



**Greenwards
Primary School
Elgin
The Moray Council
16 December 2008**

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

Greenwards Primary School is a non-denominational school which serves the west side of New Elgin. The inspection was carried out in September 2008 at which time the roll was 337, including 16 in the support base. These pupils with a wide range of additional support needs were fully integrated into mainstream classes. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2006/07.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The school's successes in developing children who are well behaved, polite and keen to learn.
- Staff who are hard working, caring and committed.
- The school's success at including children with wide ranging additional support needs.
- Children's ability to listen well to lessons.

3. Example of good practice

- Children at the upper stages are making use of podcasts and other information and communications technology opportunities to develop their learning in a range of curricular opportunities.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are making good progress in reading, writing and in mathematics. This progress has been maintained over the past three years and standards in these areas are good. Most children read well and are developing appropriate writing skills. Handwriting could still improve further, especially in the upper stages through increased pace and challenge. Very good progress in reading and writing at the early stages is not being maintained across the stages. Children are confident in solving mathematical problems and work well

with numbers both orally and in their written work. They are developing a very good understanding of how to live healthily. For example, the school involves children well in developing its healthy tuck shop. Across the school, children are improving their knowledge of the world through study of a range of interesting topics, for example investigating emergency services and other cultures. Children could talk confidently and write about healthy lifestyles and environmental issues. Children across the school achieve in a range of ways in a wide variety of activities such as public speaking and sports events. Those at P6 and P7 are making use of podcast to develop their language, for example their report on the Eco Schools Scotland award. They are enthusiastic and proud of their achievements. School teams have achieved well at football, cross-country running and public speaking. Children are learning to become responsible citizens by, for example, being involved in setting up a school health forum. Children with a wide range of additional support needs are making appropriate progress in all aspects of their learning allowing them to be confident and secure. For a few children the pace of learning is too slow and needs greater challenge.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children, including those with additional support needs are offered a broad range of learning experiences. There is a need to review current programmes and timetables to provide better balance and further develop links between areas of learning. Staff are developing aspects of the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence*. In some cases, this is beginning to lead to improved experiences for children. Staff make good use of interactive whiteboards and computers to support, and provide enjoyment in, all areas of the curriculum. They encourage children to develop their literacy skills in a range of areas. Children use these skills well when attending school meetings, delivering talks and presenting their work. Children's development of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum is too limited. Experienced visiting specialists help children develop skills in physical education, art and music. Good use of the local area increases children's knowledge and awareness of local history. This makes learning more

meaningful. Children are learning about responsibility and democracy through being on the eco committee and pupil council. They develop communication skills in a number of areas. These include running the healthy tuck shop and raising funds for the school and local community. The school provides opportunities for children at P6 and P7 to widen their experiences through well-received residential experiences.

Teachers plan tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for most children. A few higher achieving children are not always challenged enough in their learning. Staff across the school work closely with partner agencies, helping to identify and meet children's learning needs. Support for all staff and children is planned and delivered well by two very experienced highly committed depute headteachers. They work with a range of classes to monitor and support children's progress in all areas of the curriculum. Pupil support assistants work very well with all staff and children. Staff from the support base assist children with wide ranging needs very well in their classes, their integration is very successful. Teachers are sensitive in their approaches and have detailed understanding of each child's needs and how best to meet them. There are good links with parents regarding progress of children with additional support needs across the school. Teachers make their classrooms and open areas interesting and welcoming places to learn. They are developing their teaching approaches to make learning more active for children. Staff give children in P1 and P2 opportunities to learn through play. They plan to develop this further. Across the school, children need to be further involved in improving their own work. A few teachers are very skilled at using questions to help children understand more about their work. This good practice needs to be shared. Teachers set appropriate homework but a few children said that they would like more variety. The school is looking at ways of providing more active homework tasks.

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

The school works closely with the very active and supportive Parent Council. Together, they recently took effective steps to improve communication with parents. Some helpful leaflets were available for parents to support learning out of school. These have been well received. Parents are encouraged to observe classroom activities such as shared reading. Staff have developed partnerships with a number of organisations outside the school. These have supported health promotion, eco and enterprise work. Links with local business could be further developed. There is on-going support from speech therapy, the school nurse and local churches. These partnerships have improved children's learning. Children are supported to make a confident and successful move from nursery to primary and from P7 to Elgin High School. The school needs to review support for learning arrangements regularly to make sure the needs of all children are well met.

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

Children successfully take on a range of responsibilities. At the early stages, children support the teacher to complete the morning register and organise lunches. Children take an active part in the work of the pupil council. This helps to take forward new developments in the school. Through the pupil council, children are influencing health promotion and re-cycling. The school has gained an Eco Schools Scotland award at silver level. A range of visitors to the school and regular outings help enrich children's learning. Children are happy with how the school deals with their concerns. Staff work well together and support each other. This is helpful, especially for new or less experienced staff. All staff work hard to improve the school. They consider and make use of the views of parents and children before making improvements. Parents feel that recent improvements to communication have helped to keep them better informed about

children's learning. Teachers have developed effective working partnerships with parents. They keep them updated about their children's progress through meetings and an informative annual written report. A few parents felt it would be helpful to have more regular information about their children's personal next steps in learning. There is scope for involving community agencies in setting up a wider range of out-of-school clubs and activities.

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

Children are very proud of their school. Together with staff, they welcome visitors. Children are very kind and considerate, helping and supporting each other in class and in the playground. They behave very well. They recognise that the school is helping them to develop appropriate attitudes and behaviour to others both in and out of school. Staff have high expectations of children, and should encourage higher achieving children to be more independent in their learning. All staff enjoy very good relationships with children. They make good use of a variety of ways to encourage children to work well. This includes use of golden time and a class points system. The school takes active steps to promote equality and fairness. Most children have a very positive attitude towards school and towards their own achievement. Their wider achievements, including those which take place out of school, are celebrated in school. Staff celebrate successes in class, at assemblies and through press articles. There is good use of display to share children's work. Staff know what to do to keep children safe and well. A few staff need updated on the school's child protection arrangements. The school has correctly identified this as an immediate priority. All are highly committed to children's wellbeing. Children are pleased that staff listen to them and take account of their opinions. Children are very well cared for in school. The school takes appropriate steps when children are absent from school without explanation. Regular religious observance takes place in class topics and at weekly assemblies.

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

The school has recently developed a single, key aim covering learning, teaching and relationships. This has been agreed by, and shared amongst, staff, parents and children. The headteacher and his senior management colleagues work well together to identify where the school needs to improve children's learning experiences. The depute headteachers provide very strong leadership and support for staff. The principal teachers carry out their work conscientiously. Staff work hard as a team to develop the school. They now need to be more involved in how the school plans for improvement. They should be encouraged to plan, reflect on, and evaluate new activities and ways of teaching. A good start has been made to developing active independent learning, this should be built on. The school should continue to look for ways of improving and supporting new developments. The wide range of experience and expertise across the staff needs to be fully used. The school is ready to improve and take forward the *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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.

- Children need more opportunities for active learning in class and to be more involved in their own individual progress.
- Teachers need to provide more choice and challenge for children in their learning.
- The school should regularly review support for learning across stages to make sure the needs of all children are met.
- With staff, the headteacher needs to develop arrangements for reviewing and improving the school's work.

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 Greenwards 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	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

Managing Inspector: Ishbel Kerr

16 December 2008

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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