



**Poolewe Primary School
and Nursery Class
The Highland Council
23 August 2011**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of 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 children are involved. We also gather the views of children, 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 education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children 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 children. 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 children, parents and staff. 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

Poolewe Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Poolewe and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 29, including three in the nursery class when the inspection was carried out in May 2011. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2009/2010. The headteacher has also management responsibility for Gairloch Primary School.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Confident children who attain well and enjoy talking about their learning and achievements.
- Children's ability to work well on their own and in small groups.
- Teamwork between staff and their support for children's learning.
- Partnerships with parents and community links which enhance children's learning.
- Leadership of the headteacher.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery class, children are motivated effectively to learn. They talk confidently to one another and play well together. Children organise themselves, take turns and share resources well in their play. Across the primary classes, children are confident, articulate and developing independence. Children are extremely positive towards their learning and try to do their best. They work very well as a class, in pairs or in small groups. Children help each other when they have difficulties. They enjoy their learning and respond very well to challenges, for example to design a shelter as part of P5-7 coursework. There were examples of very well paced, exciting lessons, where teachers involved children well in discussions about their learning.

Children experience a broad range of activities which help them achieve widely. They have a sound understanding of sustainability

and, as a result, have achieved a second Green Flag from Eco-Schools Scotland. Children achieve success in a number of after-school sporting activities. They exercise responsibility effectively through the pupil council, eco-school group and as junior road safety officers. Children are developing secure citizenship skills by taking part in charity and community events. Many achieve personal success at local events and festivals, including the local Mod and the Plockton Drama Festival.

Children in the nursery recognise signs and captions around the playroom. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Their skills in early mathematics are developing well through their play. In the primary classes, almost all children are making very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their skills in listening and talking are developing very well. Children read well and expressively to each other and are able to talk in some depth about books which they have read. Children write well creatively, including poetry. Most children are making clear progress with spelling. They present their work well. In mathematics, children are making very good progress. Children in the nursery enjoy counting and using numbers and colours during their play. At the primary stages, children can count accurately and explain clearly how they reach their answers. They are good at gathering and displaying information. They can tackle problems confidently and solve them using a range of strategies.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

At all stages, staff show confidence in using Curriculum for Excellence to raise standards and improve children's learning. In the nursery class, health and wellbeing is being developed consistently across the curriculum. Children enjoy a range of healthy options for their snack and in their baking activities. In the primary classes, staff plan a wide range of enjoyable, challenging, often active and relevant learning experiences for children. Children are beginning to use their skills in literacy and numeracy well to help them learn in other areas. The school's approaches to supporting children's personal and social development are very good. As a result, children are developing a

responsible attitude to caring for others and contributing to their environment. Children's learning is enhanced greatly by visitors to school and a wide variety of trips outwith school, including a residential experience at Badaguish Outdoor Centre. All children learn to swim. Children do not yet receive two hours of good quality physical education each week.

In the nursery class, staff know children very well. They are sensitive to their needs and support their emotional and social development very effectively. They give children appropriate individual attention to help them to be successful and confident learners. The school identifies effectively and supports children who need extra help with their learning. All staff, including support staff, help those children who have additional support needs very well. The school is developing effective arrangements for personal learning planning to help track and record children's achievements. In lessons, staff use a variety of approaches well to help meet children's varying learning needs. This includes whole class, group, paired and individual work. Tasks are matched well to children's learning needs and children are challenged effectively in their coursework. Overall, staff ensure that the pace of learning enables all children to make very good progress. Homework is interesting and challenging, and supports learning in school.

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

Parents are very supportive of the work of the nursery. They receive regular, helpful information about what their children learn and experience. Across the school, parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and the work of the school through newsletters, open days and regular progress reports. Several parents volunteer to work alongside children in school. Many readily share their expertise with children to enhance learning. Staff deal effectively with any parental concerns and complaints. The school has developed highly effective links with members of the local community which enhances children's learning. Children help organise events for

parents and local residents, including St Andrew's and Burns ceilidhs. Staff support children as they transfer into P1 and from P7 to Gairloch High School with programmes which are planned well.

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

Staff share ideas which they have gathered from training and visits which improve children's learning experiences, particularly in Curriculum for Excellence. Staff help lead developments which improve children's learning. By taking part in pupil groups such as the eco committee, children are learning how to deal with issues which are important to them and their school. Parents influence plans for improving the school. Teachers work well together to develop aspects of the curriculum, including literacy and health and wellbeing. Staff support additional activities readily, often in connection with topic work, to extend children's learning. The headteacher monitors the work of the school through a wide range of approaches. The school has plans to address the need to improve the rigour with which children's progress is tracked and learning targets are set. Closer joint working is now needed to ensure consistency of practice across all classes.

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

The headteacher promotes a positive ethos of achievement. The school encourages children to achieve in a variety of ways and celebrates their successes at assemblies and through newsletters and displays. Most staff have a clear understanding about their role in relation to child protection. The education authority should ensure that catering staff receive appropriate training in child protection. At all stages, relationships between staff and children are very positive. Children respond very well to the high standards staff set for their behaviour and learning. Children are proud of their school and very well behaved. Children feel that staff take good account of their views.

Children have a very good understanding about the place of healthy eating and exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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

The headteacher has a strong commitment to the school and community. She is held in high regard by parents, children, staff and the wider community. She works very well with staff to help meet children's needs and includes children and their parents in helping to take the school forward. Staff take forward areas for improvement. The school now needs to continue to develop and refine arrangements for tracking children's performance and assessing their learning.

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 in connection with 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 develop recording and tracking systems using Curriculum for Excellence to ensure children continue to progress well.
- Include the nursery class more fully in developing school policies and practices.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements or recommendations.

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 Poolewe Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	good
Children's experiences	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	good

HM Inspector: Anne McGachey
23 August 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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