REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT: HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - PUBLISHED REPORTS JANUARY- FEBRUARY 2012

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

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

i) Inspection of Inveravon Primary School – Appendices 1 and 1a
ii) Follow-through inspection of Findochty Primary School – Appendices 2 and 2a

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 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 3.
3.2 When HMIE first evaluate a school or nursery class against the quality indicators in HGIOS/TCATC they use ‘standardised’ language:

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

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

- *Almost all* = over 90%
- *Most* = 75-90%
- *Majority* = 50-74%
- *Less than half* = 15-49%
- *Few* = up to 15%

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 “Key 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 From August 2011 HMIE have changed their procedures for school inspections and the format of their published reports. School inspections are shorter in duration, with the published report now in the form of a letter to parents/carers. The focus of inspections is on the school’s capacity to improve and answer the following questions:

- How well do young people learn and achieve?
- How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?
- How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Evaluations of the quality indicators are no longer included within the parents’ letter. They are however available online and are included within this report.

3.6 Copies of all HMIE reports are available 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) 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 Education and Social Care, Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant and Margaret Forrest, Acting Legal Services Manager (Litigation and Licensing) have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.
5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report on the HMIE inspection of Inveravon Primary School and the follow-through inspection of Findochty Primary School and Nursery Class.

Author of Report: Jim Gibson, Quality Improvement Officer

Background Papers:

Ref: Reports/Children and Young People’s Services Committee/07 March 2012/HMIE School Inspections – Published Reports January - February 2012
Dear Parent/Carer

Inveravon Primary School
The Moray Council

Recently, as you may know, I visited and inspected your child’s school. Throughout the visit, I talked to many parents and children and I worked closely with the Headteacher and staff. I wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the school supported children to do their best. The headteacher shared with me the school’s view of its successes and priorities for improvement. I looked at some particular aspects of the school’s recent work including the way all staff lead aspects of the school’s work. I also explored the role and importance of outdoor learning in the curriculum, and how well the school was developing moderation and tracking systems. As a result, I was able to find out how good the school was at improving children’s education. This letter sets out what I found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children engage in their learning particularly well as a result of effective teaching, support and motivating experiences. Children support and encourage each other to do well. They talk with enthusiasm about their learning and interact very well with each other and with adults. They set their own learning targets and review how well they are developing their learning skills, readily showing independence in their learning. Commendably, children write the majority of their own annual reports, reflecting with teachers on their learning and next steps. This innovative practice is excellent. Older children enjoy helping younger children. All children are involved in the joint pupil council and eco committee. They show responsibility in these roles and increase their self-confidence through them. Children are very aware of the importance of keeping safe and healthy. They enjoy taking part in the many opportunities for physical activity and outdoor learning. This includes leading the major re-development of the school garden. As a result of all of their eco work, they have recently achieved their second Eco-schools Scotland Green Flag. Almost all children are developing their literacy and numeracy skills very well, making very good progress in English and mathematics. Children are good at expressing their ideas confidently and explaining things to others. Almost all children have very good listening
and talking skills, and use questioning well. For example, children can analyse information in their reading activities and question each other, along with responding to challenging activities from their teacher. Staff should build further on this good practice. By P7, children can read and write well for a range of purposes. Across the school, children enjoy solving mathematical problems and explaining how they arrive at the answers. Children now need to be challenged more to sharpen their mental agility skills. Children are developing a good understanding of science, nature, religions and cultures. All children enjoy school and feel they are achieving success. Their achievements are praised and celebrated throughout the school.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

The school provides very good support for your children to develop and learn. Staff know your children very well and track their individual progress thoroughly. Staff are caring, flexible and responsive to children’s varied needs. Staff work creatively and use interesting activities and tasks. All staff work well with other professional partners and support for learning staff, to ensure that children who require additional support with their learning make good progress. The curriculum is broad and takes very good account of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff plan meaningful and relevant contexts for learning which regularly encourage children to follow their interests, including in the outdoors. A range of experiences contribute positively to children’s social and emotional wellbeing, including trips and visits out of school. Visitors to the school, including members of the community, contribute well to the curriculum and life of the school. Parents and community members also run after-school clubs. The school is making effective use of information and communications technology to link children’s learning experiences with children in a neighbouring school. The school now needs to explore how this practice can be extended. The school playground, including the newly developed sensory garden, is an attractive, stimulating environment for outdoor play and learning. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that transitions are smooth for pre-school children to primary school, and for P7 children to secondary school.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Overall, I am confident your children’s school will continue to improve the quality of its work. All members of staff form a highly committed team of professionals, working hard to do their best for your children. The headteacher is very highly regarded and provides particularly effective leadership which has helped to create a very positive ethos in the school. Staff have a very clear focus on thinking about and understanding learning. As a result, children also think about and reflect on their learning to review their next steps. Children and parents find staff approachable, caring and supportive. All staff take on roles of leading and developing aspects of the school. The headteacher and staff visit each other’s lessons and give helpful feedback on their work. Staff make very effective use of links with another school, which is managed by the same headteacher, to share good practice and support each other. To continue improving, staff need to focus on developing further the many good aspects of the school’s work and involve parents and the wider community more in reviewing aspects of school life and planning for improvements.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.
Confident, responsible and well-behaved children who are very proud of their school, and readily take ownership of their own learning.

The highly-effective leadership of the headteacher, whose encouragement of thinking and understanding about learning has had a very positive impact on children and staff.

