



**Kemnay Primary School
and Nursery Class
Aberdeenshire Council
24 November 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

Kemnay Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves part of the town of Kemnay and surrounding rural area. The roll was 203, including 34 in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in September 2009. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children's high standards of behaviour and readiness for learning.
- Children's progress and learning experiences within the nursery class.
- Relationships between and among children, staff and parents and the ways in which they work together to improve the school.
- The active contribution children make to the life of the school and the wider community.
- Children's experiences and skills in enterprising approaches to learning.

3. Example of good practice

- Enterprising learning.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery class are making very good progress in their learning and development. They are happy and settled. Most children play very well together. Across the primary classes, children are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They work together very well and are actively involved in learning. Children engage in ongoing discussions about the quality of their work and receive clear feedback about their

progress. Children work together with their teachers to set targets to help them progress. This should be further extended to help all children understand fully their strengths, progress and next steps as learners. Across the school, children make very good use of a wide range of technology to help them learn. They often create digital films to record and share their successes. Almost all children feel happy and safe at school.

In the nursery class, children achieve very well across all areas of their learning. They enjoy imaginative play and express their own ideas very well through drawing, painting and music. Children are confident in balancing, climbing and pedalling wheeled toys while outdoors. In the primary classes, children achieve widely, through a very broad range of experiences, including out-of-school activities. Older children undertake responsibilities enthusiastically, for example, acting as buddies for younger children. This develops further their very good personal and social skills. Older children perform and present well in music and drama through shows and concerts. Some children's skilful public speaking led to the school winning a national award. Children at all stages are developing very good knowledge about the world of work through enterprise activities. They are beginning to develop as responsible, global citizens through a range of fundraising projects. Children understand the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit. Visiting specialist teachers are helping children to develop skills in art and design, drama, physical education, music, technologies and science. Overall, children throughout the school are achieving very well.

In the nursery class, children listen well and talk confidently to adults and their peers. Children recognise their own name and most can write by making marks or writing letters and numbers. Most children count confidently within ten. They recognise simple shapes and can compare different weights and heights. Children use construction materials well to solve problems. In the primary classes, the school has maintained good standards in English language and mathematics over the past three years. Most children are making good progress in mathematics, reading and writing, and very good progress in listening

and talking. A few children do not always maintain good progress as they move through the school. There is scope for more children to achieve national attainment standards earlier. In English language, most children listen very well and respond appropriately to instructions. They talk clearly and confidently when giving presentations. Most children enjoy reading and use the library regularly. Children write for a range of purposes and can use their writing skills to express themselves well across the curriculum. They have a good knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. In mathematics, most children are confident and accurate when doing written calculations involving number, money and measurement. Their skills in mental calculation need to be improved. Children display a good knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They collect, organise and present data well using computers. Children can describe the strategies they would use to solve problems and the majority are able to apply these confidently.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school has made a very good start to developing the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. In the nursery class, staff are responsive to children's interests when developing the curriculum. Activities are organised to allow children to be independent in all aspects of their play. Across the primary stages, children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff plan programmes which encourage children to use their literacy skills across most areas of learning. They provide activities which encourage children to develop their personal, social and citizenship skills very well. The school is making good progress towards providing two hours of physical education each week for children. Children's learning is enriched by a range of outings and visitors to the school. Staff have worked successfully with community partners to provide children with very good outdoor learning opportunities.

Overall, children's learning needs are well met. In the nursery class, staff support children with effective questioning which motivates and helps them stay involved in their learning. Staff know children well and

match activities and resources to the needs of individual children. They need to ensure that higher-achieving children benefit from activities which extend their learning. Across the primary classes, staff create a positive environment for learning. They give clear explanations and instructions and share the purpose of lessons with children. They use questions well to check children's understanding. Classwork does not always take enough account of the different learning needs of all children. At times, higher-achieving children would benefit from greater challenge. The school has effective approaches for identifying, monitoring and supporting children with additional learning needs. Children with additional needs have well-planned individualised educational programmes (IEPs) which help them to make progress in their learning. Parents are involved in reviewing their child's learning targets within IEPs, which helps them to support learning at home. Children's targets in their IEPs should now link with their personal learning targets. Support assistants work effectively with children to help them with their learning. Homework activities are regular and varied.

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

The school has developed successful partnerships with a range of agencies to support children's learning. The support for learning team provides very effective help for children who need it. Staff work closely with the active Parent Council which helps with fundraising and organising events. For example, children led the whole school community in planning a 'Homecoming 2009' reunion which celebrated Scottish culture and achievements. Children benefit from strong community links with the ranger service and local employers. Parents are invited to meet their child's teacher at the start of the session and receive high-quality updates from teachers every term. This helps parents to understand and support the learning that is planned for their child. The school has very good arrangements to support children moving from P7 to Kemnay Academy. Children are well supported when they move from nursery to P1. Staff should ensure that

information about children's progress is used to meet their learning needs fully. The school is good at sorting out any concerns and complaints.

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

Children feel that they have a say in making the school better and are pleased that staff listen to their views. They work in groups with parents and teachers to help improve the environment, enterprise and opportunities for health and wellbeing. As a result, the school has achieved awards from Eco-Schools Scotland and the John Muir Trust. All staff are committed to improving the work of the school. They have worked well together to try out new ideas, significantly improve learners' experiences and offer children a very wide range of activities, both within and outwith school. They should continue to develop consistent approaches to organising and assessing learning. Staff would then be well placed to make better use of information about children's progress to plan next steps and ensure that classwork is at the right level of difficulty for all children.

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

Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour and conduct. Children are polite, well behaved and come to school ready to learn. Relationships between staff, parents and children are very good, and they work together well to improve aspects of learning. Staff are highly committed to children's care and welfare. The school has an appropriate policy for child protection and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in this area. Children feel safe and well cared for in school and are treated equally and fairly. Teachers should continue to focus on promoting equality and diversity across the curriculum. The school regularly shares and celebrates children's achievements through the school website and wall displays.

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

The headteacher has successfully created a purposeful, caring ethos where everyone feels valued and is keen to contribute to improving the school. She has worked skilfully to promote significant improvements to learning, teaching and children's wider achievement. She is well supported by the depute headteacher. Staff willingly lead activities which are related to improvement priorities. Senior leaders now need to develop remits for their posts which focus on continuing to improve outcomes for children. They should make better use of information about children's progress and the outcomes of self-evaluation activities to ensure that all children are making good progress. With the high quality leadership of the headteacher and the continued commitment of all staff, the school is well placed to improve further.

9. 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 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.

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

- Make better use of information about children's progress to increase the pace of their learning.
- Continue to improve how the school meets the needs of all learners.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements or recommendations.

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 Kemnay Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Graeme Logan
24 November 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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