

**Rosehearty School
and Nursery Class
Aberdeenshire Council
30 September 2008**

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1. Background

Rosehearty School and Nursery Class were inspected in May 2008 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated nursery children's and pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and innovation, and its capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on attainment in English language and mathematics.

HM Inspectors examined the quality of children's experiences in the nursery, pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils, including the pupil council, and staff. Members of the inspection team also met the chairperson of the Parent Council and a group of parents¹.

The school serves the village of Rosehearty and the surrounding rural area. The school included the Springboard class. This catered for a small group of pupils from local schools who had additional social, emotional and behavioural needs. At the time of the inspection the roll was 147, including 20 children in the nursery class and four pupils in the Springboard class. The proportion of pupils who were entitled to free school meals was below the national average. Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average.

2. Key strengths

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- The quality of children's experiences in the nursery.
- Well behaved and courteous pupils who were keen to learn.
- The school's partnership with parents.
- Pupils' awareness of environmental issues.
- The care and commitment of the headteacher and all staff.

3. What are the views of parents, pupils and staff?

HM Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires issued to a sample of parents, P4 to P7 pupils, and to all staff. Information about the responses to the questionnaires appears in Appendix 2.

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

Parents, pupils and staff were very positive about the school's provision. Parents, including those with children in the nursery class and Springboard class, felt that their children were well looked after while they were in school. They felt that there was mutual respect between pupils and staff and that they received helpful information about their children's progress. All parents thought that the school was well led. Pupils enjoyed being in school, thought that staff knew them well and helped to keep them safe and healthy. Staff were very positive about working in school. They thought that the school was well led and that nursery children and school pupils were enthusiastic about their learning.

4. How good are learning, teaching and achievement?

Learners' experiences

The overall quality of the curriculum was good. In the nursery class, activities provided very good breadth and balance across key aspects of learning. Staff made effective use of the playroom and had created a stimulating, challenging and enjoyable learning environment. They planned helpful activities which encouraged children to investigate, explore and solve problems. At the primary stages, staff provided pupils with a broad range of appropriate activities which developed pupils' confidence, responsibility and awareness of good citizenship. These activities included a strong and effective emphasis on the promotion of pupils' awareness and understanding of environmental issues. Staff made effective use of a well-organised programme to build pupils' skills in using information and communications technology (ICT). In key areas, including most aspects of environmental studies and expressive arts, staff ensured that activities developed pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills appropriately. Pupils did not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in science and technology. The quality of teaching for effective learning was satisfactory. Staff in the nursery made appropriate use of praise to celebrate children's achievements. They were respectful and sensitive in supporting their needs and interests during play. Nursery staff were skilled in their use of questioning and discussion to engage with children and develop their ideas. Almost all staff in the Springboard class engaged warmly and positively with pupils and shared with pupils what they wanted them to learn. There was a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching provided, which resulted in uneven progress for some pupils. In the primary classes, teachers interacted very well with pupils and had created a very positive climate for learning. They used an appropriate range of teaching approaches and their explanations were mostly clear. Teachers mostly shared with pupils what they wanted them to learn. They did not question pupils effectively enough to ensure that pupils understood what had been taught. Homework tasks on occasion lacked variety and challenge.

Learners' experiences in the nursery class were very good. Children were highly motivated, eager to learn and concentrated well on their chosen activities. They were able to make choices and decisions confidently and were developing skills in working independently. Staff consulted well with children and involved them in what they wanted to learn. In the Springboard class, pupils felt safe and secure and had developed appropriate relationships of trust with key adults. They were mostly

enthusiastic and were making effective progress with their learning targets. In the primary classes, learners' experiences were satisfactory. Almost all pupils worked well at the tasks set for them and were highly motivated learners. They were confident and felt safe and well looked after in school. Pupils' skills in working independently at challenging activities did not develop appropriately as they progressed through the school. As a result, a few pupils did not make sufficient progress in aspects of their learning.

Improvements in performance

The school had made effective and continuing improvements within the nursery class. These included work in involving children in their own learning and in developing their independence. In the primary classes, staff had improved the school ethos and aspects of the curriculum including environmental studies and citizenship. More remained to be done to raise attainment in key areas. Overall, this represented very good improvement in the performance of the nursery class and satisfactory improvement in performance in the primary classes.

