

**Craignish Primary School  
Ardfern  
Argyll and Bute  
27 June 2006**

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## **1. The inspection**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Craignish Primary School in June 2004. 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.

An inspection team revisited the school in April 2006 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**

A new headteacher had been appointed in August 2004. The education authority had worked closely with the headteacher to prepare a detailed action plan for improving the school. It had worked in partnership with the school to provide extensive staff development and a wide range of helpful new resources. This had enabled staff to deliver a more balanced and progressive range of learning experiences.

Standards of pupils' attainment were improving overall. Revised approaches to promoting positive behaviour had resulted in a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour and in their attitude to learning. The headteacher had worked very hard to improve relationships with the School Board and the local community. As a result, the school had become a focal point for village life. The school had improved significantly its approaches to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. These had begun to have a very positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning experiences. The school now used the newly-rebuilt village hall for physical education. This enabled teachers to make better use of the available space to allow pupils to work more effectively together in groups. Initial improvements in leadership for learning had been sustained and developed. Staff teamwork and commitment to continuous improvement had improved and overall morale was high. The school community had recently been formally commended by the education authority for excellence in working together.

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

The initial inspection report published in June 2004 identified six 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 Improve the school's procedure for promoting positive behaviour, including approaches to personal and social development and identifying and dealing with bullying.**

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

New approaches to promote pupils' personal and social development included the introduction of a coherent, comprehensive school programme. This programme was supplemented by teaching about anti-bullying approaches and better opportunities for

discussion about relevant issues. Pupils were now very clear about what constituted bullying, and could describe what to do if they were upset. They were confident that they could talk about sensitive issues to any adult in the school, and that any incident would be dealt with. Pupils had requested that the recently-introduced 'bully box' should be discontinued as they felt it was no longer required. The introduction of school rules, agreed with pupils, had led to a shared understanding of acceptable behaviour throughout the school.

The level and quality of playground supervision had improved. Pupils had reviewed their play experiences and suggested improvements. Support staff were effective in fostering positive relationships in the playground. Pupils, staff, parents and members of the community had worked together to improve the physical environment in partnership with the 'Grounds for Learning' national initiative. This had resulted in a greater variety of play activities and improved relationships in the playground. The introduction of the house system and weekly award assemblies had improved the celebration of pupils' achievements. Pupils were proud of their school and all now wore uniform. They showed consideration and respect in their interactions with staff and with each other. Pupils had increased opportunities to exercise responsibility within the school community, for example as monitors or playground buddies and through participating in school committees. The overall ethos within the school was now very positive.

### **3.2 Improve pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics.**

Staff had made very good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

Pupils' attainment in English language and mathematics was improving overall. Attainment in writing showed significant improvement. Pupils had responded well to increased opportunities for extended writing. More regular, varied and effective opportunities for learning through play at the early stages had improved pupils' skills in listening and talking. Standards of presentation had continued to improve and were now very good. Staff had introduced approaches to teaching which ensured that learning built more effectively on pupils' prior attainment. Regular review of pupils' learning and attainment had enabled staff to adjust their approaches to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress. Almost all pupils at P1 to P5 were now achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Several pupils had achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. Pupils now participated in daily mental mathematics activities and the speed and accuracy of their mental calculations had improved. They had developed a better understanding of strategies to solve problems and were able to apply them successfully. At P6 and P7, a few pupils were achieving national levels of attainment in reading and writing earlier than might normally be expected.

### **3.3 Improve partnerships with parents and the local community.**

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

The new headteacher had worked hard to develop effective working relationships with the School Board and the local community. He had taken significant steps to ensure that the school was seen as an integral part of the community through, for example, liaising with the community council and the church. Relevant information about the school's activities was displayed at key points around the village. The school welcomed parents and used a wide range of approaches to ensure that they were fully informed about its work and their

children's progress. Parents had opportunities to view new curricular resources, including sensitive materials for health education. The headteacher consulted regularly with parents, as well as with pupils and staff, about a range of issues. A recent school survey identified a high degree of satisfaction among parents about the work of the school.

The school had developed effective partnerships with a wide range of health and other local professionals. The School Board and parent-teachers' association were very supportive and committed to developing the work and ethos of the school. Parents now helped the school with a variety of projects, including serving on the school's Eco-committee, organising associated fund-raising events and cataloguing the school library. They were also preparing to develop a school shinty team. The building of a willow tunnel by parents and pupils had added to the diversity and attractiveness of the school grounds. Local estate owners' involvement in supporting the house system had been successful in developing pupils' knowledge of local history. The school had extended its role in village life by playing a leading part in key events. These included creating a time capsule to celebrate the opening of the new village hall and entertaining the community with regular concerts and dramatic productions.

