



**Auchtergaven Primary
School and Nursery Class
Bankfoot
Perth and Kinross Council
23 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.

Contents

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. Example 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

Auchtergaven Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the village of Bankfoot and the surrounding area. The roll was 146, including 38 in the nursery 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

- The leadership of the headteacher in improving the work of the school.
- Meeting the needs of children who require additional support in their learning.
- Staff commitment to change and improvement.

3. Example of good practice

- Curriculum planning for personalisation and choice through whole school activity time.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery and primary classes are making good progress in their learning. In the nursery, children are settled and know their routines. They are learning to share and take turns. Children are motivated by the range of activities. They are developing independence by, for example, choosing their snack. Children are developing early language and number skills well through play. They helped make signs for their cafe and use a tape measure confidently in the construction area. They are able to describe the life cycle of a butterfly. Staff could make more use of the outside area to extend children's learning.

Almost all children in the primary classes enjoy school. In most lessons, they are actively involved in learning through a good variety of activities. Children would benefit from making more use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance their learning. Almost all children work well together in groups and report back with confidence. A few children do not always stay focused on their work and this has a negative effect on the learning of others. Almost all children have learning targets and know how to improve their work. Children have some choice in areas they will study within topics and this makes learning more meaningful to them. For example, children in P6/7 have chosen to study the impact of war on the lives of children. Children in P2/3 investigated facts about birds' nests in science. Children across the school have good opportunities to develop a sense of community. A number of children across the stages contribute to the pupil council or eco group. Children in P6/7 are developing a sense of global citizenship through their links with schools in Bangladesh. All children have the opportunity to discover and develop a wide range of sporting and cultural skills during the weekly activity time. Overall, children are now making good progress in talking, reading, writing and mathematics. In English language, children's skills in listening are not yet well developed. They are developing good skills in talking in groups. Across the school, most are keen readers and talk confidently about what they have read. At all stages, most children write for a variety of relevant purposes across the curriculum. Those in P4/5 wrote cartoon captions in Scots for a Scots language week. In mathematics, most children are developing confidence in problem solving. Across classes, they show good skills in practical mathematics activities. For example, those in P6/7 took measurements accurately in school and then collected and interpreted the data. Children in P5/6 engage very well in mental calculations. Children would benefit from more opportunities for data handling through ICT. Children are beginning to use literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts across the curriculum.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff in the nursery organise a broad range of learning experiences for children. They use children's interests to plan the next steps in learning. Staff interact sensitively with children. They help children talk about their learning and listen carefully to them. Close links between the nursery class and P1/2 help children settle quickly into the primary school. All staff have started to take account of the national initiative *Curriculum for Excellence* in their planning. In the primary classes, children learn through themes which help them link learning across different areas. The school recognises some classes do not have a sufficiently balanced curriculum and are planning to address this. Children benefit from working with visiting specialists of physical education and drama. They receive two hours of good quality physical education per week. Teachers make good use of visitors and trips to make learning more relevant. The school plans to make all children more aware of sustainability issues and develop a greater awareness of different beliefs and cultures. Staff have introduced whole school activity time which provides children with greater opportunities for choice and for working in mixed age groupings. The planning and organisation of the activities is having a positive effect on children's social skills and confidence.

Across the school, teachers meet the needs of most children well. They are sensitive to children's welfare and are quick to identify and remove barriers to children's learning. They must now ensure that the behaviour of a few children does not make learning more difficult for others. Staff in the nursery have started to involve children in discussions about their progress. Children in the primary classes are learning useful skills in finding things out for themselves and in planning next steps in their learning. Support for learning staff give very good support to children who require extra help with their learning. This has a very positive impact on those children's progress and confidence. Across the school, tasks, activities and homework are generally appropriate but do not offer enough challenge to all children.

The pace in lessons is not always brisk enough. Teachers ensure children build well on previous learning as they move through the stages.

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

Staff work very well with partners, such as the speech and language therapist and the community link worker, to support children and families. Teachers involve parents fully in support plans for children who need extra help. The school works hard to involve all parents in the work of the school. Attractive nursery notice boards and helpful family folders for all children ensure parents know what their child is learning and how they can contribute. Informative curriculum evenings and information sheets keep parents up-to-date with important changes. A number of parents enjoy helping at the activities afternoon and in the nursery. The headteacher consults with parents through the very supportive Parent Council. The school is good at responding to complaints and concerns from parents and is keen to work with parents to promote positive behaviour. There are good links with the local community. For example, a local grower supplied potatoes for the P4/5 nature project. The local minister supports lessons in religious and moral education as well as taking assemblies for the school. Children contribute as good citizens by raising money for various charities. The school has good links with Perth Grammar School to support P7 children in the move to high school, including a joint literacy project.

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

Staff successfully consult children through the pupil council. There are a number of committees where children and staff work together to improve the school. Some children would like more ways of having their say. The school is aware of this and plans to involve children and

parents more in decisions about learning. All staff are committed to improving the work of the school. They reflect on their practice and have responded very well to recent changes to the curriculum. Staff working groups have improved programmes of work in reading and writing. Teachers have started to share classroom practice with each other. The headteacher has good processes in place to ensure she knows the school very well. She bases decisions on a sound knowledge of children's learning experiences. Staff make good use of information on children's progress to target support and challenge. The headteacher now needs to monitor closely the work of the nursery and involve nursery staff in improving their work.

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

The school expects children to work hard and cooperate with each other in class and most children respond to this. Staff treat all children fairly and with respect. At times, some staff do not ensure that all children show similar respect to others. The school recognises the need to promote equality and fairness more consistently. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection. The school promotes healthy living, particularly physical activity. Despite their best efforts, the impact of the healthy eating message has been variable in school. Children are encouraged to be responsible citizens by acting as playground or nursery helpers and through classroom duties. Children value opportunities to celebrate their achievements through weekly 'Get Together' assemblies, newsletters and 'Pupil of the Week' cups.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has communicated this well. She is highly respected by staff and parents who feel confident in her leadership. She offers staff very good guidance and support. She has introduced a wide range of important changes to the school and has created a close team. She is very well supported by the principal teacher who has been responsible for

leading a number of improvements. The headteacher and principal teacher recognise the need to allow time for recent changes to become embedded in the life of the school. The school is well placed to build on the work it has done and continue to improve.

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.

- Evaluate the changes made to the curriculum and develop these in line with the design principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- In consultation with staff, children and parents, develop a positive behaviour strategy based on equality and respect.
- Improve the pace and challenge of learning, particularly for higher achieving children.
- Develop clear approaches to evaluating progress and identifying areas for development and improvement in the nursery.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were two requirements, both of which had been addressed. In addition, four recommendations were made. All had been addressed.

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 Auchtergaven Primary 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: Fiona A Pate
23 June 2009

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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