

23 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Bervie School and Nursery Class
Aberdeenshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We 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 us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including new approaches to engaging children in learning. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

At the primary stages, children have very positive learning experiences. Children in the nursery are settled, demonstrate a good understanding of routines and feel safe and secure in their nursery. In the outdoor area most children are motivated by and, engage in their chosen activities across the nursery session. For example a group of children enjoyed mixing cakes and making potions in their mud kitchen, while younger children sang happily as they mixed paint colours and explored different textures. Children are becoming independent as they organise themselves for outdoor play, select resources and help to prepare snacks. We have asked the nursery to review their routines to increase opportunities for children to take responsibility for their learning. Almost all children in the primary stages are eager to learn and are motivated by interesting learning activities, including their opportunities to learn outdoors. Children speak confidently about their work on developing 'Growth Mindset' and their 'Learning Pit'. As a result of this work they enjoy challenging themselves and show confidence in learning from their mistakes. They are active participants in their learning and show increasing skills in identifying their next steps. As a Rights Respecting School, Bervie Primary School places much emphasis on the rights and views of children. Pupil voice is very strong in the school. Pupils play an active role in their learning in classrooms, engaging well with teachers in conversations about their learning. Beyond the classroom, pupils participate in a variety of activities, such as buddying, charity fund-raising, Bervie Business Brains and Bervie Bookworms. These activities encourage them to develop confidently their leadership skills and contribute fully to the life of the school. The 'Can Do Council', which is led by children, enables children from all classes to participate in and affect school decision-making and planning. Volunteering is actively encouraged in the school, with children at all stages participating in the Young Aberdeenshire Volunteer Awards.

At the primary stages the attainment of children in literacy and numeracy is very good. In the nursery, children make good progress in developing early literacy and numeracy skills across the playroom. Most nursery children are making good progress when listening to stories and talking to one another. Almost all can recognise their own name and show interest in learning to write. Children in the nursery class are learning to recognise numbers and can count and match a variety of objects in their play. At the primary stages, most children listen attentively and express their views and opinions with confidence. As a result of a recent focus on assessment and moderation of writing with other schools, the attainment of writing in the school has improved significantly. Children's writing is of a very good standard overall and most are making very good progress in reading. Across the school, children are confident in their mental agility and applying their skills to solve problems. Staff provide children with exciting opportunities to explain their mathematical thinking and link mathematics to real life situations. By P7, a significant number of children are very confident in number, money and measure. They are confident in using probability and chance. The school has a very clear picture of children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. They use this information well to target children's difficulties and thus raise attainment. Across the school, children are making good progress in developing knowledge and understanding of health and wellbeing and contribute well to the life of their school.

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

In most classes, tasks and activities are very well matched to the needs of learners. The school has made strong efforts to be inclusive and the arrangements to support children with additional learning needs are very good. The support for learning teachers are a strong team who provide well-judged interventions to help children make progress in their learning. Support staff and the office staff make a very positive contribution to looking after children's needs. In the nursery, all children are able to make choices and follow their interests in their play. A range of suitable resources are available and accessible to children. Some flexibility in aspects of the session allows individuals to progress at their own pace. We have asked the nursery to ensure an appropriate level of challenge in play for a few higher-attaining children. Across the school the curriculum offered is very good. In the nursery, the curriculum is based on Curriculum for Excellence. Nursery staff continue to develop their confidence and shared understanding of experiences and outcomes. Staff provide a broad range of opportunities which are firmly based on play. They plan meaningful learning based on questions children ask and things they are curious about. Across the primary stages, staff provide children with interesting and motivating opportunities that involve them actively in their learning. In all classes, children have a broad range of experience across the curriculum and are developing an awareness of the skills they are developing. Staff work effectively together and share their strengths and expertise to share delivery of subjects. This team approach has successfully enhanced learning. Children and their families are well supported in their move from nursery to starting school and from P7 to secondary school.

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

The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school and its children. Despite a period of unsettled staffing, she has ensured that the school continues to develop and improve through her tenacity and hard work. She is very well respected

across the community by staff, pupils and parents. She provides clear direction for the work of the school. The headteacher, depute headteacher and staff work well as a team to make improvements to the school. Staff are keen to take on leadership roles and engage in professional learning opportunities to improve their practice. Staff regularly consult children and parents about improving the work of the school through questionnaires and meetings. They are enthusiastic about their teaching and work well together to ensure positive experiences for children. The headteacher and staff have put in place a range of effective approaches to evaluate the work of the school. This has led to higher attainment and improvements to the quality of learning in classes. We have asked the school to involve the nursery more in this process. The school has developed a clear way to assess and track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They are now well placed to extend this to other areas of the curriculum. The headteacher and staff demonstrate strong capacity to ensure the school continues to improve.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, Bervie Nursery Class had no requirements and three recommendations. From these, three recommendations have been met. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and two recommendations.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Very confident, polite, sociable children who enjoy being at Bervie Primary School and value the wide opportunities for learning provided by the school.
- Opportunities for pupil voice across the school.
- The strong teamwork and the culture of professional learning across the school that is resulting in strong learner's experiences in classrooms.
- Very effective support for those children with additional needs across the school and nursery.
- Strong approaches to evaluating the work of the school.
- Outstanding leadership shown by the headteacher resulting in significant school improvement over time.

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

- Continue to develop consistent approaches across the school to improve pace and challenge in all lessons.
- Continue to develop the curriculum.
- Continue to increase opportunities for children in the nursery to take responsibility for their 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.

Sadie Cushley
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations and national care standards gradings, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/BervieSchoolAberdeenshire.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.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.