

25 August 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Aberuthven Primary School
Perth and Kinross Council**

Recently, as you may know, I inspected your child's school. During my visit, I talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. I wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with me the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including children's involvement in improving their learning and the quality of their writing. As a result, I was able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Almost all children engage well and work hard in lessons where enjoyable, practical activities have been designed around their interests. This is helping children to understand how their education is relevant to their future lives. Children are very good at designing and creating, and solving problems. They set themselves ambitious targets and use feedback from teachers and from one another to improve their work. They illustrate their learning across many curriculum areas in Learning Jotters, selecting their best work and commenting on how well they performed. I was impressed by the independence and imagination shown by children during 'Target Time', where they develop a range of skills through personal projects. Children are accustomed to being asked for their views and being fully involved in the life and work of the school. They make choices about what and how they learn. Older children are leading the development of the school grounds. Various pupil committees make important decisions and improvements. In the Pupil Forum, children were developing their leadership and communication skills very well. Children have brought about significant improvements through working together to develop the ethos and culture of the school, and take pride in their successes and achievements.

Children are achieving well, and developing skills for learning, life and work. Children's ability to work together has shown improvement in recent years. They show considerable confidence performing for audiences in regular, high-quality dramatic productions. Some have produced impressive art and design work. Children are developing leadership skills through organising aspects of school events. Pupils in P7 developed team working skills during a residential outdoor experience at Nethy Bridge. Staff encourage children's personal achievements by providing a range of awards and certificates. Sometimes these are targeted at encouraging specific skills or qualities such as friendship. Children read regularly for pleasure, and staff now need to

encourage children to work with a broader range of texts, including non-fiction. Children produce skilled writing for a range of purposes across the curriculum. They are developing mature skills in spoken communication including listening to others' views and expressing their own opinions. Staff are improving children's numeracy skills through taking a more practical approach. Younger children were cutting up shapes to understand the concept of fractions. Older children's skills in mental calculation are improving through discussing their strategies together. Children learned about loans and wages in a topic about jobs. Children need more opportunities like this to apply their mathematical skills to solve real-life problems. A few children who experience difficulties with aspects of literacy and numeracy need further support to develop their skills. Many children demonstrate a deep understanding of some of the topics they have studied, including equalities issues and the social history of the USA.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Staff are patient, caring and approachable. They value all children equally and put their wellbeing at the centre of the school's work. Morning routines, including personal welcomes from staff, help children to feel positive about the day ahead. The school has taken a number of effective steps to support children who experience difficulty with relationships and behaviour. Teachers are good at providing different activities for groups of children to give them an appropriate level of support. Occasionally the level of challenge in lessons did not meet the needs of all children. Staff are developing more tasks and activities at the early stages which enable children to learn through play. The school is working very hard to include and support children with very significant additional support needs. However, staff would benefit from more guidance from specialist staff.

Staff have developed the curriculum very well, based around the school's vision statement 'Respect and Opportunities for All'. Staff give children progressive learning experiences in all curriculum areas in line with Curriculum for Excellence. They track children's achievements closely and plan lessons based around children's interests. Daily planning gives children a good balance in the types of activities they undertake. I was impressed by the range of interesting topics which link curriculum areas in a natural way and help children to follow their own interests in more depth. Staff and pupils evaluate the structure and delivery of the curriculum regularly. Children's learning builds effectively on their pre-school experiences, and equips them with the skills to be independent learners at the secondary stages.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The school has been improving, and standards are continuing to rise. The quality of children's learning is very good and everyone has worked together to provide an engaging curriculum. The headteacher has a very thorough approach to self-evaluation. She uses the results of self-evaluation, and her professional knowledge to work with teachers to plan improvements in children's learning. The school has been very well supported in this by the Perth and Kinross Council Quality Improvement Officer. Staff gather children's views on their learning experiences. Children have taken responsibility for improving aspects of the school. They have been involved in monitoring behaviour and feel a sense of pride in the improvement.

However, some staff do not yet fully understand the school's approaches to positive behaviour management and will need more support from the headteacher.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Responsible children who set themselves goals and learn independently.
- The standard of children's writing.
- Children's involvement in improving the school, and the skills they are developing as a result.
- The depth of children's understanding in social studies topics.
- How well staff assess and track children's progress and plan their learning.

I discussed with staff and Perth and Kinross Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what I agreed with them.

- Working with partners, develop further approaches to supporting children with additional support needs.
- Support all staff and parents to apply consistent approaches to supporting children's learning and behaviour.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Perth and Kinross Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Jacqueline Sinclair
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/AberuthvenPrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.asp>

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