by his staff and provides sound direction and leadership of improvement. He has led successfully many important developments to improve children's learning and achievements. The depute headteacher provides very strong support. Staff feel well led and supported by senior managers. They provide a very caring ethos and contribute well to children's welfare and learning. The school is well placed to continue to improve through building on existing good practice.

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 in connection with 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.

- Improve the quality of children's learning experiences and performance in the nursery class.
- Continue to improve provision for meeting children's needs by sharing good practice more consistently across nursery and primary classes.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements or recommendations.

Requirements

One requirement has been made at this inspection.

The provider must ensure appropriate use of the space within the children's toilets. In order to do this the headteacher and staff must do the following.

- Relocate the parents' notice-board and children's coats to ensure children's privacy and dignity. This is to comply with SSI 2002/114 Regulation 4(1)(a), a regulation to ensure the health and welfare of service users.
- Relocate or protect the resources stored within this area. This is to comply with SSI 2002/114 Regulation 4(1)(d) a regulation to ensure appropriate infection control procedures are in place.

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 Bridgend Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Children's experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Alistair Brown
3 November 2009

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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