

**Kinlochbervie Primary School
The Highland Council
2 September 2008**

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1. Background

Kinlochbervie Primary School was inspected in May 2008 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 innovation, and its 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 Parent Council, and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the village of Kinlochbervie and the small townships in the surrounding rural area. At the time of the inspection the roll was 33. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was above the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- A very welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- Courteous, well-behaved and motivated pupils.
- High quality attainment in English language and mathematics.
- High quality accommodation and the use made of the local environment to support and extend learning.
- The teamwork of all staff and their contribution to meeting the needs of all learners.
- The leadership of the headteacher.

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.

Parents were very positive about almost all aspects of the school. They felt their children enjoyed being at school and were very well looked after. Parents thought that

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

the school communicated with them regularly and responded promptly to matters of concern. They felt that the school was well led. Pupils were happy about almost all aspects of the school. They appreciated the efforts of their teachers in keeping them safe and improving their learning. Teaching and support staff were very positive about all aspects of the school. They enjoyed working in the school and felt very well supported by the headteacher.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The school's curriculum provided a very good range of experiences and took very good account of national and education authority guidance. The Active Schools Coordinator and visiting teachers in music and art and design were enhancing the development of pupils' skills. Staff had begun to make good use of time towards the end of the school day to enable pupils to learn through play. Teachers placed an appropriate emphasis on pupils' personal and social development, which included health education and education for citizenship. Pupils benefited from appropriate opportunities for physical education each week. Pupils in the P5 to P7 class were acquiring good conversational skills in French. Staff made effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum. Interactions between pupils and teachers were very positive. The overall quality of teaching across the school was very good. Teachers provided clear explanations and instructions and built successfully on prior learning. They all shared the purposes of lessons with pupils, gave very helpful and detailed feedback and told them how to improve their work. All teachers used praise and rewards effectively to encourage and motivate pupils. They also used written comments appropriately in jotters to identify pupils' strengths and highlight areas for improvement. Arrangements for assessing, tracking and monitoring pupils' progress were effective. Teachers made good use of homework to enhance the activities being carried out in class.

Learner's experiences were very good. Pupils settled quickly to their classwork, were well-behaved and responded enthusiastically to teachers' questions. Staff provided appropriately frequent opportunities for pupils to be active and to learn independently. Pupils responded well when working collaboratively on tasks in the P5 to P7 class. At all stages, pupils were learning effective skills in drama and physical education. Pupils had effective opportunities to learn in different ways, to be creative and expressive, to think critically and to set and evaluate their own targets for learning. Pupils were developing good skills in the use of ICT in their learning.

Improvements in performance

Overall, improvements in performance were good.

The quality of attainment in English language was very good overall. Almost all pupils attained, or exceeded, appropriate national levels in listening, talking, reading and writing. Pupils who had not achieved these levels were making very good progress with their coursework. Throughout the school, pupils talked with confidence, expressed personal views and listened attentively. At the early stages, pupils were making steady progress

with reading. Pupils in the P5 to P7 class were highly motivated readers and were able to discuss authors and identify personal preferences. At all stages, pupils wrote effectively for a variety of purposes and across all curricular areas. In the P5 to P7 class, pupils wrote successfully in a range of genres, including science reports, poetry and play scripts. Pupils in the upper stages did not have sufficient opportunities to complete extended pieces of imaginative and personal writing.

The overall quality of attainment in mathematics was very good. Almost all pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in key aspects of mathematics. Most pupils at the early stages achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils with additional support needs were making good progress. At all stages, pupils were able to handle and interpret information accurately using an appropriate range of graphs and tables. They made effective and regular use of computer software. By P7, pupils were competent in written and mental calculations. Almost all pupils were able to round numbers and use decimals accurately. Across the school, pupils were secure in working out money calculations. They had a good knowledge of angles, shape and symmetry. They could identify correctly a range of shapes and discuss their properties. Pupils' skills in problem-solving and enquiry were developing well. They were able to identify and use a range of strategies to solve problems. Most were able to communicate their solutions clearly.

Pupils were making good progress in developing skills in art and design, music, drama and physical education. Across the school, pupils demonstrated a sound awareness of a range of drawing and painting techniques. Pupils had used these techniques creatively to produce a range of imaginative art displays. At P1 to P4, pupils worked cooperatively in small groups to create an attractive fruit collage, making choices about which materials to use. In environmental studies, pupils were developing an appropriate range of knowledge and skills. Pupils had successfully designed and built models of their own versions of an energy efficient house. At P5 to P7, pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of aspects of the solar system and about the impact of meteors on the surface of the moon and the effects of gravity. Throughout the school, pupils were confident in using ICT. Pupils at the upper stages demonstrated very good understanding of how to create animations and were developing their skills in filming and photography.

The school encouraged pupils' broad achievements very effectively. Pupils had achieved success in a broad range of endeavours, including sporting and enterprise activities. Many had enjoyed success and represented the school in shinty competitions. All pupils benefited from taking part in Gaelic lessons, batik and mosaic workshops. They enthusiastically took part in bridge building and a drumming workshop with pupils from other local primary schools. Pupils at all stages developed their awareness of citizenship in a variety of ways. For example, they raised funds for charities and performed in concerts for members of the local community. Pupils in the upper primary developed their self-awareness and appreciation of others, as well as their skills in outdoor education, through highly successful residential trips.

