

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
13 FEBRUARY 2008**

**SUBJECT: HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - PUBLISHED REPORTS
DECEMBER 2007- JANUARY 2008**

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 in Moray:

- i) Inspection of Milne's High School - **Appendix 1**
- ii) Inspection of Hythehill Primary School and Nursery Class - **Appendix 2**
- iii) Interim follow-through Inspection of Newmill Primary School - **Appendix 3**
- iv) Follow-through Inspection of Keith Grammar School - **Appendix 4**

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 a school is measured by HM Inspectors using quality indicators, described in their publication, "*How Good Is Our School*" (HGIOS, 2002). All schools in Moray have copies of HGIOS and are required to use this in their own self-evaluation and improvement planning. A full list of the quality indicators in HGIOS is attached to this report as **Appendix 5**. **It should be noted that from January 2008 HM Inspectors will evaluate schools' performance using a recently revised set of indicators (HGIOS 2007). This will result in some changes to the content and structure of future reports.**

3.2 When HMIE first evaluate a school's performance against the quality indicators in "*How Good Is Our School*" they use 'standardised' language:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Description</i>
<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.

Level 3	<i>Adequate</i>	Provision where strengths just outweigh weaknesses.
Level 2	<i>Weak</i>	Provision with important weaknesses
Level 1	<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 extended commentary by HMIE on the performance of a school at the time of first inspection. Such reports provide a summary of the Key Strengths of the school and HMIE recommendations for improvement listed as “Main Points for Action”. The reports also provide a summary of the school’s performance against a number of the indicators of quality from How Good Is Our School. This information is summarised for each school individually in an appendix to this report.
- 3.4 Follow-through inspection reports contain an evaluation by HMIE 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 usually published within two years of the initial report. Occasionally interim follow-through reports are published around one year from initial inspection.
- 3.5 When HMIE review the school’s and authority’s performance in a follow-through report they use a range of descriptions to evaluate the progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report, e.g.
- *‘adequate progress had been made in meeting this main point for action.’*
 - *‘this main point for action had been well met.’*
 - *‘considerable progress had been made with this action point.’*
 - *‘staff had made substantial progress with this main point for action.’*
 - *‘the school had made a promising start to meeting this main point for action.’*
 - *‘a range of developments had been taken to address this main point for action.’*
 - *‘a range of appropriate measures had been taken to address this main point for action.’*
 - *‘the school and the education authority had made very good progress in meeting this main point for action.’*
 - *‘the education authority had fully met this main point for action.’*
- 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) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

The report provides Committee with information relating to school performance as measured by HMIE in line with the corporate commitment to public performance reporting.

(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 are performing against the National Priorities in Education.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no immediate Financial, Risk, Staffing, or Property implications arising from this report.

(d) Consultations

Senior Officers within Educational Services have been consulted and support the recommendation.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report on the HMIE inspections of Milne's High, Hythehill Primary and Nursery, Newmill Primary and Keith Grammar Schools.

Author of Report: Jim Gibson, Quality Improvement Officer

Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Education and Social Services Committee/
13 February 2008/HMIE School Inspections - Published
Reports December 2007 - January 2008

APPENDIX 1

HMIE Report on **Milne's High School** – published on 15 January 2008

Key Strengths identified by HMIE:

- Confident, mature pupils with a positive attitude to learning.
- Effective opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- The high regard in which the school was held by the community.
- Staff approaches to the care and welfare of all pupils.

Main Points for Action identified by HMIE:

As well as building on the strengths and addressing the issues raised throughout the (HMIE) report, the school and the education authority should address the following main points for action:

- Improve the curriculum.
- Promote a culture of high expectations amongst staff and pupils.
- Increase opportunities for religious observance.
- Develop self-evaluation and ensure that it results in improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and attainment.
- Improve the strategic and corporate leadership of the school.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents and carers. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress, and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in a report to parents and carers, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Authority Commentary

This is a mixed report which sets a clear agenda for the school. While the report clearly recognises the many strengths within Milne's High School, it also identifies a number of key areas for senior management to address. The authority will continue to work with the school to address the issues arising from the report.

