

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
2 DECEMBER 2009**

**SUBJECT: HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - PUBLISHED REPORTS  
SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2009**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is for Committee to scrutinise and note the most recent reports published following inspections by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) of schools and nursery classes in Moray:

- i) Inspection of Elgin Academy – **Appendix 1**
- ii) Follow-through Inspection of Milne's High School - **Appendix 2**
- iii) Follow-through Inspection of Portessie Primary School – **Appendix 3**

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (1) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The performance of schools and nursery classes is measured by HM Inspectors using quality indicators, described in their publications, "*How Good Is Our School*" (HGIOS) and "*The Child at The Centre*" (TCATC). All schools in Moray have copies of HGIOS and TCATC and are required to use these in their own self-evaluation and improvement planning. Since August 2008 HM Inspectors have evaluated schools' performance using only 5 key indicators from these sets of quality indicators. A full list of the quality indicators in HGIOS/TCATC is attached to this report as **Appendix 4**.

- 3.2 When HMIE first evaluate a school or nursery class against the quality indicators in HGIOS/TCATC they use 'standardised' language:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Level 6</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	Provision which is clearly outstanding or sector leading.
<i>Level 5</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	Provision which has major strengths
<i>Level 4</i>	<i>Good</i>	Provision with important strengths that clearly outweigh areas for improvement.
<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	Provision where strengths just outweigh weaknesses.
<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Weak</i>	Provision with important weaknesses
<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	Provision which has major weaknesses and is unsatisfactory.

Words, numbers and proportions are used in a consistent manner throughout HMIE reports:

*Almost all=over 90%*  
*Less than half=15-49%*

*Most=75-90%*  
*Few=up to 15%*

*Majority=50-74%*

- 3.3 Initial inspection reports contain commentary by HMIE on the performance of a school or nursery class at the time of first inspection. Such reports provide a summary of the "Particular Strengths of the School" and agreed areas for improvement. This information is summarised for each school individually in appendices to this report.
- 3.4 Reports may also contain "*Examples of Good Practice*". These are aspects of the work of a school or nursery class which are deemed to be of an extremely high quality and therefore are being highlighted for the benefit of others across the country.
- 3.5 Follow-through inspection reports contain a commentary by HMIE of the extent to which the school and any nursery class have continued to improve since the original inspection. Follow-through inspection reports are usually published between one and two years after the initial report.
- 3.6 Copies of all HMIE reports are available in the Members' Library, from the school and online at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan**

- (i) The report provides Committee with information relevant to Local Priority 5 within the Single Outcome Agreement – Attainment and Achievement (Children and Young People), and
- (ii) within the Service Improvement Plan, Action Area 11 – Curriculum for Excellence.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

HMIE inspect and report on a sample of Scottish schools every year. Their reports are intended to provide parents, local authorities and Scottish Ministers with information about how well schools and nursery classes are performing against the National Performance Framework.

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

There are no immediate Financial, Risks, Staffing, or Property implications arising from this report.

**(d) Consultations**

Senior Officers within Educational Services, Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant and Alistair Stobie, Principal Solicitor (Litigation and Licensing) have been consulted and are in agreement with the relevant sections of the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report on the HMIE inspection of Elgin Academy and follow-through inspections of Milne's High and Portessie Primary School.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services  
Committee/2 December 2009/HMIE School Inspections -  
Published Reports September - November 2009

## **APPENDIX 1**

HMIE Report on **Elgin Academy** – published on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009

### **Particular strengths of the school:**

- Young people who are well behaved, polite and keen to learn.
- The care and concern shown towards young people by staff.
- Involvement of young people in voluntary and community work.

### **Example of Good Practice:**

- Innovative approaches to improving travel to school and road safety.

### **Areas for Improvement:**

HMIE have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Improve self-evaluation to ensure it has a positive impact on teaching, learning and achievement across the school.
- Build team working across the school to meet the learning needs of all young people more effectively.
- Develop the skills and confidence of young people and staff to help them take a stronger role in school improvement.
- Develop partnership working to broaden young people's learning experiences and opportunities to achieve.

### **What happens next?**

HMIE will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, they may continue to check the improvements the school has made. HMIE may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.

**APPENDIX 1 (cont.)****Quality Indicator evaluations for Elgin Academy**

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. Three of the five key indicators feed into the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF). Evaluations of these NPF indicators at satisfactory or better provide for an overall "positive" report.

