



**Oyne School
Insch
Aberdeenshire Council
30 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

Oyne School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Oyne and the surrounding area. The roll was 58 when the inspection was carried out in May 2009. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Happy, confident children who are enthusiastic about their learning.
- The inclusive culture and effective support for children with additional support needs.
- The wide range of children's experiences.
- The links with parents, the local community and agencies to support children's learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher in creating a strong school community.

3. Examples of good practice

- The promotion of health and wellbeing.
- The development of citizenship activities.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Almost all children are motivated and keen to do well. Children across the school feel safe, cared for, included and healthy. They treat each other, teachers and visitors with courtesy. At times, children have good opportunities to be independent in their learning. They do not always know what it is they need to do to improve their learning.

Children are developing their skills in citizenship very well, through a rich variety of activities. Their physical, social and cultural skills are being developed effectively through an extensive range of sports clubs, art activities, competitions, festivals and residential trips. Children are making good progress in physical education, art and computing. They also plant, grow, harvest and cook their own produce. They are developing confidence by taking responsibility. For example, children in P7 regularly visit the local nursery to read to younger children and advise them on road safety. Children have well-developed skills in mapping. In recent years, standards of attainment in reading, listening and talking and mathematics have been high and improving. Standards of attainment in writing are good and improving. Most children achieve or exceed appropriate national levels. Children with additional support needs are making very good progress in their learning. In English language, children's skills in listening and talking are very well developed. They are keen to share their views with others and listen respectfully to each other during group work. Most children are keen to read and do so with understanding and expression. Children write well and at length. In most classes they use these skills well across the curriculum. Standards of presentation of children's written work are not consistently high. Across the school, children are making very good progress in mathematics. In P7, children are very confident in making oral and written calculations. At the early stages, children have a sound grasp of number. They carry out written calculations involving money and time well. In P3/4/5, children's skills with shape and symmetry are being developed effectively through active lessons involving the use of technology, nature and the outdoors. Children need more opportunities to develop their problem solving skills in everyday situations.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Children experience a broad curriculum. Staff have started to take account of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence* in planning children's learning experiences. They develop children's skills in personal and social development very well. The outdoor area is used

effectively to extend children's learning. There is a full calendar of enterprise and citizenship events which have ensured children develop a 'can-do' attitude. Staff should ensure they plan these events to build on children's prior learning. Visiting specialists provide strong support in art, music and physical education. The school ensures all children experience at least two hours good quality physical education each week.

Staff know children very well as individuals and are sensitive to their emotional, personal and social needs. They ensure all children are included in every aspect of school life. In most classes, tasks, activities and teaching approaches are well matched to the needs of children. In a few classes, children require greater challenge and more opportunities to think, solve problems and find solutions for themselves. Accommodation in some areas of the school is cramped and this can, at times, have an impact on some learning and teaching activities. The school successfully supports children with additional needs. The support for learning teacher provides effective support to individuals and groups. She works alongside class teachers and provides useful advice to staff. Psychological services, local schools and other agencies ably assist teachers to support children in their learning. Teachers give clear explanations and make effective use of interactive whiteboards and computers to support learning. At the early stages, they use active and imaginative approaches to reading and writing which develop children's enjoyment and interest in language. Homework is regular at all stages but lacks variety.

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

The school is very much at the heart of its community. School plays, gardening and fundraising events are very well supported by parents and the community. Staff ensure families and the wider community are fully engaged in the life of the school. For example, parents help develop children's skills in sport and cookery. The Parent Council and the parent-teacher association actively support the school.

Newsletters, parent and teacher meetings and an annual written report keep parents well informed of their child's progress and wider school life. A few parents would like more frequent updates on their child's progress. Parents are fully consulted about sensitive health issues. Members of the local community have a very positive influence on children's knowledge of local and national history, traditional culture, arts, and the local environment. Regular visits from the local chaplain and priest help to support children's learning. Staff work very closely with the local nursery and ensure children are very well supported in their move into P1. Transitions from P7 to Inverurie Academy are effective. The school has appropriate arrangements in place to deal with any complaints.

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

The strong family ethos of the school ensures children readily help each other. All children play an active role in a variety of committees and are involved in making decisions about what happens in the school. They strive to improve each others health and safety and recently helped to develop a 'park and stride to school' scheme. Children feel their views are valued. The school makes good use of the views of parents through surveys. Staff work well together as a team and some have taken on key areas of responsibility for school improvement. The headteacher uses a good range of approaches to monitor and evaluate the work of the school which is improving children's experiences. Most staff are reflective about their work and consider carefully how they can develop their teaching skills. They would benefit from regular opportunities to discuss, share and observe good practice.

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

Staff have very positive relationships with children and have high expectations of children's behaviour and their wider achievements. A few staff do not always have high enough expectations of what children can attain in their learning. Children's achievements are celebrated widely around the school, including at assemblies and in the local press. Staff are very committed to children's wellbeing and have an appropriate awareness of child protection procedures. All children are treated with equality and respect. They are friendly, confident and are developing a good sense of right and wrong. Children behave well in classes and around the school. They look after their school grounds and encourage other young people in the community to do so. There are regular opportunities for children to take part in religious observance.

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

The headteacher has ensured that staff, parents, children and the wider community share a common vision for the school. She knows her school well and what has to be done to bring about further improvement. The school team provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children. Staff are keen to develop their practice further and take forward curriculum developments in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school is very well placed to develop further.

9. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits following this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

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

- Develop the curriculum in line with *Curriculum for Excellence* to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning.
- Ensure all children are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- Strengthen approaches to self-evaluation to further improve the work of the school.

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 Oyne School.

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

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

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| The curriculum | good |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | good |

HM Inspector: Laura J S Welford

30 June 2009

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This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors.

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|----------------|---|
| 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 |