



**Arduthie School  
Stonehaven  
Aberdeenshire Council  
9 June 2009**

We published a report on Arduthie School in May 2007. That report set out key strengths of the school and main points for action.

This follow-through report is based on an inspection visit which was carried out in February 2009. 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 parents<sup>1</sup>. Our report also describes developments in the 'ethos' of the school, by which we mean how well children 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](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Where applicable, you will also find descriptions of good practice in the school and analyses of questionnaire returns.

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<sup>1</sup>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**

Arduthie School serves part of the town of Stonehaven. The school roll has fallen from 482 children at the time of the initial inspection to 375, including 72 children in the nursery class.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- The positive ethos and commitment of staff to teamwork and further self-improvement.
- Improved communication across the school and the positive impact of this on all aspects of the work of the school.
- Impact of staff taking on leadership roles and revised promoted post remits and responsibilities which has ensured continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
- The increased involvement of children as active participants in their learning and higher expectations of staff for children's learning.
- Further enhancement of positive partnerships with parents, local schools and the local community.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

Most children are more actively involved in their learning and are making very good progress. They are finding lessons more interesting and are more confident about sharing their ideas. Teachers are now providing a broader range of learning experiences. Children are responding well to being given more opportunities to work together in groups. Staff now make very good use of the general purpose spaces to promote active learning. The school is taking effective steps to further develop aspects of the curriculum, including health education, citizenship, and enterprise. This is having a positive impact on children's enthusiasm, motivation to learn, and their wider achievements. Attainment in English language and in mathematics has improved since the initial inspection. Almost all children are attaining appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics and most do so in writing. Children are now more involved in activities

requiring group discussion and this is improving their talking and listening skills. In mathematics most deal well with oral and written calculation, measurement, shape and problem solving. There is now much better use of information and communications technology across the curriculum to support learning and teaching.

Tasks and activities are now better matched to children's needs and children are developing their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of contexts. Teachers are using questioning more effectively to challenge children's thinking. Children have participated in and achieved success in a number of local and national competitions and activities.

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

Teamwork amongst staff is now very effective and staff are working well together to ensure continued improvement. Clearer remits for senior staff are helping to improve children's learning, particularly in English and mathematics. There is now better communication and opportunities for additional training for classroom teachers and support staff. This is ensuring greater consistency in learning and teaching across the school. Arrangements for assisting children with additional support needs have improved and ensure effective assistance to individuals and groups across the school. Individualised educational programmes (IEPs) are operating well for children receiving additional support. Parents are fully involved in discussing IEPs with teachers. Parents continue to be actively involved in a range of activities and support children on educational visits and in enterprise activities.

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

The active pupil council, representing all primary stages, contributes to decisions made to improve the learning environment. Staff are having a positive impact on improving the school. They readily volunteer to take on leadership roles, and to discuss and share good practice. Self-evaluation has improved at all levels. Children's attainment is now tracked closely by the headteacher and the two deputy headteachers. Senior promoted staff discuss progress made in learning with individual children and with class teachers to ensure there is appropriate pace and progression in learning. Improved procedures are in place to monitor learning and teaching and to provide teachers with feedback to help improve classroom practice. Senior promoted staff should now ensure that feedback is used more effectively to inform future practice. Staff now make effective use of peer evaluation, involving teachers observing and commenting on each others' practice.

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

There are noticeable improvements in the expectations of all staff. Teachers have maintained high standards of children's behaviour and now have more consistently high expectations of children's achievements. The headteacher has daily meetings with senior staff to monitor any issues as they arise and regularly reviews teaching plans and children's work. Children are more involved in setting learning targets and in evaluating their own progress. Teachers and children have set themselves higher expectations of attainment and achievement. Children celebrate and share their achievements during regular assemblies. Those at P7 benefit from a residential week which raises their confidence and builds more effective teamworking skills. Staff are using a range of strategies, to motivate and encourage children at class and school levels.

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

The school now has a very clear sense of direction. The headteacher and staff are working well together to deliver the priorities in the school action plan. Staff are developing well as a team, display a high level of commitment to the school and are keen to bring about further improvements. The headteacher is now monitoring the work of the school more closely. She uses a helpful monitoring calendar, and shares the responsibility for this with her senior management team. The education authority provides helpful support to the school. The Quality Improvement Officer works closely with staff to bring about improvements.

## **8. What happens next?**

There is clear evidence of improvement since the original inspection. The school now performs better overall. With the continued commitment of staff and support from the education authority, the school is well placed to continue to improve. HMIE will make no further visits in connection with the inspection report of May 2007.

**HM Assistant Chief Inspector:** Alistair F Marquis  
9 June 2009

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