

## **The Moray Council Educational Services**

### **HMIE Inspection Follow-Through**

**Interim Report on Lhanbryde Primary School**

**December 2009**

#### **1. Introduction**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Lhanbryde Primary School in March 2009. Since the inspection, authority officers have continued to provide support and advice to the school. Officers visited the school in March, June, September and December 2009 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate the progress made in responding to the areas for improvement in the initial report. The following paragraphs provide a summary of progress.

#### **2. Continuous Improvement**

The acting head teacher has provided very good leadership for the school enabling it to address the improvement agenda effectively. She has a clear vision of where the school needs to go and how this will be achieved. She leads by example and her collegiate approach has the support of the staff. Staff, pupils and parents have commented positively on her presence in the school. The school ethos has improved and staff, including support staff, feel that they are now much more involved in the life of the school. The acting head teacher has put in place an effective programme of staff meetings for teaching and support staff. All staff now have the opportunity to contribute to the agenda. The principal teachers have assumed curricular responsibilities and staff at all levels are able and willing to take on leadership roles. There are more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively. The school has revised its behaviour management strategy and pupils and parents feel that the 'grounding' system is now much fairer and that teachers apply it consistently. P4-7 pupils have more opportunities to take responsibilities through a number of groups under the title of 'At the Helm'. These groups include health, eco-schools, library, 'magic moments' and an assembly group. Pupils state that the library is better organised with a better selection of books. Parents have indicated that communication from the school has improved and there have been fewer parental concerns addressed to the school. Where parents have had cause to express concern or complaint, matters have been resolved quickly and satisfactorily.

### **3. Progress with the Areas for Improvement.**

#### **3.1 Raise children's attainment in English language and mathematics**

##### **Actions to date**

The school has introduced setting in broad ability ranges for mathematics and writing at stages P4-7. Each set generally contains three ability groups. The Learning & Teaching Officer for literacy has provided a significant level of training for teachers on the use of the authority guidelines on writing. The Learning and Teaching Officer for numeracy has provided support on using the Interactive Whiteboard for teaching maths and also on data handling and the use of information and communications technology (ICT). The acting head teacher has introduced improved procedures for target setting and tracking pupils' progress. She meets regularly with teachers and the principal teacher for additional support needs (ASN) to discuss pupils' progress and to identify strategies to support individual pupils.

##### **Outcomes and Impact**

The pupils are very positive about the setting arrangements and have stated that the work is more challenging and better matched to their needs. They also like working with different teachers and the younger pupils are very positive about working with older ones. Most of the teachers are also very positive about the changes and feel that they are now better able to meet the needs of all of the pupils. The writing guidelines are now being used effectively and pupils are able to talk about what they have been learning in writing. The pupils are clear on which levels they are working on and what they need to do to achieve success at these levels. Mental maths has higher prominence in classes and mental maths activities frequently feature at the beginnings of maths lessons. Pupils are now better able to explain their mental strategies. There is now better management and use of data and overall record keeping has improved providing a greater focus on prior learning and identifying 'next steps'. Significantly more pupils are expected to attain appropriate levels in June 2010 with a number likely to attain levels earlier than might normally be expected. A summary of the percentages attaining appropriate levels\* at P3, 4, 6 & 7, with the projected position for June 2010, is:

	June 2007	June 2008	June 2009	June 2010 est
Reading	69%	67%	60%	74%
Writing	54%	57%	58%	73%
Mathematics	60%	74%	71%	74%

\* Attainment is expressed as a percentage of the combined P3, P4, P6 and P7 roll attaining or exceeding the relevant level for the stage - Level A at P3 or earlier, Level B at P4 or earlier, Level C at P6 or earlier and Level D at P7.

##### **Future Actions**

The school will now:

- provide pupils with more opportunities to display their learning in writing across the curriculum.
- work towards ensuring a sustained improvement trend in pupils' attainment.

### ***3.2 Develop the curriculum further to ensure that children in the primary classes make appropriate progress in their learning***

#### **Actions to date**

The school has revised its writing programme to ensure consistency of experience and progression for the pupils, improved teaching strategies in maths (including the use of ICT) and staff are beginning to use Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) outcomes and experiences when planning topic work.

