



**Golspie High School
The Highland Council
3 May 2011**

We published a report on Golspie High School in June 2008. That report set out key strengths of the school and areas for improvement. We carried out follow-through inspections in February 2009 and February 2010 and published reports on those visits in April 2009 and March 2010.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in March 2011. It tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school provides. It also comments on how the school is getting on with the main points for action. First we focus on changes in the core work of the school. We explain how the school has got better at helping children to learn and benefit from being at the school. Next we look at the key processes which enable this to happen, including the involvement of parents¹. Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well young people are cared for and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally we comment on improvements in leadership to help the school achieve its aims.

A copy of this report has been placed on the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk. Where applicable, you will also find analyses of questionnaire returns.

¹ 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

Golspie High School serves the village of Golspie, neighbouring villages and surrounding rural communities. A new headteacher took up post in May 2010.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The leadership and sense of direction provided by the headteacher.
- The commitment of staff to improve the quality of learning and teaching and young people's achievement.
- The positive attitude of almost all young people towards their school and their work.
- The wide range of opportunities and activities that help young people to learn and achieve.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Young people's learning experiences continue to improve. Young people learn more actively and take greater responsibility for planning and reviewing their own learning. They have more opportunities to work and learn together. Young people's learning is supported through better use of homework although a few teachers still use it inconsistently. Teachers are better at identifying young people's strengths and learning needs. Teachers' work is of a more consistently high quality. Staff are much more confident in using assessment information to plan further improvement. Young people's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at S1/2 has improved significantly over the past three years. Young people's attainment at S3 to S6 continues to be variable. Young people are achieving better in key subjects, but there is considerable scope for further improvement. The school continues to provide many opportunities for young people to achieve and to contribute to the ethos and life of the school.

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

Staff continue to work effectively with a range of partners to support young people's learning and development. They have further strengthened links with primary school colleagues to develop important aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff with particular responsibility for supporting young people are much clearer about their roles. They work closely with other agencies to support young people. Their work is effectively coordinated by a deputy headteacher. Parents have more confidence in the school and about their children's learning and achievement. Parents contribute to school improvement through membership of working groups. Young people's skills for life and work are developed through partnerships with local organisations and colleges.

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

Staff are clear about what is required to further improve the school. They work more collaboratively and consistently to improve the quality of learning and teaching and young people's achievement. They observe one another's lessons more regularly; make suggestions for improvement and share good practice. School managers should ensure that this is done consistently to further improve young people's learning experiences. Young people have more opportunities to contribute to improvements. More teachers ask for their opinions about courses and lessons. Young people contributed to the much improved programme for personal and social education. The pupil council is consulted regularly on a number of important developments and has a budget to support its work. Young people have more confidence and pride in their school and almost all wear school uniform.

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

The headteacher has quickly established high standards and expectations. Young people in S3–S6 have been set challenging targets for learning and achievement. They are supported through a recently introduced mentoring scheme. Young people's progress and achievement is tracked and recorded more regularly and systematically through a highly promising electronic management system. There is scope to involve parents more directly in the process. Young people generally behave well in and out of class. A clear and effective system to promote positive behaviour is leading to further improvement.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has continued the positive development and improvement of the school that was at an early stage last year. He has given the school a clear sense of direction and correctly identified the areas where improvement is most necessary. Senior managers, including faculty managers and principal teachers have benefited from clearer and more manageable remits. Almost all of them are now better placed to contribute to further improvement. Staff are more willing to take on leadership responsibilities and to improve the school through their membership of working groups. Others contribute strongly to aspects of Curriculum for Excellence, such as literacy and numeracy, and to staff development activities.

8. What happens next?

The school has continued to improve under the leadership of the new headteacher. Many of the improvements noted in the report of March 2010 are more secure and are making a significant impact on learning and teaching. As a result, we will make no further visits to the school in connection with the report published in June 2008. Our District Inspector will continue to engage with the education authority to monitor the school's progress with particular reference to young people's attainment.

Managing Inspector: Douglas Marr
3 May 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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