

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
14 APRIL 2010**

**SUBJECT: HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - PUBLISHED REPORTS
FEBRUARY - MARCH 2010**

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 Alves Primary School – **Appendices 1 and 1a**
- ii) Follow-Through Inspection of Lhanbryde Primary School and Nursery Class – **Appendices 2 and 2a**
- iii) Follow-Through Inspection of Crossroads Primary School - **Appendices 3 and 3a**

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:

Level	Definition	Description
<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.
- 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

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 inspections of Alves Primary, Lhanbryde Primary and Nursery and Crossroads Primary School.

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Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services Committee/14 April 2010/HMIE School Inspections - Published Reports February - March 2010

APPENDIX 1

HMIE Report on **Alves Primary School** published on 2nd March 2010

1. The school

Alves Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the village of Alves, near Elgin and the surrounding rural area. The roll was 39 when the inspection was carried out in January 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Well-motivated children and their positive relationships with staff.
- The quality of support for children who need additional help.
- Strong staff teamwork across the school.
- The school's approaches to self-evaluation and its commitment to, and planning for, improvement.
- The leadership of the headteacher in improving children's learning experiences.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Children are keen to learn. Almost all listen attentively and respond well to instructions and questions. Children work well together and can talk confidently about their learning. They are developing good skills in evaluating their own work, and that of others. Children enjoy the regular opportunities which teachers give them to plan their own learning. Children work well with staff to set targets for their learning. They would benefit from more regular chances to discuss and review their progress.

Children achieve success both in and outside the classroom. Across the stages, they are developing strong skills in information and communications technology (ICT). Recently, children in P5/6/7 achieved success in film animation at the Moray Film Festival. Children are developing effective skills in art. At all stages, children have a good understanding of healthy foods and activities. Children at the early and middle stages have learned successfully about how food is grown and prepared locally. Across the stages, children learn appropriate skills in road safety. Those at P7 successfully develop outdoor skills and work well together during residential visits. Children respond very well to a wide range of fundraising activities for charities which they themselves have selected.

Children make very good progress in their learning. Almost all children reach appropriate levels of attainment in listening, talking, writing and mathematics. Most do so in reading. Children who require additional support are making suitable progress. An increasing number of children are exceeding appropriate national levels of attainment and many achieve these levels earlier than might be expected. At the middle and upper stages, children enjoy reading for pleasure and can talk confidently about their favourite books and authors. Children listen attentively and readily express their ideas and opinions. At P2, children are able to write simple sentences successfully. By P7, children write well for a range of purposes. A few do not yet write at length sufficiently well. In mathematics,

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children at all stages are developing suitable skills in mental and written calculations. In the early stages, children can draw and interpret appropriate charts and graphs skilfully. By P7, children are developing skills in using spreadsheets and databases. Across the stages, children have a very sound knowledge of shapes. They are not yet sufficiently skilled in using strategies to solve mathematical problems. At all stages, children make effective use of ICT to strengthen their learning in mathematics.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum. Well-planned visits to the school by a wide range of groups and individual members of the community help to enthuse children in their learning. Staff are taking good account of *Curriculum for Excellence* in improving the curriculum. They consult children well about their areas of interest and prior knowledge when planning topics for study. Staff successfully help children to develop skills in literacy and numeracy in different curricular areas and activities. Children have very good opportunities to learn about the world of work and enterprise through well-planned Challenge Days. Visiting staff provide strong support for children's learning in art, music and physical education. Staff provide many positive opportunities for children to develop a good understanding of nature and environmental issues. All children take part in two hours of good quality physical education each week.

Staff provide a very welcoming and caring environment for learning. They work together effectively to plan tasks and activities which meet children's needs very well. In almost all lessons, work is set at a suitable level for children. Lessons take place at an appropriate pace. Staff know children very well and successfully identify the learning needs of children, including those needing additional support. Learning support staff and classroom assistants provide very positive and helpful support for individuals and small groups of children. Children with additional needs receive strong support. The needs of children with individualised educational programmes are being well met. Teachers plan their lessons well, making effective use of questions to check and develop children's understanding. Good use is made of praise to encourage children. Staff have identified the need to improve arrangements for homework.

