



**Burghead Primary School
and Nursery Class
The Moray Council
24 August 2010**

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.

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

Burghead Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the villages of Burghead, Roseisle and Cummingston. The roll was 158, including 20 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in June 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. The school has experienced significant changes in the school management team over the last three sessions. The headteacher took up post in August 2009 and the acting principal teacher was appointed in May 2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Friendly and confident children who are well behaved and keen to learn.
- Links with support agencies and the contributions of parents, the local community and visiting teachers that enhance children's learning experiences.
- The commitment of the headteacher and all staff to working effectively as a team to make improvements for learners.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the school, almost all children are enthusiastic about learning. Children in the nursery class are happy and approach staff to talk or ask for help with confidence. Most concentrate well on their chosen activities. They need to develop more independence in their learning. Children in the primary classes work well together in groups to build each other's confidence. They can share ideas and explain how they solve problems to achieve success. Children need to discuss more regularly with their teachers what they are learning and how they can improve their work.

Children show confidence and they experience success through a range of activities. In the nursery, children recently enjoyed investigating how volcanoes erupt and send ash into the atmosphere. They made their own volcanoes using baking ingredients. In the primary classes, many children achieve success in the wide range of healthy lunch time and after-school clubs run by staff and parents. Children contribute responsibly to school life through their pupil council and junior road safety activities. They need to be more involved in making decisions to achieve further success. Older children help

younger ones experience success in their learning by reading and playing mathematical games together. Children respond enthusiastically when given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, for example in using the Internet to research topics. They are developing an understanding of global issues through a range of fundraising projects. Through meaningful links with a primary school in Mexico, children at the upper stages are developing important global citizenship skills. Children are proud of their personal achievements. The school needs to take more account of children's achievements to help them succeed across all aspects of learning.

Children in the nursery class are making good progress in their development and learning. Almost all enjoy looking at books and most listen well to stories. Older children can recognise their names in print. All children can make marks with confidence. They need to use their early writing skills across a range of play activities. Children are able to count, match and sort objects during play. In the primary classes, most children attain appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Most children are making good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in listening, talking, reading and writing. In English language, almost all children listen attentively in class and group discussions and respond well to teachers' instructions. A significant minority of children do not read with enough confidence or expression. In writing, children are beginning to write longer pieces and for a wider range of purposes. Children's handwriting skills are improving. Across the school, spelling is not good enough. In mathematics, most children are accurate and confident in mental and written calculations. They draw and use graphs and charts well to display and record information. Most children have a good knowledge of shape. By P7, most can measure and draw angles, identify compass points and use coordinates well. At all stages, children work together well using a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. They are not skilled enough in using computers to support their mathematical learning.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Across the school, staff are at the very early stages of developing the curriculum using *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff in the nursery class provide a broad range of learning activities that are beginning to take more account of children's interests. Play activities are very well supported by staff. Staff in the primary classes are improving children's classroom experiences, particularly through their topic work. The pace of change is not quick enough. Staff need to help children apply their numeracy and health and wellbeing skills across different aspects of the curriculum. All children have two hours of good-quality physical education each week. Staff make very effective use of visits, visitors and specialist teachers in music, physical education and art and design to make learning more interesting for children. Staff need to provide more well-planned, purposeful play for children in the nursery and at the early stages.

In the nursery class, staff know children very well and have very positive relationships with children and families. They observe children at play and interact very well to support their learning. Staff need to improve what they record and use this information more effectively to plan for children's learning. In the primary classes, tasks, activities and resources are mostly well matched to the learning needs of children. Teachers share the purposes of lessons and give clear explanations and instructions. They need to ensure that all children are challenged enough in their learning. Children do not always have sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. The support for learning teacher and support staff provide high-quality support for children's learning across the school. They work closely with teachers, support agencies and parents to identify children's individual needs and provide very effective support for children who have difficulties with their learning. As a result, these children are making appropriate progress.

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

The school has strong partnerships with parents and the community who help with cycling proficiency training and clubs, including a productive gardening club. Parents are well informed about the school's work through helpful newsletters and e-mails. The supportive Parent Council is involved in many fundraising activities for the school. The local community police make an important contribution to promoting children's safety and health and wellbeing. The school is benefiting from the recent location of the public library in the school. Children now have access to a wider range of books. Library staff are keen to motivate children to read more. The education authority's literacy officer has made a very positive contribution to developing the school's literacy approaches. The school responds effectively and promptly to parental enquiries and has clear procedures for dealing with complaints. It consults parents appropriately about health education. Staff seek parents' views about the school but these are not used effectively enough to make improvements. Individual children have been supported successfully through close learning partnerships with support agencies. Older children shared video conferences with two primary schools in an interesting information and communications technology project to compare the lives and lifestyles of children in other parts of Scotland. Staff prepare children well for their transfer from nursery to primary. Children at P7 are well supported for their transfer to Lossiemouth High School.

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

Children respond enthusiastically to opportunities to take on responsibilities. The pupil council is making improvements to the playground. The junior road safety officers are producing a 'bike safety' film about cycling to school. They work closely with the local police to raise and resolve safety issues around the school. They take pride in the support they give and can discuss how this enables them to develop confidence and citizenship skills. Older children have been

very successful as 'bullybusters' in the playground. These activities are also helping to promote health and wellbeing in themselves and others. Children would benefit from more opportunities to be involved in making decisions about their learning in classes. Staff seek children's views about the school but these are not used effectively enough to make improvements. Staff are supportive of each other. They are keen to improve the school. All staff now need to take greater leadership roles in developing the work of the school. Nursery staff are not making enough use of self-evaluation to ensure more appropriate priorities for improvement are taken forward. The tracking of the pace of children's learning, achievement and progress needs further improvement to help raise attainment.

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

The school has a caring ethos and staff work hard to ensure all children are treated equally and fairly. Almost all children behave well and are polite, friendly and supportive of one another. Children feel safe in school and consider that any instances of bullying will be dealt with effectively by staff. Staff are committed to the wellbeing and support of all children and are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. Staff now need to promote more positive behaviour strategies across the school. Staff and children do not always have high enough expectations of what children can achieve. Children also need to be more ambitious for their own achievement. The school actively encourages children to make healthy lifestyle choices. Children are provided with a wide range of sporting activities across the year. Children's achievements are regularly shared and celebrated through assemblies, awards and displays. Children are aware of the beliefs and customs of other cultures and have regular opportunities for religious observance. The school has effective strategies in place to encourage children to attend.

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

The enthusiastic, hardworking headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of the school which he has shared with staff. Despite

several changes in the school management team, he has built positive relationships with staff, parents and children. Under his effective leadership, children's behaviour has improved. The acting principal teacher, within her short time in post, has worked well with the headteacher to drive improvements. Staff are ready and willing to be involved in taking forward developments. By working together, the school is developing a clear sense of direction and is well placed to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, 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 attainment in English language and increase challenge in children's learning activities across the curriculum.
- Improve the pace of implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* across the nursery and primary stages.
- Strengthen approaches to self-evaluation to increase impact, particularly tracking and monitoring individuals' progress.
- Develop leadership of all staff to improve learning across the school.

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 Burghead 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	good
Meeting learning needs	good

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

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: June Graham
24 August 2010

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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