

School Inspections – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) Interim follow-through Reports

HMIE published 2 interim follow-through reports following earlier school inspections at Tomintoul Primary School and Newmill Primary School

When HMIE review the schools and authority’s performance in an interim 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.

- ‘promising start’
- ‘effective steps’
- ‘useful actions had been taken’
- ‘helpful start’

HMIE interim follow-through report on **Tomintoul Primary School** – published November 2007

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Tomintoul Primary School in November 2006. HM Inspectors revisited the school in September 2007.

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

1. Improve the quality to teaching, to ensure that all pupils' learning needs are met effectively.

The school was taking effective steps to address this main point for action.

Staff now used a wider range of teaching approaches and shared with pupils what they wanted them to learn. Teachers provided more varied and appropriate homework. Their explanations were mostly clear and most lessons were structured more effectively. The support for learning teacher worked alongside class teachers to provide appropriate support to groups and individual pupils. Teachers were making better use of ICT to develop pupils' skills in a range of areas. Pupils, particularly those in the middle stages, used computers with increasing confidence. Teachers did not always take account of pupils' prior learning and attainment to ensure that all pupils' needs were met effectively. More remained to be done to ensure that teachers used questioning appropriately to check that pupils had understood what had been taught.

2. Improve the quality of pupil's learning experiences.

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

Teachers now shared the purposes of lessons more effectively with pupils and ensured that pupils were more settled in class. Almost all pupils were well behaved, remained on task and were well motivated. At all stages, pupils now worked together well in pairs and on group tasks. Pupils were now clearer about what they had achieved and about what they had to do to improve their work. Teachers did not always provide tasks which challenged all pupils appropriately. More remained to be done to ensure that pupils at all stages developed effective skills in working independently.

3. Improve attainment in English language and mathematics.

The school and education authority had taken some effective action to address this main point for action.

School staff, with the help of education authority staff, had improved some aspects of pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics. They had not yet been successful in addressing long-standing weaknesses in attainment in these key areas. Pupils at the upper stages showed a good awareness of authors they had read and could discuss texts with increasing confidence. A few pupils wrote lively and imaginative stories at appropriate

length. Across the school, pupils' skills in writing for a variety of purposes required further development. Most pupils spoke confidently and listened well to instructions and information. School staff had not yet developed a whole school programme for listening and talking and did not monitor pupils' attainment in these areas effectively. In mathematics, pupils had improved their skills in mental calculation and most performed well in the written calculations set for them. More remained to be done to improve pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in a number of areas. These included pupils' use of databases and spreadsheets, their awareness of decimals and their skills in problem solving and enquiry.

4. Improve the school's climate and relationships and ethos of achievement.

The school and education authority had made a very effective start to meeting this main point for action.

The headteacher and staff now worked well together as a more effective team. Relationships between staff and pupils had improved. Staff now had higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement, and almost all pupils responded well. Teachers mostly used praise appropriately to encourage pupils, and pupils were clearer about the standards expected of them. More remained to be done to ensure that staff had sufficiently high expectations of pupils and maintained these consistently in all aspects of the school's work.

5. Improve the leadership of the school.

The school and education authority had made a very promising start in addressing this main point for action.

The education authority had provided additional staffing and resources. Education authority staff had visited the school frequently to provide useful assistance and advice on a range of areas. The headteacher had improved relationships within the school and had gained the trust of pupils, staff and almost all parents. She had implemented a range of appropriate care and welfare policies and had improved aspects of the curriculum including reading and the use of ICT. She had regularly sought pupils' views on the school's provision through frequent meetings of the pupil council. The principal teacher's role and remit were not yet sufficiently clearly defined. The headteacher had worked with staff in improving the school's procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. These procedures still required further development to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress in key areas.

6. Improve self-evaluation and the school's capacity to improve.

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

The headteacher now monitored the quality of learning, teaching and attainment more effectively. She scrutinised pupils' written work in a range of areas and provided helpful written feedback on teachers' forward plans. The headteacher had visited classes to observe and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and had shared her evaluations with teachers. She met regularly with staff to discuss aspects of the school's work. These arrangements were not yet sufficiently systematic and rigorous. More remained to be done to identify appropriate areas for improvement and ensure that these were implemented consistently.

In conclusion, the school and education authority had taken promising steps to meeting the main points for action in the inspection report of November 2006. More remained to be done to address long standing weaknesses in attainment and ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress. The headteacher, working with staff, and with the support of the education authority, had the capacity to improve the school further. 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.

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

HMIE published a report on the inspection of Newmill Primary School in February 2007. HM Inspectors revisited the school in November 2007.

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.

The acting headteacher had improved the range of resources available to support pupils' work in reading and writing. She had ensured that staff now allocated appropriate time to all areas of the curriculum. In too many key areas, the curriculum was not yet structured effectively to ensure that pupils developed appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. The programme for information and communications technology had not been further developed. It did not yet ensure that pupils progressed well and acquired a wide range of skills. There was no whole school programme to ensure the effective development of pupils' skills in listening and talking. Much remained to be done to ensure that the range of activities in school allowed all pupils to make appropriate progress in key areas.

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.

The acting headteacher had met with teaching staff and support staff to discuss and share good practice in learning and teaching. There were examples of effective teaching in which teachers explained to pupils what they wanted them to learn. Most pupils understood their learning targets and responded well to them. For a few pupils, the tasks set did not build effectively on their prior knowledge. Teachers did not always make effective use of questioning to make sure that pupils had understood what had been taught. More remained to be done to ensure that aspects of effective practice in learning and teaching were maintained consistently throughout the school.

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.

Teachers had made effective use of additional new resources to improve attainment in reading and writing. More pupils across the school were now achieving appropriate national levels in these areas. In mathematics, most pupils were attaining appropriate national levels. For a few pupils at all stages

the pace of progress was not always well judged. In the early stages school staff had not yet set sufficiently demanding expectations for pupils' progress in key areas. Across the school, more remained to be done to ensure that pupils' learning needs were met effectively.

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.

The acting headteacher had devised an annual timetable which set out clearly how the school would evaluate its provision. She monitored teachers' plans and commented in writing upon the quality of planning. The acting headteacher now tracked pupils' progress more effectively, using helpful materials supplied by the education authority. She had recently visited classes to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and had shared her written comments with staff. These arrangements were an effective start but were not yet well established. They did not yet ensure that strengths in learning and teaching were built upon, and appropriate action taken to remedy identified weaknesses. More remained to be done to ensure that the arrangements for self-evaluation were sufficiently robust to bring about sustained improvements.

In 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.