



**King Edward School
Banff
Aberdeenshire Council
1 December 2009**

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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

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

King Edward School is a non-denominational school. It serves the hamlet of King Edward and the surrounding area. The roll was 26 when the inspection was carried out in September 2009. Almost a third of children attending the school lived outwith the catchment area. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Support for children who are having difficulties in their learning.
- The commitment of the headteacher and staff to the care and welfare of all children and to improving their learning.
- Community involvement that adds to children's environmental experiences.

3. Example of good practice

- Developing children's literacy and technology skills by building links in their learning.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Most children are enthusiastic about learning. Most work together well to build each other's confidence and to achieve success. Across the school, children give their views confidently about their work and personal targets. Most children can discuss what they have learned from their lessons. In class, they are being given more of a say in how and what they learn. Children achieve well in a variety of health promoting activities during the school day. These include the popular 'Fruity Friday' event and breakfast club where they can socialise and eat healthy snacks. Across the school, children benefit from daily tooth brushing.

Many children are experiencing success. Children from P1 to P3 can explain and demonstrate well how to pass a ball successfully to their partner. Across the school, children are well motivated to play the recorder. P4 to P7 children create interesting rhythms and melodies using musical instruments. They work well individually and with partners. Children are demonstrating responsible citizenship skills and contributing effectively to the school and the community. For example, they make helpful contributions to Eco-Schools Scotland work, to the pupil council and to health promotion activities. Children achieve success in sports activities with local leisure centre coaches, and with other local schools. These include hockey, football, rugby, swimming and cricket. Children from P4 to P7 develop their self-confidence through taking part in a skiing trip. Those at P6 and P7 improve their cycling skills using the well-designed cycle track in the playground.

Children are making good progress from their earlier levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. In English language, most children listen attentively in class discussions and talk confidently about their interests and the books they are reading. Most children read well and are keen to read for pleasure, particularly younger children. Most can find information well using books and Internet sites. Older children do not always write long enough pieces or for a wide enough range of purposes. In mathematics, across the school, most children are accurate in mental and written calculations. They use graphs and charts well to display and record information. They are not skilled enough in using computers to handle information. Across the school, children have a good knowledge of shape. They work together well to use a range of strategies and games to solve problems.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children with a good curriculum overall. Across the school, they are beginning to develop the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. They are using more active learning to enhance children's experiences. Staff help children to link their learning well across different aspects of the curriculum, particularly to

develop literacy skills. They make very good use of visits, visitors and specialist teachers to make learning more interesting for children. Staff are not yet providing two hours of quality physical education each week for all pupils. Older children would benefit from more opportunities to use information and communications technology to support their learning in mathematics.

Staff meet children's learning needs well. Most tasks and activities are well matched to children's needs. Staff are beginning to take good account of children's interests and ideas when planning activities. This is helping to ensure the learning needs of most children are well met. The pace of learning has improved and most children are making more progress. A few writing and mathematics activities are too easy for higher-achieving children. Teachers give clear explanations and share the purposes of lessons with children. As a result, children are clearer about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Children do not yet have enough opportunity to make choices in their own learning, for example, in reading and writing activities. Support staff provide very helpful assistance that ensures that the needs of children who have difficulties with their learning are met effectively. Teachers are giving children more varied homework. This is helping to encourage children to learn more.

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

The Parent Council supports the school well through many fundraising events. These include social events for parents and children such as family nights and a fundraising car boot sale. Parents attend the popular school performances. They help children, for example, to learn about gardening in the school grounds. The school has strong relationships with the local community, including local churches and businesses. Children learned how to build a greenhouse from recycled plastic bottles with the help of a local joiner. The countryside ranger and nursery plant owner help children to learn about the natural world. Teachers communicate with parents very well through regular

newsletters and questionnaires, most recently on health promotion activities. They give parents helpful information about their children's progress through meetings and written reports. The school deals effectively with complaints from parents, children and other members of the community. It consults parents appropriately about sensitive health issues. Effective partnerships with a wide range of external organisations, including psychological and social work services, have been largely successful in supporting children. The school has good links with other schools in the local area, for example through joint residential trips and team sports. Staff prepare children well for their transfer from nursery to primary. Children in P7 are particularly well supported for their transfer to Turriff Academy.

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

Most children are keen to take on responsibilities. As a result of their efforts, the school has gained a second green flag from Eco-Schools Scotland and an award from the local authority for health promotion. All children are beginning to develop their leadership skills through taking part in one of the school committees. They are learning to make decisions on how they can help to improve the school and the wider community. Staff work well together as a team to improve the work of the school. They have taken the lead on key areas of development and their work is improving children's learning experiences. Staff are increasingly involved in evaluating their work and the work of the school. They meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss individual children's achievements. The quality of the monitoring of learning and teaching and tracking the pace of children's progress needs further improvement to help raise attainment.

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

The school is very welcoming. Most children behave well in classes and around the school. They feel safe in school but a few are not

clear about how the school deals with any incidents in the playground. Staff have very positive relationships with children. They encourage children to work hard through a variety of methods, such as golden time, stickers and certificates. Staff are committed to the wellbeing and support of all children and have a clear understanding of child protection procedures. They do not have high enough expectations of what some children can attain in their learning. All children understand the importance of making healthy choices at snack and lunch times and know ways of staying safe and healthy. The school has effective strategies in place to encourage children to attend school. Staff are successful in promoting equality and fairness through, for example, including all children in all school activities. Children have regular opportunities for religious observance.

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

Under the headteacher's effective leadership, teachers are working together well to take forward improvements in learning and teaching. As a result, children across the school are benefiting from increasingly valuable learning experiences. Staff are strongly committed to making further improvements and respond very positively to the leadership of the headteacher. The quality of the school's self-evaluation has improved. The headteacher has a clear idea of how she wants the school to develop. She now needs to involve children and parents in developing the school's aims to ensure all have a shared understanding of how the school needs to develop and improve. The school, with the support of the education authority, has the capacity to continue to improve.

9. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, 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. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in learners' achievement.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to develop children's writing skills.
- Ensure all children are suitably challenged and have better opportunities to make choices in their learning.
- Strengthen approaches to self-evaluation.

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 King Edward School.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: June Graham

1 December 2009

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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Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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