



**Kinlochbervie High School
The Highland Council
26 January 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents¹, young people and the local community know whether their school 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 which young people are involved in. We also gather the views of young people, 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 young people 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 young people 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 young people. 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 young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable, you will also be able to find descriptions of good practice in the school and a report on the learning community surrounding the school.

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

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1. The school

Kinlochbervie High School is a non-denominational school which serves the north west of Sutherland. The roll was 67 when the inspection was carried out in November 2009. Young people's attendance was above the national average in 2007/2008.

2. Particular strengths of the school

- The contribution of staff to promoting young people's achievements in the community.
- The quality of learning support for young people with additional needs.
- The caring and supportive environment for learning.

3. How well do young people learn and achieve?

Learning and achievement

In most classes, young people are motivated and very willing to learn. Relationships between most teachers and young people are positive. Young people respond well to opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. They work well together but do not do so often enough. Just over half of young people feel they have good opportunities to discuss their learning with teachers. Young people are increasingly involved in reflecting on their progress. In some classes, they would benefit from more advice on how to improve their learning. The majority of young people feel that the school is successful in helping them to make healthy food choices.

Young people participate in a wide range of activities to help them develop skills and confidence. At S3, young people benefit from a work experience programme during which they develop skills in working with others. Across the stages, young people take part in residential trips which encourage them to develop a better understanding of life in different environments. A significant number of young people learn outdoor skills by participating successfully in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other activities. Young people at S6 act responsibly by helping younger pupils in classes and when they move from P7 to S1. The school should encourage young people to

become more actively involved in promoting health issues. Young people's skills and achievements are not yet being sufficiently recognised through appropriate award schemes. Almost all young people leave school to go on to further or higher education or employment.

At S1/S2, the majority of young people achieve appropriate standards in English and mathematics. Most make positive progress from their prior levels of attainment. By the end of S4, almost all young people achieve five or more awards at General level or better. The proportion achieving five or more Credit awards is below the national average. Young people with additional needs are making suitable progress in their learning. The proportion of young people achieving awards at Higher by the end of S6 has declined and, overall, is below the national average. Young people perform less well in English and mathematics than in their other subjects.

Curriculum and meeting learning needs

At S1/S2, the school provides young people with a broad range of activities and courses. In a few subjects staff plan their courses well to take into account young people's prior learning at primary school. Young people receive increasing opportunities to link their learning across different curricular areas. Recent changes to the curriculum at S3 to S6 have helped to improve choices for young people. Staff work well with local businesses to provide a successful course in rural skills. At S3, the range of courses taken by young people is too narrow and has too many assessments. Staff need to ensure that all young people at S3 have a broader education in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Young people do not yet have sufficient opportunities to develop skills in enterprise or citizenship. Across the stages, young people develop effective personal and social skills through well-planned courses. At S3 to S6, the school does not provide young people with enough high-quality physical education. In the majority of classes, teachers set young people tasks at the right level of difficulty. A few teachers share the aims of lessons effectively with young people and encourage them to reflect well on what they

have learned. Most teachers provide young people with clear explanations and instructions. They do not consistently make effective use of homework to support young people's learning. Support for learning staff are successful at identifying young people's needs. They provide very effective support for young people with additional needs. They share helpful information with staff to help them meet the individual needs of young people. Young people with individualised educational programmes receive strong support and are making appropriate progress. Staff should make sure that all young people feel more able to discuss any concerns which they may have with them.

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

Staff work well with others, including parents, to support young people's learning. Partner agencies, including educational psychologists, social workers and health professionals, provide strong support. An Active Schools coordinator works well with staff and members of the community to organise a wide range of activities which benefit young people. Local businesses and groups contribute effectively to the curriculum and work experience programme. The school has positive partnerships with most parents. Most are happy with the school and feel satisfied with how the school keeps them informed about their children's progress. Almost a third would like more chances to give their views. The Parent Council has supported the school in improving transport arrangements and helps parents to raise any concerns which they may have.

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

Almost all staff are involved in school and community activities which benefit young people. Staff have good opportunities to develop their professional skills. A few are beginning to share good practice by observing each other's lessons. Staff should continue to develop this positive start. Young people in the pupil council have made helpful

suggestions about uniforms which have subsequently been adopted. A few young people help to organise paper recycling activities. Senior managers should improve arrangements to monitor young people's progress and attainment. Their observation of lessons is not consistently focused to lead to improvements in learning. Annual discussions of attainment are too infrequent and do not consistently lead to clear planning for improvement. Staff should seek the views of young people and parents more regularly to help them set targets for improvement.

6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?

Most young people feel safe and well looked after. There are few incidents of bullying. Most staff have high expectations for young people's behaviour. In a few lessons, young people are not consistently well behaved and engaged in their learning. The proportion of young people excluded from school is well below the national average. Young people do not always present their work well. Staff encourage young people's achievements successfully at assemblies and by using certificates. Young people's work is displayed well on a website and around the school. Staff are aware of child protection arrangements. They make appropriate arrangements for religious observance.

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

The school has a positive ethos of care and support for young people. The committed and experienced headteacher has shared his vision clearly for young people's welfare and achievement. He receives strong support from his recently-appointed depute. Together, they are well respected by most parents. A sizeable minority of parents would like any concerns to be addressed and resolved more quickly. The headteacher should confirm the roles of all promoted staff in ensuring that all teaching results in a consistent quality of learning. Staff feel well supported by senior staff but are not consistently challenged to improve and maintain high standards. They have made a positive start to sharing good practice in learning and teaching and in planning

for improvements. Most staff have good relationships with young people. Young people respond very well to opportunities to act responsibly and to show leadership in the community. They would benefit from having more responsibility in school.

8. What happens next?

We will request a report from the education authority on improvements in self-evaluation, the curriculum, and the leadership of the management team within one year of publication of this report. Depending on the progress which has been made, we will consider whether or not to carry out any further inspection visits. Parents will be informed about the progress made.

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

- Develop important aspects of the curriculum in line with the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* and, in particular, to ensure a broad general education for all young people to the end of S3.
- Raise attainment by improving the consistency of learning and teaching across the school.
- Improve arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and improving young people's learning and achievements.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*. 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 are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Kinlochbervie High School.

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

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	satisfactory
Improvement through self-evaluation	weak

HM Inspector: Alistair Brown
26 January 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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