



**Hopeman Primary School  
and Nursery Class  
The Moray Council  
5 May 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**

Hopeman Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the villages of Hopeman, Duffus and Cummingston. The roll was 261, including 32 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in February 2009. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

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

- The welcoming and supportive environment for learning.
- Staff's interaction with children in the nursery.
- Motivated and confident children.
- The development work done by class teachers to improve children's learning experiences.
- Leadership of the headteacher.

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

- Development of learning in the P7 class through the theme of film-making.

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

### **Learning and achievement**

Children in the nursery class are happy and confident. They have good opportunities to learn together and on their own. Children are learning to make decisions such as which materials to use for play. All children are comfortable with the nursery routines and enjoy taking turns to be the class helper. They are learning to care for living things such as the nursery goldfish. Children are actively engaged in play and are very good at concentrating on tasks. They share ideas with each other and are developing very good listening skills. Children are

developing early writing skills through play and a few can write their own name. Almost all children recognise the numbers one to ten. They confidently use a computer to practise sorting and matching and can accurately match objects by colour and size. Overall, children are making good progress in developing communication and language and numeracy skills. They would benefit from more opportunities to talk to staff about their next steps in learning.

Almost all children in the primary classes are motivated and actively involved in their learning. They enjoy school and feel safe there. They feel that their views matter. Children are developing very good skills in collaborative working as well as in finding things out for themselves. For example, teachers at the early stages encourage children to use word mats and 'have a go' boards to check their spelling. Staff use questioning well to develop children's thinking skills. Almost all teachers give good feedback and children also make helpful comments on each other's work. All staff need to ensure that children act upon feedback to build on their prior learning. A number of children are growing in confidence through serving on the pupil council or as Junior Road Safety Officers for example. The school's eco group is making all children aware of the school's carbon footprint. Most children are developing an appropriate understanding of their responsibilities as citizens through the school's assemblies and Sunflower Citizens awards. Children are making effective progress overall in talking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all children speak confidently in group discussions. They enjoy reading and are learning to use different styles of writing. Most children write regularly but some need to write longer pieces. In mathematics, most children are developing good skills in mental calculations. They are able to discuss different ways of solving problems. They are developing skills in information and communications technology across the curriculum. For example, children in the P7 class are learning to edit film for their film-making project. Children are not yet skilled in using databases and spreadsheets.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Across the school, children benefit from a broad curriculum covering key areas of learning. In the nursery, the curriculum has an appropriate balance of adult led and free choice activities. There is still scope to involve children more in planning activities. Children have daily opportunities for energetic activity indoors. Staff need to develop the outdoors further as a learning environment.

In the primary classes all children link successfully different areas of learning and are developing their literacy and numeracy skills through environmental studies topics. Children benefit from the creative input of visiting specialists in music, art and physical education. Staff make good use of the local area, such as Duffus Castle, to make learning more relevant. Children in P7 develop teamwork skills on their residential trip to Loch Insh. The school's focus on health promotion is enabling children to make healthy lifestyle choices. The school now needs to ensure that in all areas of the curriculum, learning experiences build on children's prior learning effectively. Staff have taken steps to revise the programme for religious and moral education to ensure progression in children's learning. The programme for personal and social development requires similar attention. Teachers who teach children at the same stage do not yet work closely enough to ensure similar areas of work are covered. There are effective pastoral links between the nursery and primary classes and with the secondary school. These make children feel confident as they move to the next stage in their education. Children would benefit from more curricular links with the nursery and secondary school.

Nursery staff know individual children very well and ensure parents know about their child's progress. Staff provide an appropriate range of activities. A few children need more challenge in their play. Children are learning to assess their own work. Staff need to build on this to identify clearly the next steps in learning.

In the primary classes, the learning needs of most children are well met. Teachers know children well and support them effectively in their

learning. They explain things clearly and share with children the purpose of tasks. Almost all teachers give good feedback at the end of lessons to help children understand what they have learned. Staff are skilled in identifying and planning for children who need extra assistance. Support for learning teachers and support assistants work very well with individuals and groups of children. A few teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging classwork, particularly for higher achieving children. Homework is issued regularly but it is not always varied or demanding enough.

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

Staff work well with a range of partners such as the educational psychologist to provide extra support for some children. Where extra support is in place, parents are fully involved in their child's support plan. This enables parents to offer further support at home. The school has taken good steps to ensure that parents feel involved in their child's learning. Most parents feel that the school deals well with any complaints or concerns. The headteacher consults parents effectively through the parent council and questionnaires. She informs them about the work of the school through regular newsletters and includes them in celebrations of the children's achievements. Parents respond very positively to invitations to assemblies and a few parents offer to help in the school and nursery. A number of parents feel they would like to know more about their child's progress in learning. The school takes part in local initiatives. For example, some children help to clear the beach of litter. Community police have given helpful advice to children about internet safety. Local businesses offer useful financial support to the school's football team. There are effective pastoral links with Lossiemouth High School, including a joint drama production, to help children feel part of their future school.

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

The school is successful in asking parents and children for their views on how to improve the school. For example, this has led to better information for parents of children moving from nursery to P1. Children express their views through the pupil council or the suggestions box. This has led to improvements such as the availability of water bottles. Children know that their opinions matter but feel that a few teachers could find out more about their views on learning. Children comment effectively on their own performance and that of their peers. They have opportunities to develop leadership skills through classroom responsibilities and leading games in the playground. Staff regularly review their work and the school's progress in bringing about improvement. They have started to share good practice with each other, to the benefit of children. The headteacher encourages teamwork across the school and the nursery class. She knows the school very well. She now needs to build on this to ensure a more rigorous approach to monitoring children's learning.

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

Staff treat all children fairly in a culture of mutual respect. They have very high expectations of children's behaviour. Staff promote an awareness of diversity through activities linked to festivals from other cultures such as the Chinese New Year. Most children appreciate their teachers' work in supporting them and providing them with relevant learning experiences. Staff promote achievement in all areas of the curriculum and through out-of-school hours activities. Staff celebrate all children's achievements effectively through a variety of certificates, as well as through newsletters and assemblies. All staff now need to track children's progress and attainment more rigorously and use this information to provide activities which challenge all children appropriately.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has involved children, parents and staff in agreeing values for the school. Almost all staff are enthusiastic about helping children to develop skills as learners and are leading developments in the school. In some cases, such as the introduction of children's discussion with 'talking partners', these have had a very positive impact on children's learning. The principal teacher with responsibility for early years has supported nursery staff and has introduced structured play into P1 successfully. Overall, the depute headteacher and principal teachers have not worked directly enough with staff to lead and monitor school improvement. This has slowed down improvements to the school's provision. With the continued commitment and vision of the headteacher, and a clearer leadership role for the wider management team, the school 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 improve the arrangements for monitoring children's progress and attainment.
- Continue to update and improve the curriculum.
- Ensure that tasks enable all children to build effectively upon their prior learning.
- Ensure that all promoted staff play an effective leadership role in delivering agreed improvements

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 Hopeman Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

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

**HM Inspector:** Fiona A Pate  
5 May 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