



**Fyvie School and
Nursery Class
Turriff
Aberdeenshire Council
19 May 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

Fyvie School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Fyvie and surrounding rural area. The roll was 151, including 20 in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in March 2009. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008. The school has undergone significant staff changes over the past few years, including four headteachers. The headteacher had been leading the school in an acting capacity for three months and appointed on a permanent basis one week before the inspection.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Polite and friendly children who enjoy learning.
- Strong partnerships with secondary schools, Banff and Buchan College, local businesses and the community.
- The leadership of the headteacher and the willingness of staff to improving outcomes for children.

3. Example of good practice

- The environmental project with Banff and Buchan College.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children enjoy their nursery experiences and are growing in confidence. They are good at playing and cooperating with each other. They like to choose their own play activities and concentrate well on tasks. Staff make very good use of the school grounds to make children's nursery experiences active and interesting. Children enjoy growing flowers and vegetables in their nursery garden. All children are making progress in their development and learning. They know about keeping healthy through routines and play activities. Almost all children experiment with early drawing and can recognise their name. The majority are making attempts at writing their name. They talk to one another and adults confidently and are very good at

listening to and following instructions. Children need more encouragement to use and appreciate books. The majority of children can count to ten and a few can recognise numbers. All can match and sort by colour and shape. A few children are beginning to use mathematical language in play situations. Staff now need to improve the way they record and track children's progress and achievements and share this information with children and parents.

Children in the primary classes are becoming more aware of their strengths as learners. Most are able to work well independently. They are developing good skills in working in groups to discuss and complete tasks. Increasingly, children are achieving in a range of activities. Almost all children are enthusiastic and proud of their achievements. The school team recently won the local inter-schools quiz organised by the Rotary Club. Children have worked hard with staff and parents to achieve an Eco-Schools Scotland bronze award and are working towards silver level. Across the primary stages children use information and communications technology (ICT) for a range of purposes, including carrying out research, preparing and interpreting graphs and charts and presenting talks. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They are beginning to make the link between how they feel and good health. Children are making satisfactory progress in English language and mathematics. The school has maintained good standards in reading in recent years, but standards in writing and mathematics have declined. Children do not always make sufficient progress from strong early achievement in their learning as they move through the school. Most listen well for instructions and are good at listening to each other in small groups. Children make good use of the school lending library and are encouraged to save up to buy books through the well-established Book Club. This is helping children to read more for pleasure and appreciate books. At P7, children read fluently and can talk confidently about their favourite authors. Teachers are beginning to plan writing activities that link to other areas of learning. Across the primary stages, children do not have enough opportunities for writing.

In mathematics, children work well with numbers both orally and in written work. They would benefit from more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in real life situations.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The curriculum in the primary and nursery classes is broad and covers most key aspects of learning. Staff recognise the need to review and develop the curriculum in line with the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. They should continue with plans to develop programmes for the nursery class and English language and personal and social development programmes in the primary classes. Staff are beginning to plan projects and topics that help children make links across different areas of the curriculum. They now need to develop more ways for children to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of their learning. In the primary classes, all children are benefiting from two hours of good quality physical education each week. With the help of visiting specialists, they are developing very good skills in music and art and design. The well-established link with a school in Ghana is helping to develop children's awareness of global issues. Overall, the curriculum does not ensure sufficient progression in the development of children's skills and understanding.

Across the primary and nursery classes, there are important weaknesses in how children's learning needs are being addressed. In the nursery class, children benefit from a good range of activities which includes regular opportunities for outside play and learning. Children have opportunities to choose activities but there is scope to make some of these more stimulating. In the primary classes, teachers do not take enough account of what children have already learned and rely too heavily on published commercial materials. Higher-achieving children are not always sufficiently challenged by tasks and activities and younger children do not have enough opportunities to learn through play. Systems for monitoring and tracking children's progress in learning require to be strengthened. The needs of a few children requiring significant care are met very well. Support and care assistants provide valuable support to

individual children. Although a number of strategies have recently been put in place, the school and education authority recognise the need to take action to improve further the arrangements for supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural needs. Teachers give clear explanations and share the purpose of lessons with children. A few teachers are skilled at explaining clearly to children what they expect them to learn and check for understanding. Regular and varied homework supports what children are learning in lessons.

