REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
18 AUGUST 2010

SUBJECT: HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS – MORAY COUNCIL FOLLOW-
THROUGH REPORTS JUNE 2010

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is for Children and Young People’s Services Committee to scrutinise and note the most recent reports published by Moray Council Educational Services following earlier school inspections by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) of:

   i) Bishopmill Primary School - (Appendix 1)
   ii) Seafield Primary School – (Appendix 2)

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 The Committee is invited to scrutinise the contents of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 When a school is inspected by HMIE a report is published (by HMIE) which gives commentary on the school’s performance. These reports are presented regularly to this Committee, where possible at the first available opportunity after publication.

3.2 The HMIE reports provide a summary of the “particular strengths” of the school and “areas for improvement”. These reports also provide a summary of the school’s performance against five of the quality indicators from "How Good Is Our School", the self-evaluation toolkit used by all schools.

3.3 The follow-through approaches after inspection by HMIE changed from August 2009. Those for Bishopmill and Seafield Primary Schools reflect the position for schools inspected before that time, and this is outlined in paragraphs 3.4 – 3.7 below.

3.4 Each report gives an indication of how and when HMIE intend to follow-through the inspection process. This can include:

   • making no further visits following the inspection and relying upon the education authority to follow-through on improvement actions with the school and informing parents;
   • making arrangements for HM Inspectors to monitor progress in liaison with the education authority;
• arranging further visits to the school to support and monitor improvement.

3.5 Where HMIE decide to revisit and reinspect the school then they themselves will publish a short follow-through report, usually within two years. Occasionally interim follow-through reports are published around one year from initial inspection. These are also reported to this Committee following publication.

3.6 Where HMIE indicate in their published report, or subsequently decide, that they will not revisit to reinspect the school then they expect Moray Council to prepare and publish an equivalent follow-through report for parents.

3.7 These Council published follow-through reports contain an evaluation of the extent to which the school has continued to improve since the original inspection, and evaluations of progress made by the school and the education authority in responding to the main points for action in the initial report. Follow-through inspection reports are also usually published within two years of the initial report.

3.8 Copies of all Council reports are available in the Members’ Library, from the school and all HMIE reports are available 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, Key Priority Area – Attainment & Achievement.

(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) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk implications
There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) **Staffing implications**

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) **Property**

None.

(g) **Equalities**

There are no issues in this case.

(h) **Consultations**

Senior Officers within Educational Services, Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant, Rhona Gunn, Principal Solicitor (Litigation and Licensing), Kathleen Blacklaw, Headteacher, Bishopmill Primary and Kenneth Skelton, Headteacher, Seafield Primary have been consulted and are in agreement with the relevant sections of the report.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 That the Committee scrutinises the contents of this report on the progress made by Bishopmill and Seafield Primary Schools since inspection.

Author of Report: Jim Gibson, Quality Improvement Officer

Background Papers:
Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Children and Young People's Services Committee/18 August 2010/HMIE School Inspections - Moray Council Follow-Through Reports June 2010

Signature: _____________________ Date:______________

Designation: Director of Educational Services Name: Donald M Duncan
Moray Council follow-through report on Bishopmill Primary School – published June 2010

The original inspection
HMIE published a report on the inspection of Bishopmill Primary School in February 2009. The report can be accessed either from the school or on the HMIE website (www.hmie.gov.uk). This was reported to Educational Services Committee on 25 March 2009. At that time Inspectors indicated that they were confident that the school would be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings and as a result intended to make no further visits following the inspection.

The education authority has monitored progress and visited the school to assess the extent to which the school is continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the areas for improvement in the original HMIE report.

Continuous Improvement
Since the original inspection there have been a number of developments which have resulted in improvements in children’s learning experiences:

- Teacher’s involvement in the Tapestry project, a forum where teachers work together to improve their practice, has brought a greater focus to effective learning & teaching. Children are now clearer on what they are learning and how to be successful. More teachers are adopting new teaching strategies resulting in children having more opportunities to undertake suitably challenging activities.

- There are more opportunities for the children to experience outdoor learning. The children have good opportunities to develop their sense of responsibility and team-working skills through undertaking a range of stimulating enterprise activities. These have included an Engineering Club, KNex Workshops and the Aberdeen Mathematics Challenge. The children in primary 5 are working on an Enterprise activity that includes subjects from a range of curricular areas. This is part of a competition linking with Elgin Academy.

- The Pupil Council is taking the Eco-Schools agenda forward with different classes working on different aspects and the Pupil Council is also looking to improve playground games and facilities.

- The children are very positive about the range of sporting and cultural opportunities offered by the school.

- Staff are taking more leadership and team roles within the school, including leading staff development events.

- The school continues to have a positive engagement with parents.
APPENDIX 1 (CONT)

Progress with the areas for improvement agreed with HMIE:

1. Continue to develop the school’s self-evaluation procedures to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

The school has made good progress in addressing this point for improvement.

