

**Blairgowrie High School** (downloaded from HMIe site <http://www.hmie.gov.uk>)  
**Perth & Kinross Council**

**22 June 2004**

## **Contents**

[1. Background](#)

[2. Key strengths](#)

[3. What are the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff?](#)

[4. How good are learning, teaching, attainment and achievement?](#)

[5. How well are pupils supported?](#)

[6. How good is the environment for learning?](#)

[7. Improving the school](#)

[Appendix 1: Indicators of quality](#)

[Appendix 2: Summary of questionnaire responses](#)

[Appendix 3: Attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\) National Qualifications](#)

[How can you contact us?](#)

## **1. Background**

Blairgowrie High School was inspected in March 2004. Subjects included in the inspection were English, mathematics, chemistry and science in S1/S2, and art and design. The school is a non-denominational secondary school which serves the towns of Blairgowrie, Rattray, Alyth, Coupar Angus and the surrounding areas. It was part of an integrated community school pilot initiative from 1999-2002. The acting headteacher had been seconded to the school for a period of ten months by the education authority. At the time of the inspection the roll was 978. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals was well below the national average. Pupils' attendance was broadly in line with the national average.

Members of the inspection team analysed responses to questionnaires issued to samples of pupils, parents and carers, and to all staff. They also met the chairperson of the School Board and a group of parents. They interviewed groups of pupils and staff.

## **2. Key strengths**

HM Inspectors identified the following key strengths.

- \* The recent improvements to the climate and relationships in the school.
- \* The commitment of pupils and staff to their school and the growing sense of teamwork and involvement in decision making.
- \* The very effective links with the School Board and the support of the parents, friends and teachers' association.
- \* The leadership of the acting headteacher.

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

Around one-third of the sample of parents surveyed responded to the questionnaire. Parents, pupils and staff were pleased with a majority of aspects of the work of the school. They thought that the acting headteacher had shown effective leadership and had made a number of important improvements. Parents, staff and pupils interviewed were particularly positive about recent changes. Parents thought that their children enjoyed being at school and that staff showed concern for their care and welfare. Pupils thought that teachers expected them to work to the best of their ability and that they felt safe and secure in the school. Staff liked working in the school. However, most parents who completed a questionnaire did not think that the school had a good reputation in the community. A majority of pupils did not think that all pupils were treated fairly in the school or that staff were good at dealing with bullies. Less than half thought that pupils' behaviour was good. However, most pupils who were interviewed thought that the school now handled incidents of pupil misbehaviour more effectively. Staff interviewed were very positive about the recent improvements in communication and participation, but a large minority felt that improvements were needed in the quality of communication between senior managers and staff and in the way in which senior managers operated as a team.

Further details about what most pleased parents and carers, staff and pupils, and what they would most like to see improved, can be found in [Appendix 2](#) of this report.

### **4. How good are learning, teaching, attainment and achievement?**

In evaluating the overall quality of learning, teaching, attainment and achievement, HM Inspectors observed aspects of learning in the inspected departments and more widely across the school. They also reviewed the extent to which the structure of the curriculum addressed pupils' needs, and they analysed pupils' performance in examinations (see [Appendix 3](#)).

#### **The curriculum, learning and teaching**

Overall, the curriculum was appropriately broad and balanced. Pupils had sufficient opportunities at different stages to develop core skills, including information and communications technology (ICT) and working with others, but the school had yet to evaluate fully its provision to consolidate strengths and address gaps. The S1/S2 curriculum offered a suitable range of subjects but the school was still developing its liaison with primary schools to ensure that all subject departments built effectively on pupils' prior experiences. The school planned to reduce the number of teachers that pupils were taught by in S1/S2 to better support their learning. In S3/S4, almost all pupils studied eight Standard Grades. In some subject areas, the school had made appropriate provision for a number of pupils to work towards suitable National Qualifications (NQs). In S4 and S5, a small number of pupils received carefully-judged alternative provision including attending a local further education college. They studied a smaller number of subjects, received additional learning support and had vocational and other personal development experiences. In S5 and S6, pupils experienced a well-balanced and wide range of Advanced Higher, Higher and Intermediate 1 or 2 courses. They also had an afternoon each week to pursue community, recreational or vocational interests. However, in S5/S6, there was no

provision for religious education and the school did not ensure a consistent coverage of personal and social development (PSD).

