

**Invergarry Primary School
The Highland Council
20 December 2005**

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1. Background

Invergarry Primary School was inspected in September 2005 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the School Board, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves a rural area from Kinlochourn to South Laggan and includes the village of Invergarry. At the time of the inspection the roll was 22, including five children in the nursery class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. No school meals were provided for pupils. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

The nursery class was inspected at the same time and is the subject of a separate report.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The behaviour, courtesy and friendliness of pupils.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Examples of very effective teaching.
- Attainment in English language.
- A high level of support from parents, the School Board and the wider community.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to all parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2. What follows is an analysis of the views of parents and pupils. In light of the

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends

small number of members of staff their views are not summarised in order to protect their confidentiality.

Parents were very supportive of the school and believed that staff set high standards for the pupils. They felt welcome in the school and were confident that the school would help their children if they were upset. Pupils enjoyed being in the school and felt that they were helped with their work. They felt safe and confirmed that there was no bullying. They also believed that teachers listened to them and expected them to work to the best of their ability.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Pupils' learning experiences and achievements

The overall quality of the curriculum was adequate. Staff had organised a range of interesting activities for pupils. A newly implemented science programme had captured pupils' interest and was increasing their knowledge and understanding. However, too much time was given to English language and not enough time given to the social subjects or physical education. The overall quality of teaching was good, and, at times, very good. Teachers used praise very effectively to motivate pupils, who responded very positively. Individual teachers were very well organised and there were some very good examples of direct teaching. Teachers explained matters very clearly and also reviewed pupils' work with them to check on their understanding. Overall, staff interaction with pupils was of a high quality. Homework was set regularly, but was not varied enough. The organisation of the teaching of different stages within the school required to be reviewed as pupils were not always in the most appropriate of groups.

Pupils were keen and enthusiastic learners. They enjoyed what they were doing and overall were making good progress in their coursework. They were highly motivated to learn and responded very positively to the tasks set for them. They worked very well together and also individually. Play activities at the very early stages helped develop pupils' social skills. Pupils were confident in using information and communications technology for a variety of purposes, for example, researching using the Internet and writing. They were developing a good knowledge of aspects of science. They had a good knowledge of the need for safety during experiments and recorded their investigations effectively. Pupils responded well to the teaching of Gaelic singing and sang with considerable enthusiasm. They were developing good skills in basketball during the short block of time when the visiting teacher of physical education was in school. They were also developing their knowledge of different festivals in a range of major world religions. Pupils' knowledge of geography, however, was very limited.

The pupil council met regularly and pupil representatives had taken their responsibilities seriously. Younger pupils helped those entering the school from nursery while older pupils supported those at the early stages through, for example, reading to them. Pupils used their literacy skills very effectively across many aspects of the curriculum. Pupils achieved success in a number of areas both within and outwith school. They had achieved awards in both skiing and swimming in addition to being successful in the Lochaber Music festival. A number of musicians had taken part successfully in the local Feis. All pupils had shown consideration for others through raising monies for a national charity.

English language

The overall quality of attainment in English language was very good and had been improving over the previous four years. While almost all pupils achieved national levels appropriate for their stage there was room for improvement. From the very early stages pupils listened very attentively to adults. They enjoyed listening to stories read to them. They were confident in talking with one another and to visitors. Most read a range of texts fluently. The school, however, should try to involve parents more with their children's reading in order to encourage pupils to read more for enjoyment. Pupils wrote well for a variety of purposes and were responding positively to a new teaching programme in writing. They should, however, complete fewer formal language tasks. Standards of handwriting and presentation in jotters were very good.

Mathematics

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was good. Most pupils achieved appropriate levels of attainment. Standards had steadily improved over the previous four years and a few pupils were exceeding the levels which might normally be expected. Pupils had a good knowledge of a range of graphs but they had not yet used computers to create graphs or databases and spreadsheets. Pupils were confident in using numbers and benefited from the regular sessions of mental calculation which required them to answer accurately and quickly. They had a good knowledge of multiplication facts. Pupils at the upper stages, however, required more practice in using decimals. Throughout the school, pupils were involved in tackling a range of problems. Older pupils lacked confidence in deciding how to use mathematics to solve real life problems and in reporting what they had done.

5. How well are pupils supported?

Staff had a very good knowledge of pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. While staff were aware of the child protection policy and what action they should take when necessary they had not received up-to-date training. The school had taken positive action to ensure the welfare of pupils. There were no current incidents of bullying in the school and any that had occurred previously had been dealt with effectively. A clear programme of health education was in place and the school nurse was involved with pupils in discussing issues of personal relationships. The school should ensure that matters of alcohol and drug misuse are included in the programme during the current session. Pupils were encouraged to eat healthily and were increasing their consumption of fruit. They had a good knowledge of the requirements for a healthy lifestyle. The local Active Sports Coordinator had supported pupils through encouraging them to try a variety of activities.