Children in the nursery class were making very good progress in communication and language. They could recognise their name in print and were developing an awareness of letter sounds. They were making good progress in developing their early writing skills when drawing and when playing imaginatively. Most were beginning to write their name and a few could write other words. Children were developing confidence when talking to one another and to adults. Most listened well to stories and instructions.

At the primary stages, the overall quality of attainment in English language was satisfactory. At the early and middle stages most pupils were achieving appropriate national levels of attainment in listening, talking, reading and writing. At the upper stages, most were attaining these levels in listening and talking and the majority in reading and writing. For a few pupils, particularly at the middle and upper stages, the pace of progress was too slow. At all stages, pupils were confident in speaking to adults and to each other. Almost all listened well to information and instructions. School staff did not yet have an appropriate means to assess pupils' progress in listening and talking. Almost all pupils read well from familiar texts and understood what they had read. Most pupils' skills in reading for information were progressing effectively. A few pupils lacked confidence in their knowledge about language and in discussing how writers achieve their effects. At all stages, almost all pupils presented their written work neatly. Their skills in writing for a wider range of purposes were not always developed appropriately. Pupils at the early stages were making effective progress in building their early literacy skills. As pupils progressed through the school, they did not consistently develop their reading and writing skills effectively in other curricular areas.

Nursery children were making very good progress in their understanding of early mathematics. They were developing a sound understanding of early number and showed a keen interest in counting. They recognised simple shapes while playing with programmable toys and were developing an appropriate understanding of weight, while playing with modelling clay.

At the primary stages, the quality of attainment in mathematics was satisfactory. Across the school, the majority of pupils achieved appropriate national levels. At the early stages, most pupils achieved these levels earlier than might normally be expected. This pace of progress was not sustained and by the upper stages too many pupils did not achieve appropriate levels. At all stages, pupils had successfully carried out surveys and displayed their results in graphs. At the middle and upper stages, pupils made effective use of ICT to organise and display information. Pupils at the early stages were making appropriate progress in adding and subtracting. At the middle stages, most pupils performed mental calculations well. A few pupils at all stages lacked confidence in mental calculation. The majority of pupils at the upper stages had a good knowledge of multiplication facts. They were less confident in using fractions and decimals. At the upper stages, pupils were skilful in estimating and measuring the area of shapes. Across the stages, pupils knew the properties of a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils in the middle stages had developed an appropriate knowledge of angles and bearings. Throughout the school, pupils' skills in problem solving required further development. Pupils were aware of a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems but lacked confidence in applying these strategies in practical situations.

Children in the nursery class were effectively learning about the natural world through planting sunflower seeds and beans. They were building their confidence when using the computer and expressed their ideas creatively through painting, collage and imaginative play. Children had an appropriate awareness of space and were extending their physical skills through energetic play in the gymnasium. They were developing appropriate control of their hands and fingers when cutting, playing with modelling clay and building with construction toys.

At the primary stages, pupils were developing their skills across other aspects of the curriculum. They were confident in using ICT for a range of purposes, including making simple drawings and researching information. Most pupils used maps appropriately. Pupils at all stages produced bright and attractive art work in art and design. This included very effective charcoal drawings and colourful paper masks. Pupils' understanding of aspects of science and technology was not sufficiently developed.

Staff used a range of appropriate activities to ensure pupils' personal and social development and promote their wider achievements. In the nursery class, most children settled well and persevered with tasks. They were developing very good independent skills and had helped to decide simple social rules for the nursery. Almost all children cooperated very well and formed friendships during play. In the primary classes, staff at all stages provided a range of very effective activities to improve pupils' awareness of the environment. These included taking part in a wide variety of recycling activities and growing fruit and vegetables which were used in school lunches. As a result of the pupils' achievements the school had gained an Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag, the highest award possible. Pupils at all stages responded well to a range of activities to improve their awareness of responsible citizenship. These activities included working on the pupil council and Eco-Schools committee, and participating in raising funds for a variety of local and international charities. The

school had received the education authority's gold award in enterprise education in recognition of pupils' effective progress in this area. Staff effectively promoted pupils' knowledge of the importance of a healthy diet and active lifestyle. The school had achieved Health Promoting School status.