The quality of teaching varied across the school. There were a number of examples of high quality teaching. Staff in some departments provided lunchtime and after-school activities to provide further support. In examples of best practice, teachers prepared lessons well, gave clear explanations and used questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding. They made suitable use of homework to support and extend pupils' learning. However, some teachers did not ensure an appropriate pace of learning or that pupils were given suitably challenging work. In a number of classes pupils were not actively involved in their learning and received too little feedback on how to improve. Most pupils were hard-working and motivated. They presented their work carefully and were confident in taking responsibility for their own learning when given the opportunity. At all stages, there was an inconsistent approach to meeting pupils' needs. Departments needed to take more account of what pupils learned in primary school. Senior managers and heads of department had yet to build on the very effective practice of some teachers and departments to ensure a more consistent approach to learning and teaching and raising pupils' attainment.

### **Attainment and achievement**

The overall quality of attainment in S1/S2 was fair. Attainment in S2 was in line with the national average in reading, above the national average in writing and well above in mathematics. However, attainment in writing and mathematics was following a decreasing trend. In most subjects, pupils performed well in coursework but tasks were often not challenging enough and the pace of work was too slow.

The following comments are based on SQA data for the three-year period from 2001 to 2003.

The quality of attainment in S3/S4 was fair. Overall, pupils performed notably less well at Standard Grade in S4 than in other schools with similar characteristics. The proportions of pupils achieving Standard Grade awards at Foundation and General levels were below national averages. The proportions achieving Credit awards were in line with the national average and were improving.

The overall quality of attainment in S5/S6 was fair. By the end of S5 and S6, the proportions of pupils achieving A-C grades at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher were generally in line with national averages. Overall, however, pupils did less well in Higher than those in similar schools. The proportions achieving Advanced Higher A-C grades by the end of S6 were above national averages but lower than in similar schools.

Information on the subjects inspected is given later in the report. Significant features of attainment in examinations in the subjects not inspected were as follows.

\* The proportions of pupils achieving Credit awards at Standard Grade were well above national averages in accounting and finance, business management and music, and well below in computing studies.

- \* The proportion of pupils receiving No Awards at Standard Grade was well above the national average in computing studies, craft and design, history, physical education and physics.
- \* At Standard Grade, pupils did notably better in music, and notably poorer in craft and design, than in their other subjects.
- \* Pupils in S5/S6 made notably poorer progress in Higher biology than would have been expected from their Standard Grade results.
- \* The proportions of pupils achieving A-C grades at Higher were well above national averages in music and well below in physical education.
- \* The proportions of pupils achieving A-C grades at Intermediate 2 were well above national averages in administration, hospitality and woodworking skills, and well below in information systems and physical education.
- \* The proportions of pupils receiving No Awards at Higher were well above national averages in geography, history and physical education. At Intermediate 2, the proportion was well above national averages in business management, French, health and food technology, information systems and physical education.

Pupils participated enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They were developing citizenship skills through taking part in a school charities committee and through a range of charity work. Some pupils successfully participated in school shows and a fashion show. They hosted a successful Burns evening and a Christmas tea dance for senior citizens. Pupils had achieved success in a range of sporting activities, a Formula 1 technology competition, mathematics and modern studies challenges and a Masterchef initiative in home economics. Senior pupils showed maturity and responsibility in carrying out their duties. They worked well with guidance teachers to provide 'buddying' support for pupils entering S1 and provided valuable contributions in some junior classes.

### **English language**

#### **Learning and teaching**

There was some very effective teaching but overall, the quality of learning and teaching was too variable. Some teachers made effective use of debating to support pupils' communication skills. In some cases they made good use of the Internet for research to assist pupils' writing. Pupils were co-operative and contributed well when tasks were clear and gave sufficient opportunity for thinking and discussion. Pupils were often too passive and dependent on their teachers. Teachers tracked pupils' progress purposefully and provided some useful worksheets and feedback on key assignments. However, the approaches taken by teachers to meet pupils' needs were inconsistent and fair overall. Teachers did not always ensure that tasks and teaching resources were at a sufficient level of difficulty.

