



## Educational Services

### HMIE Inspection

### Progress Report on Mosstodloch Primary School

January 2006

Report to HMIE on the extent to which the school's work has improved in response to the main points for action in the HMIE report published on 8 June 2004, and the extent to which the school has developed its capacity to secure continuous improvement in the future.

**Evidence:** The Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) has undertaken progress meetings with headteacher and depute headteacher and interviewed class teachers in November 2004, March 2005, May 2005, September 2005 and January 2006. The QIO has attended attainment meetings between the depute headteacher and early stages teachers. The QIO & Learning & Teaching Officer (LTO) have observed reading and writing lessons and examined samples of pupils' work. The QIO has studied documentary evidence including policies and programmes of study, minutes of meetings, progress reports, pupil attainment and tracking records, classroom observation records and parental evaluations.

#### **MAIN POINT FOR ACTION – *'Improve attainment in reading and writing'*.**

*The school has made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.*

Levels of attainment in reading:

June 2003	June 2004	June 2005	Target June 2006
69%	78%	81%	81%

Levels of attainment in writing:

June 2003	June 2004	June 2005	Target June 2006
58%	72%	73%	77%

The LTO delivered a one and a half day INSET on writing and this was followed up by all teaching staff contributing to the development of a new writing programme. A

coherent programme is now in place and this includes specific guidelines for P1-P7 on planning, lesson learning outcomes, teaching strategies, success criteria, time allocations, assessment guidelines and includes a variety of teaching aids. A Writing Board is used on a rotation basis to display pupils' best work. A P7 pupil won second place in a national poetry competition for a poem she wrote on World War 2. Teaching staff have undertaken training in the use of formative assessment and these strategies have been incorporated into the writing programme. Classroom observation provides evidence that the principles behind the new programme are being put into practice in all classes. The programme will be the subject of a detailed evaluation in May 2006 when further improvements may be made. The LTO has provided advice on appropriate reading texts, Benchmarking kits and Accelerated Reader.

A new reading policy has been produced and the school has implemented a new reading programme including books aimed at pupils requiring additional support. P1-3 now use Oxford Reading Tree with non-fiction books incorporated from P1. The Ginn reading scheme has been replaced by Kingscourt as this fits different genres. SRA materials have been purchased for senior classes. Classes are organised into three reading groups per class. Pupils are now talking more positively about reading and they have stated that they find the books in the new scheme more interesting, they have more choice of reading material and the scheme has allowed them to develop greater responsibility and self-confidence. Teachers are also very positive in their comments on the reading programme. The management team undertake additional class cover (McCrone time) and deliver enrichment work on language (grammar and writing).

There has been an upward trend in reading and writing attainment over the last three sessions and in 2005 attainment exceeded PIPS baseline assessment targets by 3% in writing and 2% in reading. Attainment is in line with, or exceeds that of comparator Moray schools in the same FME band. Classroom monitoring has identified increased pupil confidence and motivation in reading and writing. A curricular evening for parents to introduce the changes to homework procedures in reading was held in June 2005 and drew positive feedback from parents.

### **MAIN POINT FOR ACTION – *‘Review the timing and use of national assessment items’.***

*This main point for action has been fully addressed.*

The school has introduced a tracking system which includes identification of projected assessment dates and areas for pupil support. Class teachers complete pupil tracking sheets and these are updated each term. The tracking sheets form the basis of the agenda for the 'attainment meetings' which are held every 6-8 weeks between teaching staff, SfL staff and management. Teachers now make regular use of national assessments during the session and overall pupils are being tested as soon as they are ready to sit an assessment, which is much earlier than in the past when more time was spent on consolidation work. Pupils are attaining appropriate levels as predicted and potential

underachievers are identified and supported. More pupils are identified to sit level C assessments in P5 than was previously the case. Classroom monitoring indicates an improved pace of learning. Management monitoring of written work pays particular attention to those pupils identified through attainment meetings as being ready to undertake an assessment. Feedback from pupil focus groups indicates that pupils have a greater awareness of what they need to learn and why. Teaching staff are more confident of their judgements on pupil progress and attainment.

### **MAIN POINT FOR ACTION – ‘Ensure that the needs of all pupils are met’**

*The school has made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.*

Setting has been introduced in maths and language with appropriately differentiated tasks. Pupils are now more actively involved in learning. Classroom observation has shown that the quality of direct teaching is very good and teachers clearly communicate learning intentions to pupils. Formative assessment strategies are being employed to effectively support pupil learning. Attainment meetings and more regular staff liaison meetings allow a greater focus on pupils who are underachieving. Teaching staff view these meetings as very helpful and the meetings ensure more appropriate progression. In March 2005 additional time was given to teachers and SfL staff for enhanced liaison time resulting in better knowledge of individual pupils with appropriate strategies for meeting the needs of individual pupils agreed. Minutes of attainment meetings have shown that staff have a greater awareness of the criteria for attaining levels.