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

The Parent Council works closely with staff to support the work of the school. Parents support the school in a variety of ways. These include running after-school clubs and helping children bake for the popular weekly Community Café. Staff keep parents informed of their children's progress through parents evenings and helpful reports. There is scope to take more account of parents' views and provide them with better information on the work of the school. Procedures introduced recently by the headteacher ensure that staff deal promptly and effectively with any complaints or concerns from parents. The quality of children's learning experiences is improved by the school's partnerships with social work, educational and health support services. The school has well-established links with Banff and Buchan College and local businesses. As a result, children are benefiting from learning about managing the environment, industry and the world of work. Children in P7 are supported very well for moving to Turriff and Meldrum secondary schools. Information from nursery staff on children's learning is not yet used effectively enough to support children when they arrive in P1.

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

Children are confident and keen to help the school improve. Members of the recently reformed pupil council and eco group have plans to gather the views of children across the school and are learning to communicate with others. Older children successfully take responsibility for running the tuck shop and collecting information daily on children's school meal choices. Children in P7 recently planned and carried out a helpful health and safety audit of the school grounds. They have also been trained as Young Leaders and are encouraging younger children to take part in playground games. There is scope to extend children's role in making decisions and taking more responsibility for their learning and aspects of school life. The school has gained Health Promoting School status from the local authority and is working towards achieving the next level. Support, clerical and janitorial staff contribute significantly to the life and work of the school. Teachers are committed to improving outcomes for children and are beginning to work together to address important priorities. However, arrangements for improvement planning across the primary and nursery classes need to be strengthened to ensure that children's attainment improves and their learning needs are met more effectively.

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

Staff have very positive relationships with children. Almost all children are friendly and polite to staff and to one another. However, the behaviour of a few children regularly interrupts the flow of learning and teaching in some classes. Teachers do not always set high enough expectations for children's learning. Children's wider achievements are celebrated at assemblies and displayed throughout the school. Children are increasingly benefiting from opportunities to achieve beyond work in the classroom. All staff are committed to supporting the care and wellbeing of children in the primary and nursery classes. They are clear about their responsibilities for child protection. There are appropriate procedures in place to monitor and encourage

children's attendance at school. The school is aware of the need to listen more carefully to children's views and to develop their understanding of equality and fairness. Children have good opportunities for religious observance at regular assemblies which are sometimes led by the school chaplain.

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

In a very short period of time the headteacher has worked with staff, children and parents to develop a clear vision for the school. She identified clearly and accurately where the school had helped to improve children's experiences and what it needed to do next. As a result, children's behaviour and the ethos of the school have improved significantly. Staff are keen to work together as a team. They feel valued and their morale is high despite the lack of continuity in staffing over the past few years. They are becoming more involved in leading whole-school developments and in evaluating their own teaching. They should continue with plans to share good practice in order to ensure improvements in children's learning and attainment. In the nursery and primary classes, self-evaluation is not yet focused on improving children's performance or meeting learning needs effectively. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, and with support from the education authority, the school has the capacity to improve.

9. What happens next?

We will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, we may continue to check the improvements the school has made. We may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second

follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.

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

- Raise attainment in English language and mathematics.
- Develop opportunities for children to take more responsibility for their own learning and aspects of school life.
- Provide children in the primary and nursery classes with appropriate levels of challenge and support to meet their needs more effectively.
- Improve communication and partnerships with parents.
- Develop approaches to self-evaluation to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the primary and nursery classes.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. Three recommendations were made, one of which has been addressed. Outstanding issues are carried forward in this report.

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 Fyvie Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

HM Inspector: Lesley A Allan
19 May 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