#### **Attainment and achievement**

Overall, the majority of pupils performed well in classwork although a significant minority struggled with the demands of NQ courses. By the end of S2, the majority of pupils generally achieved national levels appropriate to their stage in listening, talking, reading and writing but had made less progress than expected since entering

S1. At Standard Grade and in NQ awards, pupils' attainment had varied too much across the last three years. At Standard Grade, the proportion of pupils who achieved Credit awards was well below national averages in 2001 and in line with these averages in 2002 and 2003. The proportion of candidates who achieved an A-C grade at Higher had risen from well below to a level in line with the national average. Performance was generally below national averages at Intermediate. At Higher and Intermediate, the proportion of candidates not achieving an award was above and sometimes well above national averages. The majority of pupils entered for Advanced Higher gained an A-C grade.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- \* Pupils responded well to class debates and some showed skill and conviction in expressing their views.
- \* Members of the creative writing club enjoyed writing for pleasure and had won awards for their writing.
- \* Pupils in the NQ unit in drama, leading to either a Higher Grade or Intermediate award, produced and presented their very creative drama work confidently.

## **Mathematics**

### **Learning and teaching**

Teachers gave clear and helpful explanations and used homework well in most classes. They chose tasks and resources appropriately to meet the needs of pupils. However, they did not always use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and make them think for themselves. Teachers effectively supported individual pupils and appropriately placed an emphasis on developing pupils' skills in written and mental calculation. Overall, pupils were attentive to teachers' explanations, and worked well. There were some important weaknesses in the quality of their learning. They had insufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their learning through tackling problems requiring an extended response or using ICT to explore aspects of mathematics.

### **Attainment and achievement**

In S1/S2, a majority of pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment. By S2, a number achieved well beyond the minimum expected levels. The proportion of S4 pupils gaining grade 1 awards at Standard Grade had improved steadily and was above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining Credit awards was in line with the national average but less than the national average for those attaining Foundation level or better. The proportion of pupils gaining A-C grades at Higher level in S5 was above the national average. In S5/S6, pupils generally performed well at Intermediate 1 and 2. In S6, a majority of the small number of pupils presented at Advanced Higher level achieved A-C grades.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- \* Some S1 pupils performed well on a practical investigative task. Pupils at all stages should have more opportunities for such investigation work.
- \* A number of pupils achieved well in mathematical competitions.

## **Chemistry and S1/S2 science**

### **Learning and teaching**

Teachers shared lesson aims effectively with pupils and gave clear instructions for practical tasks and helpful explanations of scientific theory. They worked well with individuals, groups or the whole class, maintaining a brisk pace and extending pupils' learning through well-chosen questions. However, teachers were not consistent in setting and marking homework. Generally, pupils responded well to lessons, worked well together during experiments and were good at writing their own notes. Dialogue between teachers and pupils was purposeful but teachers did not encourage pupils sufficiently to make extended oral contributions. Teachers did not take sufficient account of pupils' different needs and tasks and materials were usually at the same level of difficulty for the whole class. The chemistry department had made a good start to setting attainment targets for senior pupils.

### **Attainment and achievement**

At S1/S2 most pupils performed well in their coursework. The proportion of S4 pupils achieving Credit awards at Standard Grade was below national averages. At S5/S6, the proportion of pupils achieving A-C grades at Higher was in line with national averages as was the proportion achieving grade A. The proportion of pupils not achieving an award at Higher was above national averages. The majority of candidates entered for Intermediate 2 and for CSYS or Advanced Higher gained an A-C grade.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- \* Pupils in S1/S2 were effectively developing a range of practical skills.
- \* In S3, pupils were successful in working together on an extended project.
- \* In S4, pupils worked well with teachers to set appropriate individual targets.

## **Art and design**

### **Learning and teaching**

Learning and teaching varied in quality. Some teaching was very effective in developing pupils' skills in creative problem-solving and personal expression. Most teaching was good. Teachers gave clear explanations and provided a caring and supportive environment for pupils, but some teachers did not plan sufficiently to ensure challenging activities. They issued appropriate homework and ensured sufficient pace in most lessons. Most pupils were motivated and responded positively when given opportunities for independent learning through completing design tasks which gave them opportunities for personal choice. The department had yet to ensure

consistency in the use of assessment to aid pupils' learning or ensure a sufficiently broad and challenging range of learning experiences to meet all pupils' needs. Pupils at all stages had insufficient experience in using computers to support their practical activities. From S3, they did not have enough experiences in design and critical activities.

