



**Knockando Primary School
The Moray Council
25 August 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

Knockando Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the rural village of Knockando and the surrounding areas. The roll was 47 when the inspection was carried out in June 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008. The current acting headteacher took up post in May 2008. She is also the headteacher of Inveravon Primary School. The school has two classes. The Junior class has children from P1-5 and the Senior class children from P4-7.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The happy, welcoming atmosphere.
- Confident, articulate children who are enthusiastic about learning.
- The vision and leadership of the headteacher in promoting children's learning.
- Staff teamwork in improving children's experiences.
- Parental involvement and consultation which has led to improved relationships and home/school partnership.

3. Example of good practice

- Use of self-evaluation by support staff.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Almost all children are motivated and enthusiastic in classes. They are increasingly active in their learning. At P1–P3, younger children are learning through play to take turns and become more independent. In the Senior class, children work well with others when working in groups to research and present their learning, for example, in topic work about Europe. Children are starting to assess their own learning and can comment constructively on their role within a group. They are not always aware of what they need to do to improve.

Children achieve success in areas such as art and design, music and science. Children in the Junior class are able to explain life-cycles clearly. They are beginning to use musical instruments creatively to convey atmosphere. At Senior stages, children are constructing sculptures of famous European landmarks and are able to talk about the design process. Those at P6 and P7 have extended their personal and social skills through taking part in two residential trips this year. They are very proud of their school and the way it has supported their own achievements.

Most children attain appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. The majority do so in writing. In recent years, standards of attainment have fallen but there are now encouraging signs of improvement in mathematics and writing. In English language, children listen and talk well in groups. They communicate with adults and to each other confidently. Almost all children read aloud with confidence. They now need to extend their skills by reading a wider range of books. Children can write for different purposes, including report writing in science. They do not write at sufficient length often enough across different subject areas. In mathematics, most children are confident and accurate in doing mental and written calculations. They are confident in solving mathematical puzzles and in producing graphs. They are able to use mathematical language to explain their learning in areas such as angles. They use information and communications technology (ICT) well to support their learning in mathematics.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school has made a very positive start to developing the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. Well-planned learning experiences across different areas are starting to provide children with rich and relevant contexts, especially in science and social subjects. For example, the Senior class were extending their learning about Europe by holding mock elections. The recently established activities afternoon provides all children with a wide range of activities designed to extend and enrich their learning experiences. These include

gardening, craft, digital photography, technology, cooking and woodwork. Staff develop children's numeracy skills well. The arrangements for developing children's literacy skills are less well planned. Programmes for English language and mathematics do not yet enable children to reach their full potential. Specialist staff in art, music and physical education contribute very well to children's experiences. Accommodation and facilities restrict provision in physical education for children, especially at the P1 and P2 stages. The school does not yet provide all children with two hours of quality physical education each week.

Teachers adapt learning well to meet the needs of most individuals and groups. At times, they could use assessment better to build on children's prior learning. Classwork is sometimes too easy for high achieving children. Arrangements to meet the needs of children who require additional support with their work are effective. Staff use individualised plans with clear targets to support children who need extra help. Staff now need to review these plans more regularly. Support staff work closely with teachers and are highly effective in supporting individuals and groups of children. There are examples of high quality teaching. All teachers share learning intentions clearly with children. They now need to give children more feedback on their next steps in learning. Staff have improved homework at the upper stages and plan to extend this further.

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

The headteacher has worked hard to involve parents in their children's learning. Staff have responded to parents' views, for example, about improving homework. Communication between home and school is of a very high quality. Newsletters and e-mails provide information about planned school events. Parents have also received appropriate information about *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school gives parents helpful and detailed reports on their child's progress and provides them with information about sensitive health issues. The Parent

Council is very supportive and is beginning to discuss teaching and learning with the headteacher. The school works very well with others to improve children's learning and support children needing extra help. There are effective arrangements to support children moving from the school based playgroup to P1 and from P7 to Speyside High School, including additional support for more vulnerable children. The school has appropriate arrangements in place to respond to parental complaints.

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

Staff, parents and children have worked well together to develop and put into action a new vision for the school. The headteacher knows her school very well. In a short time, staff have made the curriculum and learning more meaningful and active for children. The headteacher monitors learning effectively through regular visits to classrooms and discussions with staff and children. All staff, including support staff, evaluate their work and provide each other with helpful and constructive feedback. The headteacher is aware of the need to further improve arrangements for assessing and tracking children's progress. The school council is using children's ideas for improving their school. For example, members of the council have chosen new books and playground equipment for the school. Older children support younger ones well. The eco group and junior road safety officers have helped the school win a silver award from Eco-Schools Scotland. Children now need to be given more opportunities for making decisions about school improvements. Support staff have used staff development to good effect to help them work with children needing extra support.

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

The school sets high expectations of behaviour but there is scope for targets for attainment to be more ambitious. Children are polite, respectful and kind to each other. Staff listen to them and treat them fairly. Staff celebrate children's wider achievements and are beginning to track their progress in this area. The school has very good arrangements in place for child protection and for monitoring attendance. Children have confidence that staff will solve any problems quickly. The school takes positive steps to promote equality and diversity and children are learning about other beliefs and cultures.

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

The headteacher has an ambitious vision for school improvement. She provides clear direction and works together with the support of all staff and the wider school community. She has helped to improve children's learning and is leading well-considered curricular change. The school's values of '*Live, learn and grow together*' are being put into practice. The acting principal teacher has effectively used ICT to support the learning of staff and children. School staff contribute very well to taking forward new ideas which improve the school. All staff have a shared understanding of recent educational developments. Overall, they form a very effective team. The school is very well placed to improve further.

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 raise attainment in reading, writing and maths.
- Ensure that classwork is at the right level for all children so they can progress in line with their potential.
- Further develop planning for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Review the arrangements for the provision of physical education.

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 Knockando Primary School.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Carole McKenzie
25 August 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