



HMIe SCHOOL INSPECTION

FOLLOW-THROUGH REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2010

KININMONTH SCHOOL MINTLAW

CONTENTS

Page No

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

1. The school

Kininmonth School currently has a roll of 36 children.

Absence levels were above the Aberdeenshire average but below the national average.

In March 2010 the Acting Headteacher who had been in post since early 2009 was appointed Headteacher.

The school was last inspected in April and May 2008 with the report published in September 2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- development of citizenship and pupil responsibility
- commitment of staff
- positive ethos across the school
- quality of partnerships with parents and local community

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Attainment

Overall levels of attainment in reading and writing had continued to be raised throughout the school since the previous inspection and were above Aberdeenshire averages. There were more opportunities for pupil discussion, with a consequent improvement in pupil confidence. Older children had helped younger pupils through regular paired reading, and had worked with them on book reviews and character sketches. A member of staff had introduced a well-structured scheme to support pupil writing and this had been adopted throughout the school. There had been an improvement in standards of presentation, spelling and grammar. Attainment in mathematics was in line with the average for Aberdeenshire. There had been an increase in problem solving activities across the school, with for instance "Big Challenges" taking place each term. These involved pupils working with each other across stages. The school had identified problem solving as an area where more work was required. The school had taken steps to amend programmes especially in language to increase boys' engagement.

Achievement

The school had continued to offer a wide range of opportunities for pupils to achieve. These had included such things as pupils being given the opportunity to run the school bank, organising and helping with the School Fayre, and helping with the school library and garden. Pupils had also raised money for a variety of charities, most recently through a

sponsored spell in aid of Save the Children – Haiti Appeal.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Curriculum

All staff had familiarised themselves with the *Curriculum for Excellence* outcomes in literacy and numeracy, and lessons in mathematics and language were based on these. The school had carried out an audit of health and wellbeing which had involved parents as well as pupils. Teachers had begun to consider how best to change their programmes of work in other curriculum areas in response to *Curriculum for Excellence*, and had begun to identify areas for development. Support materials from the education authority and local network had been well used. There had been an increase in interdisciplinary work. Teachers had continued to embed assessment for learning techniques in their practice. Pupils were being given more say in the direction of their learning. The school had worked well with the local secondary as part of a successful transition programme. The school had started to review its aims and vision in line with *Curriculum for Excellence* and was involving pupils and parents/carers in this.

Meeting learning needs

There had been an increase in pace and challenge in classes. Pupils were regularly given opportunities to work independently. Each week, pupils used “learning logs” in which they matched their achievements and learning to the four capacities and identified new targets. These targets were monitored by staff to ensure focus. Pupils were beginning to use peer assessment more frequently. Teachers knew what the next steps in learning for individual pupils should be. Arrangements for recording and tracking progress were being developed by the local authority. Pupils regularly used “pair and share” to plan and learn. The school made consistent use of techniques to help pupils and staff to keep track of their progress. There was a wider range of homework activities, although the school recognised that this needed to be developed further. Individualised education plans had both short- and long-term targets, and were shared with both parents and children. The school recognised that such plans needed to be regularly revisited to ensure focus and relevance.

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

The school had forged a variety of productive links within the local community, for example with local farmers, businesses who attended and supported school fayre. The school made good use of local facilities such as Aden Park, Buchan Heritage, Royal Bank of Scotland and Fraserburgh Swimming Pool to widen pupil experience.

The Parent Council was very supportive of the school, and parents play an active part in school life. They had organised fundraising events, helped in school and provided opportunities and activities to widen the childrens' learning through for instance working with pupils to develop the school garden, and helping pupils in the school library. Some parents also worked with pupils in producing the new school newspaper. The school planned to start an after-school club in the coming session.

As well as communicating with parents through regular newsletters, the school had hosted successful open days when parents were invited to spend time with their children during lessons. Newsletters were uploaded to GLOW, and the school had trialled an "e-newsletter".

The school had good links with outside agencies such as social work and the local educational psychology service.

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

Staff frequently evaluated their work and were keen to try new approaches to improve pupils' learning. They had undertaken a range of training, including working with staff from other schools. This had helped them implement other ideas in their teaching. Teachers had taken a very focused look at aspects of the school using *How Good Is Our School*. They had been closely involved in the construction of the school improvement plan. The head teacher monitored classroom practice through frequent informal visits. She recognised that her classroom visits needed to be more formal and this would be an action point for the school in the new session. She worked closely with staff in their planning of work for each term. The school planned to introduce formal evaluations by teachers of the work done at the end of each term. The headteacher regularly sampled pupils' work. She had planned to allocate responsibility to individual members of staff for developing aspects of the curriculum in the coming session.

A pupil council had been established and was working well. They had aided in the organisation of the school Christmas Fayre, where they ran stalls. Members of the pupil council had meetings with the parent council and had made suggestions for the improvement of the school grounds. They had also organised various fund raising events for Charity.

The school was reviewing its aims and vision to bring them into line with *Curriculum for Excellence* and was working with parents and pupils to do this.

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

Staff had high expectations of the pupils, and encouraged them to do their best. They expected pupils to show a very high standard of behaviour and respect for others. Staff regularly gave pupils positive feedback and praise. The school had introduced a house system which had had a very motivating effect on pupils. Achievement and success were celebrated by awarding house points, which were given for such things as good work, behaviour, and kindness towards others. Certificates were awarded to the House with most points at the end of each term and the overall house winners received a medal and trophy. Class certificates and “Star Pupil” awards were given for classwork. Pupil achievements were displayed on a “Zoom to the Moon” board.

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

The Head teacher was aware of the strengths and development needs of the school. She had a clear view of the next steps for the school and had shared this with pupils, staff and parents. The vision and aims of the school needed to be refreshed to bring this into line with the Curriculum for Excellence, and steps had been taken to implement this. The HT had developed a strong collegiate way of working. She had taken a lead in introducing the house system in the school which had had a positive effect on the climate in the school. She encouraged staff to take on responsibility for new developments. Staff had a positive attitude to change, and had begun to develop their own leadership capacity. The school had benefited from a period of stability and was well placed to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

The school will continue to inform parents and carers about its quality of education and how it will build on the progress made. The education authority will continue to monitor improvement at the school and offer support and challenge as appropriate.