### **Attainment and achievement**

At S1/S2, pupils performed well in their coursework. At Standard Grade in S4, both the number of pupils presented and the proportion achieving any level of award were well below the national average. Those presented performed significantly less well in art and design than they did in their other subjects. At S5/S6, the proportion of pupils gaining an A-C award at Higher was well below national averages. The numbers of pupils who failed to gain an award at Standard Grade, Intermediate 2 and Higher was well above the national average.

Other features of pupils' attainment and achievement included the following.

- \* At all stages pupils were acquiring appropriate levels of drawing skills.
- \* Pupils were developing effective skills in aspects of design.
- \* S6 pupils demonstrated well-developed skills in photography.
- \* A few pupils had achieved recent success in art competitions.

### **5. How well are pupils supported?**

Overall arrangements for the pastoral care and welfare of pupils were good. Guidance staff were accessible and effective in responding to pupils who required advice and support. They were well supported by a wide range of external agencies. The support for learning department took significant responsibility in providing behaviour support for identified pupils. The school had effective procedures for dealing with health and welfare issues, including bullying and racism. It was developing initiatives for promoting healthy lifestyles.

The school made good provision for pupils' PSD. The PSD programme in S1 to S4 made effective use of a range of outside speakers and covered key aspects of healthy lifestyle, substance abuse, personal relationships and citizenship. The school did not ensure that S5/S6 pupils were also able to access relevant opportunities in personal and social development. During PSD lessons, teachers and visiting speakers encouraged pupils to express their opinions. However, in developing further the PSD programme, the school should ensure more consistently high standards of learning and teaching across all classes.

The school provided good curricular and vocational guidance for pupils. P7 pupils met with guidance staff and visited the school, to become more familiar with the S1 courses. At other key transition stages, the school gave pupils and their parents helpful information on course choices. It did not give all S4 pupils sufficient individual advice and support in making their choices. The school prepared pupils well for making careers choices but it should encourage them to use ICT more effectively to find out relevant information. The school had taken sound initial steps

to monitor the progress of pupils in S4 and offer them support through mentors. It had yet to monitor, track and support all pupils' progress. The school provided a good range of education for work opportunities. However, only a small proportion of pupils took up a work experience placement in S4.

The quality of support for learning and behaviour support was good. Learning support staff had developed effective approaches for supporting a range of pupils' needs. There was a particular focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable pupils were being supported. They worked well with pupils in classes across a wide range of subjects and also offered good support for individuals and groups in English and mathematics. The department operated an effective support base to assist pupils with social and behavioural difficulties. The department, however, should consider further how best to support children returning from the base to classrooms, including greater input in lessons and a clearer sharing of appropriate strategies with teachers. Staff supported pupils with additional support needs and behavioural difficulties through individualised educational programmes (IEPs). Long-term targets were well focused and well reviewed, but learning support teachers did not always define short-term learning targets clearly. These targets, and strategies to address them, were not always shared with classroom teachers. The principal teacher of learning support needed to discuss with departments the current deployment of support for learning staff and review the needs of different subject areas. Support for learning assistants knew the pupils well and made positive contributions to their support.

The depute headteacher with overall responsibility for guidance, learning support and behaviour support had made a sound start to managing this area of the school's work. The headteacher had worked with guidance and support for learning staff to develop joint working. However, their approach to pupil support was not yet sufficiently integrated. To achieve this, they needed to agree and establish clear roles, responsibilities and expectations for all staff involved and work flexibly as a corporate team.

## **6. How good is the environment for learning?**

### **Quality of accommodation and facilities**

The quality of accommodation was good. The school had appropriate arrangements for ensuring security of access to almost all of its various buildings, including temporary hatted accommodation. The school and the education authority were clarifying issues of public access to the recreation centre and the open area, and adjacent sports pitches which made up the school site. They had yet to fully resolve the management of traffic at the school gates. The buildings were well maintained and had recently been enhanced by an increased display of pupils' work. Some areas of the school had recently been improved and the science rooms were about to be upgraded. The school had poor ventilation in the science store and there was clutter and outstanding repairs required to equipment in art and design. Temperature control was variable in several departments and the music department had limited facilities for individual tuition. The school had been adapted to meet the needs of pupils with physical disabilities. It had taken recent steps to ensure more effective use of the well-stocked library during intervals, but a vacant senior librarian post was putting additional demands on staff. Provision for ICT was very good. Some departments

operated in classrooms located in different areas of the school. The school should keep under review the allocation of classrooms to assist the more effective management of departments.

