

28 November 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

**Dyce School and Nursery Class  
Aberdeen City Council**

In October 2016, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's 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. We heard that there had been several changes to the school's staffing since our last visit, including the appointment of an acting headteacher, from the start of the current school session. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff. We heard from the acting 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

**Develop a more consistent use of robust data across the curriculum to inform improvements to learning and teaching and raise attainment so that all children are working to their potential.**

A tracking system has been developed across all primary stages to monitor children's progress in learning through gathering data on their performance. A similar system now needs to be implemented in the nursery to ensure practitioners are able to track and assess children's progress in their learning more effectively. While the tracking system has now been implemented in the primary stages of the school, it has not been in place for a sufficient period to be able to evaluate its success in helping to raise attainment for children over time. We have asked teachers and staff to continue to develop the use of tracking to help ensure that all children engage in learning experiences which are well-suited to their individual needs and make appropriate progress. This will support all children to work more effectively to their potential.

**Across the school and nursery, further develop effective self-evaluation processes to focus more directly on improving outcomes for all learners.**

The acting headteacher is supporting the implementation of a quality assurance plan to monitor the quality of children's progress in the nursery. Nursery practitioners are reflective and are keen to improve further the quality of nursery provision. We have

asked that senior managers review the quality of children's nursery experience on a more regular basis and to give practitioners feedback to support further developments. The senior leadership team has now developed and introduced more rigorous quality assurance procedures across the school to support improved self-evaluation. For example, planned and regular termly classroom visits to monitor the success of the implementation of the new learning and teaching policy across the school. We have asked teachers to continue to use the national benchmarks and develop more regular moderation activities to ensure that they are making robust judgements about children's progress in learning in relation to national expectations. Senior managers should continue to develop systems to ensure that the views of parents and children are gathered on a more regular basis in order to support school improvement, in the nursery and across the primary stages.

**Increase the pace of curriculum development across the school and nursery as a priority to ensure that all children's needs, aspirations and entitlements are fully met.**

Practitioners in the nursery continue to deliver a curriculum where children are encouraged to explore and investigate. Most children engage well in their learning experiences and use the resources which practitioners have provided for them well. They are enjoying learning with their friends and also with practitioners. Partners, such as parents with particular skills, continue to add value through sharing different skills and supporting children's learning experiences. Nursery practitioners are now taking more account of children's interests and what they want to do. However the senior leadership team recognises the need to continue to develop, and improve further, children's nursery experiences through more effective planning of learning. There is also a need to ensure more effective planning in the early primary stages. Senior leaders have engaged teaching staff in reviewing the curriculum and have developed a 'curriculum wall' that exemplifies learning at different stages and identifies distinctive aspects of the Dyce community. The new curriculum rationale now needs to be used more effectively to plan learning experiences and evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum change. The senior leadership team are engaging parents, children, staff and partners in reviewing the school's vision, values and aims. Plans for ensuring that children progress in their learning have been developed in all curriculum areas. These are helping teachers to ensure continuity of learning for all children with a clearer understanding of expectations at each stage of learning. Care needs to be taken to ensure that children can use their own creativity when developing their skills rather than using worksheets which do not always further their learning. Senior leaders acknowledge that it is too early to evaluate the impact of curriculum change across the school. They reported to HM Inspectors that they intend to start their evaluative work at the end of the current term and develop this across this session. They now need to continue with this evaluative work and develop further the curriculum rationale to support this evaluation to have more of a focus on what the curriculum will deliver for children. Staff within the Learning Den have reviewed the use of time as requested to ensure it is now used more effectively for learning. They have also developed a more focused approach to learning in the community and have improved the learning environment.

**Further develop leadership at all levels, including children leading learning, to ensure this effectively improves outcomes for all children.**

Since the original inspection, the nursery has continued to experience significant change in the leadership team and its staffing. This has held back the pace of change and affected practitioners capacity to improve the quality of the nursery provision and children's experiences over time. However there is a clear commitment from the acting headteacher, depute headteacher, the senior early years practitioner and nursery practitioners to develop and improve further the quality of learning in the nursery setting. Nursery practitioners are now taking increased responsibility and lead roles which are supporting improvements. This is having a positive impact on the quality of children's experiences. Across the school and nursery there is still a need for staff to ensure that there is a greater level of challenge at all stages to enable learners to become even more independent in their learning. While staffing issues have also hampered the pace of change in the primary stages, most teachers are positive about the opportunities and support they receive from senior leaders to make suggestions and lead initiatives to improve the school. All teachers are members of working groups to take forward aspects of the school improvement plan. Pupil Participation Groups have been established across the school and these are enabling all children to engage in aspects of the wider life of the school. Children also run clubs for peers which are linked to curricular learning. These experiences are supporting children to identify and speak about their role in leading school initiatives and improvements. We have asked teachers to develop regular opportunities for children to lead learning for themselves and others. Work needs to continue to ensure that children have a greater sense of being able to act to bring about positive change in the school.

**What happens next?**

The school has made some progress on moving forward the main areas for development set out in the original inspection report. We will liaise with Aberdeen City Council to ensure the school continues to build on this progress and develops further its capacity for improvement. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

David Drysdale  
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: [complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.