

*Towards the very best...*

# Education, Learning & Leisure

## Standards & Quality Report 2009/10



**Aberdeenshire**   
COUNCIL

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea - the very best of Scotland

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## Foreword

Welcome to the 2009/10 Standards and Quality report for the Education, Learning and Leisure service of Aberdeenshire Council.

The vision of Aberdeenshire Council is to become the best council in Scotland by providing excellent services for all. This report highlights the contribution the Education, Learning and Leisure service is making towards realising this vision.

The Education, Learning and Leisure service is committed to the promotion of lifelong learning and the advancement of community wellbeing across Aberdeenshire. Through the services we provide - via our schools and range of services for children, young people and families, our sports and leisure facilities, our Cultural Services, our Community Learning and Development services and through our range of visitor attractions – we strive to build capacity, realise potential and achieve excellence.

This report provides an update on how well we are progressing on this journey to deliver the best outcomes for the citizens and communities of Aberdeenshire. It recognises our achievements and areas where we believe that there have been improvements, as well as indicating those areas which we believe are current priorities for further improvement.



Cllr Richard Stroud,  
Chair of Education,  
Learning & Leisure  
Committee.

## Introduction

I am very pleased to present this Standards and Quality report for the Education, Learning and Leisure service in 2009/10.

The report brings together a range of evidence, from sources across the service, which have been used to arrive at an evaluation of the quality of the work that we do. The evidence includes our own evaluations of how well we are doing in relation to the delivery of key outcomes, as well as evaluations by external bodies such as HM Inspectorate of Education. A wide range of quantitative data sources have also informed the evaluations set out within this report.

This is the first Standards and Quality report for the service to be produced under the organising framework set out within the Quality Improvement Framework for the service. This provides a common framework for the drawing together of evidence from across all areas of the service, and a nationally recognised format for presenting the findings, that allows how we are performing to be compared against nationally recognised quality benchmarks.

The achievements highlighted within this report reflect the dedication, hard work and effort of our staff in all parts of the service. The report also reflects the enthusiasm and commitment of the children, young people and learners of every age, as well as the continuing support of parents/carers and families and the wide range of partners in the wider community that the service works with across Aberdeenshire.

This report presents a picture of a service which is characterised by important strengths, but with some areas where we need to improve. Together, I am convinced that we can move forward on this improvement journey to excellence, and deliver the best possible education, learning and leisure outcomes for people in Aberdeenshire.



Jim Anderson,  
Interim Director of  
Education, Learning & Leisure.



## Section 1: Introduction

### Background and context for planning for improvement

Education, Learning and Leisure is the largest service within Aberdeenshire Council with an annual revenue budget of over two hundred and fifty million pounds and almost 5,000 full-time equivalent posts. The core functions of the service are:

- Schools – including nursery, primary, secondary and special needs schools
- Children's Services - Educational Psychology, Child Protection, Early Years, Childcare Partnership, Sensory Support, English as an Additional Language
- Sport & Leisure – Swimming Pools, Sports Centres, Halls, Outdoor Sports Facilities, Sports Development & Active Schools
- Cultural Services – Libraries, Museums, Arts Development & Arts Education
- Community Learning and Development – Adult Learning, Youth Work, Community Capacity Building
- Visitor Attractions



The Education, Learning and Leisure service plays a major role in fulfilling Aberdeenshire Council's vision of having happy, healthy and confident people living in safe, friendly and lively communities. This is achieved by:

- Promoting lifelong learning in the interests of personal development and employability
- Advancing community well-being by supporting and empowering individuals, families and community groups
- Adopting sustainable approaches to all that we do

whilst ensuring that the work of the service is underpinned by a commitment to building capacity, realising potential and achieving excellence.

The service recently reviewed its strategic objectives to ensure that they remain aligned with, and contribute to, the delivery of outcomes that contribute to the Council's strategic objectives. These strategic objectives are:

- To have successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- To ensure that the needs of all learners are met and that they achieve their potential including through joint working with other services
- To have more people leading healthy, fulfilling lives through regular involvement in sporting, recreational, cultural and creative activities



- To have sufficient facilities of suitable quality to deliver the educational sporting and cultural experiences people deserve
- To ensure all aspects of our service are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to people's needs

Further details about the plans that the service is currently implementing to achieve these objectives are set out in the EL&L Service Plan.

The outcomes that will be delivered through achievement of these strategic objectives also contribute to the outcomes that the Council has agreed with its community planning partners that are set out in Aberdeenshire's Single Outcome Agreement.

The key national policies that provide the context for pursuing these objectives are:

- Curriculum for Excellence – Building the Curriculum series documents
- Getting It Right For Every Child
- Early Years Framework
- 16+ Learning Choices
- More Choices, More Chances
- Reaching Higher, the national strategy for sport
- A Games Legacy for Scotland
- Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities

New plans for culture are anticipated following the establishment of Creative Scotland in June 2010.



Other plans by partner agencies such as the Health Improvement Plan will also have a significant bearing on the work of the service.

## The Quality Improvement Framework and the Standards and Quality report

This is the first Standards and Quality report for the Education, Learning and Leisure service to be published within the context of the service's Quality Improvement Framework, "How good is our Education, Learning and Leisure service", which was approved by the EL&L Committee in October 2010.

This provides a common, nationally recognised framework, against which the work and quality of provision of all parts of the EL&L service can be monitored and evaluated.

It places the primary focus on the outcomes that the service delivers and the way in which these outcomes meet the needs of stakeholders and communities across Aberdeenshire, whilst also evaluating the quality of the processes, management systems, policies and procedures and leadership capacities that underlie the delivery of these outcomes.



The report is compiled using an evidence based approach, which relies on self evaluation at every level within the service to inform evaluative discussions and decision making and to drive future plans for improvement. It sets out how the performance of the service has been evaluated by drawing on evidence which provide answers to the following 6 high level questions:

- What key outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of key processes?
- How good is our management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

The process of adopting the service's Quality Improvement Framework is being progressively implemented, as all of the areas of the service start to use the 6 high level question structure as the organising framework for self evaluative activity and collating evidence to support judgements. This means that for the present Standards and Quality report, evidence from some service areas has not been available to contribute to some of the evaluations. However, in terms of highlighting areas of improvement and achievement during 2009/10, the report provides an accurate reflection of how the service has performed.



The focus on delivery of outcomes means that the Standards and Quality report also provides an important element of the Education, Learning & Leisure service's contribution to Aberdeenshire Council's performance management system, by complementing the regular performance reports that are presented quarterly to the Education, Learning and Leisure committee and the six Area Committees of the council. Whilst these reports provide a regular update on the service's progress in implementing its strategic objectives, the Standards and Quality report provides an annual snapshot of how the service is performance benchmarked against nationally recognised standards.

The Standards and Quality report, together with the reports on progress with implementing its strategic objectives also allow the service to discharge its statutory duty to report on how, and with what success, it is improving education in Aberdeenshire.



## Section 2: How good is our Education, Learning and Leisure service? - Summary

The evaluation of how well the Education, Learning and Leisure service is performing is organised under the 6 “high level questions” outlined in Section 1. These are:

- What key outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of key processes?
- How good is our management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

These questions are answered based on evidence culled from across the Education, Learning & Leisure service in terms of the following nationally recognised 6 point scale (used widely by a range of bodies in inspection activity, for example, by HM Inspectorate of Education and the Care Commission):

Point	Descriptor	Indicating:
6	Excellent	practice that is outstanding or sector leading
5	Very good	practice characterised by major strengths
4	Good	practice where there are important strengths, with some areas of weakness
3	Satisfactory	practice where strengths just outweigh weaknesses
2	Weak	practice where there are important weaknesses
1	Unsatisfactory	practice characterised by major weaknesses



In coming to a judgement about the appropriate evaluative descriptor that applies in relation to each high level question for the whole service, a balanced view of the range and type of evidence available, the relative impact that each area of the service can have on the service as a whole, and the “direction of travel” in terms of improvement has been taken into account. For example, there will be cases where an overall evaluation of “good” has been judged appropriate for the whole

service, but there will exist some significant evidence supporting an evaluation of “very good”, or even “excellent” in some parts of the service.

For 2009/10 the overall evaluations for the EL&L service are summarised below, together with a comparison of the equivalent evaluation last year, and also at the time of the last HMle Inspections of Education Authority Inspection in 2007/08.



High Level Question	2009/10 Evaluation	2008/09 Evaluation	2007/08 Evaluation (HMle INEA)
What key outcomes have we achieved?	Good	Good	Good
How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?	Good	Good	Good
How good is our delivery of key processes?	Very good	Very good	N/A
How good is our management?	Good	Good	N/A
How good is our leadership?	Good	Good	Good-Very good
What is our capacity for improvement?	Good	Good	Good



The sections which follow provide further detail about these evaluations and the evidence underlying them from across the service, for each of the high level questions. They also give some indications of where self evaluative evidence from a particular part of the service may indicate that there is some difference between this and the overall service evaluation above.





## Section 3.1: What key outcomes have we achieved?

This section of the report focuses on the progress we have made in improving the quality of the services we provide by delivering the service's strategic outcomes by evaluating our performance using a range of data and measures showing trends over time and by assessing our performance against aims, objectives and targets.

Overall, we continue to make **good** progress in relation to the range of measures as set out below. In some areas we believe that progress is **very good**, however, there are one or two areas where there remains a need for further improvement to ensure that performance is better than **satisfactory**.

This assessment is based on an evaluation of a range of data (highlights from which are included in the text below, and in more detail in Appendix 1), as well as self evaluation data based on a wide range of evidence generated through activity across the service. (Schools' own evaluation of this indicates a level of performance between *good* and *very good*; that of Community Learning and Development also indicates an evaluation of *good* to *very good* in places, and that of the Educational Psychology Service is *very good*).

External Inspections carried out by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) shows that in all sectors, inspections continue to result in positive outcomes.

### Primary schools

14 of the 15 primary schools (93%) inspected during session 2009/10 received a positive inspection report. (This is slightly up from the previous year, including those inspections carried out from April 2008, when this measure was introduced as part of the Scottish Government's national performance reporting framework). Four of the schools inspected were evaluated as *very good* across at least 80% of the core quality indicators used by inspectors.

- *The atmosphere for learning is very positive and caring in all classes. Children are enthusiastic and confident learners. The school is meeting its clear and ambitious aims... [and]... is very well placed to go on improving.*

HMIe Inspection report, Glenbervie School, March 2010



### Secondary schools

All three of the secondary schools inspected during session 2009/10 resulted in positive inspections, which continues the 100% standard set the previous year.

## Early years

Eight of the primary schools inspected also provide early years education for children age 3-5. In 7 of the 8 schools inspected (88%), there was a positive inspection outcome. This is in line with the wider picture for early years provision (including primary schools with nursery provision plus private, independent or voluntary sector providers working in partnerships with Aberdeenshire Council), where the national indicators show that 90% of inspections carried out since April 2008 have resulted in positive outcomes.