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

Parents provide strong support for the school and work well with staff to support children's learning. The Parent Council has successfully organised a wide range of fundraising events which have enabled staff to improve resources. Most parents are happy with the school and feel well informed about their children's progress. Staff provide parents with a wide range of information about the curriculum, including sensitive health education issues. Parents are given very helpful information about how they can help in their children's learning. Parents have good opportunities to give their views or to discuss any matters with staff and most feel satisfied with these opportunities. A few would like more information about how the school has taken account of their views. Most parents feel that staff deal promptly and effectively with any concerns or complaints. Staff have developed effective links with many agencies, including educational psychologists and social workers. Children receive strong support when moving from nursery into P1 and from P7 to Forres Academy.

APPENDIX 1 cont.**5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

Staff work well together and contribute effectively to children's learning and wider aspects of the school. They willingly take additional responsibilities, for example, by coordinating enterprise activity days for children and for important aspects of the curriculum. Staff are very committed to improvement and respond very well to opportunities to share good practice. Strong links with neighbouring schools provide staff with good opportunities for professional development. The headteacher regularly visits classes and provides teachers with helpful suggestions for improvements. Staff check children's progress regularly and this has helped to improve children's learning and attainment. Staff and children have positive opportunities to evaluate their own work and to set priorities for improvement. Children feel that staff listen to what they say. A few would like to have better opportunities to discuss suggestions for improvements. By P7, children are very good at taking on responsibilities, such as producing a regular school newspaper and organising lunch time games.

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

Staff and children are proud of their school and are very welcoming to visitors. Staff have high expectations for children's attendance, behaviour and achievement. Children enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for. They feel that staff encourage them effectively to do well and that the school is helping them to become confident and responsible. Children find it easy to talk to staff if they have any problems. The school helps children to keep themselves safe and healthy, for example, by encouraging them to make healthy food choices. Staff understand the school's child protection procedures. They encourage and celebrate children's achievements, including those taking place out of school, very well. Staff and children have worked well together to record various activities and achievements on an interesting DVD. Children are aware of the beliefs and customs of others and have suitable opportunities for religious observance.

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

The school shares its aims and values successfully with staff, parents and children. The headteacher provides clear direction and very strong leadership for improvement. She has worked very effectively to lead and encourage various developments to improve children's learning and achievement. She supports her staff very well and encourages them by example to have high expectations and to look for improvement. Under her leadership, staff provide a very caring ethos. Staff make a very strong contribution to school life and to children's learning and welfare. The school is well placed to continue to improve through building on existing good practice.

8. What happens next?

As a result of the very good quality of education provided by the school, we will make no further visits in connection with 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 school.

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

- Strengthen arrangements for setting and reviewing children’s targets for learning.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Quality Indicator evaluations for Alves Primary School

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	Very Good	NPF
Learners’/Children’s experiences	Good	NPF
Meeting learning needs	Very Good	NPF
The curriculum	Very Good	
Improvement through self-evaluation	Very Good	

APPENDIX 1a

Authority position on HMIE report on **Alves Primary School**

This is a very strong report in every respect which confirms our view that this school provides a very good service and of which the local community can feel very proud.

The Inspectors' report identifies a wide range of strengths which reflect the commitment of staff and the very good leadership of the headteacher. The improvements suggested by Inspectors provide further support for the work already underway at the school.

The current Headteacher, Mrs Jennifer Morison is presently on secondment as Acting Headteacher at Findochty. In her absence the Acting Head Teacher, supported by officers from Educational Services, is already developing an action plan to address the points made by Inspectors. This work will be monitored by Quality Improvement Officers to ensure the school continues to deliver the very high quality of education described in the HMIE report.

Inspectors will not return to the school to reinspect. The authority along with the school will keep parents informed about its work and progress.

APPENDIX 2

HMIE Follow-through Report on **Lhanbryde Primary School and Nursery Class** published on 2nd March 2010.

