



**Kinellar School and
Nursery Class
Aberdeenshire Council
25 August 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.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. Examples of good practice
4. How well do children learn and achieve?
5. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
6. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
7. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
8. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
9. What happens next?

1. The school

Kinellar School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Blackburn, near Kemnay, and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 300, including 47 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in June 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The leadership of the headteacher and her depute in improving children's learning experiences.
- Staff teamwork.
- Polite and well-motivated children.
- Enterprise activities across the school.
- The positive ethos and relationships between staff and children.

3. Examples of good practice

- Enterprise in education: The Community Café.
- Money Week.
- Promoting reading through weekly breakfasts.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery class enjoy learning. They concentrate well on activities and are becoming more independent as they learn to look after themselves. Children are learning to share and take turns. They talk to staff about their ideas but need to be more involved in planning their learning and deciding what to learn next. Across the primary

stages, children work well individually and in groups in most classes. They are active and motivated in their learning and discuss their work confidently. Most children can evaluate their work but are not always clear about how to improve it.

In the nursery class, children are making good progress in their development and learning. They express their own ideas well through painting, model making and when using their imagination during role-play. Children respond positively to a wide range of health promotion activities and follow good hygiene routines to keep safe and healthy. At the primary stages, children achieve success both in and outside the classroom. Across the stages, they are developing sound skills in information and communications technology. In the early stages, children use computers well to draw. By P7, children can confidently research and present information. Across the school, children are developing effective skills in art. In the P4/5 class, children illustrated their project work very successfully in paintings of famous London landmarks. Children have benefited from activities, such as orienteering and climbing, during the recent health week. Those in P7 have developed new personal skills and worked well together at a residential experience and to organise a school show.

Children in the nursery class listen well and talk confidently to adults and each other. All recognise their own name and most like to practise writing letters and forming shapes. Most children count confidently and recognise numbers well. Most recognise simple shapes. At the primary stages, children are making good progress in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Most children attain appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading, attainment has improved over recent years. In writing and mathematics, attainment has been more variable with encouraging recent signs of improvement. Across the stages, individual children achieve appropriate national levels of attainment earlier than might be expected. By P7, an increasing number exceed these levels of attainment. In English language, children listen attentively and talk well about stories they have enjoyed. Most children read well with good expression. In P6, children develop effective reading skills at

weekly breakfasts during which stories in newspapers are discussed. Children write effectively for a variety of purposes and make good use of excursions and visitors to provide interesting contexts for their writing. In mathematics, children in the early stages learn number skills successfully through well-chosen games and activities. Across the stages, most children work well with numbers and have a suitable knowledge of shapes. By P7, most children are confident in handling and presenting information using appropriate graphs. The ability of children to identify and use appropriate strategies to solve mathematical problems is too variable.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children in the nursery and primary classes with a broad curriculum which supports their learning and development. Those in the nursery take good account of children's interests in planning learning activities and encourage them successfully to make healthy choices at snack time. Children would benefit from more opportunities to use their literacy and number skills in real life activities. In the primary classes, staff are beginning to take account of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. They provide children with very good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in many areas of the curriculum. For example, the recent 'Money Week' helped children across the stages to apply and develop successfully a wide range of skills. A wide range of activities encourage children effectively to develop sound enterprise skills. Children do not yet have two hours of high quality physical education each week.

In the nursery class, staff meet children's learning needs well. They provide good opportunities for children to select activities and resources to suit their own interests. Staff observe children's learning carefully. They should use this information more effectively to extend children's learning. In the primary stages, staff know children very well. In most lessons, staff match tasks and activities successfully to children's learning needs. They make good use of timetabling to provide high achieving children with an appropriate pace and level of work in several areas. Staff successfully identify the learning needs of

children, including those with additional needs. Staff should ensure that support staff work with the children who most need help. Staff recognise the need to set clearer targets for children who have difficulties with their learning, including those with individualised educational programmes. They should involve parents more in this process. Teachers give clear explanations to children and share the purposes of lessons well. They make good use of homework to support children's learning in class and use praise effectively to motivate children.

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

Parents provide strong support for the school and for children's learning. They contribute well to the school's programme of after-school activities. A small number work effectively with staff to give support in classes and in organising the weekly healthy tuck shop. The Parent Council has successfully organised a wide range of fundraising activities which have led to important improvements in the school hall. Most parents are happy about how the school keeps them informed about their children's progress. Parents receive helpful information about the curriculum, including sensitive health education issues. The majority are satisfied with opportunities to give their views. Staff have effective links with many agencies, including social workers and the pupil support worker to assist children's learning. They prepare children well for making a confident move from nursery into P1 and from P7 to Kemnay Academy. The school deals effectively with complaints or concerns from parents.

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

Staff contribute effectively to children's learning and wider aspects of the school. All staff take part in working groups to improve aspects of the school and to organise events. Staff have additional

responsibilities, for example for coordinating eco and health promoting activities and for planning the recent, successful Highland games event. A few staff would like more say in setting priorities for improvement. Children feel staff listen to their views but they would like more chances to discuss their learning with teachers. Children in the middle and upper stages have benefited from links with the community by organising a regular café for parents and visitors. At P7, children are very good at taking on responsibilities such as organising lunch time games. The school's arrangements for evaluating its work help to improve most children's learning. Senior staff visit classes and provide teachers with helpful suggestions for improvements. They regularly check children's work and discuss planned teaching. Staff are aware of the need to monitor children's progress more thoroughly to improve the consistency of learning and attainment.

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

Staff and children are very welcoming to visitors. They have high expectations for children's attendance, behaviour and progress. Almost all children behave well and feel strongly encouraged to do so by their teachers. They enjoy being at school. Most are confident that any bullying will be handled effectively. The school encourages children to keep themselves safe and healthy. All staff are aware of the school's child protection procedures. Staff use assemblies and certificates well to celebrate children's achievements. Children are aware of the beliefs and customs of others and have appropriate opportunities for religious observance. Staff should now promote equality and cultural diversity more actively.

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

The school shares its aims and values well with staff, parents and children. The headteacher, supported by her staff, provides clear direction and leadership of improvement. She has improved staff

morale and children's achievements and is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The depute headteacher provides very positive support. Together, the senior team are respected by parents, children and staff. Staff feel strongly supported and contribute well to school life and children's learning. The school is well placed to continue to improve through building on its existing good practice.

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 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.

- Involve children more consistently in planning and evaluating their learning.
- Strengthen arrangements for supporting children with additional needs, including those with individualised educational programmes.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

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 Kinellar School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Alistair Brown
25 August 2009

To find out more about inspections or get an electronic copy of this report go to www.hmie.gov.uk. Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team (BMCT) if you wish to enquire about our arrangements for translated or other appropriate versions.

If you wish to comment about any of our inspections, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

Our complaints procedure is available from our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsso.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website at www.spsso.org.uk.

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