



**Seafield Primary School
and Nursery Class
Elgin
The Moray Council
30 June 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

Seafield Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves an area in the north of Elgin. The roll was 381, including 75 children in the nursery class when the inspection was carried out in May 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children's learning experiences in the nursery class.
- Well-behaved, polite children who are keen to learn.
- Very effective examples of high-quality teaching.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class, almost all children engage well in their learning and take part enthusiastically in their chosen activities. Staff interact very well with children. Activities are motivating and appeal to children's interests. Children enjoy increasing opportunities to plan their own learning. In the primary classes, almost all children respond well to teachers and support staff and are well motivated to learn. Most know their strengths and what they need to do to improve. Teachers at the early stages build very effectively on how children learn in the nursery class. At all stages, children work well together in groups and learn through an increasingly broad range of practical activities. Children benefit from examples of very effective teaching, in which they are encouraged to be responsible, independent learners and to think for themselves. This good practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Children in the nursery cooperate and share very well. They have a very good awareness of what makes a healthy lifestyle through daily exercise, access to fresh air, and a healthy approach to snack and hygiene routines. Children have a very good understanding of road safety and are able to discuss related issues confidently. In the primary classes, children are developing an appropriate awareness of the need to care for the environment. As a result, the school has won

an Eco-Schools Scotland silver award. A few children across the school are developing their citizenship skills through participating in the pupil council. Teachers ensure that children are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. As a result, the school has Health Promoting School status. Children's skills in using information and communications technology are developing well. At P7, children's skills in physical education include a very effective awareness of how to organise activities and record their progress.

In the nursery class, almost all children are achieving well and making very good progress. They work together well and are learning skills of exploring and investigating. Most listen attentively and talk confidently to adults and to each other. Almost all children are beginning to write their names and most can recognise their own names in print. During their play activities, children are developing their early numeracy skills well through sorting, matching and counting. Standards of attainment in reading and mathematics across the school are good and improving. Staff recognise the need to improve children's attainment in writing. Most children achieve appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. Only the majority achieve these levels in writing and there is no trend of improvement. In English language, most children listen attentively to teachers' instructions and talk well in groups. Almost all children read with appropriate fluency and expression. Children's skills in using the Internet for research are developing well. In the early stages, children are making sound progress in improving their writing skills. Too many children, particularly in the middle and upper stages, are not yet writing with appropriate skill in a sufficient range of curricular areas. In mathematics, most children are developing appropriate skills in written and mental calculation. Children at all stages show an effective awareness of the properties of shapes and can display and interpret information well. Their skills in using computers to handle and display information are developing well. Teachers are taking well-judged steps to ensure more consistent development of children's skills in solving mathematical problems.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

In the nursery class, staff provide a broad range of opportunities for children to develop appropriate literacy and numeracy skills. Children benefit from regular physical activity, both indoors and in the outdoor play area. There is scope for staff to take greater account of children's views when planning learning. At the primary stages, teachers provide an appropriately broad and varied range of learning experiences. Teachers have made a promising start to improving children's experiences in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. Teachers are largely successful in ensuring that children engage in two hours of physical education each week, in accordance with national guidance. In the early stages, children respond well to appropriate opportunities to learn through well-structured play activities. Visiting specialist teachers extend children's learning experiences in art and design, music, and physical education. There is scope for school staff to build more effectively on prior learning in some areas, including science and technology.

In the nursery, staff work with a range of agencies to give useful support to individual children. Nursery staff are making a promising start in sharing with children what they are expected to learn. In the primary classes, teachers and support staff give children useful individual support which helps them in their learning. Most tasks and activities set by teachers are at the right level of difficulty for children. On occasion, the pace of learning is too slow and activities are too easy for a few children. Homework is varied and appropriately frequent. The support for learning teachers provide helpful support for a wide range of children. There is scope to focus the work of support staff more effectively where it is most needed. Children experiencing learning difficulties benefit from individualised educational programmes. Teachers and support staff are successful in overcoming barriers to most children's learning.

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

The headteacher works effectively with the parent-teacher association and the parent partnership. He keeps parents appropriately informed about school events and relevant educational matters. Parents help to organise the nursery library and successfully raise funds to assist the school in broadening children's learning experiences. There is scope to involve parents more in assisting with their children's learning. Teachers produce helpful annual written reports to parents on children's progress. The headteacher deals effectively with any concerns or complaints and consults parents appropriately about sensitive health issues. Children benefit from the school's links with a range of local agencies. These include Elgin library, a local farm and Lossiemouth Fisheries Museum. There are effective procedures to support children entering P1 from nursery and children transferring from P7 to Elgin Academy.

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

The headteacher and teaching staff are working to improve the school's work. The headteacher visits classes to observe the quality of learning and teaching and comments in writing on teachers' plans. Teachers meet regularly to discuss how to improve aspects of their work and to identify appropriate areas for development. The headteacher and staff track children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics and regularly monitor children's written work. These arrangements are not yet sufficiently systematic or rigorous to ensure that all children make appropriate progress. The school takes account of the views of parents, and of children through the pupil council. The school could do more to involve parents and children in evaluating the school's work and in planning for improvement.

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

Children are treated fairly and equally. They are caring and well behaved. Teachers make effective use of praise and the school's system of awards to celebrate children's achievements. They have appropriately high expectations of children's behaviour and almost all children respond well. Teachers' expectations of children's progress and standards of work are not always sufficiently high. All staff know children well and provide them with a very high level of care. Children feel well looked after and safe in school. They know how to seek help if necessary. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection. People with restricted mobility can access almost all of the school. School staff provide appropriate opportunities for religious observance. Teachers use a range of suitable activities to promote racial equality and prepare children for life in a multi-ethnic society. There is scope to develop this work further.

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

The experienced headteacher leads the school well and has a clear vision for taking the school forward. With the support of staff and the education authority, he is successfully developing aspects of the school's work. These aspects include the promotion of children's active learning and improvements in reading skills. The headteacher encourages the depute headteachers and three principal teachers to take an appropriate lead in improving the school. They are responding well and are providing examples of very effective teaching. With the continuing effective support of the education authority, Seafield Primary School has the capacity to improve further.

8. 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.

- Improve attainment in writing.
- Improve the school's arrangements for monitoring learning, teaching and achievement to ensure that all children make appropriate progress.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there was one requirement, which had been addressed. No recommendations were made.

Requirements

- The provider must at all times comply with the Conditions of Registration on the Certificate of Registration. These can only be changed by application to vary the conditions. This is to comply with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 section 29 (10) (b). Timescale: immediately on receipt of this report.

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 Seafield Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: Robert Barfoot
30 June 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