

26 March 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2017, HM Inspectors published a letter on Bramble Brae Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Aberdeen City Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Ensure approaches to improving the school are rigorously implemented to ensure all children experience consistently high-quality learning and teaching in the nursery and across all primary stages.

The school and the nursery class have made good progress in improving approaches to self-evaluation. The school has benefited from additional staff and vacant posts have been filled. There are now clearer ways through which the leadership team can monitor and evaluate the work of the school. An increased number of staff are engaged in a range of leadership roles which supports improvement in the nursery and across the primary stages.

In the nursery practitioners are developing their shared understanding of learning and teaching through a range of appropriate professional learning opportunities. They are enthusiastic about continuous improvement. The nursery team makes good use of national guidance to support the design and improvement of the learning environment. There is now scope for children to be supported to become more involved in improving the nursery. To ensure an increased pace of change and improvement to learning and teaching, senior leaders need to take an enhanced role in engaging with and leading the nursery class.

Across the primary stages children learn in calm and purposeful learning environments. There is a clear shared vision, values and aims understood by staff and children. Relationships are warm and increasingly nurturing. Staff have shared expectations for the presentation of work and are embedding more consistent approaches to learning and teaching. This includes being clear with children what they are learning and how they know they have succeeded. Children at the early level are benefitting from play based learning. There is scope to extend this active approach to learning as children move through the school. The school team should continue to work and learn together to ensure high-quality learning and teaching at all stages and across the curriculum.

Improve children's progress and attainment in literacy and English language and numeracy and mathematics in the nursery and across the primary stages.

The school has made good progress in this area for improvement. The leadership team has improved how they track children's attainment across the school and this is beginning to help them raise attainment across the school. Staff have worked with other schools to help them develop a shared understanding of the standard needed to achieve a level within Curriculum for Excellence. There remains a need to improve children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy across all stages.

Nursery practitioners are beginning to implement improved approaches to assessing and recording children's progress. This will support staff in having a clearer focus on learning and achievement. To promote learning in literacy and numeracy, there remains scope to ensure families share in children's learning and are engaged in supporting children's progress. During the inspection, children had the opportunity to apply their early literacy skills in a range of interesting contexts. Staff should ensure improved opportunities for numeracy and mathematics through play.

The school provided a range of information to illustrate the improving trends in children's attainment. The majority of children are on track to achieve appropriate levels in literacy and numeracy. Across the school, children are making satisfactory progress. However, whilst attainment is improving overall, there is significant headroom to increase attainment further to ensure all children achieve their best.

Children enjoy using the new library to support their reading development. They are improving their writing through exploring and writing about real-life experiences. A local radio station has supported the development of listening and talking skills. Whilst children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy, staff need to ensure children have regular opportunities to practise and learn a broader range of mathematical activities.

The school should continue its work in developing a bespoke curriculum that is relevant, meets the needs of all learners and supports children to develop knowledge and skills across all curriculum areas.

The school community has made good progress in improving the curriculum. Staff have worked well together with a range of partners to develop a clear purpose for the curriculum on offer in school. As staff continue to develop the curriculum there is scope to ensure the nursery and primary stages commitment to play based learning is developed further. We have encouraged nursery practitioners to engage with national guidance to support further curriculum development at early level. Staff at the primary stages have worked well as a team to ensure children experience all curriculum areas through a series of relevant contexts and inter-disciplinary learning. We have discussed with staff, the need to ensure progression across all areas, and that they use time at the end of the week effectively to support high-quality learning.

The staff team has made effective use of additional funds from The Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund to enhance children's experiences across the curriculum. This has included educational excursions across Aberdeen and beyond to extend children's

knowledge of their local area. In addition, children's development of skills for learning, life and work has been enhanced by a series of partnerships and links with the world of work.

What happens next?

The school and nursery class has made good progress since the original inspection. The school recognises the need to continue to improve children's attainment across the curriculum and ensure a consistent high-quality learning and teaching. We are confident that, supported by the local authority and in liaison with Education Scotland, the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Aberdeen City Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Susan Duff
HM Inspector