



**The New School
Butterstone
Dunkeld
1 March 2011**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the Care Commission inspect schools in order to let parents¹ and young people know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with staff how they can improve the quality of care and education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which young people are involved. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of care and education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of care and education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the service is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its 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 from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school

The New School Butterstone is an independent school situated near Dunkeld in Perth and Kinross. It provides education and care for young people aged from 11 to 18 years who have additional support needs relating to social and emotional difficulties. The roll was 32 when the inspection was carried out in January 2011.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Young people's confidence and their positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers' approaches to planning and the impact on young people's learning experiences.
- The range of opportunities to promote young people's personal achievements.
- The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school.
- The strong sense of community and the quality of relationships across the school.
- The headteacher's leadership of improvement and change.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Teachers have established a very positive and supportive learning environment. Young people enjoy learning and apply themselves well to tasks and activities. They take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. Teachers ensure that young people know what they are expected to learn. Young people evaluate their own performance and identify what they need to do to improve. They have a say in what they learn and in the types of activities they undertake. They work well together, showing respect for the contributions and opinions of others. Young people relate positively to staff. They are encouraged by the high quality feedback they receive from staff and show confidence in learning. Staff take very good account of young people's interests to provide a wide range of stimulating activities both in and out of school.

Young people feel safe, valued and respected. They appreciate that they are successful learners.

Young people are developing sound personal and social skills. They have developed positive relationships with others, based on mutual respect. As individuals, they make significant contributions to the school and wider community. They have achieved Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards for their personal skills and achievements. Some are also achieving success for their personal and social skills through gaining a Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze and Silver Award. Young people have a good understanding of how to live and maintain a healthy lifestyle. In physical education, young people participate enthusiastically and cooperate well in sporting activities. In home economics, they show skills in preparing healthy foods using a variety of cooking processes. The school is currently working towards achieving an Eco School Green Flag award. Young people are gaining a good understanding of how to grow and tend plants through a programme of horticulture activities. They use enterprising skills to provide produce from the school garden.

Over the past few years, standards of attainment have improved steadily. Increasing numbers of young people are successfully achieving National Qualification awards at Access 3 level and at Intermediate 1 and 2. A few have achieved at Higher level. In mathematics and numeracy, young people are gaining suitable skills and understanding of concepts and processes. They can apply their skills in a range of contexts. In English and literacy, all young people are developing competence in listening and talking, reading and writing. They show that they can think creatively and critically. Overall, young people are making very good progress across all areas of the curriculum. In drama, they demonstrate impressive skills in improvisation and performance. They are confident in using a range of skills in information and communication technology in learning and real life situations. In science, young people are achieving well across various areas of science.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum is suitably broad. It provides young people with learning experiences that take good account of their personal interests and gives them opportunities to make choices about what they learn. Staff are making very good progress in implementing *Curriculum for Excellence*. In developing the curriculum, they are making it more relevant and enjoyable. Teachers' planning of learning programmes is thorough and well-considered. The planning and delivery of the curriculum is helping young people to see the links between different subjects and to apply their skills across the different areas of learning. There is good attention to developing young people's skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the whole curriculum. The curriculum includes very good opportunities for young people to prepare for the world of work. Beyond the school day, care staff and teachers work well together to provide young people with a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities that successfully promote young people's wider achievements. The school has very good arrangements for young people coming into the school and for those leaving school and moving on to further education and employment.

Staff working in care and education know young people very well. They work well together in a team approach to ensure that young people receive appropriate levels of support and challenge. Teaching staff take very good account of the needs of each individual to provide well-considered programmes of learning. As appropriate, members of the care staff provide valuable one-to-one support to young people to help them make the most of their learning experiences. The school has effective arrangements for assessing and reviewing young people's needs. Each young person has an individualised educational programme that contains targets for their progress in both care and education. Young people know their learning targets well and they are highly motivated to achieve them.

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

Staff have established very good relationships with parents. The school uses a variety of ways to communicate with them, keeping them informed about school events and the range of learning activities that their child is experiencing. Parents are involved appropriately in reviewing their child's progress and in identifying their next steps in learning. Staff work well with colleagues from other agencies to ensure that young people and families receive additional support as and when they need it. The school has established very strong partnerships with colleges to extend young people's learning experiences and to support them move on to further education. The school has very good links with the local business community and this provides young people with challenging and relevant work experience. The school and local community support each other well. Members of the local community make valuable contributions to help extend young people's learning and wider achievements. Young people from the school demonstrate their citizenship skills in the local community through activities such as litter picking, helping at coffee mornings, planting an orchard and putting on drama performances for children at the local primary school.

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

Staff show outstanding commitment to the school and to young people. Together, they have developed a clear understanding of what is involved in providing high quality learning experiences for young people. They discuss and share good practice regularly. Staff make very good use of their collective experience and interests to improve and extend young people's learning and achievements. They appreciate opportunities they have to take lead roles in developing aspects of the school's work and take part in regular staff training and development activities. Young people are at the centre of decision-making processes in the school. Their opinions and views on

school life are sought and acted upon. The headteacher has promoted effective approaches to evaluating the quality of the school's work. Teachers give very good attention to evaluating and reporting on the quality and impact of learning and teaching. Care staff meet regularly with the head of care to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work. Young people's progress is tracked and monitored carefully. The school makes effective use of the information it collects about the quality of its work to identify suitable areas for improvement.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?

The school has a strong sense of community and is characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Staff set high and realistic expectations for young people. Young people respond very well to the encouragement and support they receive and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and to others. Staff give very good attention to young people's emotional, physical, health and social needs. Care staff have drawn up and maintain appropriate care plans for each young person. Young people help to set and review their care targets. Across the school, staff give very good attention to promoting healthy living. The catering manager is playing significant role in promoting healthy eating. Young people feel safe and cared for in school. Staff provide positive role models and are successful in promoting a culture of inclusion and respect for others.

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

The headteacher has set out a sense of purpose and direction for the school. She has created a supportive work environment where staff are motivated and empowered to improve further the quality of the school's work. She recognises the importance of teamwork and has appropriate plans in place to strengthen team working across the

school community. The Head of Care provides effective support to the headteacher in managing aspects of the school's work. The school is well placed to move forward and to maintain high standards of care and education for its young people.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The board of governors will inform parents about the school's progress as part of their arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its school.

We have agreed the following area for improvement with the school and board of governors.

- Continue to develop the curriculum to enable young people to learn through relevant contexts and to practise their learning in real life situations.

Quality indicators help schools, boards of governors and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*

Here are the evaluations for The New School Butterstone.

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good

HM Inspector: Norma Wright
1 March 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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