IDEAS Software and Phoenix ‘Minimum Level Not Achieved’ reports generate further evidence on which to base action points to address underachievement. Certain pupils can be identified as potentially ‘less able’ or ‘high achiever’ and appropriate support and differentiated activities are identified in order to meet these pupils’ needs. IT based dyslexia screening has identified individual pupils with additional needs and this has resulted in early parental involvement, agreed support strategies and onward referral to Support Services in the case of pupils with more complex needs. Extra support for certain pupils has come about through the use of Alphasmart and Dana ICT to support pupils experiencing difficulties in writing and story construction. The Toe-by-Toe phonics programme is delivered by support staff. The regular programme of stage meetings have a greater focus on learning and teaching and new strategies and ideas are discussed. A number of pupils have been identified to take part in a daily exercise group and these pupils undertake activities developed by occupational therapy and SfL staff. The pupils involved have shown significant improvements in reading attainment after six months of daily exercises. Staff are more aware of the need to ensure appropriate pace and challenge, and this is reflected in classroom practice. A reading club and a newspaper club have been introduced and these have promoted pupil interest in reading, writing, team building, decision making and citizenship.

**MAIN POINT FOR ACTION – ‘*Improve approaches to monitoring learning and teaching to ensure appropriate pace and challenge at all stages*’.**

*The school has made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.*

The management team undertake additional class cover and this provides opportunities for monitoring pupils’ work. A formal monitoring timetable has also been implemented and each teacher’s classroom practice is monitored three times per session with a different focus each time. Classroom observation is followed up through discussion and written comments. Good/very good standards of learning and teaching have been observed in all lessons. The headteacher systematically samples pupils’ written work and discusses classroom experiences with pupils. She monitors all assessment information, follows up issues from attainment meetings and tracks individual pupil progress. Teaching staff are very supportive of the monitoring process. They view it as non-threatening, supportive and value the feedback. The management team is able to provide evidence of appropriate pace and challenge in class work at all stages.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Since the inspection, the school has made good progress in a number of other areas.

**ATTAINMENT**

The overall quality of attainment has improved and there has been a clear improvement trend in reading and writing 2002-2004. Attainment in mathematics dropped slightly from the 2004 level however remained well above that of 2003, the 2005 Moray average and 2005 school target.

**LEARNING AND TEACHING / CURRICULUM**

A new science programme has been introduced and this is proving to be popular with staff and pupils. The school is involved in the development of a mathematics common order framework in conjunction with its ASG primary partners and Milne’s High school. The school has also introduced CAME into P7.

**NATIONAL PRIORITIES**

Pupil absences are below Moray and national averages. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent sessions. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities including stay and play, junior road safety officers, cycling proficiency, music group, a boys’ choir, storytellers club, a newspaper club and junior librarians. There is a very active Pupil Council. The school is involved in a number of community events including the harvest assembly, following which gifts are distributed to older members of the community, the Remembrance Service and a concert for the

local WRI. During the last session staff have attended CPD events on AifL, German, First Aid, Smartboards, Brain Gym, emotional literacy and ASN legislation. The management team attend a variety of authority management courses. Current assembly themes are developed around the four purposes of a 'Curriculum for Excellence'. An Eco School Committee has been established and the school is working towards a bronze award. One of the principal teachers is enterprise co-ordinator and a recent audit has confirmed that a large range of enterprise activities are taking place in the school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND SELF-EVALUATION**

The headteacher provides very good leadership. The depute headteacher provides very good support and contributes extensively to the running of the school. Together they provide clear strategic direction for the school and have managed the changes following the inspection very well through detailed planning and appropriate support, both internal and external, at all stages of development. These changes have the full support of staff. They have been successful in improving attainment through well planned improvements to classroom practices. The headteacher has very good interpersonal skills and has very good relationships with pupils, parents, staff and authority officers. She is very approachable and supportive and creates a feeling of confidence within the school community. There is good teamwork between the headteacher, depute, teaching and support staff. The school has good audit procedures which involve actively seeking the views of parents and staff. The headteacher also discusses learning and teaching with sample groups of pupils and all of these approaches combine to influence the improvement plan priorities. Priorities for next session will include mathematics, behaviour policy and a 'Curriculum for Excellence'.

### **CONCLUSION**

Overall the school has made very good progress in responding to the main points for action in the original report. The Education Authority has confidence in the school's on-going commitment to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It takes the view that the headteacher and staff are fully committed to improving pupils' experiences in the school and that much of the good practice, which is going on, can be shared with other schools.

