

Agenda item	9
Report no	RC/4/18

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Ross and Cromarty Committee

Date: 31 January 2018

Report Title: **Report on Education Scotland activity in Ardross Primary School and Tore Primary School during session 2016-17**

Report By: Steph Wood, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Mid Area

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the outcomes of the visits by Her Majesty's Inspectorate to Ardross Primary School and Tore Primary School during session 2016-17. In the case of Ardross Primary this was a full inspection, whereas in Tore Primary there was a shorter-form 2-day inspection. In Ardross Primary, which is clustered with Newmore Primary, the acting Head Teacher at the time of inspection was Mrs Gemma Dunnett (Mrs Dunnett is currently on maternity leave). In Tore Primary, which is clustered with Munloch Primary, the Head Teacher is Mrs Audrey Buchanan.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report.

3. Ardross Primary

3.1 A team from HMle (Education Scotland) visited Ardross Primary during week beginning 8 May 2017. The full report of this visit was published on 22 August 2017 and is [available](#) on the Education Scotland website.

3.2 During the visit, members from the visiting team met pupils, parents and staff as well as the acting Head Teacher and the cluster Principal Teacher, Miss Julie Lawson, focusing on the Quality Indicators from *How Good is Our School?*, 4th Edition. The visiting team also observed each of the two classrooms several times during the inspection. Surveys of children, parents and staff were carried out by the inspection team and the results of these surveys can be found [here](#).

3.3 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The acting Head Teacher's commitment to and success in involving parents and partners in children's learning. The school is continually exploring ways to develop the school community further.
- The strong teamwork across the school. This is helping to address important priorities for school improvement.
- The friendly, welcoming and nurturing environment where children feel safe and part of a strong school community. Children who are very well behaved and respectful of each other.
- The emerging involvement of children in their learning. This is supported through the focus on learning conversations, learning profiles and children's involvement in capturing their achievements and sharing this online with their parents. Children's involvement in their learning is resulting in some examples of high-quality writing, particularly at the early stages.

3.4 At the end of the inspection activity, a feedback session (attended by the Head Teacher, the cluster Principal Teacher, the school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Donald Paterson, and the Area Education Quality Improvement Manager, Mrs Stephanie Wood) was held, where the inspection team described the school's strengths, as listed above, and identified some areas for the school to work on. These areas were identified as being:

- Continue to improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Continue with the strategies to help develop children's mental agility. Develop further children's skills in listening to each other.
- Develop approaches to enable children to identify and understand key skills for learning, life and work. Involve them in understanding how they can develop and apply these skills.

These areas for improvement had already been identified by the school staff during their self-evaluation activity and are covered in the School Improvement Plan.

3.5 During a full inspection such as this one at Ardross Primary, HMI report against specific Quality Indicators (which relate to the priorities of the National Improvement Framework) and evaluate the school's performance in these Indicators. In the case of Ardross Primary the evaluations were as follows:

- Leadership of change – Good
- Learning, teaching and assessment – Good

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – Good
Raising attainment and achievement – Satisfactory

- 3.6 A fuller document, known as the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) is published [here](#) on the Education Scotland website. This document is designed to provide schools with more detail about the inspection conclusions to help with future work, and contains some more specific information about attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- 3.7 Some of the key additional positive points made in the SIF were:
- School staff have good knowledge of the local community
 - Self-evaluation activities, such as classroom observations, are effective
 - The rights of children are respected within the school
 - Children use digital technology positively
 - The Head Teacher and other staff in the school make good use of data to monitor children's progress
 - Online tools are being well used to engage parents with their children's learning
 - Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust
 - Support for children with Additional Support Needs is carefully considered and Pupil Support Assistants are deployed effectively
 - Children have many opportunities for wider achievement
- 3.8 Some of the key additional points for the school to work on made in the SIF were:
- There is scope to involve parents more in self-evaluation activities
 - Children could have more opportunities to lead their own learning
 - Further opportunities for digital learning could be developed
 - There is scope to develop more opportunities for outdoor learning in the school
 - Pace and challenge in classrooms could be increased at times
 - The school should regularly review its arrangements for religious observance
- 3.9 The conclusion drawn by the visiting team of Inspectors was that they were confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve, so will make no more visits in connection with the inspection.
- 3.10 Following the inspection, the QIO worked with the school to ensure that the School Improvement Plan for session 2017/18 was aligned with the inspection findings and will continue to support the school and its staff in their future working.

