



**Lumphanan School
by Aboyne
Aberdeenshire Council
9 June 2009**

This report tells you about the quality of education at the school¹. We describe how children benefit from learning there. We explain how well they are doing and how good the school is at helping them to learn. Then we look at the ways in which the school does this. We describe how well the school works with other groups in the community, including parents² and services which support children. We also comment on how well staff and children work together and how they go about improving the school.

Our report describes the 'ethos' of the school. By 'ethos' we mean the relationships in the school, how well children are cared for and treated and how much is expected of them in all aspects of school life. Finally, we comment on the school's aims. In particular, we focus on how well the aims help staff to deliver high quality learning, and the impact of leadership on the school's success in achieving these 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. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school.

¹ The term 'school' is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

² 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

Lumphanan School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Lumphanan, near Aboyne, and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 80 when the inspection was carried out in April 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Well-behaved, friendly children who are motivated to learn.
- The progress made by teachers in developing the curriculum.
- The level of care provided by all staff.
- Partnership with parents.
- The progress made by the headteacher in leading the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are well motivated to learn and respond positively to teachers and support staff. Increasingly, they are involved in activities which encourage them to be active in their learning. In mathematics, especially, they learn through a wide range of practical activities. Children cooperate well when working in groups. They need further opportunities to develop independence and take responsibility for their own learning. Children are helped to develop their confidence and sense of responsibility through a variety of out-of-class experiences. They participate in school shows, competitions, community events and fundraising for charity. Children from each class act as representatives on the pupil council and the health promotion committee. P7 children lead younger ones in playground games. In these ways, children actively contribute to the health and wellbeing of others. A few children serve on the eco committee. The school is working towards an Eco-Schools Scotland green flag. About a quarter of the children attend after-school badminton and netball clubs. Children are developing their knowledge well through class topics.

They are learning about their different senses at P1/P2 and ancient Egypt at P2/P3. Children at P4/P5 can describe the variety of life in tropical rainforests and the damage caused to the environment by acid rain. At P6/P7, they show wide-ranging knowledge about the geography and social customs of Japan. In recent years, standards of attainment have been high in mathematics but have declined in reading and writing. Attainment has improved considerably this year and most children are now achieving appropriate national levels in all three areas. A few children require further challenge in order to achieve their full potential. In English language, children listen and talk well in groups. They enjoy reading. The youngest ones are reading aloud with growing confidence. Older children can explain and discuss their reading confidently and are good at finding information from books. Most children write well for a variety of purposes. They take pride in their writing and present work neatly. In mathematics, children can calculate well and often know quick ways to calculate mentally. Most children have well-developed measurement skills and show good understanding of shapes. Their skills in using computers to process and display information are well developed by P7. Children solved some mathematical problems well, but they did not always think through problems carefully enough before tackling them.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum is good. Teachers are making steady progress in improving children's experiences in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. They are developing new teaching programmes to take account of recent advice on what children should be learning. They are ensuring that children can apply skills of literacy and numeracy in different contexts. Visiting specialist teachers help to develop children's learning in art, drama, information and communications technology, physical education and science. Children are not yet spending enough time on high-quality physical education. At P1 to P3, they spend too little time in school. The education authority plans to increase this time in session 2010-2011. Some children at P2 and P3 need more regular opportunities to learn through play.

Overall, teachers and support staff provide a high level of individual support to children to help them to learn. In a minority of lessons, the pace of progress in learning is too slow at times. Tasks and activities are not always well adjusted to suit children's needs and stage of development. An experienced support for learning teacher has recently been appointed on a temporary basis. She has acted swiftly to assess and prioritise children's learning needs and plan suitable support. Her plans include some help for higher-achieving children. New individualised learning programmes (IEPs) are being prepared for children experiencing difficulties with their learning. These IEPs require additional detail for some children. On most occasions, staff are overcoming barriers to children's learning. They need further expert advice on supporting children with more complex needs. The school involves parents and support agencies effectively in meeting children's needs. Teachers should ensure that all children are better informed about their strengths and development needs in learning. They should involve children in setting clear targets for improving their work.

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

Staff have developed close and effective links with parents. The headteacher keeps the Parent Council well informed about educational matters. It is actively involved in raising funds to broaden children's learning experiences. Parents have helped to develop the attractive school library. Several parents work with children and staff on the school's health promotion and eco committees or run after-school sports. Home-school communication is good and improving. Annual reports to parents on children's progress are detailed and informative. Staff are keeping parents better informed about homework through new homework diaries and spelling and reading records. Each class teacher provides parents with helpful information about forthcoming classwork and how parents can assist their children's learning. Staff make effective use of visitors to the school to enhance children's learning. The fire service, police, NHS health improvement staff and

the Active Schools Coordinator are all used effectively to promote children's health and wellbeing. The school has formed helpful new links with the local church. It benefits from contacts with other local schools, including growing curricular links with Aboyne Academy.

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

Staff are committed to improving the service they provide for children. They work together well in deciding which aspects of their work are strong and which need improvement. The headteacher has introduced a more organised approach to monitoring the work of the school. She has begun to visit classes to observe classroom practice and work with groups of children. She recognises the need to monitor learning and teaching more closely. Staff are giving more attention to improving children's attainment. The headteacher has introduced a tracking system to monitor children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This requires continued development to make it fully effective. The school takes very good account of the views of parents, children and staff in planning for improvement. Any complaints are recorded carefully and handled effectively. Children are pleased with the good work done by the pupil council. All children should have opportunities to say how the quality of their learning might be improved.

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

Staff set high expectations of children's behaviour and quality of work. Children are friendly and very well behaved. They are respectful towards staff and one another. Staff praise children's individual achievements. New ways of recording their activities and achievements out of school have been introduced, including a 'celebration of success' folder. Teachers' expectations of children's progress and achievement in classwork are sometimes not high enough. All staff provide a very high level of care for children.

Children feel safe and secure and know how to obtain help if necessary. A few staff have still to be trained in child protection. Health promotion is a strong feature of the school. Children have very effective access to outdoor play facilities which help to keep them fit and active. They are treated fairly and equally. All are fully included in the life of the school. Access is limited for any children with restricted mobility. School policy and staff training on equality and diversity issues require some updating to take account of legislation. The school provides appropriate opportunities for religious observance.

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

The school has come through an unsettled period in recent years with several changes of staff and leadership. The headteacher is highly committed to improvement and has made very good progress in taking the school forward. Parents are confident that the school now has a clearer direction. Communication and school organisation have been improved. Staff's expectations of children's achievement have been raised. The professional development of staff is strongly encouraged and they are willingly trying out new ideas in developing the curriculum. The headteacher has delegated appropriate tasks to teachers and support staff which are helping to improve children's learning and wellbeing. Staff, some of whom are new to the school this session, are coming together well as a team. With continued support from the education authority, the school is well placed to go on improving.

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 following 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.

- Increase opportunities for children to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure appropriate pace and challenge in all lessons by matching tasks more closely to children's learning needs.
- Continue to improve approaches to school self-evaluation, including closer monitoring of children's learning experiences and progress.

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 Lumphanan School.

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

HM Inspector: Tom Straiton

9 June 2009

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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