

18 June 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2018, HM Inspectors published a letter on Fraserburgh North School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Aberdeenshire 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. The Care Inspectorate inspected the nursery class at the same time and that report will be available at www.careinspectorate.com.

Take immediate action to address the major weaknesses in leadership of the school and nursery.

Since the original inspection Aberdeenshire Council has taken prompt action to recruit a new headteacher to the substantive post. The appointed headteacher has been in post since September 2018. We are pleased that the newly established Parent Council participated fully in the recruitment process. The successful appointment of the headteacher has significantly increased the leadership capacity of the school.

In the seven months while in post, the headteacher has successfully improved the environment of the school building. Significant improvements have been made to the play area shared by nursery children and the P1 children working at the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. This now provides a motivating and engaging environment for learning. The headteacher is demonstrating she is effective in her role. She has been particularly successful in engaging parents as partners in the life of the school. The Parent Council is proactively reaching out to the diverse wider parent forum and has successfully organised a range of clubs, events and funds to improve the playground area for children. This is a new and dynamic feature of the school and its community. While the school is making progress in taking forward its improvement plan, we have asked that the recruitment of key staffing vacancies is prioritised so that the leadership of school and nursery improvement priorities is as effective as possible.

The headteacher is taking a strategic role in the leadership of meeting the needs of all learners. This is leading to increased levels of attendance, children being ready to learn and parents feeling their children are settled in school and their behaviour is improving. The school should now involve children and parents in devising the school's policy and practices on anti-bullying. All staff need to ensure they take forward positive approaches to supporting children's relationships with one another more consistently.

Improve the school's approaches to self-evaluation to ensure the school develops consistency in high quality learning, teaching and assessment leading to raised attainment for all children.

The school, including the nursery has made a recent start to monitoring aspects of staff practices, children's work and the quality of the learning environment. This is a new feature of the school's work and helps staff and nursery practitioners to improve approaches together. The headteacher should now develop her rigour in feedback to staff following regular observations of learning and teaching. The school should take forward its three year plan to develop the quality of learning and teaching. This needs to incorporate assessment as part of planning for learning across all classes and provisions. The assessment and identification of children's needs should be closely monitored by the headteacher and key staff in various supporting roles.

Overall, teachers, nursery practitioners and support staff are providing interesting and well supported learning experiences. In most lessons and play experiences activities match the needs of most learners. Overall, attainment and achievement are not yet improving and remain satisfactory as at the time of the original inspection. Promisingly, a few children are making good progress. The school now needs to focus on its approaches to further raising attainment and achievements and track these closely. The high proportion of children with English as an additional language are making appropriate progress and those with additional support needs are making appropriate progress through targeted support. The headteacher and staff should further develop professional dialogue related to tracking and monitoring of children's progress.

Improve the school's approaches to equality and diversity and the ways in which children develop an understanding of their wellbeing including anti-bullying.

The Parent Council is proactively engaging with all parents and successfully encouraging an increasing number to be involved in the life of the school and nursery. This is evident through the martial arts club, community cafés, and 'Tots' sessions. Communication through regular newsletters, keep many informed of the school's diary of events and what children are involved in. The use of social media platforms is also helping ensure parents are well informed. The school and parents should continue to work together to engage more parents in their children's learning and the life of the school.

Staff and children are gaining an increased awareness of health and wellbeing and diversity. In the nursery class the diversity of the community is now recognised and celebrated. Promotion of equalities by all staff needs to be more evident across the school. Children and their parents need to be involved in devising the school's policy and practices on anti-bullying. This will help support awareness of equalities and the school's positive approaches to children's behaviour. All staff now need to harness their commitment to school improvement priorities and work effectively as a team.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. 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 12 months 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 informing you of the progress the school has made.

Susan Gow
HM Inspector