### **Ethos**

The acting headteacher, working with staff, pupils and the wider community, had successfully introduced a range of initiatives to promote a positive ethos based on mutual respect between staff and pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils varied but were good overall. Pupils were well behaved in class but there was some minor misbehaviour in corridors when pupils were not supervised. Pupils and staff identified strongly with the school and a high number of pupils and parents had supported the recent emphasis on the school's dress code. Pupils and staff had been encouraged to express their views on aspects of school life. They were actively involved in decision making through their growing participation in school committees. Pupils took part in a broad range of extra-curricular activities which aimed to develop their self-esteem and confidence. The headteacher and staff had revised and improved arrangements aimed at enhancing pupils' behaviour and achievements. This had led to an increased sense of equality and fairness, although some staff responses to pupil behaviour remained uneven. Most pupils related well to each other and younger pupils valued the support of seniors. The headteacher had taken appropriate action to deal with the few incidents of indiscipline, including those on the buses. The school had promoted pupils' achievement successfully through the use of assemblies and pupil award systems. It had taken some effective steps to improve attendance and reduce exclusions this session.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

Partnership with parents and the community was good. The school had very effective links with the School Board and a recently restructured parent, friends and teacher association. Overall, communication with parents was good. This included a well-planned induction programme for P7 pupils transferring into S1. The school should review the quality of the information given to parents on their children's attainment to ensure consistency and accuracy. The school had good but still developing links with its associated primary schools, churches, FE college and local businesses. These links included the positive support given by the Rotary Club and input by church representatives to the Higher religious education course. The school links with its primary schools included effective liaison by guidance staff and developing links with English, mathematics and science departments. There was a need for stronger joint planning and transfer of curricular and attainment information in other subject areas. The school worked effectively with a wide range of agencies, including social work and the police to meet the needs of individual pupils and to support PSD and alternative curricular activities. However, there was limited evidence of any impact resulting from its involvement in the integrated community school initiative. The school was developing its relationships with community education staff to ensure a better understanding of each others roles and responsibilities in supporting vulnerable pupils. A vacancy in an education support service post had constrained the school's ability to monitor attendance through home-links.

## **7. Improving the school**

Blairgowrie High School had taken some recent and very effective steps to promote a learning environment based on an ethos of mutual respect and shared sense of belonging. This improved ethos had resulted in a significant decrease in pupil exclusions in the current session. The school now had a sound platform to support further improvements. It had yet to ensure a consistently high standard of management and learning and teaching throughout the school. Staff and pupils were working more closely together to ensure that pupils were being effectively supported. The school had improved the way that it analysed pupils' performance in national examinations, evaluated its work and communicated with parents. Pupils' performance in national examinations was still consistently below that of similar schools. The school should focus more fully on raising attainment. It should build on its existing good practice to ensure that it fully meets its stated objectives to ensure consistently high quality education for its pupils.

The education authority had appointed the acting headteacher on a short-term basis during a period of considerable challenge and uncertainty for the school. He had provided very effective leadership and inspired respect and confidence from pupils, parents and staff. He showed particular skills in building relationships and in developing a clear agenda for improvement. This had resulted in improvements to teamwork among senior and middle managers. He was ably supported by the senior depute headteacher. The remaining three depute headteachers had displayed strengths in some areas of their work. Overall, the support given by senior managers to departments, and their impact on raising pupils' attainment, remained uneven. Some heads of department were very effective managers but the quality of middle management also varied across the school. Senior managers and heads of department were not always sufficiently rigorous in ensuring consistency in learning and teaching, assessment and quality assurance.

The schools' approaches to self-evaluation had been enhanced through a more rigorous analysis of pupils' attainment linked to staff development aimed at setting clearer targets for improvement. The priorities for development contained within the school improvement plan were suitably focused on raising pupils' attainment. Staff were now tracking pupils' attainment in S4 and S5 more effectively through sharing information across departments. Members of senior management and some principal teachers were engaged in more formal approaches to evaluating learning and teaching. There remained considerable variation in the capacity of departments to ensure a systematic approach to evaluating their work. The school did not make enough use of the existing good practice within the principal teacher group to ensure more consistent approaches to quality assurance.