The school had made effective progress in implementing some priorities identified in its improvement plan. In the nursery class, staff had effectively and regularly reviewed their practice against key targets. As a result, improvements had been well sustained. In the primary classes, the plan did not always identify areas where improvements were needed and state clearly how success was to be measured. Progress in improving attainment in some key areas had been slow.

5. How well are pupils' learning needs met?

Staff in the nursery class met children's learning needs very well. They made regular observations of children at play and identified group and individual targets. These were used to plan effectively for new learning and ensure appropriate progress. In the Springboard class, staff generally met pupils' needs well, but there were inconsistencies in the degree to which all staff were successful. Their recording of individual targets and progress was not always of a suitably high standard. There were no individual behaviour plans for pupils. Staff had not yet developed sufficiently formal and effective liaison procedures with the Springboard pupils' base mainstream schools. As a result, there was a lack of consistency in the approaches being adopted within the Springboard class and across the outreach service. In the primary classes, approaches to meeting pupils' learning needs were satisfactory. Class teachers ensured that tasks and activities, particularly those in English language and mathematics, matched the needs of most learners. Staff successfully ensured that children with additional support needs were identified appropriately and supported well. Teachers did not consistently set sufficiently challenging tasks and the pace of learning was too slow for a few learners. Support for learning staff knew their pupils well and made positive contributions in assisting pupils' learning. The support for learning teacher provided effective help for identified groups of pupils. The school did not always coordinate the work of all support staff sufficiently well to ensure effective learning opportunities for pupils with additional support needs. Staff had developed individualised educational programmes (IEPs) for those pupils who required them. These IEPs did not consistently contain specific targets with clear criteria of success. The school had developed positive links with a range of agencies to provide helpful and appropriate support for pupils.

6. How good is the environment for learning?

Aspect	Comment
Care, welfare and development	<p>The school had very good care and welfare arrangements. All staff were very sensitive to the social and emotional needs of nursery children and primary pupils. Nursery staff were successfully developing children's confidence and awareness of personal safety. In the primary classes, staff provided very effective care for pupils. There was a range of relevant policies, including those for child protection and dealing with bullying, to guide staff. Staff implemented these policies well and had undertaken appropriate training in child protection. Staff took well-judged steps to ensure that vulnerable pupils, including looked after children, felt safe and secure in school. Pupils' attendance was monitored appropriately. The school's health education programme promoted pupils' awareness of personal relationships and the dangers of substance misuse. Effective procedures were in place to support pupils entering P1 from nursery, and pupils at P7 transferring to Fraserburgh Academy.</p>
Management and use of resources and space for learning	<p>The quality of accommodation was very good. The school and nursery were part of a modern community building which opened in October 2005. Pupils and nursery children benefited from a spacious gymnasium. There was an enclosed outdoor play space for nursery children. The school's security arrangements were appropriate. There was very good access for pupils and visitors with restricted mobility. Classrooms and teaching areas were bright and of a good size. Staff successfully used the well-equipped computer suite and integrated community library to promote pupils' learning. Pupils benefited from access to the Internet in all teaching areas. Staff used interactive whiteboards fitted in almost all teaching areas to enhance their teaching. The playground was spacious, and staff made effective use of the school grounds to promote pupils' learning.</p>

Aspect	Comment
Climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement and equality and fairness	<p>Staff had been successful in creating a very positive climate in school. All pupils were very well behaved, courteous and friendly. Staff worked well together and staff morale was high. Relationships between staff and pupils were very good. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the school's helpful system of certificates and awards, which successfully encouraged them and rewarded their achievements. Staff had appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They did not have consistently high expectations of what pupils could achieve. All staff treated primary pupils and nursery children equally and fairly. The small number of pupils in the Springboard class were not always well included in the life of the mainstream school. The school did not yet give sufficient attention to racial equality issues to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society. Staff provided pupils with appropriately frequent opportunities for religious observance.</p>
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	<p>The school was very successful in working in partnership with parents. The Parent Council supported the work of the school well. Parents helped with activities in school, including planting seeds, assisting with improvements in the playground and attending school events. Parents worked with the Active Schools Coordinator to provide pupils with a range of after-school activities, including basketball and dance. Staff kept parents well informed using illustrated newsletters, parents' meetings, informative written reports on pupils' progress and a range of informal contacts. All parents valued the approachability of the headteacher and class teachers. Parents were confident that if they raised any concerns, school staff would deal with them promptly and effectively. Staff had consulted parents appropriately about sensitive health education issues.</p>

7. Leading and improving the school

Appendix 1 provides HM Inspectors' overall evaluation of the work of the school.

