Andover Primary School
and Nursery Class
Brechin
Angus Council
23 August 2011
HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents\(^1\), children and the local community know whether their school\(^2\) 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.

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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.
1. The school

Andover Primary School is a non-denominational school with a nursery class. It serves an area in the town of Brechin. The roll was 250, including 60 in the nursery, when the inspection was carried out in May 2011. Children’s attendance was in line with the national average in 2009/2010. *The Launch Pad* is an authority provision which is located within the school. It caters for a small number of children who have social, emotional and behavioural needs. Additionally, a further small number of children who have similar needs, are taught for most of the time in a learning base within the school.
2. Particular strengths of the school

- Confident children in the nursery and school who are well motivated and achieve widely in a range of activities.

- Enthusiastic staff who are open to change and who work very well together in taking the school forward.

- The quality of children’s reading and writing across their learning.

- The quality of provision in the nursery, especially outdoor learning and transitions.

- The impact of the headteacher's leadership in involving staff and children to help the school achieve its aims.

3. How well do children learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In the nursery, children are happy, confident and independent. Almost all engage very well in a wide range of learning experiences both inside and outdoors. They take responsibility for choosing activities and play well together. Children are learning how to work well with others and to agree what to do next, for example when working together at tasks such as experimenting with different colours of paint at the light box. At the primary stages, children are enthusiastic learners. They work well on tasks which require them to take responsibility, think creatively and make decisions. Most children work very well together and are confident when giving their views. Overall, children have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve, particularly in writing. Most children are developing a better understanding of their skills and what helps them to learn.
Children successfully represent the views of others through the pupil council, peer supporters and eco committee.

Across the nursery and primary classes, children are aware of environmental issues. In the nursery, children talk confidently about recycling newspapers to make their own plant pots. Outdoor learning is a very strong feature of the nursery. At the primary stages, children broaden their learning successfully by the quality of their contributions to such things as a visit to the Victorian classroom and a wide range of enterprise events and fund raising activities. Children’s achievements are wide and varied. They include many sporting and musical achievements such as the excellent choir and drumming groups. Children achieve well in their social skills through the cookery club, Polish reading club and by working successfully on their personal development targets.

Across the school and nursery, children are making very good progress in their learning. In the nursery, they listen very well and successfully take part in short discussions. Most express themselves well and several use books to find interesting information. The majority of children write their own name. Children are very good at counting. They recognise some shapes, patterns and colours and can sort and match very well. At the primary stages, almost all children are making very good progress in listening, talking, reading and writing, with most making good progress in mathematics. Levels of attainment in mathematics have remained stable over time with an improving trend in reading and writing. Overall children are working well in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. Most children across the school use their listening and talking skills well in a variety of activities and areas of the curriculum. These include lively group and class discussions and debates. Children read well, for a range of purposes. Across the school, most children write well for different audiences and purposes. In mathematics at the early stages, children successfully use and follow directions while at the senior stages most know their multiplication tables well. At the middle stages, most know how to give change accurately when handling money. At the senior stages, most children work well on area and symmetry.
Children are progressing very well in other areas of their learning. For example, in their science work, moving image education, physical education and art and design.

**Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Across the school and nursery, staff plan a stimulating, well-balanced curriculum. Staff are making good progress in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers use experiences and outcomes well in their planning and they are developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing steadily across all areas of the curriculum. Staff should continue to build on this good practice. In the nursery, staff provide highly-effective learning opportunities for children, both inside and outdoors, which is based clearly on play and enjoyment. At the primary stages, curriculum improvements are providing more choice and take very good account of setting learning in relevant contexts. As a result, children apply what they learn well in different settings. Most children have access to two hours of physical education each week. Staff and children use information and communications technology well to support the curriculum. Across the school and nursery, transition arrangements are highly effective, in particular the innovative approaches which help children and families when children first start nursery.