Very effective teaching and support, which provides children with interesting and motivating learning experiences.

The nurturing and supportive ethos, based on shared values and mutual respect of all.

I discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the school. This is what I agreed with them.

Continue to take forward improvements to the curriculum, building on the current high quality experiences for children.

On behalf of Education Scotland, I am satisfied with the overall quality of provision. I am confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, Education Scotland will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The local 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 schools.

Sally Fulton
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at http://www.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=9027&type=2.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.
HMIE Quality Indicator evaluations for Inveravon 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.

HMIE’s evaluated the quality of the learners’ experience in Inveravon as excellent and the indicators for improvements in performance, meeting learning needs, the curriculum and improvement through self-evaluation as very good. Overall therefore HMIE have confirmed this as a positive report.

Authority position on HMIE report on Inveravon Primary School

Inveravon Primary has become the first school in Moray to be awarded an ‘excellent’ evaluation by inspectors. Education Scotland defines ‘excellent’ as outstanding and sector leading.

While we have had many positive reports over the years it is fair to say that Inveravon tops them all. Excellent is an assessment used very sparingly by school inspectors and to have gained the highest rating is something of which everyone associated with Inveravon Primary can be extremely proud.

Head teacher Mary Smith was very highly regarded by the inspection team and provided particularly effective leadership which had helped to create a very positive ethos in the school. The report said staff made very effective use of links with Knockando Primary – which Mrs Smith also manages under a paired headship arrangement – to share good practices and support each other. To receive external feedback that this school’s performance in relation to learners’ experiences is excellent and sector leading is extremely satisfying. This is a tremendous reflection of the commitment and effort of all concerned.
24 January 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

Findochty Primary School and Nursery Class
The Moray Council

In October 2009, and again in November 2010, HM Inspectors visited your child’s school and after each visit we wrote a report to you with our findings. In the report, we indicated that we would return to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. Throughout our visit, we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school’s view of how it has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified at our first visit and also areas where the school is continuing to improve. As a result, we were able to find out how well the school was continuing to improve children’s education. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

The quality of children’s learning across the nursery and primary classes has improved. The recently introduced Active Start helps children in the nursery and early stages class to develop confidence through working and learning together. Across the stages, children work together cooperatively and are keen to talk about their learning. Almost all children behave responsibly in classes and around the school. They enjoy having more opportunities to choose aspects of topics which they wish to learn. Arrangements to encourage children to learn at home have improved considerably. Most children now respond well to the regular and varied homework tasks set by teachers. Children are becoming more involved in their learning, for example, by planning Challenge Days and in evaluating their own work.

In the nursery class, children listen attentively and speak, with increasing confidence, to adults and each other. Across the primary classes, most children now achieve at an appropriate level according to staff’s expectations. Most children continue to enjoy reading and now write well for a variety of purposes. Children at the upper stages show a promising improvement in their mental mathematical skills. They are not yet sufficiently
confident in using fractions and decimals. Children are becoming more confident in using information and communications technology. Across the stages, children show an appropriate awareness of how to stay healthy. At the upper stages, for example, children understand how to use the Internet safely. Children have good opportunities to achieve and to show responsibility. The pupil council has worked well to encourage positive playground behaviour. Junior road safety officers have successfully raised greater awareness of important safety issues.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

The curriculum in the nursery and primary classes is broad and balanced overall. Staff have made considerable improvements to the curriculum. They now plan children's learning better across all areas of the curriculum. Staff follow relevant advice on the curriculum and are now ensuring that important aspects of literacy and numeracy are being developed well across children's learning. Children benefit from an increasing range of out-of-school visits and from visitors to the school. Links between the nursery and early stages class are very strong, helping children to make a positive start at P1.

In most lessons, staff match the level of difficulty of activities well to meet children's needs. In a few lessons, activities lack challenge for higher-achieving children. Across the stages, staff increasingly make well-judged use of games and challenges to motivate children in their learning. Staff know the children and their needs well. They provide a very caring environment in which children feel safe and enjoy their learning. Support for learning staff, including classroom assistants, provide strong support for children. Staff should improve their approaches to recording how they plan to meet the needs of children with individualised educational programmes.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and direction. She is highly respected by parents, staff and children. The ethos of the school is very positive. Staff willingly take responsibility for important aspects of school life, including developing areas of the curriculum. They have responded positively to the school's improved approaches to self-evaluation. The headteacher observes lessons regularly and provides staff with helpful suggestions for further improvements. Children are now given more opportunities to discuss and suggest improvements.

What happens next?

There are many signs of improvement in the school's provision. Staff now plan children's learning more effectively and have made significant improvements to the curriculum. Approaches to self-evaluation are much improved and leadership across the school is strong. Staff should continue to work together to raise children's attainment. We will make no further visits in connection with the inspection report of December 2009.

Alistair Brown
HM Inspector
Authority position on HMIE Follow-through report on Findochty Primary School and Nursery Class

We welcome this report which confirms our view that much progress has been made at the school since the earlier inspections and great credit goes to the leadership shown by Headteacher, Mrs Jennifer Morison. During her time at the school she has quickly established a shared vision for improvement and is leading her staff well in order to develop children’s learning experiences.

This latest report confirms the developments which have taken place in the last year and the impact these have had on children’s learning. We are delighted that Inspectors recognise the efforts of school staff, pupils and their parents and will make no further visits to the school for the time being.
APPENDIX 3

“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 *

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