1. The school

Lhanbryde Primary School and Nursery Class serves the village of Lhanbryde and the surrounding area. The headteacher at the time of the original inspection has been absent since the inspection. The acting headteacher has been in post since January 2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The improved pace of learning which meets children's learning needs more fully and is helping them to make more progress.
- Children's achievements, particularly from P4 to P7.
- Greater involvement of all staff in self-evaluation to ensure school improvement.
- The leadership and support of the acting headteacher in managing change.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Attainment in English language and mathematics shows signs of improvement. Children now write using a wider range of styles for different purposes and know how to improve their writing. Their skills in using computers to handle information are developing well. Education authority staff have worked closely with teachers to develop the curriculum. Together they have been successful in improving children's literacy and numeracy skills. Staff provide more opportunities for children to think for themselves, for example by explaining how they have tackled mental calculations. The acting headteacher has improved the arrangements to support, review and evaluate children's individual learning needs. Children have more tasks and activities that meet their learning needs. The rate of learning is now better and most children are making suitable progress.

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

Communication with parents is now better. Staff and children have led stimulating workshops on the work of the school. As a result, parents now have a better understanding of how the school is developing *Curriculum for Excellence* and how learning is becoming more active. Parents in the primary classes now receive helpful, advance information about their children's homework and how they can help. Any concerns or complaints are now resolved quickly and satisfactorily.

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

Children enjoy taking on more responsibilities. Every child from P4 to P7 is involved in groups which lead to improvements. These include promoting healthier food choices, making the school more eco friendly and providing more interesting library books. The pupil parliament is currently making helpful suggestions to improve the rewards system and lunch and playtime arrangements. Children use learning logs to provide helpful comments about what they have learned and what they need to improve. Children contribute well to reports which are shared with parents. Staff now have more

APPENDIX 2

opportunities to share ideas and good practice. As a result, learning and teaching approaches are now better. Staff are now fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. By improving how they plan and assess what children learn, staff ensure that children are making better progress. The acting headteacher holds regular discussions with groups of children. This has resulted in improvements in children's learning.

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

The school continues to make everyone feel welcome. Children have very positive relationships with their teachers and feel safe and fairly treated. Staff now have higher expectations of what children can achieve. Children respond well to the challenges set. Staff are making more use of assessment information from nursery staff to help younger children to achieve more success. All staff support the health and wellbeing of children very well.

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

Leadership of the school is much improved. Under the strong leadership and support of the acting headteacher, staff are now much clearer about how they want the school to improve. School staff now use more effective methods to assess and improve the school's performance. As a result, children are making better progress in their learning. The planning and assessment of children's learning is now better across the school. Staff are working together well to provide a better education for children. Overall, Lhanbryde Primary School has the capacity to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

There is clear evidence of improvement and the school now performs well overall. Improvements in performance, meeting learners' needs and self-evaluation are now at a satisfactory or better level. More remains to be done to improve attainment. With continued strong leadership, commitment of staff and support from the authority, the school is well placed to continue to improve. Our District Inspector will maintain contact with the education authority to monitor improvements in attainment. We will make no further visits in connection with the March 2009 report.

APPENDIX 2a

Authority position on HMIE Follow-through report on **Lhanbryde Primary School and Nursery Class**

We welcome this report which confirms our view that much progress has been made at the school since the previous inspection there in 2009 and much of the credit for that goes to the Acting Head Teacher, Gillian Ross's leadership. She has been ably supported by other Authority staff including the experienced Head Teacher from St Thomas' Primary, Mr Gerard Farrell.

In our own recent review of progress the education authority was 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. Quality Improvement Officers will continue to monitor, support and challenge the school with its improvement agenda.

Inspectors will not return to the school to reinspect. The authority along with the school will keep parents informed about its work and progress.

APPENDIX 3

HMIE Follow-through Report on **Crossroads Primary School** published on 23rd March 2010.