Overall, teaching is of a high standard and staff are sensitive to children’s learning needs. Most tasks are chosen appropriately to meet the range of needs within the class. In the nursery, learning experiences are appropriately challenging with close attention being paid to the needs of newly-admitted children. In a few primary classes, the pace of learning can be too slow, mainly due to the disruptive behaviour of a few children. Children in the school and nursery who need additional help have appropriate, individualised educational programmes. Staff who work with a very small number of very challenging children need to now plan, monitor and assess their learning more effectively. The school ensures effective support is in place for individuals through involving other agencies. This includes the school and family support service and voluntary groups such as
Insight who successfully offer a counselling service for a few children. The very effective Grannies Gogo voluntary listening service is available in the school if children want someone to talk to. This includes counselling on bereavement and separation. Support staff work very effectively with class teachers to help children.

Staff in The Launch Pad successfully support children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They take very good account of children’s needs when planning the curriculum. This highly-effective provision provides a secure and stimulating environment where children feel valued and are making good progress. Staff encourage and reward success. Children’s social and independence skills are encouraged effectively, with children becoming more confident.

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

The school has built up good partnerships to support children’s learning. Most parents are generally positive about the work of the school and nursery. They involve themselves in the life of the school, for example, helping with clubs and going on outings. Most parents feel that their children enjoy learning and that the school is helping them to become more confident. Parents speak very positively about the high-quality Learning Logs, which show children’s progress in their work. Curricular information evenings and helpful newsletters are also well received by parents. The Parent Council is very supportive of the school. It is very active in fundraising ventures to support the school and the community. The school has very good links with the local community, which it uses very well to enhance children’s learning. For example, a significant link with older members of the community is the excellent intergenerational project, Angus Gold.

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

Staff, parents and children are very active in helping to improve the school. Staff work well together to develop plans for improving the
curriculum and developing active learning. Children are involved in helping to improve their learning through such things as making suggestions about which aspects of their environmental studies topic to study. The pupil council actively seeks the views of children across the school which has resulted in improved play facilities. There is still room for senior managers to ask children how to improve the school, including how to make sure everyone has the best possible experiences. Staff reflect very well on their work and share good practice across the school. The headteacher monitors effectively teachers’ plans and children’s jotters. She observes teaching and provides useful feedback and next steps. Senior managers and staff now need to track children’s progress across their learning, to ensure they are making appropriate progress. Parents comment on aspects of the school’s work, such as the effectiveness of children’s Learning Logs.

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

Staff work very well together as an effective and enthusiastic team. Children’s achievements are recognised well in class and in the nursery. Attractive wall displays and Learning Logs record children’s achievements. Staff have high expectations of children’s learning. All staff have regular training on child protection, and know how to keep children safe in their care. The school needs to work further with children and parents to ensure all have a clear understanding of how the school promotes positive behaviour and addresses any incidents of bullying. Staff and children actively promote equality and diversity. For example, children at the senior stages comment confidently on and evaluate a video on racial incidents between families in Bosnia. The school has appropriate arrangements for regular religious observance through assemblies, and good support from local churches. Children are encouraged to make healthy eating choices at lunch. Arrangements are clear for addressing complaints from children and parents.
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

Overall senior managers and staff are working very hard to take the school forward. There is a clear sense of direction that focuses well on what is best for children. The headteacher is an effective leader who has developed a strong sense of teamwork. She actively promotes effective teaching and learning. All staff are committed to ongoing professional development to support the vision for the school. The school is also developing successfully the skills and competences of children, to enable them to take on leadership roles to move the school forward. Overall the school is well placed to continue to improve.

8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school’s progress in improving the quality of education.

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

- Continue to develop systems to track children’s progress more effectively across the school.
- Continue to develop children’s roles and responsibilities for improving the quality of learning across the school, and act on their views.

At the last Care Commission inspection of the nursery class there were two recommendations which have been addressed.
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 Andover Primary School and Nursery Class.

**Primary school**

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**Nursery class**

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We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

| The curriculum               | good      |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | good      |

**HM Inspector:** Jane Lopez  
23 August 2011
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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