#### **Outcomes and impact**

There is now greater consistency in teachers' planning including identification of 'next steps' in learning. There is an increased pace of learning at all stages in maths and language, particularly writing and better differentiation based on prior learning and attainment. Teachers' planning has improved and is standardised making clearer what children will learn and how this will be achieved. There is improved deployment of support staff to support learning in maths and writing, in order to take account of the needs of groups and individuals.

#### **Future actions**

The school will now:

- take literacy and numeracy developments further to ensure that the children are given opportunities to develop their language skills in other contexts and to consider why they are learning particular mathematical concepts and operations and how these can be applied.
- continue to develop its curricular provision in line with the authority's strategy for taking forward Curriculum for Excellence.

### ***3.3 To meet the needs of all learners fully, ensure continuity in learning and a consistent and challenging pace of progress in the primary classes.***

#### **Actions to date**

At P1, better account is being taken of pupils' prior learning through effective transition arrangements. Teachers are making more use of pupil assessments in maths in order to improve pace. Most classroom activities are appropriate and differentiated to meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers are sharing learning outcomes at the beginning of each lesson. Computers and interactive whiteboards are being used more effectively to support pupils' learning. The pupils have more opportunities to participate in active learning and are being given opportunities to learn from their peers, including being given the opportunity to use the interactive whiteboard to share their strategies for solving maths problems. Arrangements are now in place to gather pupils' views about their learning.

#### **Outcomes and impact**

The pace of learning has improved in most classes and there is greater consistency in teaching approaches. Overall teachers' questioning is more probing and some teachers give pupils the opportunity to explain answers or strategies to the rest of the class or group. Pupils have commented favourably on the changes in learning and teaching, stating that they feel more confident in their writing and have a greater understanding of maths through being involved in active learning approaches. They feel that lessons are more fun and that the work is generally more challenging. They appreciate the opportunities for revision and consolidation in maths.

### **Future action**

The school will now:

- ensure all teachers share or discuss the context or relevance of the learning with the children.

### ***3.4 Use self-evaluation effectively within the primary classes to improve children's attainment and achievement.***

#### **Actions to date**

All staff, including support staff, are committed to improving the school and are now much more engaged with the school's improvement agenda. The acting head teacher undertakes rigorous formal classroom observation covering maths and writing lessons. She monitors pupils' written work and 'drops in' to lessons informally every week. The acting head teacher also provides helpful feedback on teachers' forward plans. Teachers have developed quality liaison time in order to discuss pupils' progress in maths and writing. The school introduced new 'settling in reports' in October which involves pupils reflecting on their own learning and thinking about what they feel they need to improve on. Pupils are also undertaking appraisal and self-assessment and in some classes they are using learning logs to in order to evaluate their success in learning. The 'Pupil Parliament' meets regularly with the acting head teacher to make decisions about the school and have a say in improving issues like lunch arrangements, playtimes and the promoting positive behaviour system.

#### **Outcomes and impact**

Staff are aware of what needs to be improved in the school and why, and have a much better understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation and the use of quality indicators in evaluating the work of the school. Teachers indicate that they have good opportunities to discuss observed lessons and the acting head teacher's feedback is very constructive, enabling teachers to reflect on the outcomes and develop their practice. Staff meetings have greater structure and staff have more time to reflect and are using non-contact time more effectively. Sharing practice now forms an important part of staff meetings and three teachers have visited another school to observe learning and teaching there. The acting head teacher also meets with pupil focus groups and feeds back outcomes to staff. This has resulted in changes to practice in some classes.

#### **Future actions**

The school will now:

- continue to use a range of evidence to further improve learning and teaching and pupils' attainment and achievements.

### **Conclusion**

The education authority is satisfied that the school now has a clear sense of direction and under the leadership of the acting head teacher has developed the capacity to further improve. There have been significant changes during the last eleven months and the pace of change now needs to be modified to ensure a period of consolidation to allow new developments to become further embedded, and further planned improvements to be introduced. The education authority will continue to monitor, support and challenge the school with its improvement agenda.