1. The school

Crossroads Primary School serves the parish of Grange and the surrounding area.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Children's increased motivation to learn.
- The improved environment for learning.
- Staff's effective use of information and communications technology to support children's learning.
- The success of the headteacher in improving the educational experiences of all children.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Children are now more confident. They benefit from increased opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. They now work very well together in small groups and as individuals on tasks and challenges. Across the school, attainment in English language and mathematics has improved. An increasing number of children achieve appropriate national levels earlier than might normally be expected. Children listen very well to each other and adults. They talk knowledgeably about what they are learning and what they want to learn next. In mathematics, children use a range of problem solving skills more effectively. Children now apply their information and communications technology (ICT) skills well to support their learning across a range of subject areas. Teachers have made significant improvements to their teaching approaches. They make regular and effective use of ICT to support and extend children's learning. They are successfully motivating and encouraging children to think for themselves more often. Teachers have made a good start to using the experiences and outcomes from *Curriculum for Excellence* in their planning and policy making. Staff now involve children and their parents in the planning of the curriculum. Children regularly review their own progress and set clear targets for themselves in learning booklets. Parents are regularly invited to provide comments in these booklets.

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

School staff have improved the arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs. Support staff are now deployed effectively and visiting staff have clearly defined remits. The support for learning teacher works alongside teachers and children in class to provide well-targeted support. Classroom assistants provide well-judged support for a few children with specific learning needs. The school has effective links with other agencies to ensure that children and families receive the right kind of support.

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

Children have an effective role in making their school better. All children are included in the pupil council. The children have helped to refurbish the school gymnasium and have created an attractive library area. Parents and the community have supported their efforts. Children are very proud of their many achievements. These include fundraising events and

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school shows. The staff team are now more involved in leading aspects of the work of the school. They discuss children's progress regularly with the headteacher. The headteacher now observes lessons. All staff now monitor children's work more closely to ensure children are making progress at the correct pace.

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

Teachers and support staff have higher expectations of what children can achieve. Teachers have improved the pace of learning. Children are achieving very well. They are now more motivated and challenged by the tasks and activities they engage in, both in class and out of doors. Teachers are making better use of real life contexts for learning with a better understanding of how children learn. Children are very well behaved. They show respect for each other and they are polite and well mannered to adults and visitors. The wide range of reward systems used by staff has improved children's confidence in themselves as learners.

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

The headteacher has significantly improved the environment for learning. She has greatly improved the curriculum and the quality of learning and teaching. She has put in place clear and effective systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The education authority has supported the school by providing additional staffing. This has helped the headteacher develop and improve the work of the school more quickly. The school is very well placed to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

There is clear evidence of improvement and the school now performs better overall. We will make no further visits in connection with the April 2008 report.

APPENDIX 3a

Authority position on HMIE Follow-through report on **Crossroads Primary School**

This is a very positive report on the significant progress made by the school since the original inspection in 2008. Mrs Elizabeth Beattie the Head Teacher has made a very good start to improving the experiences for children at the school. Since taking up post at the time of the original inspection Mrs Beattie has provided clear direction to the school community. Much of the credit for the improvements noted by inspectors is due to her leadership. The HMIE report acknowledges the helpful additional support provided by the authority to assist with these improvement activities.

We are confident that the Head Teacher, staff and parents at the school will continue to work together to secure future improvements for the pupils there.

Inspectors will not return to the school to reinspect. The authority along with the school will keep parents informed about its work and progress.

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***

Key Area	Quality Indicator
Key performance outcomes	<u>1.1*</u> <u>Improvements in performance</u>
	1.2 Fulfilment of statutory duties
Impact on learners	<u>2.1*</u> <u>Learners'/Children's experiences</u>
	2.2 The school's/centre's success in involving parents, carers and families
Impact on Staff	3.1 The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school/centre
Impact on the community	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
Delivery of education	<u>5.1*</u> <u>The curriculum</u>
	5.2 Teaching for effective learning
	<u>5.3*</u> <u>Meeting learning needs</u>
	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
	<u>5.9*</u> <u>Improvement through self-evaluation</u>
Policy development and planning	6.1 Policy review and development
	6.2 Participation in policy and planning
	6.3 Planning for improvement
Management and support of staff	7.1 Staff sufficiency, recruitment and retention
	7.2 Staff deployment and teamwork
	7.3 Staff development and review
Partnerships and resources	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
Leadership	9.1 Vision, values and aims
	9.2 Leadership and direction
	9.3 Developing people and partnerships
	9.4 Leadership of improvement and change