

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
9 JUNE 2010**

**SUBJECT: HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - PUBLISHED REPORTS APRIL –
MAY 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 report published following inspection by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) of schools and nursery classes in Moray:

i) Inspection of Mosstowie Primary School – **Appendices 1 and 1a**

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 2**.

- 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 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.
- 3.5 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 inspection of Mosstowie Primary School.

Author of Report: Jim Gibson, Quality Improvement Officer

Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services Committee/9 June 2010/HMIE School Inspections - Published Reports April - May 2010

APPENDIX 1

HMIE Report on **Mosstowie Primary School** published on 27th April 2010

1. The school

Mosstowie Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the communities of Mosstowie, Miltonduff and Pluscarden. The roll was 60 when the inspection was carried out in March 2010. More than half the children lived outwith the local school area. Children's attendance was above the national average in 2008/2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Very well-behaved, polite, confident and responsible children who are motivated to learn.
- The richness of learning experiences provided for children.
- Strong and supportive relationships with parents and the community.
- The work of the headteacher and staff in developing a strong culture of achievement throughout the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Almost all children are enthusiastic about learning. They give their views confidently about their work and can discuss what they have learned from their lessons. Children are clear about how well they are doing in writing and what they need to do to improve. They work together very well to build each other's confidence and to achieve success. Children at the upper stages take part in discussions in a very thoughtful and mature manner. They give well-considered responses to searching questions, for example, about how to support someone who is experiencing emotional difficulties.

Children achieve very well in health promoting activities during the school day. They experience success and apply their skills well in their topic work. Younger children can explain and demonstrate with confidence how to care for the environment. Children at the middle stages use information and communication technology (ICT) well to research their topics and present information. They are developing very effective touch-type keyboard skills. Children at the upper stages are developing their literacy skills well using stimulating moving image technology. Children demonstrate citizenship skills by showing responsibility and by contributing well to the school and the community. For example, they help with work on the environment and health promotion. Children achieve success in a variety of sports and cultural activities. These include football, hockey, badminton, cross-country running and walking. All children perform to good effect in events such as the school pantomime and the 'Mossie Factor'. Children are successful in many musical and sporting competitions.

Almost all children attain appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. Most do so in writing. Children are making very good progress from their earlier levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading and mathematics, and good progress in writing. In English language, almost all children listen attentively in class discussions and talk confidently about their interests and books they are reading. They are able to find information well

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

from a variety of sources including dictionaries and the Internet. Almost all children read fluently and with good expression. They discuss and share their ideas very well in groups. Children's writing is occasionally too short and spelling and presentation need to be better. In mathematics, across the school, almost all children are accurate in mental and written calculations. They can interpret a range of graphs well. Children at the early stages have made a class bar chart. At the middle stages, children use ICT effectively to handle information using simple spreadsheets. Children at the upper stages can identify shapes and symmetry and they can measure angles confidently. They are able to solve mathematical problems together well.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

Staff provide children with a good curriculum overall. They are beginning to develop the curriculum taking account of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff use approaches which encourage active learning, for example, in developing literacy skills. They provide motivating opportunities for children at the early stages to learn through doing. Staff need to help children apply their numeracy skills across different aspects of the curriculum. Staff make very effective use of visits, visitors and specialist teachers in music, art and design and physical education to make learning more interesting for children. Staff are providing all children with at least two hours of high-quality physical education each week.

Staff know children very well and support their learning needs effectively in the classroom. They provide children with a very caring and nurturing environment. Tasks, activities and resources are well matched to the learning needs of children, including high-achieving children. Staff have begun to take good account of children's interests and ideas when planning activities. Teachers give helpful explanations and make effective use of questioning to check children's understanding and extend their learning. They need to give children more opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Support staff help to identify and support the needs of children who have difficulties with their learning well. The way additional support for children who have learning needs is organised needs to be improved. Homework needs to be more varied at few stages to encourage children to learn more.

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

The school has strong partnerships with parents. Parents appreciate the care and commitment the headteacher and staff give to providing their children with a broad range of experiences. They help with outings and run a range of after-school clubs. These include rugby for P1 to P3 children and a nature club for those at P4 to P7. The Parent Council supports the school very well through stimulating fundraising events. Staff communicate with parents very well through regular newsletters and questionnaires. They give parents helpful information about their children's progress through meetings and written reports. The school responds effectively to parental enquiries and any complaints. Staff consult parents appropriately about health education. Home-school diaries give parents a clear understanding of what their children are learning and how they can help. The school has strong relationships with the local community, including the local abbey and businesses. Staff work productively with a range of support services. The school has good links with other schools in the local area, for example through team sports. Staff prepare children well for their transfer from nursery to P1 and from P7 to S1 at Elgin High School.

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

Children are keen to take on responsibilities. As a result of their efforts, the school has gained a silver award from Eco-Schools Scotland. House captains ensure children contribute well to decisions on how they can help to improve the school and the wider community. Children raised substantial funds for playground equipment and games with the support of local businesses. As a result, children are now benefiting from an exciting selection of toys and games at playtimes. Staff are involved in developing areas such as Eco-Schools, the school website and health promotion. They set appropriate priorities for improvement and meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss individual children's learning and progress. This work has led to improvements in the rate at which children learn. Staff need to evaluate their work together more rigorously, taking account of children's successes and achievements. They need to develop their leadership roles across the curriculum further.

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

The school is very welcoming. Children are proud of their school. They behave very well and are respectful of others' feelings and opinions. The school has effective strategies in place to encourage children to attend. Children feel safe and they are confident that staff will deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. Staff have very positive relationships with children. They are committed to the wellbeing and support of all children and are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. The school has a strong culture of achievement. Staff have high expectations of what children can attain and achieve and children respond positively to these. Children's achievements in and out of school are celebrated regularly through attractive photographic wall displays. Children understand the importance of making healthy choices at lunch times and know ways of staying safe and healthy. These include the many health promoting games and sports that are part of their everyday play. Staff promote equality and fairness well and develop children's awareness of different cultures. Children have regular opportunities for religious observance.

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

The headteacher is highly regarded by staff, children and parents. Her vision for the school has helped to create a strong culture of ambition and achievement amongst staff and children. The headteacher is a very effective role model in helping staff to develop new learning activities and ways of teaching. As a result, children across the school have more consistent, active learning experiences. Staff are strongly committed to making further improvements and they respond very positively to the leadership of the headteacher. The quality of the school's self-evaluation has improved. The headteacher now needs to give staff clearer direction on leading and evaluating new initiatives in the curriculum.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

APPENDIX 1 (cont.)

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

- Continue to develop *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Improve self-evaluation to increase its impact.

Quality Indicator evaluations for Mosstowie 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.

	Whole School	
Improvements in performance	Very good	NPF
Learners' experiences	Very good	NPF
Meeting learning needs	Good	NPF
The curriculum	Good	
Improvement through self-evaluation	Satisfactory	

APPENDIX 1a

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

This is a strong report which we accept accurately reflects the quality of service provided by the school. We welcome the confirmation of the range of strengths of the school. The improvement agenda set out for the school and the authority is realistic and manageable.

The report reflects the hard work of the headteacher and her staff. In particular we are pleased the report acknowledges the breadth of learning experiences available to children and their achievements.

We have every confidence in the headteacher, Ms Frances Wardhaugh, and her staff, that with continuing support from the authority they will be able to make progress towards their vision of an excellent school. Inspectors will not return to the school to reinspect and we will keep parents informed about its work and progress.

APPENDIX 2

"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