



**Gledfield Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
Ardgay  
The Highland Council  
28 April 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school<sup>1</sup>. 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 parents<sup>2</sup> 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](http://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.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘school’ is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

<sup>2</sup> 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**

Gledfield Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Ardgay and the surrounding area. When the inspection was carried out in January 2009, the roll was 43, including six children in the nursery class. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2006/2007

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- The early steps taken by the headteacher and staff to improve learning and teaching approaches.
- The use of the local environment to enhance children's learning experiences.
- The very caring and positive ethos in the school and nursery class.
- Children's enthusiasm and motivation to learn.
- Attractive and stimulating surroundings for learning.

## **3. Example of good practice**

- The use of the local environment to enhance children's knowledge and understanding about the environment.

## **4. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Nursery children are making steady progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Most children talk well to each other and adults about what they are doing and about previous learning experiences. Within early literacy they are making good progress. Children enjoy developing their early writing skills through making notes and adding captions. In early reading, they have a good understanding of the importance of the printed word. Children are able

to identify sounds, some simple words and their names. In early number development, they have a good understanding of numbers to ten. The majority of children are confident with number between ten and twenty. Most children would benefit from more appropriate challenges in most areas of their learning.

Across the primary stages, most children are making appropriate progress in their learning. The school has recently improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In listening and talking, children are making appropriate progress. The standard of attainment of children's writing in English language and the use of language skills needs to be improved. In all aspects, staff need to increase the pace of learning at the middle stages. All children work well together and individually and can talk enthusiastically about their learning. Most children are confident in reading aloud and are posing questions in their topic work. At the upper stages, they talk well with each other about settings and characters. In mathematics, most children carry out written and oral calculations well and are able to explain how they reach answers. They are developing their problem solving skills effectively and can confidently interpret information from a range of graphs and tables. They are using board games and computers successfully to enhance their mathematical skills. All children are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and participate in projects that promote effectively health and wellbeing. They are successful in developing their citizenship skills through their participation on committees, such as the eco group. All children are increasing their knowledge and understanding of environmental aspects very effectively through the study of their local surroundings. Across the school, they achieve well through their active involvement in a wide variety of activities such as sporting, community and cultural events. Children with additional support needs are making appropriate progress in most aspects of their learning.

### **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Staff have started to develop aspects of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. This work is helping to improve children's

learning experiences and to develop their skills through more practical activities. The nursery curriculum is based on a variety of appropriate play activities. Children have several opportunities to experience different celebrations, for example participating in the school's Robert Burns celebration. They also have made a good start to developing an awareness of different cultures and the need to look after their environment. In the primary classes, staff provide children with a broad curriculum. Staff have made a good start at using cross-curricular themes as part of their learning and teaching approaches. Children are successful in learning about the natural environment by making their own wildlife garden and bird tables. The school has started to use the Highland Literacy Project to help improve children's performance in reading, listening and talking. Visiting specialist teachers are effective in helping children to develop their skills in drama, music and physical education. Stimulating inputs from the community and Feis group are further extending children's understanding and enjoyment of Scottish heritage and Scottish country dancing. In the nursery and early primary stages, children require to have more opportunities to develop their learning through purposeful play. At P7, children are improving their investigative skills through their science links with Tain Royal Academy. The school does not provide all children with two hours of high quality physical education. Children have recently begun to have an opportunity to learn a foreign language. All children are successful in using information and communications technology to improve their learning.

Staff in the nursery are caring and support children well in their learning. Their support could be further enhanced by developing the types of questions they ask children about what they are doing. This would help children think more about their learning. They provide children with suitable opportunities to choose activities and to work with others. In the primary classes, teachers are using a variety of learning and teaching approaches appropriately to support and motivate children in their learning. They give clear instructions and helpful explanations, and use questioning skilfully to reinforce the main points of lessons. In most lessons, the pace is appropriate and children are able to work effectively in groups or individually to

complete their tasks. Children are beginning to take some responsibility for their own learning and to become independent learners. A few children would benefit from a greater level of challenge and further discussion about the next steps in their learning. Teachers give regular and relevant homework linked to the work of the class. Classroom assistants and visiting support for learning staff provide helpful and valuable support to individuals and groups of children. Staff provide appropriate and relevant attention to children with additional support needs.

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

Staff have formed effective partnerships with a range of organisations, including conservation organisations and the speech and language service. Staff have started to inform parents more about how they can help their children in their learning, for example through curricular workshops and helpful progress reports. The Parent Council supports the school well and has participated in several school events, such as a gardening afternoon. The school has developed strong links with the community. It has several adults coming to school to work with children to improve their musical and dancing skills. Staff work well with the Active Schools Coordinator to provide children with additional opportunities in physical activities. They take very effective steps to treat all children equally and fairly. The school has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure continuity in children's learning as they progress from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Tain Royal Academy or Dornoch Academy.

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

Staff and children work very well together to improve the school. Children are beginning to take more responsibility in making decisions about the work of the nursery. They have opportunities to decide what

areas could be developed within the nursery. All staff and children are involved with the local community through fundraising and performing shows. Children are successful in taking on roles of responsibility. For example, children from P2 to P7 are members of the pupil council and a few at the upper stages are junior road safety officers. Children are collecting a variety of materials for recycling and are learning how to save energy efficiently at home and in school. The headteacher is successful in encouraging teamwork and staff feel valued and consulted. Staff have started to share good practice in teaching with each other and with other schools to improve children's learning experiences. They are using self-evaluation approaches well. Staff ask children about their learning and are committed to improving their own teaching approaches. Staff need to monitor children's progress more closely to better meet children's needs and to raise attainment.

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

Children are learning in stimulating and attractive surroundings with very caring and supportive staff. Staff know the children well and are sensitive to their physical, social and emotional needs. Children are polite and courteous, are enthusiastic about their learning and work well together in class. They play well with each other in the playground. Staff have formed very good working relationships with children and have high expectations for their behaviour and attendance. They encourage children to have high expectations for their own achievements. Children's achievements are effectively displayed around the school and celebrated at assemblies. Staff understand and implement child protection procedures effectively. Children feel that their opinions are valued and listened to. Across the school, children are learning to respect and value other cultures and traditions. The school provides regular opportunities for children to participate in religious observance. Staff deal effectively with any complaints from parents, children and visitors.

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

In the six months since her appointment, the headteacher has identified appropriate areas for improvement in the school. She has provided a strong lead in improving learning and teaching approaches. She actively involves staff in successful developments and encourages them to try out new ideas. Staff are committed to improvement. They now need to focus on making the learning and teaching meet more effectively the needs of all children. The school needs to develop its approaches to evaluating school improvement and classroom practice more systematically. Overall, the school provides a good quality of education and is well placed to continue to improve.

## **9. 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 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.

- Continue to develop learning and teaching approaches to meet more effectively the needs of all learners and to raise attainment.
- Provide children with further opportunities to take on more responsibility for their own learning.
- Continue to develop aspects of the curriculum to widen children's learning experiences.
- Develop more rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching and the work of the school.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements and no 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 Gledfield Primary School and Nursery Class.

### Primary School

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

### Nursery Class

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Children's experiences</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

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

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

**HM Inspector: Hakim Din**  
28 April 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