APPENDIX 1

<u>The Indicators of Quality: MILNE'S HIGH SCHOOL</u>	
How well does the school raise achievement for all?	HMIE evaluation
• Structure of the curriculum	weak
• The teaching process	good
• Meeting pupils' needs	adequate
• Pupils' learning experiences	good
• Personal and social development	very good
• Overall quality of attainment: S1/S2	adequate
• Overall quality of attainment: S3/S4	weak
• Overall quality of attainment: S5/S6	adequate
How good is the environment for learning?	
• Pastoral care	very good
• Accommodation and facilities	good
• Climate and relationships	good
• Expectations and promoting achievement	weak
• Equality and fairness	good
• Partnership with parents, the Parent Council and the community	good
Leading and improving the school	
• Leadership across the school	weak
• Self-evaluation	weak

The HMIE report uses the following word scale to make clear the judgements made by inspectors:

excellent
 very good
 good
 adequate
 weak
 unsatisfactory

outstanding, sector leading
 major strengths
 important strengths with some areas for improvement
 strengths just outweigh weaknesses
 important weaknesses
 major weaknesses

APPENDIX 2

HMIE Report on **Hythehill Primary School and Nursery Class** – published on 22 January 2008

Key Strengths identified by HMIE:

- Interactive teaching and the effective development of the curriculum.
- The quality of pastoral care provided for all pupils.
- The school's welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- The quality of provision for pupils with additional support needs, including those in the base.
- High quality leadership of the headteacher.

Main Points for Action identified by HMIE:

The school and education authority should continue to provide high quality and improving education. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- in the nursery class, further develop approaches to improve children's learning, through play;
- continue to improve aspects of learning, particularly the pace of lessons, and ensure greater consistency of experiences for pupils as they progress through the school; and
- address potential road safety hazard to pedestrians at school entrance and aspects of accommodation as identified in this (HMIE) report.

What happens next?

As a result of the high performance, the strong record of improvement and the very effective leadership of this school, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report the education authority, working with the school, will provide a progress report to parents.

APPENDIX 2**Authority Commentary**

This is a very good and well deserved report. It reflects the strong teamwork, professional commitment and effective leadership throughout the school and, in particular, that of Hazel McPherson, the head teacher. The entire school community can be well satisfied with this report and the work of Hythehill Primary School.

<u>The Indicators of Quality: HYTHEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS</u>	
How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	HMIE evaluation
• Structure of the curriculum	very good
• The teaching process	very good
• Pupils' learning experiences	good
• Pupils' attainment in English language	good
• Pupils' attainment in mathematics	good
How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
• Meeting pupils' needs	very good
How good is the environment for learning?	
• Pastoral care	very good
• Accommodation and facilities	adequate
• Climate and relationships	very good
• Expectations and promoting achievement	good
• Equality and fairness	very good
• Partnership with parents, the Parent Council, and the community	very good
Improving the school	
• Leadership of the headteacher	very good
• Leadership across the school	good
• Self-evaluation	good

The HMIE report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

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 adequate
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outstanding, sector leading
 major strengths
 important strengths with some areas for improvement
 strengths just outweigh weaknesses
 important weaknesses
 major weaknesses

APPENDIX 3

HMIE Interim follow-through report on **Newmill Primary School** – published on 29 January 2008

The original inspection

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Newmill Primary School in February 2007. This was reported to Educational Services Committee on 4 April 2007. That report indicated that HM Inspectors would engage with the school and the education authority in monitoring progress and would publish an interim report within one year. HM Inspectors revisited the school in November 2007.

Continuous Improvement

- There had been significant staff changes following the inspection. The headteacher at the time of the initial inspection had been on sick leave since January 2007 and had not yet returned to work. In April 2007 two experienced teachers within the school took up the posts of joint acting Headteachers. One acting headteacher retired in June 2007, leaving the present acting headteacher as the only promoted member of staff.
- During this period, education authority staff had provided helpful support and guidance to the school.
- The continuing uncertainty over the leadership of the school had limited the capacity of the school to improve.
- The education authority had improved aspects of the school's accommodation. The office and reception area had been restructured to create a separate room for the headteacher to conduct private meetings. School staff, parents and pupils had refurbished the central garden area. The acting headteacher, working with staff, had extensively reorganised the storage and resources within school.
- The school won an Eco School bronze award for the pupils' work in developing their awareness of how to look after their environment.

Progress towards meeting the Main Points for Action identified by HMIE:

1. Improve the structure and balance of the curriculum.

The school had taken some helpful steps to address this main point for action, but much remained to be done.

2. Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning to ensure pupils' needs are met.

The school had made a useful start to meeting this main point for action.

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3. Improve pace and challenge in order to raise attainment in English language and mathematics.

The school had made an effective start to addressing this main point for action.