4. Tore Primary School

- 4.1 A team from HMle (Education Scotland) visited Tore Primary during week beginning 22 May 2017. The full report of this visit was published on 22 August 2017 and is [available](#) on the Education Scotland website.
- 4.2 During the visit, members from the visiting team met pupils, parents and staff as well as the Head Teacher and the cluster Principal Teacher, Mr Ben Sharp, focusing on the Quality Indicators from *How Good is Our School?*, 4th Edition. The visiting team also observed each of the two classrooms several times

during the inspection. Surveys of children, parents and staff were carried out by the inspection team and the results of these surveys can be found [here](#).

- 4.3 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
- The caring and inclusive ethos across the school which is supporting children to develop and learn. Staff know children and their families very well and positive relationships are a strong feature of the school community. As a result children feel cared for, are confident and enjoy their learning.
 - The commitment of staff to improving outcomes for children. Under the leadership of the Head Teacher, staff work together well to improve the work of the school.
 - The regular opportunities children have to take their learning outdoors and into the local community. This is promoting health and wellbeing and providing enjoyable and relevant contexts for learning.

- 4.4 At the end of the inspection activity, a feedback session (attended by the Head Teacher, the cluster Principal Teacher, the school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Donald Paterson, and the Area Education Quality Improvement manager, Mrs Stephanie Wood) was held, where the inspection team described the school's strengths, as listed above, and identified some areas for the school to work on. These areas were identified as being:

- Continue to raise children's attainment from their already good levels, through increasing pace and challenge in learning.
- Further develop approaches to target setting to support children to understand themselves better as learners. This will increase their knowledge of what they need to do to improve.
- Continue to develop approaches to evaluating the work of the school to focus on what makes the most difference to children's learning and attainment.

These areas for improvement had already been identified by the school staff during their self-evaluation activity and are covered in the School Improvement Plan.

- 4.5 During a shorter format inspection such as this one at Tore Primary, HMI report against only two specific Quality Indicators (which relate to the priorities of the National Improvement Framework) and evaluate the school's performance in these Indicators. In the case of Tore Primary the evaluations were as follows:

Self-evaluation for self-improvement – Good
Raising attainment and achievement – Good

- 4.6 A fuller document, known as the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) is published [here](#) on the Education Scotland website. This document is designed to provide schools with more detail about the inspection conclusions to help with future work, and contains some more specific information about attainment, especially in literacy and numeracy.

- 4.7 Some of the key additional positive points made in the SIF (which is briefer for a two-day inspection visit than it is for a full inspection) were:
- There is a strong commitment to self-evaluation activities across the school
 - Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust

- Most children are achieving the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy (this was confirmed post-inspection by the school's assessment judgements, submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2017)
 - Staff make good use of standardised assessment data to track children's progress from prior levels of attainment
- 4.8 Some of the key additional points for the school to work on made in the SIF were:
- There is scope for children to have greater involvement in evaluating the work of school.
 - Staff should now use the new national Benchmarks to plan and moderate assessments.
- 4.9 The conclusion drawn by the visiting team of Inspectors was that they were confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve, so will make no more visits in connection with the inspection.
- 4.10 Following the inspection, the QIO worked with the school to ensure that the School Improvement Plan for session 2017/18 was aligned with the inspection findings and will continue to support the school and its staff in their future working.

5. Implications

5.1 Resource – none beyond existing school budgetary allocations

Legal - none

Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - none

Climate Change/Carbon Clever - none

Risk – none

Gaelic – none

Designation:

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Author: Steph Wood (EQIM, Mid Area)

Background Papers: Education Scotland reports on visits to Ardross Primary School, which can be found [here](#) and Tore Primary School, which can be found [here](#).