There is more of an improvement culture in the school and staff are getting better at evaluating their own work through self-reflection and formal evaluation strategies. The school is now making more rigorous use of its quality assurance calendar. This includes an appropriate range of activities managed by the senior staff including monitoring teachers’ plans, observing learning and teaching, sampling children’s work and surveys of stakeholders’ views. The school should continue to ensure that support staff are routinely involved in self-evaluation strategies where appropriate. Senior staff provide helpful and informative written feedback to teachers following observations of learning and teaching. Children’s views on learning are increasingly being taken into account by teachers when planning topics. All teaching staff are involved in reviewing their teaching through observing colleagues, with follow-up professional dialogue about classroom practice. This is resulting in improvements in the quality of children’s learning. Staff literacy and numeracy working groups are established to look at the development of these aspects across the curriculum. This has involved a review of current programmes and the inclusion of appropriate outcomes and experiences as part of topic planning. As a result, more relevant contexts for developing skills in literacy and numeracy are being identified.

2. Ensure that all children have consistently high quality, sufficiently challenging learning experiences

The school has made sound progress in addressing this point for improvement.

The children are experiencing more exciting and attractive contexts for learning. There is a good balance in lessons with more imaginative presentations of tasks and activities. There is more use of interactive whiteboards, websites and IT resources to extend contexts for learning. Children have more opportunities to undertake active learning tasks such as games, puzzles and challenges which stimulate their thinking. This builds effectively on the active play pilot at early years. There are more opportunities for practical activities and group and pair work with less reliance on textbooks and worksheets. Teachers’ questioning is more probing in order to check for understanding and teachers are beginning to use consistent assessment techniques across classes. There are good, efficient start up routines in most classes and teachers are making better use of end of lesson plenaries to consolidate children’s learning. ‘Starter questions’ and self-registration ensure that children are appropriately engaged in learning activities on coming into classes. Class visits and trips create contexts for cross-curricular work.

The school is using the writing guidelines provided by the authority and these are proving useful in taking forward improvements in writing. Children are given sufficient opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and within a range of contexts. Many children write at length but often the structure of their work is weak.
APPENDIX 1 (CONT)

It is unclear how skills in writing are being developed from stage to stage. Children find it difficult to suggest a type of writing for a particular task. Some children do not understand some of the success criteria they are using to progress their learning. With support from the authority further development in writing should lead to further improvements in children’s writing skills.

A policy and programme for problem solving containing a range of strategies has been established. This is being further developed and built into the school’s programme for mathematics. As part of this development the school should continue to develop problem solving in line with Curriculum for Excellence principles and practice documents. The school should look again at its mental maths and number programme to ensure that children get the opportunity to explore and share a wider range of number strategies. These should tie to assessment methodologies that link current learning to next steps. The school should also look to support children to use software such as graphing programs and spreadsheets.

3. Improve staff’s use of assessment information to ensure that all children make appropriate progress

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing this point for improvement.

Most of the children are secure in their learning at the levels attained although some require further consolidation in mathematics. Overall assessment records are reliable. The school’s strategies for tracking children’s progress are sound. Appropriate use is made of baseline assessment information at the start of the year to inform pupil groupings. Assessment data is used as part of the termly attainment meetings between senior staff and individual teachers to ensure that children have sufficiently challenging targets to aim for. Tracking arrangements are effective in identifying children at risk of underachieving. Children not on target are identified and support strategies are put in place. Teachers are identifying more able children through baseline assessments and are using more differentiated and challenging tasks to meet the needs of all. A significant number of children are attaining levels earlier than might normally be expected including attaining level E in primary 7. The school should continue to develop opportunities to challenge the more able children.

Teachers are sharing expectations with children so that they know what is acceptable. At times feedback in jotters shows little sign of impact. While there are usually teacher comments on children’s work, in many cases it is difficult to see how children act upon them in order to improve as they do not always understand success criteria. The use of learning outcomes, success criteria and feedback to children needs to be more coherent in some classes in order that teaching builds on prior learning to ensure progression. The school should give priority to improving children’s writing next session.

As National Assessments are withdrawn, senior staff should look at how they might sample children’s attainment and consider how other assessment information can be used to provide an overview of children’s progress.
APPENDIX 1 (CONT)

Conclusion

The school has made effective progress in addressing the points for improvement identified in the original report. Consequently the education authority will not publish any further reports in connection with the 2008 HMIE report. The education authority is satisfied with the school’s on-going commitment to evaluation and continuous improvement. Authority staff will continue to be involved in supporting and challenging the school to improve the provision for the children.
APPENDIX 2

Moray Council follow-through report on **Seafield Primary School** – published June 2010

**The original inspection**

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Seafield Primary School (and Nursery Class) in June 2009. The report can be accessed either from the school or on the HMIE website ([www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)). This was reported to Educational Services Committee on 12 August 2009. At that time Inspectors indicated that they were confident that the school would be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings and as a result intended to make no further visits following the inspection.

