

26 August 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**Fetterangus School
Aberdeenshire 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. I looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the breadth of opportunities for children to achieve and partnerships with parents. 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?

Fetterangus School is a happy school with a family atmosphere and a positive, nurturing climate. The children are friendly and confident, show an eagerness to learn, and talk about their achievements with pride. The school is preparing them well to be active and successful and to play a valuable role as part of a community. Children enjoy rich and exciting learning experiences. They are good at learning independently and together with others in co-operative tasks. Learning is not confined to classrooms, indeed some of the richest learning takes place through excursions, committee work and special events. For example, 'Fetterangus School Eat our Veg' enterprise company develops children's skills and knowledge in many aspects of numeracy, communication and business administration. Children understand the purpose of lessons and the skills they are expected to develop, and are beginning to become involved in setting personal learning targets.

Children are making good progress in developing their skills and knowledge in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A few younger children demonstrate advanced skills for their age in reading and in mental calculation. Children of all ages talk French confidently in everyday classroom routines. They are well informed about current affairs and the world around them. I have suggested that the school could increase the pace of children's progress and develop their skills through their wider learning experiences. For example, staff could be making more of children's involvement in planning trips, serving on committees and growing and selling vegetables to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. An impressive range of activities run by staff, parents and volunteers encourage wide participation and develop important skills for life and work. The school's music group includes all children from P4 upwards, former

pupils and members of the local community. This group performs music of an outstanding quality at prestigious local events.

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

The school's curriculum effectively supports the school's aim of building children's 'Creativity, Confidence and Citizenship'. It is particularly notable how well the school works with a range of partners and its local community to deliver a relevant and enriching curriculum. For example, the local minister and teachers worked as a team to deliver linked literacy and religious and moral education themed learning activities. Children have progressive learning experiences across all curriculum areas and these are frequently linked in meaningful ways like this. Older children deepened their understanding of a novel about Paris by connecting it with French language topics and artwork of the Parisian skyline. Staff have been asked to continue to develop Curriculum for Excellence, and provide opportunities for children to develop and apply their skills through real life experiences. Children transferring into Fetterangus School from three local nurseries are very well supported to feel excited about coming to school. Staff have surveyed former pupils now at Mintlaw Academy, and have changed the school's curriculum in response to what children have said about how well prepared they felt they had been for secondary school. Further work should be undertaken at school and cluster level to ensure that children's progress at primary level is extended further in S1.

Teachers are good at planning work at different levels for the children at different stages in their classes. At times the two classes work together, and this is enabling children to experience more challenge. Staff use assessment well to determine children's strengths and areas where support is needed. Pupil Support Assistants play a valuable role across the school supporting children and providing engaging learning experiences. The role of the visiting support for learning teacher needs to be further developed to enable her to work in the classroom and to provide advice to teachers. Learning targets for children who have individual education plans need to be more focused on classroom learning.

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

The staff team have worked together to improve the school and children's learning. They listen carefully to the views of parents and children. A recent survey of parents' views and expectations of homework is driving improvement in children's learning outside school. Staff are creative when adapting national guidance to their own context. They also reflect critically on whether new approaches have achieved the desired effect. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. He has successfully engaged the local community in supporting the school. He plans to spend more time observing lessons and sharing teaching and learning with colleagues. The very active Parent Council contributes to the school's inclusive, welcoming ethos by organising informal events. It is supported by the fundraising committee who contribute significant sums to ensure children have access to a wide range of fulfilling cultural experiences.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The supportive ethos and family atmosphere.
- Children's learning experiences and opportunities for achievement.
- The very high standard of children's performance in music.
- The significant role played by support staff and community volunteers in the school.
- The school's extensive links with its local community and parents which extend and enrich children's learning.

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

- Continue to develop how children take responsibility for setting and meeting personal goals and targets in their learning.
- Continue to raise attainment by increasing the pace of children's progress and developing their skills through their wider learning experiences.
- Ensure that the headteacher and support for learning teacher work together in classrooms to provide advice and support to teachers and continue to improve children's learning.

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, Aberdeenshire 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/FetterangusPrimarySchoolAberdeenshire.asp>.

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

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