### Joint inspection of services to protect children and young people in Aberdeenshire Council area.

This inspection, carried out in the autumn of 2009, focuses on services to protect children and young people in Aberdeenshire provided by the EL&L service in partnership with the Housing and Social Work service of Aberdeenshire Council, together with a range of other partners, including NHS Grampian and Grampian Police. It found that for the six quality indicators used, the quality of provision was either *good* (5 indicators) or *very good* (1 indicator). This represented an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.



The inspection team also identified two examples of good practice which they published along with the inspection report. These were:

- “Time out for Teens,” which helps parents understand and meet the needs of their teenage children better, and helps reduce conflict at home. CLD Youth Workers worked with staff from Social Work and Health to develop a programme of advice and support aimed at the parents of teenagers.

and

- “Peer Listening”, which provides effective emotional support for children and young people in five schools across Aberdeenshire. The Educational Psychology Service has been instrumental in the training of peer listeners in five secondary schools. (See Case Study box).



## Case Study of good practice: Peer Listening

Emotional support for children and young people in schools. Young people developing new skills and helping each other. Promoting a listening culture.

### What was the identified issue?

Staff recognised that moving from primary to secondary school is a difficult time for many young people. In 2004, primary school pupils moving to Portlethen Academy were asked about their concerns and how they could be helped to keep safe and be better supported in their new school.

### What have staff in services done together?

Staff from several services worked with Robert Gordon University to review the young people's ideas. They looked for examples of helpful support services from other areas. They agreed to train pupils from Portlethen Academy to become 'peer listeners' who could provide a listening ear to other pupils and help them with any problems.

### What are the benefits for children/young people and families?

Peer Listening has been available for children attending Portlethen Academy for four years. The scheme provides helpful support to young people about a range of problems. Every year pupils are asked for their views about the scheme and feedback has been very positive. Many pupils feel it makes the school a safer place for them because they have someone they can talk to if they have worries. Young people who act as peer listeners receive special training and support. They are learning useful skills and play a very important and responsible role within the school. Peer Listening is now in place in four more secondary schools across Aberdeenshire.

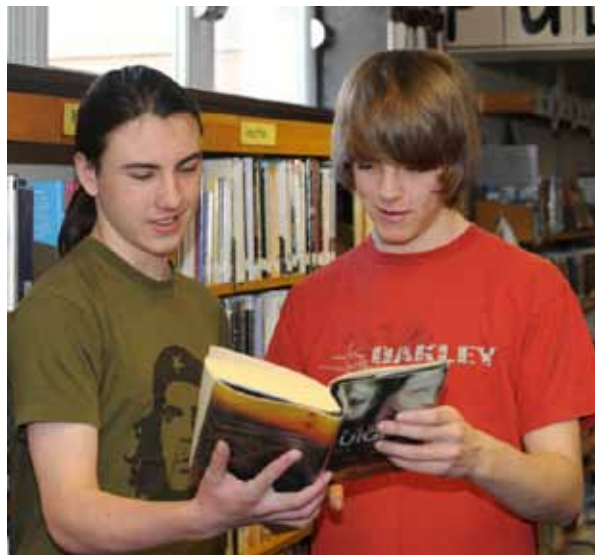


Attainment of children/young people in Aberdeenshire continues to be at a level which is higher than the national average, and across most measures, higher than the average of Aberdeenshire's set of comparator local authorities.

Levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in primary schools indicate that most children continue to achieve the appropriate national standard in each curricular area.

In reading, there has been a small but steady improvement over the past five years, whilst in writing and mathematics, the level of attainment has remained broadly stable.

Levels of attainment in writing and mathematics in the early years of secondary schools have shown notable improvement over the past five years. In reading, the level of attainment has been broadly maintained.



## Attainment in SQA Examinations

By the end of S4, it remains the case that levels of attainment in Aberdeenshire remain above both the comparator authority and national averages on all measures, and improved in 2009/10 compared with the previous year at Credit Level (SCQF Level 5). Overall however, although attainment levels by the end of S4 remain high, they are not quite as strong as they were in the first half of the decade that ended in 2010, particularly on measures that tend to capture attainment of more able pupils.

By the end of S5, attainment levels at 2010 on most measures are below where they were 5+ years ago. This has resulted in Aberdeenshire's relative position on most end of S5 measures changing from being well above the national average to being either above, or in line with the national average.

By the end of S6, levels of attainment at 2010 have not changed significantly on most measures, and in the case of the English and Mathematics at Level 3 measure, attainment has remained very strong, and is amongst the top 10% of local authorities in Scotland.

A high proportion of school leavers from Aberdeenshire go on to secure a "positive destination" after leaving school, and good progress is being made in ensuring that all pupils at 16 receive an offer of education, employment or training to meet their post 16 requirements.



91% of the cohort of 2009/10 school leavers went on to secure a positive destination, a figure that is slightly up on the previous year (89%) and higher than the national (87%) and comparator authority (89%) averages. This is the fifth highest figure of all of Scotland's 32 local authorities.



96.5% of those pupils who became statutorily able to leave school by summer of 2010 received a positive offer for post 16 education, training or employment.

Good progress continues to be made within the "More Choices, More Chances" programme to eliminate the proportion of 16-19 year olds in so called "negative destinations", with the figure for 2009/10 being 5.3%, which is lower than the national figure (10%) and the comparator authority average.

Levels of attendance in Aberdeenshire schools remain amongst the highest in Scotland.

The overall rate of attendance in Aberdeenshire was 94.4% in 2009/10, a rate well above the national average (93.2%), and the third highest attendance rate in Scotland.



Levels of exclusions of pupils from schools continue to show a downward trend.

The rate of exclusion per 1,000 pupils in Aberdeenshire in 2009/10 was 26.6 (down from 28.0 in 2008/09), a rate significantly below the national average of 44.7.

## Progress with 2009-2012 EL&L Service Plan outcomes

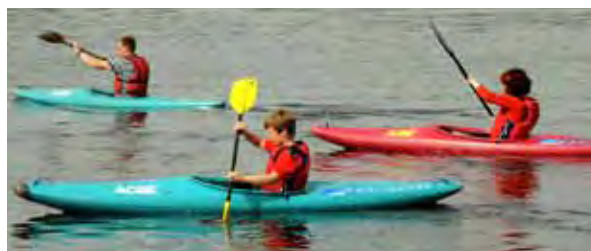
In December 2009, EL&L Committee received and approved a report which noted that 78% of the actions associated with the achievement of outcomes in the Service Plan had either been achieved or already completed. These actions are linked to the Council's strategic priorities.

During 2010, the format of the EL&L service plan was revised, in line with a Council wide review, aimed at improving the "golden thread" from Single Outcome Agreement and Community Planning Partnership plans, to Council strategic priorities to service level strategic outcomes. Subsequent performance reporting linked to the revised EL&L Service Plan will inform the service's Standards and Quality report.

The contribution of the Community Learning and Development service to a number of outcomes highlighted in the Single Outcome Agreement.

Local Indicator 3.1.2: Number of adult literacy learners and Local Indicator 3.1.3: Percentage of adults reporting that they have achieved all the goals of their individual learning plans.

- 55% of adult learners reported achieving their goals in their learning plans in 2009/10 compared with 41% in 2008/09.



Local Indicator 3.1.4 and 4.1.5: Number of young people achieving youth accreditation (through a variety of awards schemes).

- 52% more young people completed a youth award in 2009/10 compared with two years ago



## Other Key Achievements contributing toward service objectives in 2009/10:

- Educational Psychology Service (EPS) gained Customer Service in Excellence award in March 2010.
- Aberdeenshire EPS provides a psychological service to a 0 to 24 population of 70,700. Last session HMIE highlighted that very good progress was being made in the implementation of a post-school psychological service. The EPS has raised its research profile in schools and networks through a commissioning framework and has increased the number and range of professional development sessions provided. The EPS continues to make a major contribution to the development of areas such as the integrated assessment framework and additional support needs and has a heightened national profile with regard to work around autistic spectrum disorders, the development of cognitive skills and cognitive behavioural approaches within school settings.

- During Session 2009/10, almost all children had pre-school experience on entry to Primary One. Over 5,300 children received pre-school education within Aberdeenshire Council nursery classes or partner provider settings. The Early Years Team provided Workforce training for early years staff across the sectors, firstly in conjunction with the Joint Management Group for Integrated Children's Services in Aberdeenshire to explore how early intervention can improve outcomes for children and secondly, in conjunction with Learning and Teaching Scotland, on the Early Level Curriculum.



- Participation in sport and active recreation in Aberdeenshire is the second highest for any council area in Scotland according to research findings published by SportScotland; however, attendances at Council operated swimming pools and other sports facilities were down by 9% on the previous year due largely to temporary closures for renovation work and adverse weather.



- According to research carried out for the Scottish Arts Council, around 70% of the population in the north-east of Scotland take part regularly in cultural activities. Almost a quarter of the people who live in Aberdeenshire are active library users, however, there have been downward trends over the last four years in the use of libraries (4%). Attendance at Council run museums has increased by 30% over the last four years, and plans are in place to increase access to Collections through more outreach based provision.



- All Council run museums are nationally accredited.
- Duff House has been awarded a five star rating as a visitor attraction by VisitScotland and Macduff Aquarium was awarded the prize as best visitor attraction in Scotland in 2009.
- 80 new projects or initiatives were developed by community based organisations or groups with support from CLD, some of which brought significant investments to Aberdeenshire, the most notable of which was the £0.5m investment from the Scottish Towns Regeneration fund to the Dickson Hall refurbishment in Laurencekirk.



## Section 3.2: How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

This section of the report focuses on the extent to which the EL&L Service is successful in meeting the needs of its range of stakeholders. At its most general, our stakeholders are the citizens and communities that make up Aberdeenshire. However, it is useful to think of the stakeholders within a number of main groupings. These include Learners (which encompasses children and young people, but also adult learners), Parents/Carers of children and young people and their families, our Staff (includes those volunteer staff who support the delivery of many services), the various groups of users who make use of and rely on the range of services provided by the EL&L Service.



The focus here is on the extent to which the service has had a positive impact on these various stakeholder groupings and on communities. It thus refers to a range of themes, which include:

The extent to which:

- Learners are included, participating, achieving, attaining and progressing.
- Learners, parents/carers and families report that learners' educational experiences enable them to become:
  - » successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors
  - » safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected and responsible and included
- Parents/carers and families are:
  - » treated equally and fairly, are satisfied with the quality of education provided, and are involved and engaged in their children's development and learning.
- Staff (including volunteer staff) are motivated, confident and valued, and improve their practice through training and development activities, and work effectively in teams.
- The service:
  - » engages with and supports organisations in the community and contributes to achieving social justice
  - » engages local communities in and contributes to wider developments (e.g. national or international)
  - » engages stakeholder so that they become involved and motivated to participate in cultural and sporting activities

Overall, our evaluation of how well we are meeting the needs of our stakeholders is **good**; however, in respect of several of the areas, the evidence supports an evaluation of **very good**.



This assessment is based on an evaluation of a range of data (highlights from which are included in the text below, and in more detail in Appendix 1), as well as self evaluation data based on a wide range of evidence generated through activity across the service. (Schools' own evaluation of this indicates a level of performance between *good* and *very good*; that of Community Learning and Development also indicates an evaluation of *good* to *very good* in places, and that of the Educational Psychology Service is *very good*).

