

**Back School  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
25 January 2005**

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## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on Standards and Quality in Back School in February 2003. Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report published in February 2003.

HM Inspectors revisited the school in November 2004 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.

## **2. Continuous improvement**

The school had maintained good standards of attainment in English language and mathematics in the primary classes and had improved these standards in the secondary classes. In S1/S2, almost all pupils were now achieving or exceeding national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

The education authority had significantly improved the school's accommodation. Access for all users had been improved, the library had been extensively enhanced and a well equipped computer suite set up. The games hall had been refurbished and new changing rooms and toilets had been added.

Following effective consultation with parents, the headteacher had altered the school hours to allow valuable improvements in the range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils. Teaching staff and parents now worked effectively to assist pupils in a wide range of well supported after-school activities, including dancing, chess, football and rugby.

The headteacher, ably assisted by the depute headteacher, had effectively brought about a range of improvements in the school's work. He had continued to develop pupils' enterprise education skills and had introduced more systematic arrangements to ensure the quality of the school's provision. He had shown that, working with the education authority, he had the capacity to further improve the school.

## **3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action**

The initial inspection report published in February 2003 identified four main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

### **3.1 The education authority should ensure controlled access to the buildings.**

The education authority had fully met this main point for action.

The education authority had installed an effective secure entry system. Helpful arrangements were in place to ensure that visitors signed in and were provided with identifying badges. As a result, pupils were now protected more effectively while they were in the school buildings.

### **3.2 The school should address the weaknesses in the primary curriculum and programmes of work identified in this report.**

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

The headteacher and depute headteacher now monitored teachers' timetables more effectively to ensure that pupils experienced a broad and balanced curriculum. The programme for English language had been improved and staff were making effective use of helpful new resources. Pupils now had more opportunities for discussion and for developing their skills in writing. The improved mathematics programme was more effective in encouraging pupils to solve problems using a range of strategies. The social subjects programme within environmental studies had been further developed to include a greater emphasis on pupils' understanding of people in society. As a result of the improvements made to programmes in key areas, pupils now experienced a broader and better balanced range of learning activities.

### **3.3 The school should improve procedures for planning, use of assessment information and monitoring of pupils' progress.**

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

Staff in the primary classes now used a helpful common format for planning pupils' work. The headteacher and depute headteacher had introduced a wider range of useful standardised tests to assess pupils' attainment. Teachers now used assessment information more effectively to ensure that pupils made appropriate progress. Staff had begun to involve pupils in setting their own learning targets and in assessing their success in meeting these targets. The school had introduced useful systems to monitor and predict pupils' progress more accurately. As a result of these improvements, pupils' work was planned, assessed and monitored more effectively and they were progressing well.

### **3.4 The school should continue to develop more rigorous and systematic procedures for quality assurance.**

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

The headteacher and depute headteacher, with the support of staff, now used a systematic programme to monitor the quality of the school's provision. They provided useful comments on teachers' plans and met regularly with staff to evaluate aspects of their work using national quality indicators. The headteacher and depute headteacher had recently begun to visit classes to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and share their evaluations with teachers. These visits had not yet had time to have significant impact in ensuring consistency in the quality of learning and teaching. Staff consulted frequently with the pupil council about a range of appropriate issues. As a result of the school's more rigorous and systematic procedures for quality assurance, pupils' needs were now being met more effectively.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The school, with assistance from the education authority, had made very good progress in addressing the main points for action. As a result, no further visits to the school will be made by HM Inspectors in connection with the inspection report of February 2003.

Robert D Barfoot  
HM District Inspector

25 January 2005

## **How can you contact us?**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Longman House, 28 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1SF or by telephoning 01463 253115. Copies are also available on our website: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **If you wish to comment about follow-through inspections**

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### **Our complaints procedure**

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