The school and education authority should take action to bring about further improvements in the quality of pupils' achievements. In doing so, they should take account of the need to:

- \* address the weaknesses in accommodation identified in the report;
- \* ensure that the curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for religious and moral education and PSD in S5/S6;

- \* share good practice in learning and teaching to ensure greater consistency, more active involvement of pupils in their learning, more effective tracking of pupils' progress and appropriate challenge and pace to better meet pupils' needs;
- \* improve the overall quality of attainment at all stages including performance of pupils in national examinations;
- \* ensure more coherent delivery of pupil support through closer working between guidance and support for learning staff;
- \* build on best practice at middle and senior management level to ensure more effective management and impact on raising pupils' attainment; and
- \* further develop approaches to self-evaluation to ensure greater consistency within and across departments.

### **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 and carers. HM Inspectors will engage with the school and the education authority to monitor progress. They will publish an interim report on progress within one year of the publication of this report. HM Inspectors will continue to engage with the school and the education authority and will undertake a follow-through inspection. This will result in another report to parents and carers, within two years of the publication of this report, on the extent of improvement that has been achieved.

Bartolomeo Biagini  
HM Inspector

22 June 2004

### **Appendix 1 Indicators of quality**

#### **We judged the following to be very good**

- \* Leadership

#### **We judged the following to be good**

- \* Structure of the curriculum
- \* The teaching process
- \* Pupils' learning experiences
- \* Personal and social development
- \* Pastoral care
- \* Curricular and vocational guidance
- \* Learning support
- \* Accommodation and facilities
- \* Climate and relationships
- \* Expectations and promoting achievement
- \* Equality and fairness
- \* Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community

### **We judged the following to be fair**

- \* Overall quality of attainment: S1/S2
- \* Overall quality of attainment: S3/S4
- \* Overall quality of attainment: S5/S6
- \* Meeting pupils' needs
- \* Self-evaluation
- \* Effectiveness and deployment of staff with additional responsibilities

### **We judged the following to be unsatisfactory**

- \* No aspects were found to be in this category

## **Appendix 2 Summary of questionnaire responses**

### **What pleased parents and carers most**

#### **What parents and carers would like to see improved**

Almost all felt that:

- \* their child enjoyed being at school;
- \* their child found school work stimulating; and
- \* staff showed care and concern for the welfare of their child.

Most felt that:

- \* staff made them feel welcome in the school and treated their child fairly;
  - \* parents evenings were helpful and informative;
  - \* the school encouraged their child to work to the best of his/ her ability; and
  - \* the school was well led.
- \* Most parents did not think that the school had a good reputation.

A significant minority felt that improvement was needed in:

- \* the information provided by teachers on their child's strengths and weaknesses;
- \* their knowledge of the school's priorities and the quality of consultation on decisions which affect their child;
- \* the way that the school dealt with inappropriate behaviour; and
- \* the mutual respect shown between pupils and teachers.

### **What pleased pupils most**

#### **What pupils would like to see improved**

Almost all felt that:

- \* teachers expected them to work to the best of their ability; and
- \* they got on well with other pupils.

Most felt that:

- \* teachers helped them if they were having difficulty;
- \* at least one teacher knew them well;
- \* teachers checked their homework; and
- \* the school helped them to keep themselves safe and healthy.

A majority did not feel that:

- \* all pupils were treated fairly in the school and that pupil behaviour was good;

and

- \* staff in the school were good at dealing with bullies.

A large minority felt that improvements were needed in the effectiveness of the school in helping to sort out areas of concern.

**What pleased staff most**

**What staff would like to see improved**

Almost all staff thought that:

- \* staff set high standards for pupils' attainment;
- \* they showed concern for the care and welfare of pupils;
- \* they worked hard to promote and maintain good relationships with the local community;
- \* they liked working in the school;
- \* there was effective communication among staff; and
- \* the school was well led.

A large minority felt that improvements were needed in the:

- \* quality of communication between senior managers and staff;
- \* opportunities to become involved in decision making;
- \* way in which senior managers operated as a team;
- \* manner with which indiscipline was dealt with; and
- \* effectiveness of the school in dealing with bullying.

