

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Education, Learning & Leisure

HMIe SCHOOL INSPECTION

MAY 2010

FOLLOW THROUGH REPORT

BANCHORY PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONTENTS

	Page No
1. The School	2
2. Particular strengths of the school	2
3. How do young people learn and achieve?	2
4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?	4
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?	4
6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?	4
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?	5
8. What happens next?	5

1. The school

The school serves the town of Banchory and the surrounding area. The roll at present is 438 pupils, including 59 children attending the nursery.

A full inspection of the school took place in July 2007 and the report published in September 2007. Since the publication of this, there has been a number of staff changes including the appointment of an acting deputy head teacher following the promotion of the substantive member of staff.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The school's approach to inclusion and ability to deliver on additional support needs
- Successful transition procedures at all stages
- The steps taken to embed health and wellbeing in the curriculum
- Opportunities for leadership and roles of responsibility for pupils across the school

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

At the primary stages almost all children are motivated and keen to learn. The school is developing its planning to take account of Curriculum for Excellence. Implementation of the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence has started to ensure a higher standard quality of teaching with greater continuity and progression in pupils' learning across each area of the curriculum. Through robust self-evaluation, the senior management team should monitor this development. There is an increased understanding of active learning and children demonstrate this both in and out the classroom environment. Recent improvement to the playground, taking account of children's views, is encouraging children to be more active outdoors.

Children in the nursery play enthusiastically and enjoy learning. They are developing their skills and knowledge through a good range of activities used to extend learning. In the nursery, children listen well in groups, enjoy conversations and can follow instructions. Formative assessment strategies are now more embedded and provide challenging learning experiences. Children with additional support needs are making steady progress.

Across the school, children regularly use information and communications technology (ICT) to carry out research and develop their skills. In most classes, children work well together and make helpful comments about their own and each other's work. There are now more opportunities for pupils to develop talking and listening skills in a structured and progressive manner. At early level, for example, pupils presented 'What's in the box?' sessions positively. The school should continue to develop pupil decision making in aspects of school life. A structured reading programme has helped to improve pupils' knowledge about language, spelling and punctuation.

Children are confident in presenting at assemblies, in shows and in their class. The school communicates achievements and news in a number of ways including the local press and the school blog. The national schools intranet for Scotland, GLOW, is starting to provide another means to further improve aspects of communication within and out-with the school for staff, parents and pupils.

Children are starting to use problem solving skills effectively across the curriculum. In mathematics, children are developing speed and accuracy in mental and written calculations. The numeracy leader has shared local authority training effectively and there are signs of improvements in learning and teaching as a result. This includes improvements in pupils' ability to relate and demonstrate practical aspects of mathematics. In response to the original inspection report the school had set classes in Maths at P6-7 to address pupil achievement as well as pace and challenge. In light of the recommendations made in the context of Curriculum for Excellence, the school is now in a position to review this. Interdisciplinary approaches to learning will enhance pupil skills and further develop levels of attainment and achievement. There is scope for continued improvement in standards of attainment to ensure that learners are challenged and are making the best possible progress in their learning across all stages of the school.

4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?

The Parent Council is heavily involved in the life of the school and the Parent Teacher Association provides strong support with links that promote and enrich the curriculum. The school has very positive features of partnerships with parents and the wider community. Recently this has included a successful charity project on Helambu in association with the local general practitioner's surgery and as a Health Promoting School. Class assemblies are well attended by parents as are a range of other events. To share children's learning with parents, the school used 'Soft Start' as a means of communication with parents.

There are opportunities for staff to be involved in the improvement agenda and most are actively involved in working groups to change aspects of learning and teaching. The establishment of the Teacher Learning Community (TLC) and the sharing of good practice is beginning to show impact and enhance learners' experiences.

To improve attainment and to address an action point from the inspection, the school has recognised the need to set realistic targets for all learners and continues to do this by electronically tracking pupil attainment to ensure effective monitoring of individual progress. This now includes systematic assessing and recording of pupils' attainment in listening and talking.

5. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?

Staff and children work well together to keep improving the school and nursery. Children are consulted on what is being taught and how they can improve their work, and there is capacity to develop this further. The school recently achieved its second Green Flag Award and is committed to the eco agenda. The school allotment is now well established and used effectively to enhance learning and teaching. Many staff have taken on additional responsibilities for leading new initiatives within the improvement plan.

The senior management team visit classes regularly and review forward planning with staff however, this should be more targeted to ensure children are progressing well. Classroom teachers have started to make informal visits to other classes to observe and share good practice.

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

Children in the nursery and school feel safe and happy. In some classes there is still potential to increase the pace of learning and to involve children more in understanding what they need to do to improve their work. Children are polite and very well behaved. Staff celebrate children's successes in class, at assemblies, and through school displays. The latter has allowed for appropriate presentation of pupil work and reflects a higher standard in terms of the quality of pupils' handwriting. All staff know what to do to keep children safe and well. They understand child protection arrangements.

Staff, parents and pupils have high expectations of behaviour and achievement. Pupils behave well and there is clear evidence of mutual respect and very good positive relationships with staff. As a result young people achieve well and take a pride in their school. Attendance and behaviour are monitored and information is acted on appropriately.

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

The head teacher and senior management team have a strong and inspirational vision for the future of the school, its pupils and staff. They are clear on how to build on the school's considerable strengths and further improve aspects of the school's work. The school is fully committed to the implementation of the Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Framework and staff have contributed to and been involved in developing many aspects of the entitlements and good progress is being made in the wider context of implementing the Curriculum for Excellence.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Children are achieving very well overall.

8. What happens next?

There has been improvement in all the areas identified and the commitment of the staff to the improvement agenda ensures that the school's capacity for this can be maintained. Areas for development will now be incorporated to the school's improvement planning cycle, in line with Aberdeenshire Council policy and procedures.