Rosehearty School and Nursery Class had many strengths. Children in the nursery class had a very positive experience and were making a sound start to their early learning. Staff throughout the school worked well together to provide a high standard of pastoral care. Pupils in the primary classes were well motivated and confident and were developing a very good awareness of environmental issues. Overall, pupils were attaining satisfactory standards in English language and mathematics. More pupils

could have made better progress if the pace of learning had been faster and the work set for them had been appropriately challenging.

The experienced headteacher provided good leadership. She had worked well with staff to create an effective, caring team and had gained the trust of pupils, parents and staff. The headteacher had improved aspects of the school's work, including the development of enterprise activities and environmental education. She had not yet ensured that all staff had appropriately high expectations of pupils' progress and achievements in some key areas. The school's arrangements for evaluating the quality of its work were satisfactory. The headteacher met regularly with teachers to discuss pupils' progress and examined samples of pupils' written work. The school had sought parents' and pupils' views on aspects of its work through written questionnaires. The headteacher provided helpful written comments on teachers' plans and visited classes to observe and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. These arrangements were not yet sufficiently rigorous and systematic. Staff used a broad range of assessment information to monitor and predict pupils' progress. They did not always use this information effectively to ensure that all pupils made appropriate progress. With the continuing support of the education authority, the school had the capacity for further improvement.

The headteacher and staff were aware of the implications of the Scottish Social Services Council's Codes of Practice and appropriate staff had completed registration. At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there was one recommendation. This had been met successfully.

Main points for action

The school and education authority should take action to improve self-evaluation, learning and teaching and meeting needs. In doing so they should take account of the need to:

- improve attainment in English language and mathematics;
- improve the pace and challenge in learning and teaching to ensure that all pupils' needs are met effectively; and
- improve the arrangements for evaluating the quality of learning, teaching and attainment to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress.

What happens next?

The school and the education authority have been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. Within two years of the publication of this report parents will be informed about the progress made by the school.

Robert Barfoot
HM Inspector

30 September 2008

Appendix 1 Indicators of quality

The sections in the table below follow the order in this report. You can find the main comments made about each of the quality indicators in those sections. However, aspects of some quality indicators are relevant to other sections of the report and may also be mentioned in those other sections.

How good are learning, teaching and achievement?	
The curriculum	good
Teaching for effective learning	satisfactory
Children's experiences (nursery class)	very good
Learners' experiences (primary stages)	satisfactory
Improvements in performance (nursery class)	very good
Improvements in performance (primary stages)	satisfactory

How well are pupils' learning needs met?	
Meeting learning needs (nursery class)	very good
Meeting learning needs (primary stages)	satisfactory

How good is the environment for learning?	
Care, welfare and development	very good
Management and use of resources and space for learning	very good
The engagement of staff in the life and work of the school	good
Expectations and promoting achievement	good
Equality and fairness	good
The school's success in involving parents, carers and families	very good

Leading and improving the school	
Developing people and partnerships	good
Leadership of improvement and change (of the headteacher)	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	satisfactory

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgements made by inspectors:

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

Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses

Important features of responses from the various groups which received questionnaires are listed below.

What parents thought the school did well	What parents think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents were very positive about all aspects of the school's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.
What pupils thought the school did well	What pupils think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils were very positive about all aspects of the school's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.
What staff thought the school did well	What staff think the school could do better
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff were very positive about all aspects of the school's work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no significant issues.

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 Education and Recreation, 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, Greyfriars House, Gallowgate, Aberdeen AB10 1LQ or by telephoning 01224 642544. Copies are also available on our website www.hmie.gov.uk.

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Should you wish to comment on any aspect of primary inspections, you should write in the first instance to Chris McIlroy, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330, fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail: ask@spsa.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsa.org.uk.

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