### **3.4 Improve approaches to learning and teaching, to include more interactive teaching and more active learning including, at the early stages, learning through play.**

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

They had taken major steps to develop their professional expertise. This was clearly reflected in improved classroom practice and better targeted tasks and activities for pupils. Learning and teaching in writing, for example, was now more rigorously structured, varied and relevant to pupils' experiences. Staff were beginning to use improved approaches to assessment to involve pupils more closely in their own learning. Most teachers set very high expectations of pupils' attainment, effort and behaviour. They were very skilled at using questioning to enable pupils to explore their thinking. Pupils were working together more effectively and contributing well to discussion. They were developing a sense of responsibility for their learning by setting their own targets and working more closely with each other in groups.

At the early stages, pupils now had very effective opportunities for developing their learning and social interaction through play. Following the school's review of teaching approaches and resources for mathematics, pupils were involved in a much broader range of effective learning experiences. These included more practical work and improved activities in problem-solving and enquiry. Pupils were beginning to use information and communications technology effectively to support their learning in mathematics. The headteacher and staff were developing an appropriate range of useful policies to help ensure consistently positive learning experiences for all pupils.

### **3.5 Improve the level of support and challenge offered to pupils to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including higher attaining pupils and pupils with English as an additional language are met.**

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

Improvements in the school's programmes for reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in learning and teaching, had resulted in significant improvement in the level of support and challenge offered to pupils. The headteacher had also led improvements in teachers' planning and tracking pupils' progress. Teachers were now taking better account of pupils' prior attainment in planning the next steps in their learning. They were providing more appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils. Most staff were now evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching approaches in some detail. More rigorous target setting, involving pupils themselves, had enabled staff to improve learning experiences for individual pupils. The school had established strong links with the English department of Lochgilphead High School to support higher attaining pupils in reading and writing. A heightened awareness of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language had led to closer monitoring of their attainment. Staff had prepared individualised educational programmes for a few pupils who needed additional support. These now needed to be developed further to state more clearly what pupils were expected to achieve. Staff had further developed effective relationships with a wide range of support services, including area network support teachers and health professionals, to improve learning for all pupils.

### **3.6 Improve self-evaluation and monitoring systems in the school to ensure that all pupils are making appropriate progress.**

The headteacher had made excellent progress in addressing this main point for action.

In partnership with the education authority, the headteacher had led the development of a programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's work. All staff had worked closely together to evaluate key areas of provision. This monitoring programme had resulted in a helpful plan for improvement which contained an ambitious programme of priorities, linked to sensible timescales. The headteacher sampled pupils' work, scrutinised teaching plans, visited classes and discussed the outcomes of these visits with staff. Commendably, he had developed leadership for learning by involving all staff in class observation and in subsequent discussions about effective learning and teaching. Much of the learning and teaching had improved significantly. Individual pupil profiles had been created to facilitate the monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment. While these were still at an early stage of development, they were useful in identifying pupils' individual strengths as well as areas for development in their work. The school's more rigorous systems for self-evaluation had led to clear improvements in pupils' progress and achievement.

## **4. Conclusion**

Overall, very good progress had been made to address the main points for action. With the support of the education authority, the headteacher and staff had considerably improved the quality of education for pupils of Craignish Primary School. Pupils now received more appropriate, progressive learning experiences. Successful approaches to developing the school's ethos had led to a notable improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitude to

schoolwork. Pupils now spoke confidently about their responsibilities within the school and their ambitions for the future. The school's strong leadership, improved staff teamwork and very positive developments in approaches to self-evaluation demonstrated the school's clear capacity for continuing improvement.

In view of the very good progress achieved in addressing the main points for action, HM Inspectors will not carry out any further inspection visits in connection with the report of June 2004.

Anne McGachey  
HM Inspector

27 June 2006

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

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Community Services, 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, Ground Floor Suite, Unit 7, Blair Court, Clydebank Business Park, Clydebank, G81 2LA or by telephoning 0141 435 3550. 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**

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

### **Our complaints procedure**

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to Hazel Dewart, Business Management Unit, HM Inspectorate of Education, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office or by telephoning 01506 600258 or from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

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