



**Glass School  
and Nursery Class  
Huntly  
Aberdeenshire Council  
24 February 2009**

We published a report on Glass School and Nursery Class in February 2008. 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 November 2008. It tells you about improvements since the original inspection in the quality of education which the school<sup>1</sup> 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>2</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> The term 'school' is used to include the work of the nursery class, where relevant.

<sup>2</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**

Glass School and Nursery Class serves the village of Glass and the surrounding area. A number of staffing changes have taken place since the original inspection.

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

- The increased use of information and communications technology (ICT).
- The commitment by staff and their initial success in working together as a team to improve children's learning experiences.
- The enthusiastic, motivated and well behaved children.

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

Most children are making good progress in their learning. They are confident and enjoy their lessons. Across the school teachers are providing a wider range of learning experiences for the children. Children are now much more active in their learning. In the nursery, children enjoy more opportunities for energetic play. The school grounds are being used well for outdoor learning and play activities. Attainment in English language and mathematics is showing signs of improvement. Children work well together in small groups. They listen carefully to each other's ideas. They have been developing their skills of research and public speaking through presentations to the rest of the class. Children are given more choice in their writing activities, which has resulted in increased motivation and improvements in the quality of their work. The children had produced interesting pieces of written information on volcanoes. In mathematics, they responded enthusiastically to problem solving activities which had been set in the context of their topic work on World War II.

There is much better use of ICT across the curriculum. Teachers are using it well to help children learn. Children are confident in their use of computers to research information. They are skilled at using the technology independently to produce graphs and documents. In the

nursery, improvements in planning have ensured that there is now better coverage of all areas of the curriculum.

Teachers now use a variety of tasks and activities to motivate and challenge children's learning across the curriculum. Most of the time learning activities present sufficient challenge for children. Teachers are improving the way in which they give children feedback on how to improve their work. Children now have a better idea of what they need to do to improve.

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

The support for learning teachers and classroom assistants now work more effectively in classes. They work alongside teachers in the classroom and provide helpful advice and support to meet the needs of the children. The school has improved the way in which it identifies children's individual learning needs. The school has made improvements to its procedures for producing individualised education plans (IEPs). Parents and pupils are now involved in the development of IEPs. The school works well with other council services to provide support for children with additional needs.

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

Children are involved in weekly committee meetings which are helping to improve the school, for example the Eco committee and pupil council. These meetings give the children the opportunity to be involved in making decisions. Their confidence and sense of pride in the school is improving as a result. They have a better understanding of the environment through the work they have done with the Forestry Commission. Children in P1 are given the responsibility of playing and talking with the nursery children about the things they are learning. This is helping to prepare the nursery children to move into P1

smoothly. Children in P1 feel good about their role in this and are developing good citizenship skills as a result. The headteacher and staff are working well as a team to improve the school. They are committed to developing their practice as teachers. They have been enthusiastic about researching good practice in other schools and developing it in their own classrooms.

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

Teachers' and children's expectations of what the children can achieve are rising. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and children respond well to a range of different activities. As a result, children are more positive and motivated in their learning. Children's work is displayed around the school. The school is good at celebrating children's success in a variety of ways, for example by using certificates and presentations at assemblies.

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

The headteacher has led by example and has begun to make significant changes to the way children learn in the school. The headteacher and her staff are now much more focused on monitoring and tracking children's attainment. They have regular discussions on children's progress. This is leading to improvements in the pace at which children are progressing through their work. Improvements to approaches to self-evaluation are still at the early stages of development. However, the headteacher has clear ideas on how she will develop systems for evaluating the work of the nursery and primary school. The education authority has provided effective and well-judged support to the headteacher and her staff. Glass School is showing increased signs of its capacity to improve further.

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

There is evidence of improvement in the school's work. However there are still some weaknesses in the school's approaches to self-evaluation. As set out in the original report, we will undertake a follow-through inspection within one year of the publication of this report.

**HM Inspector:** Laura JS Welford  
24 February 2009

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