

**Cannich Bridge Primary School  
The Highland Council  
13 June 2006**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Key strengths</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5. How well are pupils supported?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. How good is the environment for learning?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7. Improving the school</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Indicators of quality</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>How can you contact us?</b>	<b>10</b>

## 1. Background

Cannich Bridge Primary School was inspected in February and March 2006 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA), and a group of parents<sup>1</sup>.

The school serves the village of Cannich and the surrounding area in Inverness-shire. At the time of the inspection the roll was 45, including 15 children in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher who had been in post for three months.

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

## 2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- Warm, supportive and courteous relationships amongst all pupils and adults associated with the school.
- Close links with parents and the school's contribution to its community.
- Staff teamwork and their promotion of pupils' wider achievements.
- Exceptionally high quality school meals.
- The leadership and vision of the acting headteacher.

---

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

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

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

Parents were very pleased with the work of the school. Many commented that it had a very good reputation in the community and that they valued highly the approachability of staff. A large number praised the vision and leadership of the acting headteacher. They thought that staff and pupils respected each other and that if they had a concern the school would take action quickly. A significant minority mentioned the positive impact of the school's wider work on the local community. Pupils felt happy in the school and enjoyed being there. Many expressed appreciation of the care and support provided by their teachers. All staff liked working in the school and felt that the pupils were enthusiastic about learning. They thought that the school was very well led and that there was very effective teamwork and communication at all levels.

### **4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?**

#### **Pupils' learning experiences and achievements**

The school offered pupils a very good curriculum which was broad and balanced. A well-developed scheme of values education and their involvement in a range of enterprise activities enhanced pupils' experiences. Effective approaches to pupils' personal and social development had raised their awareness of how they could contribute as active citizens. Pupils benefited from the effective promotion of healthy eating, exercise and personal hygiene. Available additional time was appropriately allocated to English language and mathematics and to other aspects of the curriculum as required to meet pupils' needs at different stages. Staff used links between curricular areas, for example, mathematics and environmental studies, to provide real-life contexts for pupils' learning. The quality of teaching was good. Teachers used a range of effective approaches. Explanations and instructions were clear. Teachers used questioning very well to ensure understanding and reinforce learning but did not always share fully with pupils what was to be learned. In many lessons, teachers made very good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance their teaching and stimulate pupils' imaginations. They used praise well but did not always give sufficient written feedback on pupils' work to indicate how they could improve. Regular homework included an appropriate range of research activities.

Throughout the school, pupils took responsibility for, and were actively involved in, their own learning. In many instances pupils worked together very well. Pupils were very good at thinking independently and worked well in groups. Most were highly motivated and worked enthusiastically. Pupils responded very well to teachers' questions which ensured that all concentrated fully on their learning. The pace set by teachers was sometimes too slow. Very good access to ICT enabled pupils to research widely and to explore ideas relating to their work in English language, mathematics and environmental studies. Class routines were well known and carefully followed by pupils. Those who finished their tasks quickly made very good use of the additional activities available to enrich their learning.

Pupils played a key part in the school's full accreditation as a health promoting school and served on the School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG). They were also closely involved in the school's bid for an Eco School award for its work in promoting environmental issues. Older pupils were developing a good understanding of road safety through their involvement as Junior Road Safety Officers and participation in cycling proficiency training. The pupil council, with membership from all stages, had organised a number of playground improvements, including a friendship bench, basketball and football facilities. Pupils held special events each year to raise funds for a charity they had chosen and learned to care for others through financially supporting families in Africa. The school visited the local day care centre and entertained older members of the community through music and song. These initiatives gave pupils very good opportunities to develop an understanding of active citizenship.

