



**Bunessan Primary School
and Pre-5 Unit
Isle of Mull
Argyll and Bute Council
29 June 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, children and the local community know whether their school² provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit www.hmie.gov.uk. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

¹ Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

² The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

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1. The school

Bunessan Primary School is a non-denominational school with a pre-5 unit. It serves the villages of Bunessan, Fionnphort and Pennyghael, and the island of Erraid. Children from the island of Iona attend the pre-5 unit. The roll was 48, including 17 in the pre-5 unit when the inspection was carried out in May 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- Friendly and well mannered children who are keen to learn and achieve.
- The ways that staff build children's confidence through their achievements in a range of areas.
- Support from parents and the community for the school.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

Across the school, children are happy, well mannered and are keen to learn. Most enjoy school. In the pre-5 unit, children are confident with daily routines and in making choices for themselves. They take part in a range of activities which help them learn, including outdoor play. Children would benefit from taking part in activities for longer periods of time. This would encourage them to think for themselves. At the primary stages, children work well with their teachers. They answer questions well. Children are beginning to work effectively in pairs and groups. In these situations, they are learning through relevant and interesting topics. The practice of children working together is not yet consistent across the school. All children extend their learning through a number of outings. Children are not sure what they need to do to improve their work. They would benefit from setting targets that identify clearly what their next steps are in learning. The majority of children use information and communications technology (ICT) well. For example, in music, children have produced a graphic slide show which they presented to the school. Children express their views through the pupil council. They have improved the way the school recognises good behaviour.

Across the school, children are developing confidence, lifelong skills and a broad range of interests. Children in the pre-5 unit are developing friendships. They cooperate and share well with each other. Almost all have a good understanding of people who help them in the community. At the primary stages, children achieve success in and outwith the classroom. Children benefit from a variety of opportunities to extend their learning out-of-school by being involved in such activities as athletics, shinty and tag rugby. Those at P6 and P7 attend an annual residential trip which helps develop their personal and social skills through outdoor education. At P7, children are positive role models to younger ones through acting as 'buddies' to them. Children are developing a good understanding of world issues through the school's link with a school in Sri Lanka. They raise funds for a wide range of charities. Children are showing leadership qualities by taking part in the eco committee. They have a secure awareness of environmental issues such as recycling. They perform confidently in school shows and local events. At all stages, children have a sound knowledge of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Those at P7 organise a healthy tuck shop for others.

In the pre-5 unit, almost all children are learning to recognise their name in print. Most talk confidently to adults and can share ideas with others. They listen well to stories and enjoy talking about their favourite books and characters. During play, they count, sort and match effectively. Children need more opportunities to develop their skills in early literacy and mathematics in all areas of play. In the primary classes, the standard of attainment in English language and mathematics has shown no trend of improvement. There has been a significant decline in attainment in writing. More needs to be done to improve attainment in key areas. The pace at which children learn needs to be brisker. In English language, all children listen well and talk confidently and clearly to adults. By P7, children can use books and the internet to research topics. Children read regularly a range of texts and they show an understanding of how authors use language. A few children write well for a variety of purposes and they produce a high standard of writing. Across the school, children do not write often enough using themes and topics that interest them. They do not

always present their work neatly and accurately enough. Children have enjoyed learning about other Scottish languages through preparing for a Burns supper and learning Gaelic songs. In mathematics, children are secure in using number, money and measure. By P7, children can use fractions effectively. They use problem-solving strategies suitably when performing mental calculations. Across the school, children are not yet using mathematics in other areas of learning, or building well enough on what they already know.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

The school is at an early stage of developing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff have started to use the experiences and outcomes set out in curriculum guidance developed nationally. Children have begun to be involved in the planning of topics. Staff make regular use of the local area for delivering aspects of the curriculum. They make effective use of visits and visitors to extend children's learning. Children need more opportunities to use their ICT skills. Children do not experience consistently two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Programmes to support children as they move from P7 to Oban High School are well-organised, with joint projects taking place. The arrangements for children moving from the pre-5 unit to P1 need to be more focused on building on what children already know.

Across the school, staff know children well and provide a very caring environment for them. Staff use praise effectively to motivate children. Lessons are well-organised. Teachers are not consistent in their use of skilled questioning and do not regularly share with children what they are going to learn. In a few lessons, tasks and activities are too easy. The needs of children requiring additional support for their learning are met effectively. The support for learning teacher works closely with teachers. The school supports vulnerable groups of children well. Homework is regular but could be more varied to motivate children in their learning.

4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?

The school has developed strong partnerships with a range of agencies to support children's learning and promote their health and wellbeing. Parents are positive about the school and feel teachers are approachable. They think that school newsletters and parents' evenings are helpful. A few would like more information on their children's progress in learning. The school keeps parents well informed about the programme for health education, including sexual health and relationships. The Parent Council, Parent Teacher Association and the local community are very supportive of the work of the school. There is scope to involve parents further in improving the school. The community plays an important role in supporting the school. For example, celebrations for the 140th anniversary of the opening of the school were very well attended. Any complaints are dealt with appropriately. However, the school should ensure that it has a detailed way of recording complaints and incidents of bullying.

5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?

Children are proud of their success in achieving an Eco-Schools Scotland silver award for the school. Staff, parents and children do not have enough opportunities to be involved in making decisions about improving the school. The headteacher has developed a vision for the school by working with staff, parents and children. However, he has not put in place regular and planned arrangements to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. He now needs to visit classes to observe and evaluate lessons, and discuss with teachers how they can help all children learn better. There needs to be a clear focus on monitoring children's progress in learning. Staff are not yet checking their own approaches to learning and teaching in their classroom practice. They do not have sufficient opportunities to share good practice.

Overall, the school's improvement plan does not yet have enough impact on improving the quality of children's learning experiences.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?

Across the school, children are friendly and polite to staff and one another. Staff are very committed to supporting the care and wellbeing of children. They know about child protection procedures. Almost all children feel safe and cared for at school. Most are confident that any incidents of bullying will be handled well. A few children feel that staff do not treat them fairly and with respect. Teachers set high standards for children's behaviour and attendance. Expectations of children's learning, attainment and presentation of work are not yet consistently high enough across the school. Children's achievements, including those outwith school, are celebrated effectively at assemblies. Arrangements for religious observance are regular and appropriate.

7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The headteacher has been successful in leading improvements that have made children more confident. He now needs to develop his knowledge and skills further to help lead improvement in children's learning and attainment. Staff are committed to the school. They have not been sufficiently involved in identifying the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Teachers should now play a greater part in taking forward school developments.

8. What happens next?

We will carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of publication of this report and will report to parents on the extent to which the school has improved. Following that visit, we may continue to check the improvements the school has made. We

may also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit is necessary then it will result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school has made.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to develop Curriculum for Excellence to enable children to develop greater independence and responsibility in their learning.
 - Ensure that approaches to self-evaluation lead to improvements in children's learning and attainment.
 - Increase the challenge and pace of learning to meet more effectively the needs of all children.
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- At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were no requirements. There is one recommendation from the last inspection. This recommended that the headteacher develop a participation strategy that reflects service users' participation in assessing and improving the quality of the service. This recommendation has been partially met.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Bunessan Primary School and pre-5 unit.

Primary school

Improvements in performance	weak
Learners' experiences	satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

Pre-5 unit

Improvements in performance	satisfactory
Children's experiences	good
Meeting learning needs	satisfactory

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and the pre-5 unit.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

HM Inspector: Joan Esson
29 June 2010

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website www.hmie.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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