4. Improve leadership, including monitoring pupils' attainment, and evaluating and improving the work of the school.

The school had made a promising start to meeting this main point for action.

Conclusion

The acting headteacher, working with staff and with the helpful support of the education authority, had made a useful start to improving the school. The continuing absence of the headteacher, and the subsequent temporary leadership arrangements, had slowed the school's progress in bringing about improvements. As a result of the absence of the headteacher, it was not possible to determine the school's capacity to ensure sustained and continued improvement. HMIE will continue to engage with the school and education authority and will provide another report on progress for parents and carers within one year of the publication of this report.

APPENDIX 4

HMIE follow-through report on **Keith Grammar School** – published on 29 January 2008

The original inspection

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Keith Grammar School in January 2006. This was reported to Educational Services Committee on 8 February 2006. HM Inspectors revisited the school in November 2006 and again in November 2007 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

Continuous Improvement

- Ongoing input from the quality improvement officer had helped to support school improvement.
- The education authority had provided useful support to the school. A member of the education authority's quality improvement team had met with principal teachers to clarify their roles and responsibilities. Principal teachers, working closely with link members of the senior management team, were now identifying and spreading good practice within the school.
- The education authority had engaged an external provider to work with members of the senior management team to assist them in developing effective teamwork. As a result, the senior management team now communicated with staff and pupils more effectively and involved staff appropriately in decision making. Members of the management team had further developed their role in quality assurance with their link departments.
- School staff had improved aspects of the school's timetabling arrangements. Almost all pupils were now able to follow appropriate courses, involving a well judged blend of work in school and out-of-school placements. As a result, pupils could now gain vocational skills whilst achieving academic success.
- Staff were now more positive about working in the school.

Progress towards meeting the Main Points for Action identified by HMIE:

The initial inspection report published in January 2006 identified five main points for action.

1. Review the curriculum to ensure choices offered to pupils are appropriate and can be successfully delivered by the school and associated outside organisations.

The school had made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.

APPENDIX 4

2. Involve all staff more effectively in delivering initiatives to improve the school, particularly in relation to attainment and new courses.

The school and education authority had made very good progress in meeting this main point for action.

3. Ensure that all staff use consistent approaches to promoting positive behaviour.

The school had made good progress in addressing this main point for action.

4. Further develop the quality assurance role of principal teachers in order to improve pupils' classroom experiences.

The school and education authority had made good progress in meeting this main point for action.

5. Ensure senior managers work more closely as a team and with other staff to share best practice and improve further the overall quality of learning and teaching across the school.

The school and education authority had made very good progress in addressing this main point for action.

Conclusion

The headteacher and staff, with the support of the education authority, had made good or very good progress in meeting all of the main points for action. The headteacher and the senior management team had given a clear lead to staff in planning and implementing improvements in the areas identified in the original report. With the continuing support of the education authority, the headteacher and his staff had the capacity to improve the school further. As a result of the overall good progress made, HM Inspectors will make no further visits to the school in connection with the report of January 2006.

APPENDIX 5

"HOW GOOD IS OUR SCHOOL?" (HMIE 2002)

The Quality Indicators

- 1.1 In published reports HMIE provide an evaluation of a school's performance against some of the Quality Indicators published in "How Good Is Our School", (almost) always including those marked *.

Key Area	HGIOS Quality Indicator
Curriculum	1.1* Structure of the curriculum
	1.2 Courses and programmes
Attainment Learning and Teaching	2.1* Overall quality of attainment
	3.1 Teachers' planning
	3.2* The teaching process
	3.3* Pupils' learning experiences
	3.4* Meeting pupils' needs
	3.5 Assessment as part of teaching
Support for pupils	3.6 Reporting pupils' progress
	4.1* Pastoral care
	4.2 Personal and social development
	4.3 Curricular and vocational guidance
	4.4 Monitoring progress and attainment
	4.5 Learning support
	4.6 Implementation of SEN & disabilities legislation
	4.7 Placement of pupils with SEN & disabilities
	4.8 Links with local authority, other schools and others
	Ethos
5.2* Expectations and promoting achievement	
5.3* Equality and fairness	
5.4* Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community	
Resources	
	6.2 Provision of resources
	6.3 Organisation and use of resources and space
	6.4 Staffing
	6.5 Effectiveness and deployment of staff
	6.6 Staff review and development
	6.7 School management of finances
Management, leadership and quality assurance	7.1 Aims and policy making
	7.2* Self-evaluation
	7.3 Planning for improvement
	7.4* Leadership
	7.5 Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities