

14 March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Banchory 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.

- Confident, polite and articulate children across the school and nursery class. Children are eager to learn and develop their knowledge and skills.
- Across the school children have regular access to a range of digital tools. They are developing skills well in using digital platforms to support their learning.
- Children enjoy being outdoors. The school's location on Deeside, and the extensive outdoor areas offer potential for rich learning and play opportunities across the curriculum.

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

- Senior leaders need to work with staff across the school and nursery to provide clear, strategic leadership. This leadership should result in focused improvement priorities to improve children's progress and attainment across all areas of the curriculum. There is a need for improved communication across the school to ensure a shared understanding of expectations and standards.
- Senior leaders should establish robust approaches to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's work. There is a need for senior leaders to take greater managerial oversight of the nursery, primary stages and enhanced provision as a whole school community.
- Improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure all children receive a consistently high-quality learning experience across the school. This should include a whole school focus on assessment and achieving national standards. There is a need for a specific review of approaches to learning and teaching at early level.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four 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 Banchory Primary School

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	weak
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	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	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#)

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Aberdeenshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Aberdeenshire Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Susan Duff
HM Inspector