8 March 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Abernethy Primary School and Nursery Class
Perth and Kinross 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 active learning, the school’s approach to developing writing and how teachers are working together to develop the curriculum. 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?

Children’s experiences in the nursery are good. Across the primary stages, children’s experiences are very good and they are learning and achieving well. In the nursery, children are relaxed and confident, and are treated fairly and with respect. They play well together, take turns and help each other in their learning. We have asked staff to provide children with more opportunities to investigate and explore in their play. There is scope to enrich the opportunities for outdoor learning. Across the primary, children are keen to talk about their learning. They work well on their own and when asked to work on a group activity. Children benefit from planned opportunities to reflect on what they are achieving. The wide range of out-of-class activities are extending children’s interests and include clubs in science, film and sporting activities. Children also benefit from visits to places of interest and there is a residential experience for older children. Children are developing their leadership skills, for example, in providing lunchtime clubs for younger children such as the craft club run by primary 7 girls. House captains are being supported in organising and running a range of activities. Children speak with enthusiasm of their roles and responsibilities as members of the school’s action groups and committees. Wider achievements are recognised and celebrated in displays throughout the school, at assemblies and in the local press.

Across the nursery and primary stages, children are making good progress in developing their skills in numeracy and literacy. In numeracy, most nursery children are developing well their understanding of early number and counting through sorting and matching objects in their play. Most children listen well to adults and to each other. Most children are becoming confident in expressing preferences about stories and show a love of books. They are developing early literacy skills through songs and
rhymes. Most children are developing their early writing skills through mark making in their play and a few are beginning to recognise and write their name. Staff are aware of the need to increase opportunities to develop early literacy skills more fully across all areas of the playroom.

Across the primary stages, most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. Children are developing well their skills in talking and listening. Across all stages, children are attentive and express their ideas in answer to questions asked by their teachers and in group situations. Across the school children write well for a variety of purposes. For example, in early years, children are developing their skills in letter writing as part of a space project. Most children are making good progress in their spelling and their understanding of letter combinations through group spelling activities. By primary 7, most children can explain confidently what makes their reading and writing more interesting and effective. Most children are making good progress in developing and applying their numeracy skills. In primary 1/2, children can add two single digit numbers when playing simple board games. By primary 5, most children are applying their skills in more advanced calculations. Older children use fractions, decimals and percentages well. They can apply their mathematical skills in interpreting and transferring information to graphs and charts. Across the school children have a good understanding of shape and symmetry, for example, children in primary 2/3 can identify symmetrical patterns and shapes in the local Powrie Park. Older children are able to talk about strategies to solve complex problems. They can describe their thinking and reasoning when working on numeracy-based problem solving activities. Most children are making good progress from their prior learning across the curriculum areas. Children are developing well their skills in digital technologies to enrich their learning and take forward a confident use of the internet and social media. For example, in primary 2/3, children can explain with confidence how they are developing their animations as part of their study of technology. In expressive arts, older children combine their understanding of drawing, tone and texture to research Mesolithic art and produce their own cave paintings. Children are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding about how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

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

Across the school and the nursery, children are well supported in their learning. Strong positive relationships between teachers, children and their families are supporting children in their development. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in meeting all children’s needs. In the nursery, staff know children well and meet their emotional needs effectively. Across the primary stages, activities appropriately challenge most children. In the best lessons, children are motivated through well-paced and engaging learning. Children work well together on the creative challenges which teachers are setting them. Children with additional support needs are supported well in class. The school works closely with external agencies and services to address barriers to learning.

In the nursery, staff are planning learning around play. They are confident in using national guidance to plan opportunities for children to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff should continue to improve activities to ensure children build on their knowledge and skills over time. Greater use should be
made of digital technologies to extend children’s learning. Staff in the nursery work well with colleagues in primary 1 to ensure children can build on their successes from nursery. Across the primary stages, staff are using national guidance to take forward the school’s aim of ‘Learning Today for Tomorrow’. The school is sharing what children will learn through well designed ‘learning trees’. Across the stages in primary, well-planned programmes are allowing children to build on what they have already learned. The school is providing children with a range of opportunities to develop positive attitudes, skills and talents. Whole-school events, for example, the school’s recent performance of ‘Joseph’ helped improve their self-confidence. Children are developing their skills such as problem solving and working with others through planned programmes of outdoor learning. Children are successfully applying their learning in community projects, for example, planting trees in the local park and successful fundraising activities to support national causes. Children develop their understanding of the wider world through their international links with Bongani in South Africa. The school makes effective links with the local community through projects such as ‘Abernethy the Movie’.

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

Across the school and nursery, staff work effectively together in evaluating the quality of children’s learning. The headteacher has shared well her vision for the school. She provides clear leadership and is supported well by her colleagues in taking forward developments. She has the respect of staff, children and parents. Staff work closely with other schools to plan programmes of learning. The Parent Council is fully engaged in the life of the school. The school seeks the views of parents and children to help the school identify areas for improvement. The headteacher and staff have made a good start to improving how children are challenged consistently in their learning as they move through the school. They should continue with their plans to track the skills children are developing in the different areas of the curriculum. This will provide the school with more detailed information on which to plan learning and support for children further.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the school had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and 3 recommendations.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Well behaved, conscientious and respectful children who are keen to learn.
- Teamwork shown by staff under the leadership of the headteacher in taking forward developments.
- Effective links with the community which are enriching the life and work of the school.
- Positive relationships between staff, children and their families.

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

- Continue with planned improvements to raise the attainment and achievement of all children.
• Within the curriculum provide further opportunities for children to take a leading role in their learning and in the life of the school.

**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.

Charles Rooney
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/AbernethyPrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/AbernethyPrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.asp)

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