### **English language**

The overall quality of pupils' attainment in English language was good. Over recent years the levels of attainment had remained steady. From P1 to P7 almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment. Pupils at P1 to P4 who experienced some difficulties in their learning were making steady progress but the pace of learning for a few pupils in the upper stages was too slow. Almost all pupils listened carefully and followed instructions successfully. Pupils from P1 to P4 talked confidently in pairs about personal experiences. At P7, a few pupils lacked the confidence to talk readily about their experiences and feelings and express opinions about texts they had read. Pupils at P1 to P4 read reports aloud to one another with confidence. By P7, pupils read individually for pleasure and were highly skilled in finding information from a number of sources. At most stages, pupils wrote well for a range of purposes and audiences. By P7 most pupils wrote interesting and expressive pieces of good length.

### **Mathematics**

The quality of attainment in mathematics overall was adequate. Over the last three years levels of attainment had been steady. All pupils at the early stages and most pupils at the upper stages achieved appropriate attainment levels. A few pupils had achieved these levels earlier than might be expected. Pupils who experienced some difficulties in their learning were making steady progress. At P7, pupils' understanding of the relationships between fractions and decimals was too limited. Pupils collected and displayed information and interpreted graphs very well at all stages. At the upper stages pupils made very good use of ICT to organise and display information. Most carried out written calculations appropriately but at all stages pupils required further practice in mental calculation. In shape, position and movement almost all pupils identified two- and three-dimensional shapes accurately and discussed their properties with understanding. Across the school, pupils' skills in problem-solving and enquiry and their knowledge of strategies used to solve problems were weak.

## **5. How well are pupils supported?**

The quality of pastoral care was very good. All staff were very caring and very strongly committed to ensuring pupils' well-being. Staff knew their pupils and their circumstances very well and responded sensitively to their social and emotional needs. Pupils showed care and concern for each other and older pupils effectively supported those younger than themselves. Procedures and routines for ensuring the care and welfare of pupils, including the prevention of bullying, were effective and well-established. Staff carefully followed protocols and procedures for the administration of medicine and for dealing with severe allergies. Pupils' personal and social development was very well supported by learning about important aspects of healthy and safe living, including personal safety, relationships and substance misuse. The school strongly promoted healthy lifestyles. This initiative was enhanced by morning interval snacks and a very high standard of school lunches.

Staff made good use of their knowledge and skills to cater for pupils with additional support needs. They supported pupils with additional support needs with well-judged tasks and materials. Teachers' effective questioning and explanations helped pupils overcome difficulties in their learning. However, they had as yet not developed individualised educational programmes for those with additional support needs to make pupils and parents aware of how their learning could improve. Higher attaining pupils in P4-P7 required, in a number of instances, a faster pace of work and a wider range of challenging activities. The school required further specialist advice to ensure that the needs of all pupils with additional support needs were met in full.

## 6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	The quality of accommodation and facilities was good. Security arrangements were appropriate and access for those with mobility problems was very good. Space for pupil social areas was very limited. Physical education classes were held in the village hall. Learning and teaching resources, including ICT, were up to date, well organised and easily accessible.
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	The school had a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Staff, pupils and parents were very proud of the school. The reception of visitors was very well organised and welcoming. Pupil and staff morale was very high and teamwork was exceptionally strong. At all levels relationships were extremely positive. Pupils' achievements were celebrated and praised throughout the week, at assembly and through the use of wall displays. Standards of behaviour and discipline were exemplary.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	Staff had very high expectations for the quality of pupils' work and its presentation. They used a range of highly successful strategies to motivate pupils and reward positive behaviour, including an effective points system. Pupils enjoyed the social experience at lunchtimes. All members of the school community were treated in a fair and just manner. In line with the school's anti-racist policy, cultural diversity was regularly celebrated. There were frequent opportunities for religious observance.
Partnership with parents and the community	School events consistently attracted extensive support from parents and the wider community. Reports to parents on their children's progress were perceptive and detailed. Well-attended evening meetings provided parents with helpful information on curriculum developments. Staff also invited parents of nursery pupils about to enrol in P1 to learn about the school's curriculum and routines. The school consulted parents each year on potentially sensitive aspects of its health education programme. Parents were fully involved in SNAG, and the Eco School initiative. Many gave of their time and expertise to improve the playground and other facilities. The PTA was active in support of the school. Parents had arranged a number of very successful fundraising activities. Each month the school produced regular, informative newsletters for parents which included a summary of the school's improvement priorities. Pupils benefited from a range of useful links with the local community. These included the local policeman, an Active Schools Coordinator, Glenurquhart High School and Fèis Rois outreach workers.