Evidence from HMle school and nursery inspections indicates that we are having a positive impact on children and young people's learning.

In inspections, HMle evaluated this aspect as *good* in 50% of inspections and *very good* in a further 30% of cases. In one case, Inspectors considered that the school was *excellent* in providing learning experiences that met the needs of the children.

In inspections of local authority run pre-school centres and all private, independent or voluntary pre-school centres in partnership with local authorities (carried out between April 2008 and March 2010), this aspect was evaluated as *good* in 51% of cases, *very good* in 22% of cases and *excellent* in 6% of cases.

- *Almost all children are well motivated and engaged in their learning. They are able to think independently, take responsibility and be active in their learning.*•

HMle Inspection report on Catterline School,  
April 2010

- *In almost all lessons, children learn actively, think for themselves and make choices about how they learn. Children are very confident in giving their views. They are aware of how they are doing and their strengths as learners.*•

HMle Inspection report on Gourdon School,  
August 2010

Evidence from HMle inspections of Community Learning and Development indicates that we are having a positive impact on young people and adults and the local community.

- *Young people are well supported and are encouraged to get involved in activities. Young people are actively engaged in local decision making within Acoustic Youth Stage, the Skate Park Group and the Stonehaven Young People's Society.*

*Almost all [adult] learners are more confident as a result of their experience and have become more successful learners. Staff are effectively engaging sizable numbers of learners who are traditionally hard to reach. These learners are being well supported to make important changes in their lives.*•

HMle Inspection report on the learning community surrounding Mackie Academy,  
March 2010





- *There is a wide range of vibrant, volunteer-led community groups in the area. These groups make a considerable contribution to the quality of life in the community. Almost all volunteers are very confident and make very good use of their considerable range of knowledge, skills and experience to help their community. Residents on the Westhill and Elrick Community Council engage effectively with the local authority and positively influence decision-making.*

HMIe Inspection report on the learning community surrounding Westhill Academy, June 2010

Evidence from HMIe inspection of services to protect children and young people indicates that measures taken by services to ensure that children are helped to keep safe were *very good*.



- *Services provide very effective support to help children keep themselves safe. Schools help children learn about alcohol, drugs and bullying. Staff from education, police and voluntary services work together very well to help children understand risks when using the Internet.*

HMIe Joint Inspection report on services to protect children and young people in Aberdeenshire Council area, December 2009

The continued implementation of the Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Framework, in line with Curriculum for Excellence is having a positive impact on learners.



The curriculum and the learning experiences arising from it have at their centre the idea that children and young people are active participants in their own learning. All schools are progressively ensuring that planning for learning and teaching recognises this essential fact. There are now many examples of this being successfully put into practice in schools, and direct evidence is starting to emerge of the positive impact it is having:

Pupils from Methlick and Rothienorman became costumed tour guides for Haddo House for a day as part of the Meldrum Heritage Fair. In order to prepare for the role pupils visited Haddo and researched its history with the help of the adult tour guides and a research specialist. The pupils then worked with drama tutors to fine tune their performances. The children decided which of the stories, characters and objects related to the house to present as part of their tour.

Staff from the Mathematics Department at Inverurie Academy have been working closely with Primary colleagues in developing a more cohesive, active approach to teaching and learning Maths and Numeracy. They have made excellent use of learning through technologies, as well as sharing ideas for making Numeracy “real” and teaching with minimal reliance on traditional textbooks and worksheets alone. Pupils and staff have responded with enthusiasm to the Active Maths project, finding that not only has it opened up links between Primary and Secondary colleagues, but has also helped to fire imaginations and has begun to create more of a “teamwork” approach through the cluster.

P6 pupils in the Aboyne cluster are undertaking the Environmental Award of the John Muir Trust at Discovery Level for a Transition Project. Within the Award, a wide range of exciting outdoor learning will be encompassed, discovering and exploring with a nature focus in Deeside which fully embraces our Aberdeenshire Entitlements.

Pupils in a number of Aberdeenshire schools have set up and are running a regular 'Community Café'. Pupils take responsibility for planning the café and develop many enterprising skills such as team work, cooperation and budgeting.



In December 2009, Barthol Chapel Primary School set up, in partnership with RBS Turriff branch, their very own school bank. Through providing this opportunity the children are participating in a range of vocational and enterprise experiences. Through their involvement in organising workshops, supported by the RBS Money Sense Programme, the children understand that successful independent living requires financial awareness and effective money management. RBS Money Sense programme has provided pupils with excellent resources, workshops and interactive games to enable the children to learn about personal finance.

A project to set up a Youth Bank has also been initiated in Fraserburgh with young people from Fraserburgh Academy directly involved in awarding grants to support youth groups in the area.

Young people from 6 Academies have spent time in the grounds of Fyvie Castle learning a range of traditional rural skills, ranging from fairly basic things such as clearing paths, stripping fallen trees through to more complex whittling and chiselling and on to basic dry stone dyke construction. As well as being physically demanding and challenging the activity is extremely rewarding for those involved – mixing an increased awareness of our rich heritage with the development of skills and qualities which may help them in their futures.

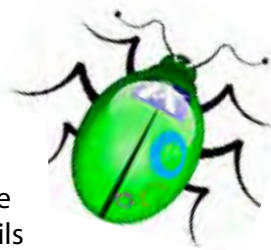
As part of their Victorian project, Primary 6 pupils at Westhill Primary also made a film



called 'Show Mercy' following research in the subject. A local writer helped the class to write a script for the film, and then went on to help edit, film and act in the film which was recorded by Aberdeenshire Council Media Unit. The class held a 'Red Carpet Premiere' event at Haddo House, as this location was used in the filming. A DVD was produced and made available for parents.

Young people in S3 at Alford Academy designed and made models of their visions for "School Buildings – Past, Present and Future" and then a series of board games were developed for use on the models, incorporating relevant Mathematical, Art, IT concepts and personal skills along the way. Higher Mathematics students at the same school looked at artists who use maths in their work; combining art techniques and differential calculus to relate the graphs of functions and derived functions. They worked on a design project based on graphs they researched and the final task was to explore the fascinating history around the concepts of zero and infinity.

Good progress is being made in implementing 16+ Learning Choices, as part of the wider "More Choices, More Chances" agenda, with over 96% of young people reaching the statutory leaving age, being in receipt of a positive offer.



The use of glow continues to be developed with a large number of schools and pupils making use of it to maintain contact and facilitate continued learning during snow closures experienced in January-March 2010.



Aberdeenshire schools continue to make progress in attaining accreditation within the Eco schools scheme which aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of the school for both pupils and staff and to engage with the wider community. By September 2010, 100% were registered with the scheme, 68% had attained Bronze level, 60% Silver and 24% had attained at least one Green Flag. Four schools had achieved their third Green Flag.

In annual stakeholder surveys of children and young people in secondary schools, there were significant improvements in reported views in relation to the following questions:

- I am allowed to set my own targets for my learning (up 7 percentage points from 2008/09)
- Lessons are organised in a way that suits the ways I like to learn (up 2 percentage points from 2008/09)
- I have been able to suggest improvements for my school (up 8 percentage points from 2008/09)
- When I am in school I feel safe and secure (up 8 percentage points from 2008/09)
- I get the support that I need to help me learn when I am in school (up 12 percentage points from 2008/09)
- My teachers let me know when I have done well (up 9 percentage points from 2008/09)

A new question, included in the survey for the first time in 2009/10, asking whether children and young people felt they had good opportunities to keep fit and healthy resulted in 90%+ positive outcomes for both primary and secondary respondents, indicating the positive impact that Health and Wellbeing across the curriculum is having.



Aberdeenshire's Parental Involvement Strategy received a positive response in a wide ranging consultation exercise in March-May 2010.

Across all respondents there was widespread agreement (88% to 96%) with almost all of the proposals contained in the strategy, including:

- Encouraging, facilitating and supporting the establishment of Parent Councils in all schools
- Opening up opportunities and removing barriers to parental involvement
- Ensuring effective parental involvement and support for the most vulnerable children, young people and families
- Actively planning, supporting, encouraging and developing parents' involvement in their child's learning within service establishments and at home



- Establishing an effective communication framework with parents which facilitates communication with the whole service, within community networks, between schools and with individual schools
- Systematically planning and seeking parents' views on the service and schools in order to inform policy and how the service can best meet the needs of parents and families
- Having a fully comprehensive compliments and complaints procedure in place which incorporates the rights of parents to complain about any failure of the authority to fulfil its duties under the Act
- Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation of procedures, activities and processes for parental involvement

Evidence from annual stakeholders' survey indicates that Parents/Carers feel that they are treated fairly and have good relationships with their schools, but also highlight a number of issues relating to motivation and engagement of staff.

- 61% of Parents/Carers and families responded positively when asked if they feel that they are treated fairly by the education authority (up 12 percentage points from 2008/09, up 17 percentage points from 2005/06).
- Just over 80% of Parents/Carers responded positively when asked if they had good relationships with their local schools (only slightly down from the previous year).
- The response of Parents/Carers also indicated an increase in the percentage of positive responses regarding opportunities for children and young people to participate in sporting activities.
- When asked whether they felt morale was high, there was a reduction in the percentage responding positively to this question in most staff categories.

## Other achievements supporting the evaluation in this area:

- The Arts Education Team was instrumental in securing a £30,000 grant from the Scottish Arts Council to support the setting up of an Aberdeenshire Youth Pipe Performance Band.
- Mintlaw Academy was awarded a special award by the Scottish Schools Football association to recognise their "outstanding contribution to the development of girls' football". The award was presented at Hampden Park, Glasgow in May 2010.
- Banff Primary school became the first mainstream school to gain accreditation by the National Autistic Society in January 2010.
- Portlethen Academy received the prestigious International School Award from the UK government in recognition of the school's work in bringing the wider world into the classroom. This is the second time that the school has received the award.
- A team of young engineers from Mearns Academy won the PetroChallenge competition in September 2009. Aberdeenshire pupils also finished as runner up in the competition, which involved over 320 senior pupils from across Scotland.
- There was our busiest ever Run Balmoral event, with over 4,000 participants.
- The number of participants in Sport and Leisure's Learn to swim programme in 2009/10 was 10% up on the numbers taking part the previous year.
- There were over 400,000 visits to sports development courses in 2009/10.





## Section 3.3: How good is our delivery of key processes?

This section of the report focuses on how well we perform in relation to the key processes relating to service delivery. The key processes will vary, depending on which service area is under consideration. Within schools and early years provision there is a focus on the themes of the design and delivery of the curriculum and the processes of learning and teaching; within CLD the themes of creating and facilitating opportunities for community development and context for learning and development are important. Within the Educational Psychology Service processes relating to the themes of consultation, assessment, intervention and professional development and research are important, whilst within Sport and Leisure and Cultural Services there is a focus on the themes of promoting participation and development, engaging with communities and promoting innovation and creativity.

Across all service areas, this key question includes a focus on inclusion, equality and fairness and on processes that support improvement.

Overall, our evaluation of how well we are delivering key processes is **very good**.

This assessment is based on an evaluation of a range of data (highlights from which are included in the text below, and in more detail in Appendix 1), as well as self evaluation data based on a wide range of evidence generated through activity across the service. (Schools' own evaluation of this indicates a level of performance which is *very good* in

most places and *good* elsewhere, but which is improving; that of Community Learning and Development indicates an evaluation of *good*, and that of the Educational Psychology Service is *very good*).

Evidence from HMle Inspections that the curriculum is increasingly being developed and implemented in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

In the majority of school inspections, Inspectors have found and reported evidence of positive progress being made in developing and implementing the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

- *Across the nursery and primary classes, staff are making a very positive start to implementing Curriculum for Excellence. In the nursery, staff take very good account of children's interests in planning stimulating activities. In primary classes, the well planned curriculum is helping children to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills.*

HMle Inspection report, Mill O'Forest School, June 2010



• *Across the stages, the school offers a wide choice of stimulating courses and activities to meet young people's needs. As a result, young people have very good opportunities to develop appropriate skills. ...Staff have made very positive progress in planning courses in line with Curriculum for Excellence.* •

HMle Inspection report, Westhill Academy,  
June 2010

• *Staff have made a very positive start to reviewing the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which includes all subject areas. Staff are helping children link their learning across subjects.* •



HMle Inspection report,  
Crathes School,  
March 2010

HMle evidence that key aspects of planning for learning and teaching inherent within Curriculum for Excellence are increasingly being implemented.

• *Staff work very well together to plan and assess children's work using Curriculum for Excellence. They plan literacy and numeracy experiences effectively to ensure children are making continuous progress.* •

HMle Inspection report, Foveran School,  
August 2010

• *The curriculum has major strengths. It is being further improved as staff implement Curriculum for Excellence. Staff give very good attention to ensuring children's mental and physical health and wellbeing.* •

HMle Inspection report, Glenberrie School,  
March 2010

• *At the primary stages, staff have made a highly promising start to providing a Curriculum for Excellence. They are developing children's literacy and numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum.* •

HMle Inspection report, Strathburn School,  
March 2010

Wider evidence of the increasing impact of the development and implementation of Curriculum for Excellence on the curriculum and learning and teaching in schools and early years establishments.

A range of evidence indicates that the work that has been taking place which supports curriculum planning and development, the planning of learning and teaching experiences that engage and involve children and young people and assessment practices that support learning and engage learners are starting to have a positive impact.

P6-S1 Curriculum Maps are in place in all networks to support curriculum planning in upper primary and early secondaries and ensure effective primary – secondary transition.

Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing are delivered across the curriculum by all teachers and increasingly reflects best practice, which have been exemplified, shared and made available through the work of the relevant Cognate groups and associated development officers.

The Determined to Succeed initiative has ensured that enterprise and vocational learning is well embedded as part of the 3-18



Curriculum in schools and networks. The September issue of the service's Curriculum for Excellence newsletter highlighted a series of case studies from eleven schools, across each of the six Determined to Succeed themes, to illustrate and exemplify this.

Evidence from pupil responses in stakeholder surveys shows positive and/or improving responses to items relating to quality learning and teaching practice.

Question	% Positive responses (primary)	% Positive responses (secondary)
I get the support that I need to help me learn when I am in school	92%	90% (improving trend)
My teachers let me know when I have done well	97%	83% (improving trend)
I am allowed to set my own targets for my learning	84%	76% (improving trend)
The way we work in class suits the way I like to learn (Primary). Lessons are organised in a way that suits the ways I like to learn (Secondary)	88%	59% (improving trend)

A clear commitment to ensure that Inclusion, equality and fairness feature highly in the delivery of services across the Education, Learning & Leisure service.

Improved tracking and monitoring of outcomes for looked after children to inform policy and practice to address issues of inequality relating to looked after children and help them secure positive outcomes.

In 2009/10, 40.2% of 16 or 17 year olds ceasing to be looked after (at home or away from home) achieved at least SCQF Level 3 in English in Mathematics, compared with 33.3% in 2008/09.

Steady reduction in the number of times that exclusion from school is used, as a last resort in dealing with behavioural issues. During 2009/10, there were 913 cases of exclusion from schools in Aberdeenshire, a decrease of 20% over the last two years (1,144 exclusions in 2007/08).

Since HMle commented positively on the Educational Psychology Service's (EPS) approach to the delivery of Post School Psychological Services (PSPS) EPS has continued to develop its PSPS through building on its work both at the secondary school and post-school levels. The Service has also strengthened the links it has forged with a range of authority and partnership groups including: More Choices, More Chances; Looked After Children; Youth Offender Review Group (YORG) and Partnership Matters with FE Colleges as a means of improving transitions, developing effective supports for vulnerable groups and ensuring better outcomes.

Aberdeenshire schools continue to make progress in attaining accreditation within the Rights Respecting School Awards (RRSA) scheme, which recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. By the end of June 2010, 27 schools were registered with the scheme (16% of all schools in Aberdeenshire), 9 schools had attained Rights Respecting School status at Level 1 and 1 school had attained Level 2 status. Five schools achieved Level 1 in 2009/10: Dunnottar Primary School, Fishermoss School, Lairhillock School, Elrick Primary School and New Deer Primary School.

Progress in ensuring that processes for improving the quality of services are robust, effective and based on self evaluation.

Following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, the service's Quality Improvement Framework was agreed and approved by the Education, Learning and Leisure committee. At the heart of the framework is the notion that the key driver of improvement practice is effective self evaluation, involving staff at every level across the service.

In stakeholder surveys, almost all Head Teachers (90%+) reported that Curriculum for Excellence was having an impact on their Improvement Plans and that they had used the online resource Journey to Excellence to support their improvement planning processes. More than 80% reported that they had engaged with their Quality Improvement Officers on self evaluative activities (the second year in a row where this figure has increased).

The Kaizen for Daily Improvement (KDI) initiative is seen as an integral part of our improvement processes and has been incorporated within the Quality Improvement Framework. A KDI team, consisting of a Senior Improvement Officer and two Continuous Improvement Officers is now in place.



Evidence from HMle school inspections indicates an improving trend in relation to the Quality Indicator "Improvement through self-evaluation".

Use of Kaizen (in December 2009) to improve the Culture and Sports and Leisure service's Easter and Summer holiday programme for young people. As a result, more programmes

than ever were held across the service (including libraries, the Ranger service, Sports and Arts development, Museums and visitor attractions and sports and leisure facilities). Most programmes were well attended and the flagship P7-S4 programme of Outdoor Activities and Trips, which operated every week of the Easter, Summer and October holidays was attended by over 1,100 young people aged 11-16.

### Other evidence

Evidence gathered under the national self evaluation toolkit used by the Library service resulted in evaluations of *excellent* for Arrangements for Access and *very good* for Staff interaction and support.

In addition, Provision of public access computers was rated as *very good* with regularly refreshed hardware and very good connectivity, which offers greater opportunity to support the public in finding information, skills development, cultural enrichment, leisure and the tourist industry. Key strengths of the service include the levels of in-house and corporate ICT support which offer a reliable and responsive service to the public and staff, wi-fi access, use of web 2.0 tools, support for information literacy and learners and support for staff skills development. Other important strengths include well-organised web pages, provision of broadband internet access on regularly refreshed machines, a range of online resources and community information.





Delivery of teacher training in mediated learning and instrumental enrichment by the Educational Psychology Service.

Mearns Academy were awarded the Customer Service Excellence award in recognition of the high quality of their customer services. The school, which had previously been awarded a Charter Mark Award (which the Customer Service Excellence Standard scheme has since replaced), were informed of their success following a formal assessment visit in January 2010.

### Other achievements supporting the evaluation in this area:

- Heritage Fairs were held in several communities in Aberdeenshire in the second half of 2009. Heritage Fairs celebrate the culture and traditions that are unique to each community and encourage individuals to engage with their community and to take pride in their heritage. These were in Peterhead (July), Inverurie (September), Fraserburgh (October), Laurencekirk (November) and Ellon (November).
- Aberdeenshire was commissioned by Learning and Teaching Scotland to develop the use of Glow Beyond School. This project aimed to develop parental involvement, the roll out of Glow across the EL&L service, working with our partners in learning, particularly the Cairngorm National Park Board and Learning with Employers, including the Oil and Gas sector and the Rural Skills network. Aberdeenshire's practice for parental involvement through Glow has been shared nationally and is being used by other authorities in Scotland to guide their roll out of Glow to parents and carers. More than 45,000 Glow accounts have now been created.

- Parts of Glow have also been developed to support quality improvement and self evaluation processes through the creation of a Virtual School.
- In 2010, Daviot primary school and Arduithie primary school achieved the Health Promoting Schools Excellence Award. The Grampian Health Promoting School Accreditation Scheme has three levels of accreditation: commitment, commended and excellence. To achieve excellence, schools are required to meet the criteria for all three levels and host a visit by representatives of the Pan Grampian Moderation Board.
- Ellon Academy became the first secondary school in Aberdeenshire, and only the fifteenth in Scotland to be granted Fair Trade Status. To achieve this the school has undertaken a range of activities including hosting international speakers, establishing cross faculty links and integrating Fair Trade ideas within lessons and providing a range of selling and promotional opportunities across the school and the community.





## Section 3.4: How good is our management?

This section of the report focuses on how effectively we manage the service. It is therefore concerned with issues such as policy planning and development, participation of stakeholders, operational planning, how well we manage and support and develop staff, how well we manage and deploy resources and how effective we are at partnership working.

Overall, our evaluation of how well we manage the service is **good**.

This assessment is based on an evaluation of a range of data (highlights from which are included in the text below, and in more detail in Appendix 1), as well as self evaluation data based on a wide range of evidence generated through activity across the service. (Schools' own evaluation of this indicates a level of performance which is *good* to *very good*; that of Community Learning and Development indicates an evaluation of *good*, and that of the Educational Psychology Service is *very good*).

### Evidence relating to policy, policy development and review, planning and the participation of stakeholders

In the course of 2009/10 the Education, Learning and Leisure department considered and approved major changes in policy and procedure relating to the Management of Primary School Clusters, quality improvement in the form of the Quality Improvement Framework, the Parental Involvement Strategy, the allocation of Support for Learning

Auxiliaries and new strategies for Culture and Sport. All of these involved appropriate consultative processes, either through existing consultative arrangements, or through specific consultation exercises involving a wide range of stakeholders.



However, evidence from stakeholders surveys of parents/carers has consistently shown a relatively low percentage of positive responses to the question "Through consultation we have a chance to influence the aims and plans for education in our Council area". In five years of surveys, the maximum percentage of positive responses received to this question is just under 50%, and it has shown a small downward trend over the past two years.

Some major policy areas are subject to regular review and monitoring, via regular reporting to EL&L committee. These would include the major policy on the curriculum (The 3-18 Curriculum Framework), the joint Corporate Parenting Policy, the Service Plan and various policies that are monitored through regular performance reporting (e.g Attainment and Achievement, School Attendance). However,

review and monitoring of a range of other policies is not always conducted on such a regular basis across all of the service and in some cases a more ad-hoc approach applies. This may be an area that requires a more strategic approach.

The Quality Improvement Framework, together with the revised arrangements for Service Planning will see a consistent approach to improvement planning being used across the service with all service areas adopting a cyclical approach which involves identifying priorities for improvement, taking action and ensuring impact, all within the context of an improvement journey towards an agreed vision, expressed in terms of outcomes for stakeholders. An annual Improvement Plan will be a key element of this process.

### Evidence relating to management and support of staff

For the start of session 2009/10 a total of 90 new teaching posts were appointed to permanent and fixed term teaching posts, a number of which included a significant number of the previous year's cohort of probationer teachers. Effective use was made of creative advertising to generate interest in vacant posts resulting in relatively few teaching posts remaining vacant at the start of the session.

The overall pupil teacher ratio across schools in Aberdeenshire was 13.1, which was slightly below the national average of 13.2. In addition, the overall pupil teacher ratio for P1–P3 classes was below 20.

Support for probationer teachers within Aberdeenshire is a key strength. In primary schools, probationer teachers are supported by 11 full-time Mentors. In addition, the 53 fully funded probationers that Aberdeenshire released have allowed a number of Depute Head Teachers and Principal Teachers to be released from teaching commitments to support development work associated with the 3-18 Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Excellence. Each year,

supported by staff and officers across the service, almost all probationers in Aberdeenshire schools achieve the Standard for Full Registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. The success of the scheme was recognised by the awarding of a Bronze COSLA award in 2010 within the "Securing a Workforce for the Future" category.

A range of opportunities for continuing professional development have been made available for teaching staff. These include the expansion of the Sustaining Teacher Learning Communities scheme to 83 communities involving nearly 700 staff, the creation of Professional and Cognate Support Groups as part of the 3-18 Curriculum support structure, support from Development Officers with remits in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.



In addition, support for development and implementation of the 3-18 Curriculum Framework has been provided to support schools and networks in development activities during in-service days.

Head Teachers have been supported through regular Head Teachers' Conferences, with the main focus for support being the 3-18 Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Excellence.

In November 2009, a major conference for all teaching staff was organised. The Aberdeenshire Learning Festival was held in the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference centre and was attended by close to 3,000 delegates. The focus for the conference was the 3-18 Curriculum Framework and Curriculum for Excellence and it involved high

profile keynote speakers, a range of discussion groups, a showcase of best practice from each of the 17 learning communities within a “Learning Village”, which also provided the opportunity for many learning partners and commercial organisations to exhibit a wide range of resources, ideas and programmes. The event was exceptionally well organised and gained very positive feedback from those attending.



In stakeholder surveys of staff, a number of items provided evidence that staff welcomed the staff development opportunities available, and that they had a positive impact:

Item	% Positive responses (Teachers)	% Positive responses (non-school)
In my establishment/my team, there is a policy and programme for continuing professional development.	86%	62%
Training and development activities that I have undertaken have had a positive impact on my ability to do my job.	85%	79%
I have access to appropriate training and development opportunities.	60%	70%

The figures do, however, highlight a discrepancy between teachers and non-school based staff so far as the existence of a programme for continuing professional development is concerned.

A number of other items within the stakeholders survey of staff point to a positive picture in relation to team working, ability to carry out duties and knowledge of health and safety procedures:

Item	% Positive responses (Teachers)	% Positive responses (non-school)
In my establishment/my team, there is effective team working.	77%	86%
I have access to the information I need to do my job effectively.	85%	84%
Health and safety information is available to me.	91%	97%

However, the picture is less positive in relation to communication, care and welfare (teachers only) and making best use of expertise.

Item	% Positive responses (Teachers)	% Positive responses (non-school)
There is effective communication amongst staff in the EL&L service.	51%	57%
Managers show concern for the care and welfare of staff.	55%	71%
My expertise and professional experience are used effectively in the EL&L service.	66%	61%

### Evidence relating to the management of resources and partnerships.

Total spending per pupil in Aberdeenshire primary schools in 2009/10 was £4,382, compared with £4,028 nationally. In the secondary sector the figure for Aberdeenshire was £6,074 per pupil, compared with £5,598 nationally.

In September 2009 the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning announced the first phase of secondary schools to benefit from the Scottish Government's School Investment Programme. Aberdeenshire was the only authority to secure funding for more than one secondary school project, with plans to build new schools at Ellon and Mearns Academy. Since then, the Council's Capital Plan has been reviewed – to take account of this new funding and the subsequent change in the national funding climate – but it retains plans to develop these schools along with a range of other capital projects.

During 2009/10, the service completed an ambitious run of sports and leisure facilities renovations at Peterhead, Turriff and Banchory and is now developing the business case for the new Fraserburgh Swimming Pool and Sport Centre that is part of the Council's Capital Plan.



As part of the revised national system for Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs), the service has included two new SPIs specifically tied to the quality and "fit for purpose" status of school, community and sports and leisure accommodation.

All 17 of Aberdeenshire's secondary schools are now fully wireless enabled, which provides much greater flexibility to develop and implement learning experiences which require online access.

Partnership working is an important element in service delivery in an increasing number of areas of the Education, Learning and Leisure service. In Sports and Leisure, Cultural services and Community Learning and Development this has been a feature of service delivery for some time. The service works with the Aberdeenshire Childcare Partnership to promote the provision of quality day care and out of school care across Aberdeenshire and in order to discharge its responsibilities through its Corporate Parenting role, the service works



closely with Aberdeenshire Social Work and other partners. However, the 3-18 Curriculum Framework envisages that delivery of all of the curricular entitlements for learning will require a commitment to and effective delivery of successful partnership working. Some examples of successful partnership working are:

- Community Learning and Development partners are involved in improvement planning and self evaluation.
- The delivery of post 16 Learning Choices options via links with Further Education Colleges and other providers. In September 2009, as a result of successful partnership working with Aberdeen College, a new learning centre was opened in the Crichton Building on the grounds of Inverurie Academy to offer courses in care and IT for young people and learners from all ages in the locality.
- Aberdeenshire EL&L worked in partnership with Satrosphere Science Centre to bring the 'Walking with Dinosaurs' exhibition to Satrosphere Aberdeen in May-Aug 2010. As a result, over 900 primary and special school pupils from Aberdeenshire schools had priority access to the exhibition, and the pupils also benefitted from the 'Dinosaur Dig' workshop activity that supported the exhibition. The exhibition was also visited by over 200 people from Aberdeenshire, who benefitted from the 'golden ticket' scheme that was made available through Aberdeenshire libraries.
- Partnership working with the Oil and Gas industry (through the 'Careers in the Oil, Gas and Energy Sector' forum), through a range of projects and activities aimed at: promoting the development of industry ready young people, supporting the development of industry aware educators, supporting the development of educationally aware industry, helping link young people with real career opportunities, helping to link industry to potential trainees and creating an exemplar model of collaboration which can be shared across the UK. (See Case Study box).

## Case Study of good practice: Determined to Succeed - Links with the Energy Sector

Determined to Succeed (DtS) is a National initiative aimed at developing Enterprise in Education. Given the importance of the Energy sector to the North East economy individual schools and companies together with Aberdeenshire DtS staff have forged strong links with partners from this sector.

Through partnership working, the 'Careers in the Oil, Gas and Energy Sector' (COGeS) forum has ensured that significant numbers of pupils and teaching staff have been involved in a range of energy related projects and activities:

- All academies involved in 'PetroChallenge', an annual 2 day oil exploration simulation organised by OPITO (The Oil and Gas Academy) and held at RGU Business School
- All academies sending pupils to 'Education Day at Offshore Europe' in September 2009
- All academies sending staff to 'All Energy' an international event with a focus on Renewable/Green Energy
- Development of Young Engineer clubs in Primary and Secondary schools from around 16 in 2008 to over 40 in 2010

Other key strands of work either being supported by COGeS at present or linked to the COGeS objectives include:

- Development of Skills for Work Energy courses at both Banff and Buchan College and more recently at Aberdeen College
- Involvement of a company called C-T-C, who are specialists in Coaching and Training Consultancy for the Energy sector, to support potential S4 leavers in CV writing, interview and employability skills
- Working with another company called Ideas in Partnership to promote links between schools and local businesses
- Developing materials for Curriculum for Excellence linked to renewable/greener forms of energy, through a number of teacher placements with industries
- Working with the Energy Institute and Society of Petroleum Engineers on a resource called Energy 4 Me which supports engineers when they visit schools



## Section 3.5: How good is our leadership?

This section of the report focuses on the extent to which the vision, values and aims of the service guide planning for and impact on maintaining and improving the quality of services for learners, their families and the community. It also focuses on arrangements for strategic planning, the effectiveness of the senior management of the service and how well they provide support and challenge across the service to secure continuous improvement.

Overall, our evaluation of the quality of our leadership is **good**.

This assessment is based on an evaluation of a range of evidence, highlights from which are included in the text below, and in more detail in Appendix 1.

The vision, values and aims of the service underpin the improvement priorities and plans for action that comprise the EL&L Service Plan. Work to strengthen this underpinning by revising the strategic planning and performance reporting of the service began in 2010 and will continue through 2011.



The 3-18 Curriculum Framework provides a distinctive Aberdeenshire policy framework which encompasses the national Curriculum for Excellence programme.

The strategic priorities of the service are clearly linked to the Council's own strategic priorities, the themes of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership Plan and also specific local outcomes within the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement. The Council's vision to be the "best council" is effectively reflected within EL&L strategic plans and publications and is well understood by staff across the service.

Elected members work effectively with senior managers to provide strategic direction and leadership through the EL&L committee and the Area Committee structure. Through regular "away day" events, elected members are able to engage with senior managers and managers of establishments and facilities, to discuss how they contribute towards the service's vision, values and aims.



Evidence from stakeholders surveys indicates that the strong commitment of elected members and senior management to improving Education, Learning and Leisure services continues to be recognised amongst service managers (90%+ positive responses). However, there was a notable drop in the percentage of positive responses to the question “The authority is well led” across all stakeholder groups involved in the survey – parents/carers, staff (managers) and staff (non-managers). For instance, for teachers, the drop was from 50% positive responses to under 30% positive responses.

These findings perhaps reflect the fact that for half of the period of time covered by this report, there was a lack of continuity of personnel within the senior management team which may have impacted on the perception of stakeholders as to its ability to exemplify and provide effective leadership.

To strengthen its commitment to continuous improvement, the service appointed a team of Continuous Improvement Officers to roll out and support the Kaizen for Daily Improvement programme across the service. Part of the work of this team is to complement existing improvement practices and ensure that there is an empowering culture of improvement and an understanding that all staff, at whatever level, have a key role to play in taking forward the work of the authority.

As a key element of the Quality Improvement Framework, the idea of the Leadership for Improvement engagement was introduced. This requires leaders at every level to be active in setting the agenda for improvement and leading their teams in the improvement planning process, and envisages arrangements whereby staff must be able to interact with their line managers in an informed, supportive, challenging and professional dialogue about improvement in their establishment, team or area of the service. In school, this was implemented during 2009-10 as the “Leadership for Learning” engagement.

Through the support structure of the 3-18 Curriculum Framework, its strategy groups, special focus groups, cognate groups and professional support groups, there are opportunities to identify, nurture and develop new talent, who will support improvement, in a variety of roles, in the future.

The Aberdeenshire Education, Learning & Leisure Service is also supporting the development of Leadership and Management skills through a number of other significant initiatives and support events which include: the nationally recognised arrangements to support Probationer Teachers, a number of “Leadership Conversations” led by the former Director for existing Head Teachers, a series of conferences for Senior Management Teams which have focused on key priorities, particularly Curriculum for Excellence, support days for Depute Head Teachers and Principal Teachers in Primary Schools, Mentoring Courses jointly developed and delivered with Aberdeen University, School of Education with participants ranging from Class Teachers to Head Teachers, the growing number of “Sustaining Teacher Learning Communities” established in schools across Aberdeenshire and opportunities for coaching and mentoring support for existing Senior Management Teams.







## Section 3.6: What is our capacity for improvement?

This section of the report provides a global judgement on “how good the service can potentially be” based on evidence of all key areas, in particular, outcomes, impact, and leadership.

Overall, our evaluation is that the Education, Learning and Leisure service’s capacity to improve is **good**.

The Service is confident, based on the evidence and evaluation to date, that:

- Outcomes for children, young people and learners across Aberdeenshire in terms of levels of attainment and achievement are already at levels above the national average and the progressive implementation of the 3-18 Curriculum Framework means that we are well placed to address those areas where attainment has not shown the improvement we seek, and secure further improvements in these areas in the future.
- The work which was started in May 2010 to revise the Education, Learning & Leisure Service Plan, and review our strategic objectives to ensure better alignment with corporate and national planned outcomes, as well as the associated work to ensure effective arrangements for performance management will increase our capacity to make progress in delivering positive outcomes for the people of Aberdeenshire.

- Leadership and management are currently effective but key senior posts will become vacant in the near future which will require to be filled by suitable replacements in order to ensure that further improvement are not delayed.
- Quality Improvement arrangements are in place, and improving, in all areas, and the current Service Plan contains within it a commitment to ensure that the Quality Improvement Framework is in place across the entire service.
- Notwithstanding the current difficult financial outlook, by maintaining a clear focus on the outcomes we want to deliver for the people of Aberdeenshire, by ensuring that improvement is driven from the “grass-roots” using self evaluation, and by providing effective leadership at all levels, the service is well placed to improve.



## Our Improvement priorities

The evaluations outlined in this report indicate a fairly stable position in terms of quality, compared with the previous year. Whilst evaluations that are mainly “good” are indicative of a service where there are “important strengths”, it also means that there remain significant areas for improvement, which we seek to address by exercising the capacity to improve just described. These were highlighted within the new Service Plan as follows:

- Ensuring the curriculum is meeting all learners’ needs and engaging them in their own learning
  - Ensuring greater parental involvement
  - Achieving consistency in the quality of learning, teaching and assessment within and across establishments
  - Improving achievement in literacy and numeracy
  - Improved use of self evaluation to drive improvement
  - Achieving consistency in levels of achievement and attainment across establishments and across different subject areas
  - Ensuring effective transitions at key stages
- Ensuring effective partnership working
  - Reversing downward trends in the use of libraries, visitor attractions and a number of sports facilities
  - Widening access to lifelong learning, sporting and cultural opportunities by targeting under-represented groups such as those on low incomes, disabled people and older people
  - Adopting a more co-ordinated approach to strategic planning that ensures a “golden thread” connects all related plans and strategies
  - Ensuring that performance is measured systematically in relation to objectives
  - To continue to improve the fabric and fitness for purpose of all our buildings in accordance with the Council’s Capital Plan





# Appendix 1: Facts and Figures

## HM Inspectorate of Education External Inspections

**Table 1:** Percentage of pre-school establishments receiving a positive inspection report from HM Inspectorate of Education/The Care Commission (28 April 2008 to 31 March 2010) (%)

	Percentage of pre-school establishments where inspection reports found that:			
	The criteria for a positive inspection was not met	The criteria for a positive inspection was met at the following level:		
		Satisfactory or better	Good or better	Very good or better
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	10	90	55	14
<b>Scotland</b>	8	92	71	27

**Table 2:** Percentage of primary and secondary schools receiving a positive inspection report from HM Inspectorate of Education (28 April 2008 to 31 March 2010) (%)

	Percentage of schools where inspection reports found that:			
	The criteria for a positive inspection was not met	The criteria for a positive inspection was met at the following level:		
		Satisfactory or better	Good or better	Very good or better
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	7	93	63	17
<b>Scotland</b>	10	90	68	18

**Table 3:** Inspections of CLD and Learning Community Inspections, Inspections of Learning Communities surrounding secondary schools in Aberdeenshire, (No.)

Quality Indicator(s)	Number of inspections where Quality Indicator(s) assessed as:	
	Satisfactory or better	Good or better
1.1 Improvements in performance	2	0
2.1 Impact on participants - adults and young people	4	1
4.1 Impact on the local community		

## Child Protection Measures

**Table 4:** Number of EL&L staff who have undergone appropriate training in child protection measures

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
932	1,400	4,383	4,140

## School Attainment

### Attainment in Primary Schools

**Table 5:** Percentage of pupils achieving the appropriate level at P3, P4, P6 and P7 (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reading	81	82	83	84	83
Writing	76	78	77	76	75
Mathematics	83	84	84	83	84

### Attainment in Secondary Schools

**Table 6:** Percentage of pupils at S2 achieving at least level E (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reading	72	70	68	71	72
Writing	55	51	53	60	59
Mathematics	68	68	69	73	72

## Attainment in SQA Examinations

### Attainment by the end of S4

**Table 7:** Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at the specified SCQF Level (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	National (2010)	Comparator (2010)
5+ Awards at SCQF 5	43	41	41	39	41	35	38
5+ Awards at SCQF 4	85	84	84	85	83	78	78
5+ Awards at SCQF 3	94	93	94	95	94	92	92

**Table 8:** Percentage of pupils achieving at least SCQF Level 3 in English and Mathematics (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	National (2010)	Comparator (2010)
English & Maths SCQF 3	95	94	96	96	94	92	93

### Attainment by the end of S5

**Table 9:** Percentage of pupils attaining Awards at Higher Level (SCQF Level 6) (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	National (2010)	Comparator (2010)
5+ Awards at Higher	12	13	12	12	12	11	12
3+ Awards at Higher	28	27	27	27	26	24	26
1+ Awards at Higher	45	43	44	44	45	43	45

## Attainment by the end of S5

**Table 10:** Percentage of pupils attaining Awards at Higher and Advanced Higher Level (SCQF Levels 6 and 7) (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	National (2010)	Comparator (2010)
1+ Award at Adv. Higher	16	16	16	17	16	14	16
5+ Awards at Higher	25	23	24	25	24	22	25
3+ Awards at Higher	37	35	35	35	35	33	37
1+ Awards at Higher	50	49	47	49	48	43	50

**Table 11:** Percentage of pupils attaining an award at at least SCQF Level 3 in English and Mathematics (%)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	National (2010)	Comparator (2010)
English & Maths SCQF 3	96	96	96	95	97	93	93

## Destinations of School Leavers

**Table 12:** Percentage of school leavers going on to a "positive destination" (%)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeenshire	91.4	91.6	90.1	91.4
CA Average	89.0	88.7	87.5	87.9
Scotland	86.6	86.4	85.7	86.8

## Attendance, Absence and Exclusions

**Table 13:** Attendance rates (%)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeenshire	94.7	94.9	94.7	94.4
Scotland	93.3	93.2	93.3	93.2

**Table 14:** Truancy or unexplained absence rates (%)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%
<b>Scotland</b>	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%

**Table 15:** Exclusions per 1,000 pupils

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	36	33	28	27
<b>Scotland</b>	64	57	50	45

**Table 16:** Cases of exclusion by type of exclusion, Aberdeenshire

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
<b>Temporary exclusions</b>	1,259	1,130	945	911
<b>Removed from register</b>	15	14	9	2
<b>Total exclusions</b>	1,274	1,144	954	913

## Adult Learning

**Table 17:** Number of Adult Literacy Learners

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
2,557	2,431	2,624	2,199

**Table 18:** Percentage of Adult Learners reporting that they have achieved all of the goals of their Learning Plans (%)

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
43%	64%	41%	55%

## Achievements of, and Engagement with, Young People

**Table 19:** Average monthly number of young people taking part in Youth Work opportunities (which may lead to various Youth Awards - e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award, Youth Achievement Award etc)

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
2,674	3,980	3,809

**Table 20:** Number of young people achieving accreditation through a variety of awards schemes

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
127	166	193

**Table 21:** Number of events/meetings taking place to build community capacity that include young people

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
2,106	1,085	1,372

## Sports, Leisure and Active Lifestyles

**Table 22:** Number of attendances at activities organised by the Council's sports and active lifestyles team

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
250,913	421,499	485,680

**Table 23:** Number of coaches, volunteers and teachers attending training courses for sports and active lifestyles

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1,666	3,706	2,822

**Table 24:** Number of attendances at swimming pools per 1,000 of the population

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
3,248	3,292	2,941

**Table 25:** Percentage of children walking or cycling to school (%)

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
46%	50%	51%	52%

## Sustainable Development and Eco-Schools

**Table 26:** Aberdeenshire Eco-Schools - Progress

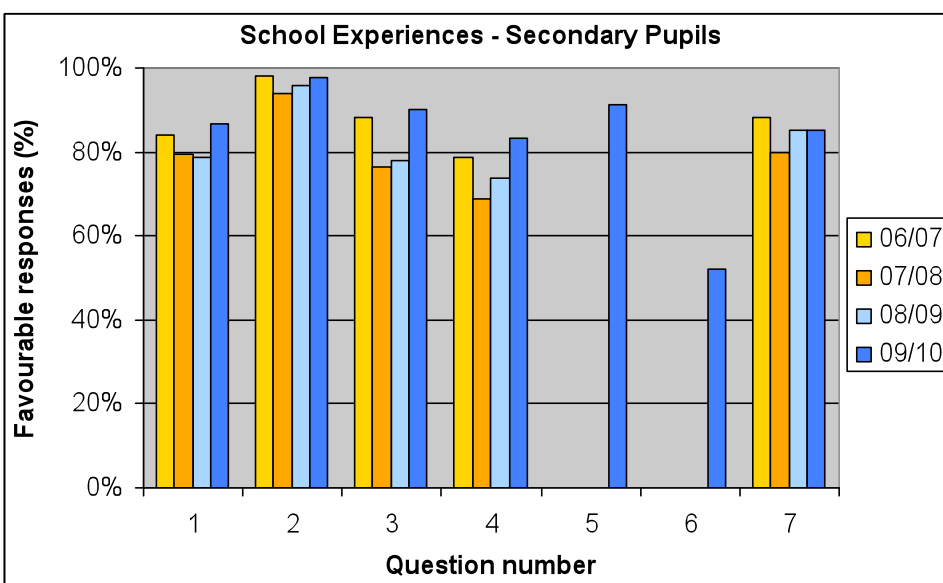
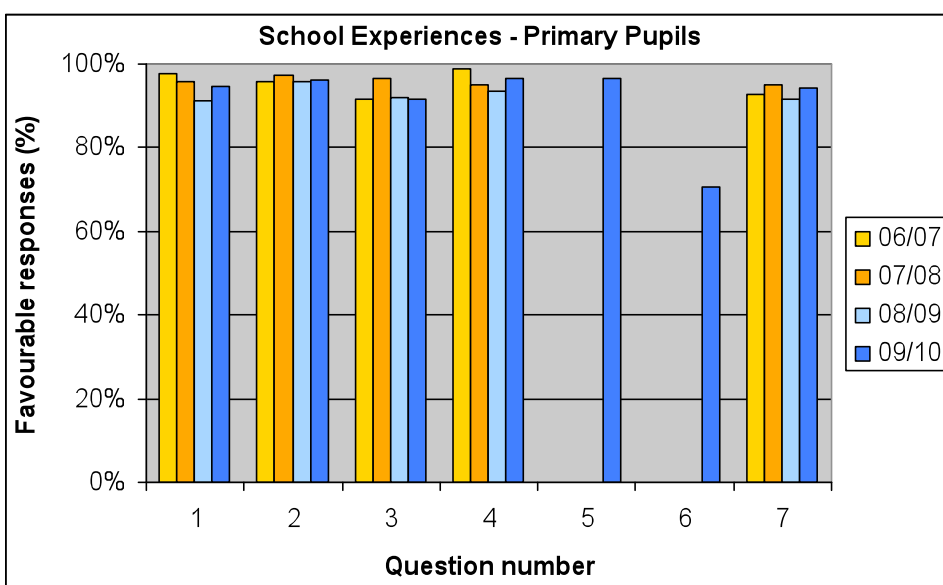
Position	2007	2009	2010
Schools registered	162	172 (all)	172 (all)
Bronze Awards	72	111	117
Silver Awards	42	83	101
1st Green Flag	9	26	42
2nd Green Flag	2	9	15
3rd Green Flag	0	1	4



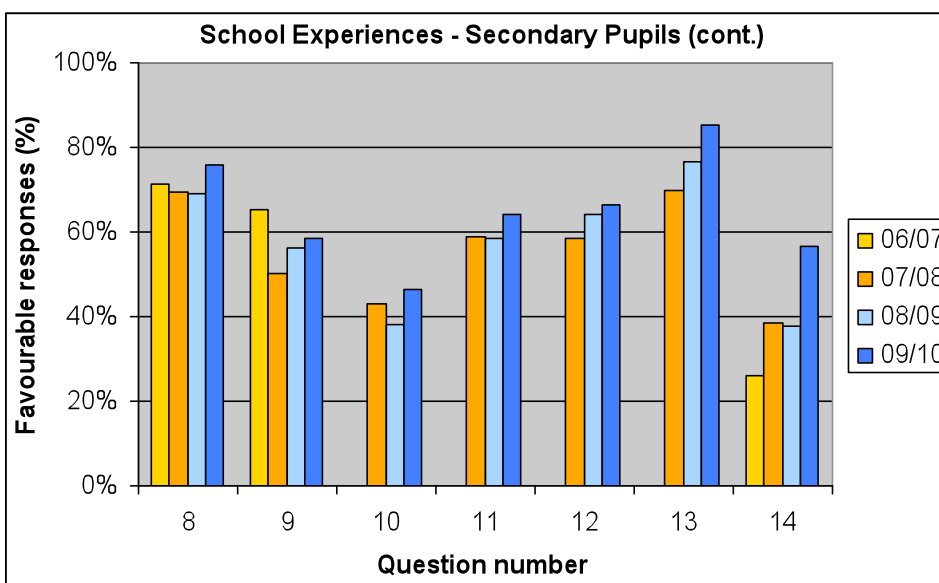
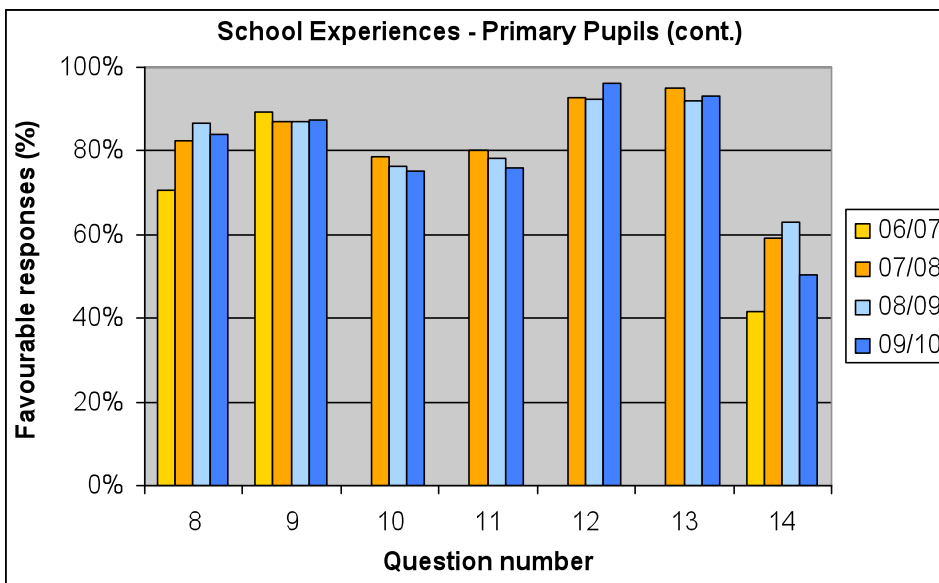
## Stakeholder Survey Evidence

### School Experiences - Primary and Secondary Pupils

1. When I am in school I feel safe and secure
2. Doing well at school is important to me
3. I get the support that I need to help me learn when I am in school
4. My teachers let me know when I have done well
5. I have opportunities to keep fit and healthy (new question introduced in 2009/10)
6. I have opportunities to participate as a volunteer in the community (new question introduced in 2009/10)
7. I am happy with the progress that I have made in school over the past year

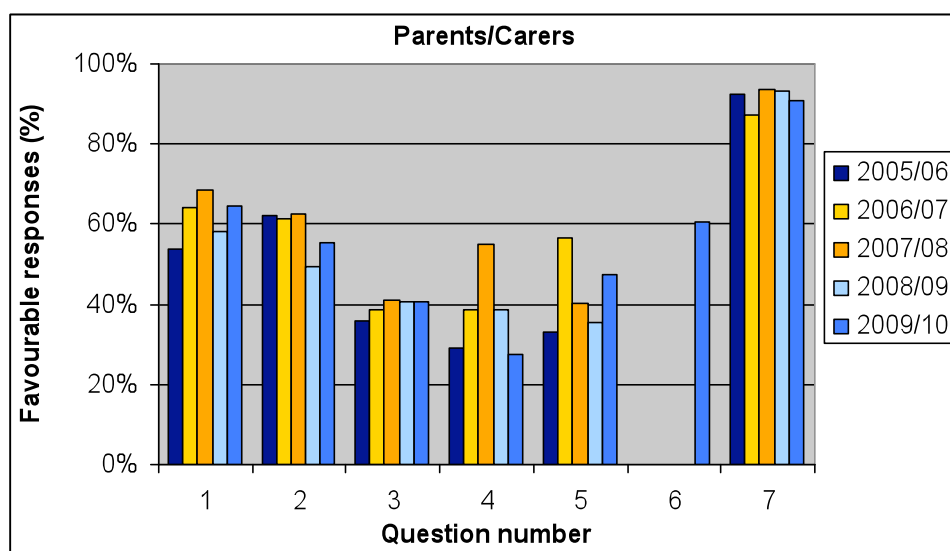


8. I am allowed to set my own targets for my learning
9. The way we work in class suits the way I like to learn (Primary). Lessons are organised in a way that suits the ways I like to learn (Secondary)
10. I have been able to suggest improvements for my school
11. My school has a statement of its aims that has been shared with pupils
12. I am proud of my school
13. My school provides an excellent education
14. I am able to make suggestions for improvements to the way that services for young people are run by Aberdeenshire Council (services includes libraries, museums, arts and cultural activities, youth clubs and youth services, and sports and leisure activities). (This is a new question and is broadly comparable with the following question from the 2006/07 - 2008/09 surveys: Pupils/ young people have a voice in of Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure's services).

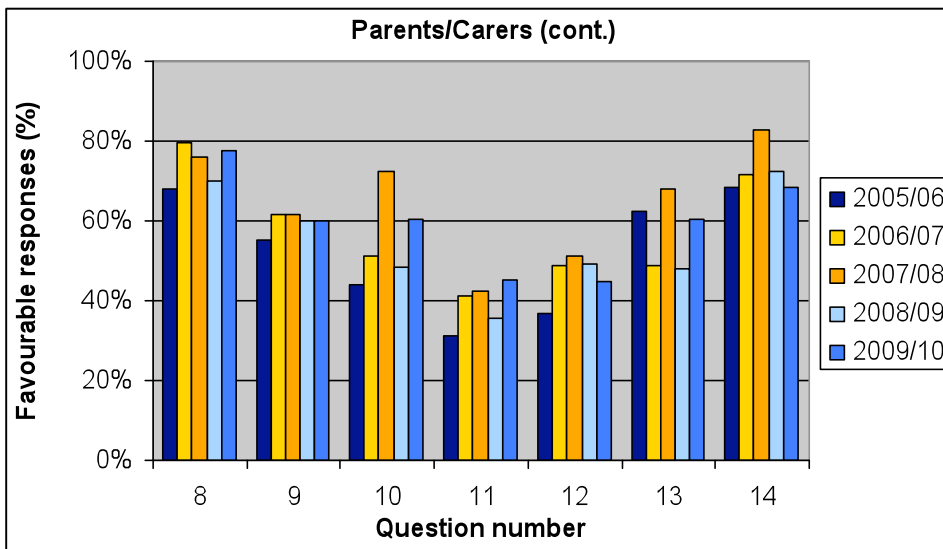


## Parents/Carers and Families

1. The education authority recognises the achievements of our school.
2. The education authority is effective in promoting equal opportunities.
3. We know about the education authority's priorities for improvement.
4. Elected members and the directorate of the education authority provide effective leadership for the service. (This is a new question and is broadly comparable with the following question from the 2005/06 - 2008/09 surveys: The education authority is well led).
5. The education authority gives our school appropriate resources so that it can continue to improve the quality of education of our children.
6. Parents/Carers are aware of the education authority's complaints procedures. (New question introduced in 2009/10).
7. The education authority promotes opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping healthy.