Improvements in performance	Good	NPF
Learners' experiences	Good	NPF
Meeting learning needs	Weak	NPF
The curriculum	Good	
Improvement through self-evaluation	Weak	

## APPENDIX 2

HMIE follow-through report on **Milne's High School** – published on 3 November 2009

### **The original inspection**

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Milne's High School in January 2008. This was reported to Educational Services Committee on 13 February 2008. HM Inspectors visited the school in August 2009 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

### **Particular strengths of the school**

- Hardworking and well-behaved young people.
- High quality team work and professional development opportunities.
- Commitment of staff and young people to improving the school.
- Leadership of the headteacher and other senior managers.

### **Example of Good Practice**

- Developing creativity to improve attainment.

### **Improvements since the last inspection:**

#### **How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Young people are eager to learn, achieve and take responsibility for their learning. Most know their strengths and what they need to do to improve their learning. Teachers have higher expectations of what young people can achieve. Young people continue to achieve in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities. At S2, the majority of young people achieve appropriate national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The school now monitors and builds on the progress of young people in all their subjects. At S4, attainment is in line with national averages and with schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds. There is room to continue to improve attainment at S5/6. The school is working towards the recommended two hours of core physical education for all young people. Young people benefit from an improved and better organised choice of options to build on what they have already learned. This is increasing the motivation and progress of young people, particularly those in S5/6. Staff, young people and parents work well together to develop relevant activities across the school. The implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* is progressing very well. The school has identified the need for teachers to provide tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for all young people. Staff are taking steps to improve this.

## **APPENDIX 2 (cont)**

### **How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?**

School staff work with a range of partners to support young people's learning. A number of departments work alongside a local business to provide innovative enterprise activities around developing a new brand of soup. Stronger links with associated primary schools have developed. These are beginning to improve young people's skills in areas such as literacy and numeracy. The Parent Council is actively involved in improving the school. The well organised work of the chaplains increases young people's awareness of moral issues.

### **Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?**

Staff, young people and parents are more involved in improving the school. Their opinions are gathered and action taken on key issues. Senior managers have more effective links with departments and support improvements across the school. A range of methods, including focussed lesson observations, are used to review and improve teaching and learning. Most principal teachers are increasingly effective in monitoring the work of departments and improving what happens in the classroom. The pupil council, peer support programme and the new prefect system are increasing opportunities for young people to improve the work of the school.

### **Does the school have high expectations of all young people?**

Parents, young people and staff are proud of the school and morale is very high. Expectations of staff and young people have improved greatly. Young people work enthusiastically with staff and enjoy the increased challenge in most lessons. They are set targets for improvement and a number are mentored by volunteer staff. This has led to improved achievement. Young people are proud to wear the new school uniform. The recently developed praise system encourages young people to work hard. It is being reviewed to ensure all young people have opportunities to benefit from it. There are now sufficient opportunities to reflect on religious and moral issues.

### **Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

The new headteacher has had a very positive impact on the work of the school. Senior managers now have clear roles which allow them to focus on improving the quality of learning, teaching and achievement. The effective teamwork across the school is increasing the pace of improvement. Many teachers lead activities, including working groups and training for colleagues. Increasingly, young people develop leadership skills through pupil council activities and opportunities to lead groups, discussions and presentations in classes.

### **What happens next?**

The school and education authority have achieved major improvements since the inspection of October 2007. The headteacher, along with her senior management team, provides strong leadership and a clear vision. The school is well placed to continue to improve. HMIE will make no further visits in connection with the original inspection. The District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor continued improvements in attainment.

### APPENDIX 3

HMIE follow-through report on **Portessie Primary School** – published on 17 November 2009

#### **The original inspection**

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Portessie Primary School in October 2007. This was reported to Educational Services Committee on 28 November 2007. HM Inspectors visited the school in August 2009 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

#### **Particular strengths of the school:**

- The leadership of the headteacher.
- Improvement in children's attainment.
- Improved staff teamwork and morale.

#### **Improvements since the last inspection:**

##### **How well do young people learn and achieve?**

Teachers are improving the rate of children's learning by reducing the number of tasks based on textbook work. Children are now better motivated by the increased opportunities to work collaboratively. For example, in P6/7 children work well together to investigate how to make a complaint. At the middle stages, children provide others with helpful feedback on their presentation skills. Across the stages, children continue to achieve success in many sporting and cultural activities including cross-country running, dancing and walking. Attainment in English language and mathematics has improved steadily. Most children are now achieving well. They listen carefully to each other and discuss their ideas with more confidence. They know how to improve their writing. Most children now undertake mental calculations quickly and with accuracy. They work together regularly to solve practical mathematical problems. Children's skills in using computers to handle information are still not developed well enough. Staff now effectively encourage children to take greater responsibility for their own learning in all areas of the curriculum. Children undertake more tasks and activities that meet their learning needs. The headteacher has improved the arrangements to identify and support children's individual needs. At the early stages, a few play activities are not yet challenging enough for some children to learn effectively from them.