The school had made very good progress in achieving the priorities in its improvement plan. The planned improvements were having a positive effect on pupils' experiences. Pupils were benefiting from working with their teachers, the local countryside ranger and science staff from the local secondary school as they planned and recorded science

experiments. At all stages pupils benefited from involvement in the Eco-Schools Scotland project as they worked to reduce waste and encourage recycling.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Pupils' learning needs were met very effectively. Staff had a very good knowledge of pupils' strengths and areas for development. They took appropriate steps to ensure that pupils made very good progress by undertaking tasks which were well matched to their needs. Staff set clearly stated learning targets, reviewed pupils' progress regularly and discussed this with parents. They worked closely with parents, professionals and support agencies to support pupils with additional support needs. Staff liaised closely with the support for learning teacher who provided useful advice regarding any pupils with additional support needs. Support staff provided very good assistance for individuals and groups. Very good arrangements were in place to support pupils with English as an additional language.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	The overall quality of care, welfare and development was very good. Staff knew their pupils well and were very sensitive to their emotional, social and medical needs. Staff were aware of child protection procedures and knew how to implement these. Appropriate procedures were in place for the administration of medicines and safe use of the Internet. Effective procedures were in place to check on the location of absent pupils. The Pupil Council played an important part in the life of the school. Staff and a range of partner agencies worked effectively together to support children and their families. The school had appropriate transition arrangements in place for pupils as they entered P1 and transferred from P7 to Kinlochbervie High School.
Management and use of resources and space for learning	The quality of accommodation and facilities was very good. All staff made good use of attractive displays to enhance the learning environment. Classrooms were large, bright and well equipped. Pupils benefited from extensive and well-planned grounds which provided ample space for play, games and sport. The school had made very good use of available space to support pupils and welcome parents. There were appropriate security arrangements. The school was fully accessible to users with restricted mobility.

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness	<p>There was a very good sense of community and very positive and supportive interactions between staff and pupils. Staff praised children appropriately to acknowledge their efforts and achievements and to build self-esteem. Staff promoted a strong sense of fairness and mutual respect through the positive use of praise and reward. All staff contributed fully to the very good ethos of the school. The school effectively celebrated pupils' achievements in well-presented displays of their work. All staff were fully committed to ensuring all pupils achieved their full potential. A racial equality policy was in place and education authority procedures were well implemented. Weekly assemblies provided very good opportunities for religious observance and to celebrate pupils' achievements.</p>
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	<p>The school had very good links with parents and the local community. Very good opportunities were available for parents and staff to discuss children's progress. Parents were kept well informed about the life and work of the school. Parents of P1 pupils were given very helpful advice prior to their children's entry to the school. Parents had appropriate opportunities to view resources used for sensitive issues in health education. They received regular and informative reports on pupils' progress. The newly formed Parent Council provided active and high quality support. Parent support through fundraising had enhanced outdoor learning and play opportunities for pupils. The school nurse, community policeman, parental volunteers and the Active Schools Coordinator contributed very effectively to the work of the school. The school had established effective links with local businesses.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

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

Kinlochbervie Primary School provided a secure, well ordered and friendly learning environment within which staff put a high priority on pupils' care and welfare. Primary pupils were happy, very motivated to learn and well-behaved. The quality of learning and teaching was very good. Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was very good. Pupils enjoyed their learning and their skills in personal and social education were well developed. Staff provided very effective support for pupils requiring additional assistance in their learning. Relationships with parents and the community were very good.

The headteacher provided very good leadership. She demonstrated a high level of commitment, professional expertise and care in managing and moving the school forward. She had developed very positive relationships with pupils, parents and staff and had gained their respect. She recognised the talents, interests and development needs of all staff and supported them effectively in their endeavours. The school's approaches to improvement through self-evaluation were good. The headteacher effectively monitored the work of the school by observing lessons, monitoring teachers' plans and sampling pupils' work. She had consulted parents and pupils on aspects of the work of the whole school and taken good account of their views. She fully involved staff in evaluating the quality of the provision and in identifying improvement priorities. All staff showed a strong commitment to taking these forward. The school had many strengths and was very well placed to build on the existing high standards.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- further develop the current approaches to self-evaluation to ensure they are appropriately focused on securing improvements in key areas of the school's work.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. 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 the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

David M Martin
HM Inspector

2 September 2008

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?	
The curriculum	very good
Teaching for effective learning	very good
Learners' experiences (primary stages)	very good
Improvements in performance (primary stages)	very good

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	very good

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	very good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	very good
Expectations and promoting achievement	very good
Equality and fairness	good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	good
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

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

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children enjoyed being at school and were treated fairly.• Staff showed concern for children's care and welfare.• They were made to feel welcome and were consulted on decisions which affected their children.• The school was well led and if they raised a matter of concern it would be dealt with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers encouraged them and helped them when they had difficulties with their school work.• The school helped to keep them safe and healthy.• Pupils had a say in deciding how to make the school better.• Teachers expected them to work hard and were good at letting them know how they could improve their learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Around one quarter of pupils thought that not all pupils were treated fairly and that the behaviour of pupils in the school was not good.

What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was well led. • There was good communication between senior managers and staff. • The school worked hard to promote good relations with the community. • They had good opportunities to be involved in decision making. • Continuous professional development was effective. • They liked working in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant issues.

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, 1st Floor, Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee DD1 4QB or by telephoning 01382 576700. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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 (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsa.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsa.org.uk.

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