There were some weaknesses in how well the school met the learning needs of its pupils. Very good teaching at the early stages had ensured that pupils made very good progress in English language and mathematics. This initial progress had been largely maintained in both the middle and upper stages. However, at times, some of the activities set for pupils were too undemanding and repetitive or inappropriate. As a result, the pace of work was

too slow for some. Staff should decide what they want pupils to learn before allocating tasks. High attaining pupils could achieve even higher standards if their programmes of work were targeted more carefully. The school did not have specific programmes with clearly identified targets and timescales for pupils with additional support needs.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Quality of accommodation and facilities	<p>The accommodation had a number of weaknesses. Pupils were taught in a temporary classroom, but toilet facilities were in the main school building and access to them caused problems for younger pupils in particular. While there was sufficient accommodation for pupils, facilities for the headteacher were very limited. Security arrangements were appropriate and disabled access to the temporary unit had recently been provided. Part of the play area was a rocky hillside which provided an interesting and exciting play area for pupils. While pupils enjoyed using this area it did contain a number of potential safety hazards. Vehicles also drove into the play area while pupils were present.</p>
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality	<p>The overall atmosphere in the school was very good. Parents, pupils and staff were very proud of their school and standards of behaviour were very high. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff were very good, and throughout the school individuals had respect for one another. Pupils were very courteous and friendly and very welcoming to visitors. Staff had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement and pupils responded positively to them. They used praise very effectively and rewarded pupils achievements appropriately. The headteacher, with the staff, should now review their expectations of able pupils. All pupils were treated fairly and included very effectively in the life of the school. Pupils were careful to include one another in their play activities. Although the development of positive attitudes to one another was encouraged by staff the school had not introduced the issue of racial equality with pupils. Assemblies were held weekly and provided opportunities for religious observance. Pupils enjoyed these occasions and participated with enthusiasm. The school was very well supported by the school chaplain and local priest.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Partnership with parents and the community	<p>The school was very well supported by parents and the wider community. Working together, they had raised considerable sums of money for the benefit of the pupils. The School Board was also very supportive of the school and its members showed a commitment to improvement. The school provided parents with well written reports on pupils' progress. However, not enough had been done to make parents aware of curricular developments within the school. Pupils entering P1 and those about to enter secondary school were well supported. The school had had sustained support from the education authority but recommendations made had not been fully implemented. The school nurse had made parents aware of the programme which she delivered on sensitive health issues. The school should consult with parents on the overall health education programme.</p>

7. Improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Overall, Invergarry Primary School provided a good quality of education. Pupils were very enthusiastic learners who responded very positively to the good quality of teaching in the school. Staff showed considerable care for and commitment to the pupils. Parents, the School Board and the wider community were very supportive of pupils and staff. However, there was room for improvement. There were weaknesses in the curriculum and, overall, the needs of pupils were not being met well enough. High attaining pupils and those with additional support needs required more targeted support.

The headteacher had very good relationships with the pupils, parents, staff and the wider community. She was very well supported in the school by all staff who showed a clear commitment to the pupils. She taught well and set high standards for pupils in, for example, the presentation of their work. There were, however, important weaknesses in leadership and management. Priorities for improvement had not been well implemented and there was a lack of whole school systems to support staff. Too little had been done to monitor the progress of pupils or the quality of learning and teaching. The school had not shown that it had the capacity to improve without the on-going support and challenge of the education authority.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve leadership, management and how well pupils' needs are met. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- conduct a risk assesment of the pupils' play area;
- review the balance of the curriculum and the organisation of teaching;
- create individualised educational programmes for pupils with additional support needs;
- improve the procedures for quality assurance to ensure that pupils' needs are met appropriately; and
- improve the overall quality of leadership and management.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school. In the meantime the District Inspector will continue to discuss the management of the school with the education authority.

Dr Roddy Duncan
HM Inspector

20 December 2005

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
Structure of the curriculum	Adequate
The teaching process	Good
Pupils' learning experiences	Good
Pupils' attainment in English language	Very good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Good

How well are pupils supported?	
Pastoral care	Good
Meeting pupils' needs	Adequate

How good is the environment for learning?	
Accommodation and facilities	Weak
Climate and relationships	Very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	Good
Equality and fairness	Good
Partnership with parents, the School Board, and the community	Good

Improving the school	
Leadership	Weak
Self-evaluation	Weak

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

excellent	excellent
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
adequate	strengths just out weigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below. Where any one group had five or less respondees then, in order to maintain confidentiality, the analysis is not provided.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoyed being in school and found their work stimulating and challenging. • Teachers set high standards for pupils' attainment and encouraged children to work to the best of their ability. • Staff made them welcome and communicated effectively with them. • Staff showed concern for the care and welfare of their children and took action on any concerns they raised. • The school was well led and had a good reputation in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of accommodation.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoyed being in school and knew what to do if they were upset. • Teachers explained things clearly to them and helped them with their work. • They were treated fairly and got on well with other pupils. • They felt safe and well looked after and teachers let them know how their learning could improve. • Teachers listened to them and expected them to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few pupils were concerned about the behaviour of others.

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, Culture and Sport, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 4-6 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS. You can also telephone 0870 011 5378 or e-mail enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.scottishombudsman.org.uk

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