##### **How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?**

The headteacher has worked well with the supportive Parent Council to agree a vision and direction for the school. Communication with parents has improved and they are better informed about the work of the school. Staff are looking at ways to provide parents with more time to discuss their children's progress. The parent support group continues to raise funds and helps children to develop their enterprise skills well through their participation in school events. Productive links with the playgroup and local schools have been maintained successfully.

### **APPENDIX 3 (cont)**

#### **Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?**

Children are making an increasing contribution to improving the school. The pupil council has helped to create the school's vision and values. Children in the eco group work together well to reduce the amount of litter in the school. Staff use the views of all children to bring about further improvement. The headteacher is working well with staff to improve children's learning experiences. All staff are ensuring that priorities for development are taken forward effectively. This involvement and the stability in the leadership of the school has significantly improved staff morale.

#### **Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

Staff now work together more effectively and have higher expectations of what children can achieve. At all stages, teachers encourage children to do their best. Children are responding well to these improved expectations. As a result, attainment has improved. Staff celebrate children's successes and achievements at regular assemblies. Relationships between staff and children are very positive. Children now feel safer in school as a result of the improved traffic control measures implemented by the education authority.

#### **Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

Leadership of the school is much improved. Staff know their strengths and areas for development and have clear plans to improve the school's work. The approaches the school uses to assess and improve its performance have ensured that children are making good progress in their learning. All staff are now working together well to provide a better education for children. Overall, Portessie Primary School shows a strong capacity to continue to improve.

#### **What happens next?**

There is clear evidence of improvement since the original inspection and the school now performs well overall. The arrangements to evaluate the quality of the school's work are now at a satisfactory level or better. With continued strong leadership, commitment of staff and support from the authority, the school is well placed to continue to improve. HMIE will make no further visits in connection with the October 2007 inspection.

## APPENDIX 4

**"How Good is Our School?"/"The Child at the Centre" (HMIE 2007)****THE QUALITY INDICATORS**

In published reports HMIE evaluate a school's performance against some of the Quality Indicators published in *"How Good Is Our School?"/"The Child at The Centre"* **marked in the table below with an asterisk\***

<b>Key Area</b>	<b>Quality Indicator</b>
<b>Key performance outcomes</b>	<b><u>1.1*</u></b> <b><u>Improvements in performance</u></b>
	1.2 Fulfilment of statutory duties
<b>Impact on learners</b>	<b><u>2.1*</u></b> <b><u>Learners'/Children's experiences</u></b>
	2.2 The school's/centre's success in involving parents, carers and families
<b>Impact on Staff</b>	3.1 The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school/centre
<b>Impact on the community</b>	4.1 The school's/centre's success in working with and engaging with the local community
	4.2 The school's/centre's success in working with and engaging with the wider community
<b>Delivery of education</b>	<b><u>5.1*</u></b> <b><u>The curriculum</u></b>
	5.2 Teaching for effective learning
	<b><u>5.3*</u></b> <b><u>Meeting learning needs</u></b>
	5.4 Assessment for learning
	5.5 Expectations and promoting achievement
	5.6 Equality and fairness
	5.7 Partnerships with learners/children and parents
	5.8 Care, welfare and development
	<b><u>5.9*</u></b> <b><u>Improvement through self-evaluation</u></b>
<b>Policy development and planning</b>	6.1 Policy review and development
	6.2 Participation in policy and planning
	6.3 Planning for improvement
<b>Management and support of staff</b>	7.1 Staff sufficiency, recruitment and retention
	7.2 Staff deployment and teamwork
	7.3 Staff development and review
<b>Partnerships and resources</b>	8.1 Partnerships with the community, educational establishments, agencies and employers
	8.2 Management of finance for learning
	8.3 Management and use of resources and space for learning
	8.4 Managing information
<b>Leadership</b>	9.1 Vision, values and aims
	9.2 Leadership and direction
	9.3 Developing people and partnerships
	9.4 Leadership of improvement and change