



**Carrbridge Primary School
and Nursery Class
The Highland Council
18 May 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

Carrbridge Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Carrbridge and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 69, including 14 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in March 2010. The headteacher served as acting headteacher from August 2009 and took up permanent post in February 2010. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2008/2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children are polite, very well behaved and motivated in school.
- Positive relationships throughout the school community.
- Staff teamwork and commitment to providing children with high-quality learning experiences.
- The leadership of the headteacher in improving the school.
- The support provided for children who require additional help with their learning.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery class are happy and settled. They know their routines and are confident choosing toys and making decisions when playing. Children are learning to form friendships, share and take turns. They are learning to play cooperatively indoors and outside. Across the nursery and primary classes, children are polite, kind and courteous. At the primary stages, children are motivated and eager to learn. They work very well together and are actively engaged in their learning. Almost all children feel that they have a say in their learning and that staff listen to their views. They are involved in planning and reviewing their own learning. Children discuss the quality of their work and receive helpful feedback about their progress from adults and from each other. Almost all children feel, appropriately, that the school is helping them to become more confident.

Children in the nursery class are developing their understanding of the natural world through experiences outdoors. They are confident talking about animals, their homes and hibernation. Children are creative through role-play, art and craft activities. They enjoy special music sessions and know a range of songs that they like to perform. Across the primary classes, children achieve success both within and outwith the classroom. They are developing very good skills in physical education and take part in a range of sporting activities. They are developing a good understanding of world religions, such as Buddhism and Islam. Children at the upper stages are competent in programming graphics software to draw a range of regular shapes. All children take part confidently in concerts, displaying good skills in singing and playing instruments. They are developing a very good understanding of global issues through a range of fundraising projects. Older children take on leadership roles and whole school duties with responsibility and pride.

Children are doing well in the nursery class. Almost all children can recognise their name when it is printed on cards. Most listen well during story and group times. They are confident when talking to adults and other children. Most children can count to ten and a few can count beyond. Staff need to encourage children to be more independent in their learning. At the primary stages, almost all children achieve appropriate national levels in reading and most do so in writing and mathematics. More children should achieve these levels earlier than they do. In English language, almost all children are confident and articulate when speaking. They listen very well and respect the views of others. They enjoy reading and read confidently with expression and understanding. Children at the upper stages are skilled in extracting key information from text. Children write for a range of purposes, including the school website, and have a good understanding of grammar and punctuation. Standards of handwriting and presentation need to be improved. Children need more opportunities to produce longer pieces of writing and to use information and communications technology more effectively to improve their writing. In mathematics, most children are confident and accurate in written calculations involving number, money and

measurement. They need to improve their ability to solve problems mentally. Children have a good understanding of symmetry and angles. A few are not secure enough in their knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Children can collect, present and interpret information in a range of ways. Children are not confident enough when applying their mathematics to real-life contexts.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school has made a positive start to developing the curriculum taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the nursery and primary classes, children experience a broad curriculum which supports their learning and development. Staff plan activities which enable children to make good links across learning. A good recent example was learning at the middle stages based on the Stone Age. Staff have recognised the need to develop more consistent approaches to planning, particularly in science and health education. Children need better opportunities to develop their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. Children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Staff use the school grounds and the local area well to enhance children's learning. A range of visitors to the school further enriches children's learning.

Staff know children very well. They interact with children in a supportive and caring way. They have created a very positive environment for learning. They give clear explanations and share the purposes of lessons with children. Staff use questions appropriately to check and extend children's understanding. On occasion, the pace of progress for different groups of children is too slow. Staff evaluations of children's play in the nursery are not yet used effectively to identify what children need to learn next. Across the school, children who need additional help with their learning are very well supported and they make good progress. Targets set for them, including those identified in individualised educational programmes, are clear and well-considered.

The support for learning teacher and support assistants provide very valuable and skilled support for children's learning. Homework activities are regular and varied.

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

The school has developed successful partnerships with a range of agencies to support children's learning and to promote their health and wellbeing. The Parent Council supports the school very well with fundraising and school events. It is consulted on school improvement issues and responds constructively. The school works very well with parents to support children's learning. Staff actively encourage parents to become involved in the school. A number of parents share their skills, interests and expertise, for example by contributing to children's learning in French and music. Staff consult parents in a variety of ways about the work of the school, including health education. Almost all parents feel confident to approach the school with concerns. A minority would welcome clearer information about how the school takes parents' views into account. The school has appropriate procedures for dealing with any complaints. Almost all parents feel that their children's learning is progressing well. A minority would welcome more information about their child's progress. The school uses links with the local community well to enrich children's learning. Children are well supported as they move from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Grantown Grammar School.

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

All children and staff play an active part in the life of the school. Children take on a range of leadership roles with enthusiasm. Good examples of these roles include young leaders, house captains, monitors and pupil council members. Older children successfully run information evenings for parents. The eco council has been

successful in improving the school. As a result the school has gained an Eco-Schools Scotland silver award. Staff take on leadership roles willingly. They work together very well as a team to improve learning experiences for children. They learn about good practice from visiting each other's classes. The headteacher evaluates learning and teaching across the school and provides clear guidance for further improvement. Staff recognise the need to increase the extent to which self-evaluation approaches improve children's learning.

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

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and attitude. Children behave very well and relationships within the school community are very positive. The school has a nurturing 'family' ethos and children are treated equally, fairly and with respect. Almost all children enjoy their learning and feel safe and cared for in school. Staff respond appropriately to any incidents of bullying and racism. All staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The school actively encourages children to make healthy lifestyle choices and has been awarded Health Promoting School status. Children's achievements are regularly shared and celebrated through assemblies, newsletters, displays and awards. Children are aware of the beliefs and customs of others. They have regular opportunities for religious observance. A minority of parents had concerns about children's safety in the playground. The school should continue to review how different areas of the playground are used in order to ensure appropriate supervision.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision and very high aspirations for the school. She is highly regarded by children, staff and parents and has led the school through a period of staffing instability very successfully. Staff are committed to improvement and are eager to evaluate and embrace new ideas. They support the headteacher's ambitions for the

school and embrace her improvement strategies very well. Children are very proud of their school and keen to share in its improvement. Building on the expertise and commitment of all within the school community, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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.

- Strengthen children's learning in writing and mathematics.
- Continue to improve the curriculum taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Increase the challenge in children's learning.

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

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 Carrbridge Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
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	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Peter Eavers
18 May 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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