

17 September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Ballater Primary school and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Children in the school and nursery who are happy, motivated and eager to learn. They are respectful of each other and of teachers. Children are articulate and confident in speaking to adults.
- The staff who are supportive of each other and loyal to the school community. Staff are keen to develop their skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for children. The nursery staff are beginning to work well together to support children.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Aberdeenshire Council.

- Raise attainment for all children, with a specific focus on increasing the pace of learning and the challenge in classwork. This includes having higher expectations and standards for all children, including those in the nursery, to attain more in their learning.
- The headteacher should work closely with staff to lead learning, teaching and assessment. The staff team should agree a shared understanding of what constitutes high quality learning and teaching and apply this in their work. The headteacher should work with staff to make sure that all school improvement activities lead to improved outcomes for all children.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Ballater Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Raising attainment and achievement	weak
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

Here are the Care Inspectorate's gradings for the nursery class

Care Inspectorate standards	Grade
Quality of care and support	adequate
Quality of environment	adequate
Quality of staffing	adequate
Quality of management and leadership	weak

Requirements/recommendations made by Care Inspectorate for the nursery class

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had no requirements and three recommendations. From these; one recommendation has been met. Two have not been met.

Outstanding issues relating to the previous inspection are carried forward in this inspection. As a result of this inspection, there is one requirement and four recommendations.

This letter and a more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/Aberdeenshire/5256224>

What happens next?

We are not at present confident from our visit that the school has effective arrangements for ensuring continuing improvement in the quality of education for all learners. We will return within one year to explore this further. After the return inspection we will report our findings to you.

Ann Floyd
HM Inspector

Nicola Creighton
Care Inspector