**Appendix 3 Attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications**

**Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels:**

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2  
4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4  
3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

**Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by end of S4**

**2001**

**2002**

**2003**

**2001-3**

*English and Mathematics @ Level 3*

**Blairgowrie High School**

94.5

88.9

87.0

89.9

**Comparator schools1**

95.3

95.4

95.5

95.6

**National**

92.0

91.1

91.3

91.4

*5+ @ Level 3 or better*

**Blairgowrie High School**

89.5

86.9

86.5

87.5

**Comparator schools**

94.7

94.4

94.9

94.9

**National**

90.7

90.8

90.7

90.7

*5+ @ Level 4 or better*

**Blairgowrie High School**

79.6

70.2

73.4

74.2

**Comparator schools**

84.2

86.5

83.8

84.6

**National**

76.8

76.7

76.4

76.6

**5+ @ Level 5 or better**

**Blairgowrie High School**

28.7

35.4

34.8

33.1

**Comparator schools**

44.9

44.2

40.5

43.0

**National**

33.8

33.9

34.0

33.9

**Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by end of S5**

**2001**

**2002**

**2003**

**2001-3**

**5+ @ Level 4 or better**

**Blairgowrie High School**

78.0

81.2

73.2

77.4

**Comparator schools1**

86.0

85.4

86.5

85.5

**National**

78.2

78.5

78.5

78.4

**5+ @ Level 5 or better**

**Blairgowrie High School**

42.4

42.0

45.5

43.3

**Comparator schools**

53.0

55.0

55.4

55.5

**National**

44.1

45.5

45.6

45.0

***1+ @ Level 6 or better***

**Blairgowrie High School**

35.6

34.8

39.9

36.8

**Comparator schools**

48.4

46.4

48.1

48.8

**National**

39.6

39.5

39.4

39.5

***3+ @ Level 6 or better***

**Blairgowrie High School**

22.0

18.8

26.3

22.5

**Comparator schools**

27.9

30.1

29.3

29.4

**National**

23.0

22.8

22.6

22.8

***5+ @ Level 6 or better***

**Blairgowrie High School**

10.5

7.2

7.6

8.4

**Comparator schools**

10.9

12.4

10.8

11.8

**National**

9.3

9.2

9.6

9.4

**Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by end of S6**

**2001**

**2002**

**2003**

**2001-3**

*5+ @ Level 5 or better*

**Blairgowrie High School**

43.3

45.0

43.1

43.8

**Comparator schools1**

52.3

56.3

55.6

55.6

**National**

44.5

46.7

47.8

46.3

*1+ @ Level 6 or better*

**Blairgowrie High School**

44.8

42.4

37.0

41.6

**Comparator schools**

54.7

54.7

53.3

52.4

**National**

45.7

44.1

44.0

44.6

**3+ @ Level 6 or better**

**Blairgowrie High School**

30.5

29.8

26.5

29.0

**Comparator schools**

40.5

39.1

39.9

39.7

**National**

31.7

31.0

30.8

31.2

**5+ @ Level 6 or better**

**Blairgowrie High School**

18.2

19.9

16.0

18.1

**Comparator schools**

23.2

24.7

25.9

25.2

**National**

19.9

19.8

19.7

19.8

**1+ @ Level 7 or better**

**Blairgowrie High School**

11.8

14.7

9.4

12.0

**Comparator schools**

12.8

14.6

15.9

13.3

**National**

11.2

11.6

11.9

11.6

1. Comparator schools are the ten schools immediately above and the ten schools immediately below the school being inspected in terms of the percentage of pupils entitled to free meals (FME).

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

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education & Children's 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, Wellgate House (Level 5), The Wellgate, Dundee DD1 2DB or by telephoning 01382 224155. Copies are also available on our website: ([www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)).

Should you wish to comment on or make a complaint about any aspect of the inspection or about this report, you should write in the first instance to Bill Maxwell, HMCI at HM Inspectorate of Education, H Spur, Room H1-11, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from that office and on our website.

If you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman directly or through your member of the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government Departments and Agencies. She will not normally consider your complaint before the HMIE complaints procedure has been used. Instead, she will usually ask you to give us the chance to put matters right if we can.

Complaints to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman must be submitted within 12 months of the date of publication of this report.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:  
Professor Alice Brown  
The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman  
23 Walker Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7HX  
Telephone number: 0870 011 5378  
e-mail: [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk)

More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: [www.scottishombudsman.org.uk](http://www.scottishombudsman.org.uk)

Crown Copyright 2004  
HM Inspectorate of Education

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

-----