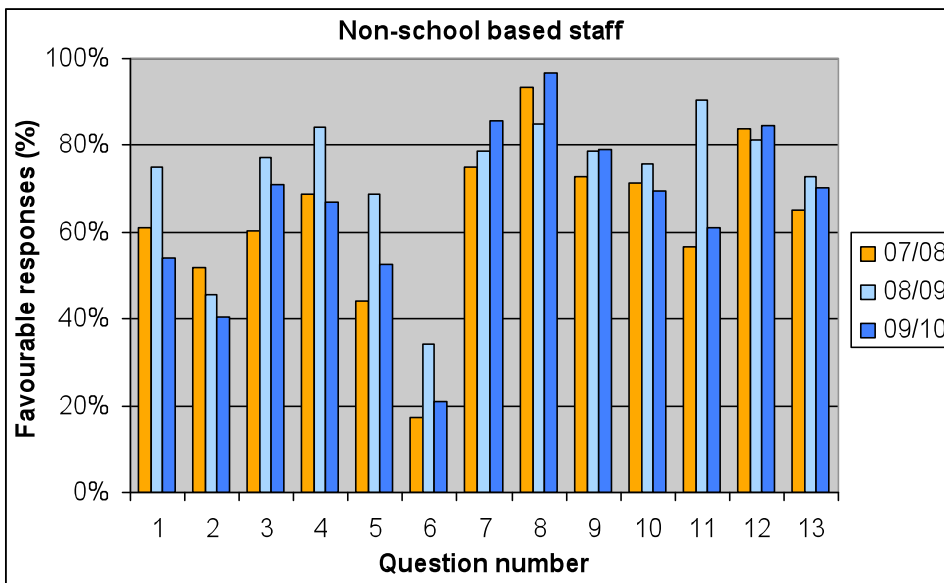
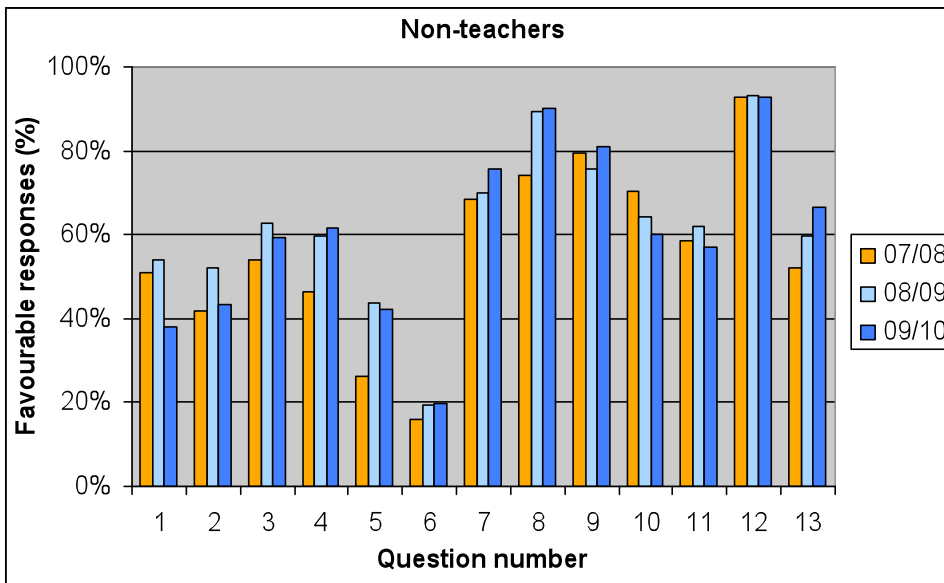
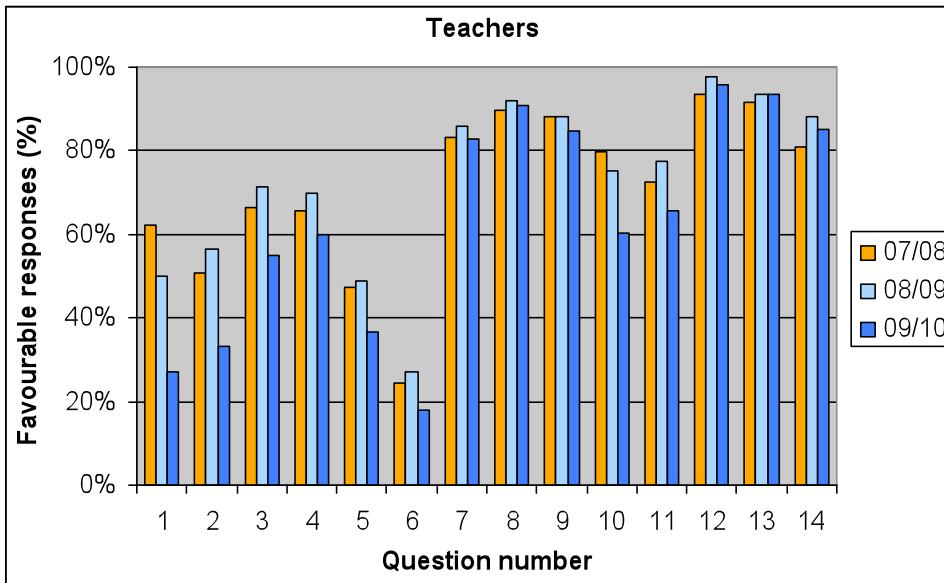


8. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting initiatives in our Council area.
9. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in cultural initiatives such as art, music and drama in our Council area.
10. Parents/Carers and families feel that they are treated fairly by the education authority.
11. Parents/Carers are aware of how the education authority's procedures for supporting individual pupils with additional support needs are implemented.
12. Through consultation we have a chance to influence the aims and plans for education in our Council area.
13. The education authority provides good opportunities for parents/carers to access adult learning in our Council area.
14. There is a high standard of education in our Council area.



## Our Staff

1. The EL&L service is well led.
2. Elected members demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of education, learning and leisure services in our Council area.
3. Managers show concern for the care and welfare of staff.
4. There is a high-quality working ethos in the EL&L service.
5. My work for the EL&L service is recognised and valued.
6. Morale is high among staff in the EL&L service.
7. I am treated fairly.
8. Health and safety information is available to me.
9. Training and development activities that I have undertaken have had a positive impact on my ability to do my job.
10. I have access to appropriate training and development opportunities.
11. My expertise and professional experience are used effectively in the EL&L service.
12. I have a sound knowledge about the authority's procedures for child protection and promote them.
13. I am familiar with arrangements for quality improvement and self-evaluation.
14. A Curriculum for Excellence is having an impact on our Improvement Planning. (Responses from teaching staff only)



## Service managers

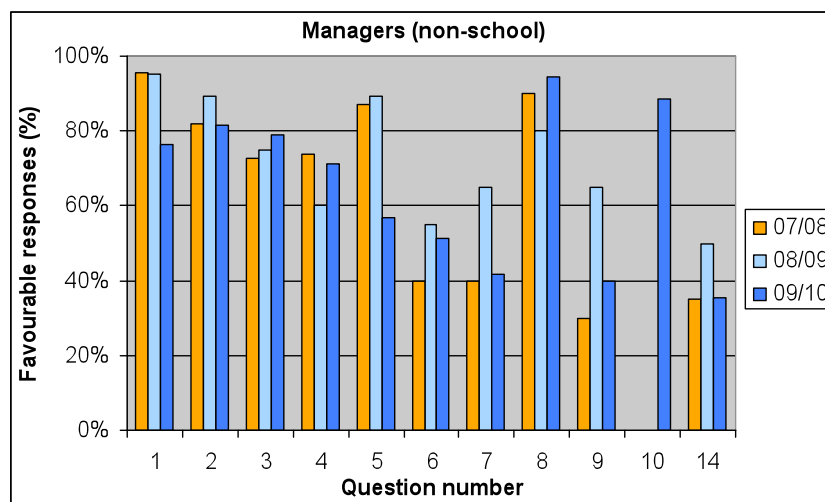
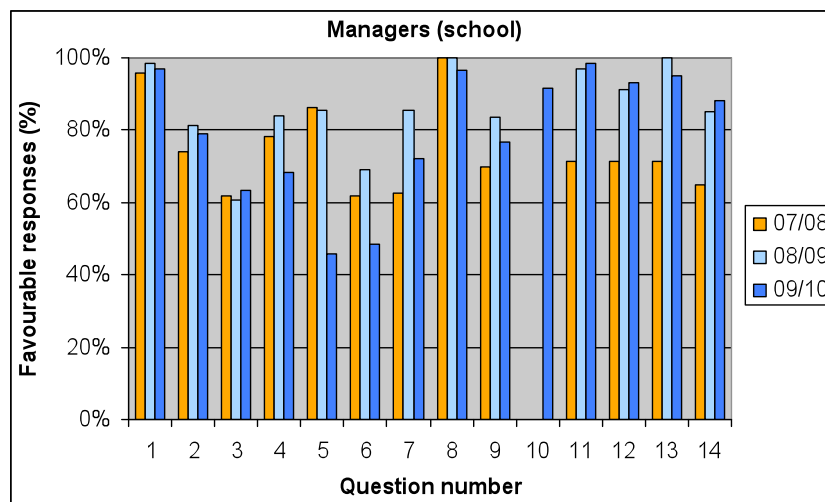
1. Heads of Service/Directorate staff in the EL&L service show a high level of commitment to improving education, learning and leisure services in our Council area.
2. The EL&L service is effective in promoting equal opportunities.
3. Elected members demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of education, learning and leisure services in our Council area.
4. Staff have access to training for leadership.
5. The EL&L service is well led.
6. Heads of Service/Directorate staff maintain effective contact with my establishment.
7. Management/Support staff with responsibility for Quality Improvement maintain effective contact with my establishment.
8. The EL&L service makes sure that I am fully informed about procedures relating to child protection and that the school implements guidelines and training.
9. I have been given clear guidance on working with other services (e.g. social services, health services, police).
10. There is a partnership approach to supporting children and young people through our work with a wide range of external organisations/agencies (School Managers). There is a partnership approach to supporting children, young people, adults and communities through our work with a wide range of external organisations/agencies (Non-School based Managers). (New question introduced in 2009/10).

11. I have made use of Journey to Excellence Part 4: Planning for Excellence to support Improvement Planning. (Responses from school managers only)

12. I have accessed the online resources Journey to Excellence Part 5: Journeys to Excellence to support Improvement Planning. (Responses from school managers only)

13. A Curriculum for Excellence is having an impact on my Improvement Planning. (Responses from school managers only)

14. Management/Support staff with responsibility for Quality Improvement evaluate the performance of my establishment with me.



## Complaints

**Table 27:** Number of Stage 1 Formal Complaints received by the Education, Learning and Leisure service, 2009/10

Aug 2009	Sep 2009	Oct 2009	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010	Jun 2010	Jul 2010	Total 2009/10
1	8	5	2	3	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	34

## Looked After Children - Attainment

**Table 28:** Percentage of 16 or 17 year olds ceasing to be looked after (at home or away from home) who achieved at least SCQF Level 3 in English and Mathematics (%)

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeenshire	41.2	33.3	40.2
Scotland	37.9	41.5	Not available

## Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA)

**Table 29:** Aberdeenshire Rights Respecting School Awards - Progress

Position	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Registered	2	9	15	27
RRSA Level 1	1	1	4	9
RRSA Level 2		1	1	1

## Management of Resources

**Table 30:** Total spending per pupil, Primary Schools (£)

Primary	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeenshire	3,638	4,060	4,281	4,382
Scotland	3,422	3,634	3,948	4,028

**Table 31:** Total spending per pupil, Secondary Schools (£)

Secondary	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Aberdeenshire	5,098	5,618	6,031	6,074
Scotland	4,675	4,906	5,437	5,598

This document is also available on Aberdeenshire Council's web site:

**[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)**



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