



**Invergowrie Primary School
and Nursery Class
Perth and Kinross Council
5 May 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

Invergowrie Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves the villages of Invergowrie and Kingoodie and the surrounding area. The roll was 229, including 42 in the nursery when the inspection was carried out in March 2009. Pupils' attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Nursery children's experiences in outdoor learning.
- The development of language skills across the school.
- The positive impact on children's learning of the school's work in health, sustainability and international citizenship.
- Meeting the needs of children who require additional support in their learning.
- Staff involvement in the work of the school.
- Leadership for school improvement.

3. Examples of good practice

- The positive impact of the European Comenius project on the curriculum and children's experiences.
- Developing literacy across the curriculum.
- Partnership working with parents and the local community.

4. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children in the nursery are very keen to learn. They concentrate on their chosen play activities and work together well in small groups, cooperating with their friends. Almost all children are making good progress in their development and learning. They talk confidently to each other and adults, and listen carefully to instructions. Children are benefiting from using their early language and number skills in well-planned play experiences. For example, these include asking children to find hidden numbers in the outside play area. Almost all children in the primary classes enjoy school and are actively involved in their learning. They learn effectively through a variety of motivating tasks which encourage them to find things out for themselves. For example, children used computers confidently to research facts for writing a tourist booklet. Staff give children interesting homework tasks which motivate them to learn. Children are developing important skills in working together and they give opinions confidently. They respond well to questions which make them think more deeply. Children are learning to make helpful comments on each other's work. They have a say in choosing the areas they will study within topics. Children at all stages are learning to appreciate other languages and cultures through the Comenius project which links them with four other European schools. They are making very good progress overall in listening, talking, reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all children listen attentively to their teacher and in groups. Most enjoy reading and almost all read aloud confidently. Children write for a good range of relevant purposes. In mathematics, children use graphs and tables to present work such as the school health survey. They are developing confidence in mental mathematics and problem-solving across the stages. Children are also developing skills in literacy and numeracy in real life contexts across the curriculum. For example, they wrote letters to the local councillor about litter and glass left in the village park.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Nursery staff provide a very good range of activities across the key areas of children's learning and development. The out-of-doors area of the nursery offers particularly stimulating experiences which encourage children to be active and imaginative. Children are developing their understanding of the natural world through looking after their garden and feeding and watching the birds. They express themselves well through their art and craft. Staff have started to take account of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*, in their planning. They involve children by asking their views about what they enjoy in their learning. In the primary classes, well-planned activities provide children with very good opportunities to make progress in key areas of learning. Staff arrange regular joint sessions between nursery children and those in P1 which ensure that children progress smoothly from nursery into the primary school. Children benefit from working with visiting specialists in music and physical education. Teachers make good use of visitors and trips to enrich children's learning. Children have many opportunities to develop personal, social and citizenship skills. They invited an MSP to talk to them about the European Parliament. Health promotion is encouraging children to make healthy choices. Staff are beginning to develop aspects of the national initiative, *Curriculum for Excellence*. They successfully plan activities which encourage children to build on their learning across the key themes of health, sustainability and citizenship. The school recognises that children do not yet have sufficient opportunities to develop their knowledge of science. Across the stages, children use technology confidently. The school's participation in the Comenius project has made children more aware of international citizenship and environmental issues.

In the nursery, staff support children sensitively and know them well as individuals. They ensure children enjoy activities and planning is flexible to respond to children's interests and needs. Nursery and P1 staff have made an early start to providing more active approaches to learning through play using the resources and the areas outside the classroom bases. This is proving effective in supporting early learning

with young children. In the primary classes, the learning needs of most children are well met. Staff know the children very well and show concern for their welfare. Staff are very skilled in identifying and planning for children who need extra help with their learning. Support staff and teachers, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, work very well with individuals and small groups. Homework tasks actively support learning. Tasks and resources are generally appropriate and motivating but they are not always sufficiently challenging for all children. Children are not always clear what they need to do to improve. Staff now need to set clear, individual targets which tell children how to build on their skills and move to the next stage in their learning.

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

Staff work very well with partners such as the educational psychologist to provide extra support for children with difficulties in their learning. Teachers involve parents fully if their child has a support plan. Teachers ensure that all parents are fully aware of what their child is learning through helpful class news bulletins each term, and weekly bulletins in the nursery. These steps enable parents to offer more support at home. The headteacher consults parents effectively through the parent council and eco group. She has taken good steps to involve parents in their child's learning through helpful curriculum evenings and open afternoons. The school is aware that a few parents would like to be more involved in their child's learning and has started to address this. For example, staff have trialled informative learning logs in some classes. The school has very productive links with its associated primary schools which led to a joint writing project on a Scottish theme. Strong links with the local community and businesses have made a positive difference to children's learning experiences. A local herb nursery helped children choose appropriate plants for their herb garden. The whole school worked very effectively with some of its partners to set up a Trim Trail to encourage physical fitness.

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

Staff successfully consult children on improving the school through the pupil council and the eco group. This has led to initiatives such as children designing litter bins for the outside play areas. A number of children take responsibility for running lunchtime clubs such as the drama club, and a few children in the upper stages act as playground helpers for younger children. Children across the stages are involved in charity fundraising. They are developing skills in assessing their own work and that of others. Children feel safe in school and they know that their opinions matter. There is scope for the school to find out more about children's views on the way they learn. The school responds well to parents' views and is good at sorting out complaints and concerns. Staff are committed to improving the school and almost all teachers lead out of school hours learning activities. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have good arrangements to ensure that they know what the learning experience is like for children at all stages. This helps them to spread best practice. Teachers also share good practice with their associated primary schools. The headteacher organises staff and resources carefully to support children's learning. Teachers regularly gather information about children's learning and achievement from nursery to P7. The school is now taking steps to make better use of this information to track children's progress, and ensure that all children are fully challenged.

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

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They expect children to show respect for each other and almost all children respond well to this. All children are treated fairly. Staff have an appropriate awareness of their responsibilities for child protection. Children of all ages are encouraged to take on leadership roles, including classroom and nursery responsibilities. They have organised school performances. Children know that if they have an idea for a new club they will receive support from staff to introduce it. Staff promote

achievement in all areas of the curriculum and in out-of-school hours activities. Staff celebrate children's achievements very effectively through well organised displays, newsletters, regular assemblies and an achievement board, 'Beeline to Excellence'.

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

The headteacher has high standards and a very clear vision for the school. She and her deputy work very well with others to bring about continuous improvement. They enjoy the respect of staff, parents and the local community. They encourage children and staff to develop leadership skills and to introduce new ideas to improve the school. Some of these initiatives, such as the introduction of learning through play in the early years, have had a very positive impact on children's learning. Staff work well as a team, learning from each other, to ensure children make good progress in their learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are well placed to build on this strong platform and take a more rigorous approach to monitoring children's progress.

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.

- Improve arrangements for monitoring children's progress so that all children build more effectively on their prior learning.
- Ensure all children are engaged in sufficiently challenging activities.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. In addition, three recommendations were made, two of which had been addressed. Outstanding issues are carried forward in this report.

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 Invergowrie Primary School and Nursery Class.

Primary school

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

Nursery class

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

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

The curriculum	very good
Improvement through self-evaluation	good

HM Inspector: Fiona A Pate
5 May 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