



**Foyers Primary School
The Highland Council
23 June 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.

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1. The school

Foyers Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Foyers, near Inverness, and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 14 when the inspection was carried out in May 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children's enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers' use of the local environment to promote learning.
- The commitment of the headteacher and all staff to children's care and wellbeing.

3. Example of good practice

- Children's learning experiences while studying the local environment.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are enthusiastic about their learning and respond well to teachers and support staff. They enjoy activities which require them to be active in their learning. Children work well together in groups and learn through a wide range of practical activities. Children are increasingly confident in thinking for themselves and considering how to improve their learning. They do not have enough opportunity to learn how to be independent and responsible for carrying out tasks. Children take part in school shows and recently achieved success for their choral work at the Inverness Music Festival. Children have an effective awareness of the need to care for the environment. As a result, the school has won an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag. Around a third of the children are developing their citizenship skills

through serving on the pupil council. Children are recognising the benefits of healthy eating and regular physical activity. As a result, the school has Health Promoting School status. Children are developing their knowledge and understanding very well through studying a range of topics. Across the school, children show an extensive knowledge of their local environment through field work at Loch Bran. Children at P5 and P6 are learning about the human body. They have a sound awareness of aspects, such as the skeleton and digestive system. Standards of attainment in English language and mathematics are good. Across the school, most children achieve appropriate national standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In English language, most children listen attentively and talk well in groups. At all stages, children read with appropriate fluency and expression. Children in the P5 and P6 class confidently discuss authors whose work they have enjoyed. Children's skills in using the Internet for research are developing well. Most children write effectively for an appropriate range of purposes. In the P5 and P6 class children are producing imaginative stories with effective use of descriptions. At all stages, standards of neatness and presentation of written work are not yet high enough. In mathematics, most children are developing effective skills in written calculation. Their skills in mental calculation are not yet sufficiently quick and accurate. Children at all stages have an appropriate knowledge of strategies they can use to solve mathematical problems. Their skills in using computers to handle and display information are developing well.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum is good and includes appropriate opportunities for children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts. Teachers have made a positive start to improving children's experiences in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. In accordance with national guidance, children benefit from at least two hours each week of physical education. There is scope to improve opportunities for children to benefit from taking part in lunch-time and after-school activities. In the P1-P4 class, children respond well to appropriate opportunities to learn through play.

Visiting specialist teachers enhance children's learning experiences in art and design, music, physical education and French. Teachers recognise the need to build more effectively on prior learning in areas such as science and technology.

Teachers and support staff give children useful individual support which assists them in their learning. On most occasions, teachers set tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for children, and meet their learning needs well. At times, the pace of progress in learning is too slow. Most children respond well to discussions with teachers and know their strengths and what they need to do to improve. Homework is appropriately frequent and varied. There is scope for involving children more effectively in setting targets for improving aspects of their work.

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

The headteacher works effectively with the Parent Council and keeps parents appropriately informed about school events and relevant educational matters. Parents support school events and successfully raise funds to assist the school in broadening children's learning experiences. There is scope to involve parents more in assisting with their children's learning. Teachers produce informative annual written reports to parents on children's progress. The headteacher ensures that parents are appropriately consulted about sensitive health issues. She ensures that any concerns and complaints are recorded effectively and the action taken noted appropriately. Children develop their skills in discussing their learning through their active participation in a parents' afternoon. Children benefit from the school's links with a range of local agencies. These include a local graphic design firm, a community newsletter and Forest Enterprise. There are effective procedures to support children entering P1 and the very small number of children transferring to Inverness Royal Academy.

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

The headteacher and staff are highly committed to improving the school's provision. They regularly meet to discuss how to improve aspects of their work and have identified appropriate areas for improvement. The headteacher visits classes to observe the quality of learning and teaching. Teachers monitor children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics and predict when children will achieve the next stage in their learning. These arrangements are not always sufficiently rigorous and systematic to ensure that all children make appropriate progress. The school takes account of the views of parents and children through written surveys and the pupil council. There is scope to build on this to involve parents and children more in evaluating the school's work and in planning for improvement.

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

Almost all children respond well to teachers' appropriately high expectations of their behaviour. Children are treated fairly and equally and are caring and well behaved. Teachers use praise well to celebrate children's achievements. Their expectations of children's progress and standards of work are not always high enough. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, provide children with a very high level of care. Children feel safe and secure in school and know how to obtain assistance if necessary. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection. Access to the school would be difficult for those with restricted mobility. The school provides appropriately frequent opportunities for religious observance. The headteacher recognises that more work is needed in promoting racial equality to prepare children for life in a multi-ethnic society.

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

The headteacher is highly committed to improving the school. She is effectively developing aspects of the school's work, including attainment in reading and the promotion of children's active learning. She has a clear vision for taking the school forward and is well supported by staff and most parents. Staff respond well to the headteacher's encouragement in seeking new ways to improve children's learning and wellbeing. With the effective support of the education authority, Foyers Primary School has the capacity to improve further.

9. What happens next?

We are confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in the 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.

- Improve children's written presentation of work and their attainment in mental calculation.
- Improve arrangements for evaluating the quality of the school's provision 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 Foyers Primary School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	good
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: Robert Barfoot
23 June 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