## 7. Improving the school

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

Cannich Bridge Primary School provided a warm and caring learning environment to which pupils responded responsibly. There was a strong sense of mutual respect between pupils and staff. The school very successfully ensured that all children and adults associated with it were part of a very strong partnership. Pupils achieved widely outwith the formal curriculum and raised considerable sums of money for charity. However, despite recent improvements, standards of attainment in aspects of English language and mathematics were still too low overall. The specialist needs of pupils with additional support needs were not always fully met.

The acting headteacher provided high quality leadership. She had a clear and perceptive vision for the school focused directly on improving learning, teaching and attainment. She had successfully drawn together an effective, supportive and caring staff and had instituted a review of care and welfare procedures to ensure conformity with recent legislation. Her relationships were of the highest quality and she was held in very high regard by staff, pupils and parents. She had involved staff extensively in improving the school and in policy development. The acting headteacher had put in place good arrangements for evaluating the quality of the school's work but it was as yet too early to see their full impact. Staff formally reviewed pupils' progress and attainment each month. They made good use of information from assessment, including National Assessment results, to track and predict pupils' progress. However, they had not always been fully successful in matching learning tasks and activities to pupils' emerging needs. They had sought parents' and pupils' views on aspects of the school's work through surveys and questionnaires. The information gained had informed an effective improvement plan. The acting headteacher had visited classes to observe learning and teaching. Her feedback, while perceptive, had not yet focused closely enough on improving teachers' practice. Cannich Bridge Primary School was well placed to continue to improve and provide a high quality education for its pupils.

#### **Main points for action**

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

- continue to improve attainment in English language and mathematics;
- ensure that the learning needs of pupils with additional support needs are more effectively met; and
- continue to refine arrangements for evaluating the quality of the school's work.

### **What happens next?**

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority 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. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

Duncan MacQuarrie  
HM Inspector

13 June 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.

<b>How good are learning, teaching and achievement?</b>	
Structure of the curriculum	Very good
The teaching process	Good
Pupils' learning experiences	Very good
Pupils' attainment in English language	Good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Adequate

<b>How well are pupils supported?</b>	
Pastoral care	Very good
Meeting pupils' needs	Adequate

<b>How good is the environment for learning?</b>	
Accommodation and facilities	Good
Climate and relationships	Excellent
Expectations and promoting achievement	Very good
Equality and fairness	Very good
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	Very good

<b>Improving the school</b>	
Leadership	Good
Self-evaluation	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 outweigh 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. Where any one group had five or less respondees then, in order to maintain confidentiality, the analysis is not provided.

<b>What parents thought the school did well</b>	<b>What parents think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their children.</li> <li>• Parents' evenings were helpful and informative.</li> <li>• Their children were treated fairly.</li> <li>• The school explained how children could be helped with their homework.</li> <li>• Mutual respect was effectively developed between teachers and pupils.</li> <li>• The school was well led.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</li> </ul>
<b>What pupils thought the school did well</b>	<b>What pupils think the school could do better</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers explained things clearly and treated them fairly.</li> <li>• At least one teacher knew them well.</li> <li>• Teachers helped them when they had difficulties and listened to what they said.</li> <li>• Teachers expected them to work as hard as they could.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no significant issues.</li> </ul>

## **How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture & Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **If you wish to comment about primary inspections**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, Acting HMCI, at 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, Second 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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk). More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk).

Crown Copyright 2006

HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.