The education authority has monitored progress and visited the school to assess the extent to which the school is continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the areas for improvement in the original HMIE report.

**Continuous Improvement**

Since the original inspection there have been a number of developments which have resulted in improvements in children’s learning experiences:

- More teachers are adopting new teaching strategies resulting in children having increased opportunities to undertake suitably demanding activities. All teaching staff are involved in the teacher learning community. They have amended the model to suit the school context and all teachers are involved in peer observation. This is impacting positively on classroom practice.

- Children have increasing opportunities to undertake stimulating active learning tasks including group and pair work. Contexts for learning have given the children opportunities to develop valuable enterprising and entrepreneurial skills. These have included a primary 4/5 project, in conjunction with a local industry, and a primary 6 film-making project with the help of a local arts group. The school has produced a book through a publisher’s ‘We Are Writers’ project, as a combined writing/enterprise project. The book will be going on sale shortly.

- The children are enthusiastic about their opportunities to undertake responsibilities through the Pupil Council, Eco Committee, Health Committee and Junior Road Safety Officers. Primary 7 children are undertaking the John Muir Award which encourages awareness and responsibility for the natural environment.

- The trained peer mediators from primary 6 and 7 have been successful in resolving some conflicts between pupils.

- There are good levels of pupil participation in a range of sporting and cultural activities including football, hockey, netball, cricket, golf, badminton and drama.
Parents are positive about the class open days where the children make presentations to their parents. These have helped to increase the level of parental involvement by clarifying the work which the children are undertaking.

Children’s achievements are recognised through certificates and ‘class of the week’. Their successes are celebrated at assemblies.

**Progress with the areas for improvement agreed with HMIE:**

1. **Improve attainment in writing**

The school has made sound progress in addressing this point for improvement.

With the support from the authority officer for literacy, the school has developed and implemented a writing programme aligned to the *Curriculum for Excellence* experiences and outcomes. Almost all children are making steady progress from their prior levels of attainment. Overall there has been a modest increase in writing attainment this session with a clear improvement in the quality of writing the children are producing, particularly at upper stages. All teachers are using learning outcomes and success criteria effectively. The school’s programmes for phonics and reciprocal reading are also having a positive impact on pupils’ writing. Most teachers are giving good, specific feedback to the children on how to improve. However, procedures have yet to be established to ensure that the children act on the feedback. The head teacher has assessed writing individually with all of the middle and upper stages children. This has resulted in the children having a clearer understanding of success criteria and the next steps in their learning. The pupil grouping arrangements have resulted in more targeted support for individual children. In some classes there is no differentiation in targets to support the children in achieving success. Support staff make a valuable contribution to reinforcing children’s learning, including providing support to the more able where appropriate. Children are now better able to assess their own and their peer’s work. The children are enthusiastic about the ‘writing pyramid’ which provides effective support and enables them to evaluate and improve their work. Primary 7 pupils are using a writing notebook, which contains targets for a range of writing genres and this helps them to become more independent writers. There are more opportunities for the children to undertake writing exercises for a range of purposes across a number of curricular areas.

2. **Improve the school’s arrangements for monitoring learning, teaching and achievement to ensure that all children make appropriate progress.**

The school has made important progress in addressing this point for improvement.

There are better arrangements in place to track children’s progress. The head teacher meets with teachers throughout the year to monitor children’s progress towards agreed targets. Assessment data is used as part of these meetings to ensure that children have sufficiently challenging targets to aim for. The head
teacher continues to monitor learning and teaching and identifies areas of good practice. These are then shared with all staff. The head teacher should now delegate some of this responsibility to the depute head teacher and principal teachers. There are increasing opportunities for staff to engage in peer observations which have brought a greater focus to effective learning and teaching. More teachers are adopting new teaching strategies resulting in children having more opportunities to undertake suitably challenging activities. Teachers are sharing learning outcomes and success criteria more consistently with children. The children are now more involved in planning and assessing their own learning and are now clearer on what they need to do to be successful. The pace of work in most lessons has improved and teachers have appropriate expectations of the children. The pupils are experiencing more challenging activities and numbers of children are attaining levels in reading, writing and mathematics earlier than might normally be expected. The school should review arrangements for teaching mathematics to ensure the optimum use is made of pupil groupings and active learning tasks.

Conclusion

The school has made effective progress in addressing points for improvement identified in the original report. Consequently the education authority will not publish any further reports in connection with the 2009 HMIE report. The education authority is satisfied with the school’s on-going commitment to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Authority staff will be involved in supporting and challenging the school to continue to improve the provision for the children.