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ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

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Parents/Carers
Fernielea School

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Dear Parent/Carer

Fernielea School – Follow through Report

In March 2012, HM Inspectors visited the school and nursery class and, in May, published a report of their findings. In the report they recognised the strengths of the school. These being:

- Polite, well-behaved children and their involvement in improving the school.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership in involving children, parents and staff in improving the work of the school, and the innovative approaches they use to do this.
- Sense of community, teamwork and inclusive school ethos where children receive high-quality support in their learning.
- Transition arrangements to ensure continuity in children's learning.
- Strong partnerships with parents and the wider community to support children's learning.

To further improve the school and the nursery class, inspectors recommended that staff continue to review and improve the quality of the curriculum and further develop assessment procedures.

Since then officers from the local authority have visited the school to find out how well the children are learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. As a result we are now able to report on the improvements made.

GAYLE GORMAN
DIRECTOR

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How well do young people learn and achieve?

Across the school, there continues to be a strong culture and ethos which promotes inclusion and sets high expectations and aspiration for all. As a result, children feel safe and well cared for and have very positive relationships with their teachers and other staff who support them. All children are well behaved, polite and show respect towards adults and each other.

Attainment across the school has continued to improve particularly in English language and literacy. Children are proud of their school and of their achievements. They talk confidently about their learning and are enthusiastic about the range of quality learning experiences which are provided for them.

At all stages, children are becoming increasingly involved in planning and evaluating their learning. In the nursery, floor books are being used very effectively to help children plan with staff what they want to learn, to reflect on their success and to share their learning journeys with parents and carers.

Whole school involvement in the *Tapestry* programme has enabled teachers build confidence in using a range of approaches to develop children's understanding of learning. As a result, almost all children routinely use learning outcomes and success criteria to describe their learning and evaluate their progress. In primary classes, *learning walls*, individual profiles and *GLOW blogs* are used to very good effect to share and evaluate learning and to celebrate this within the school and beyond.

Across the school, children continue to achieve appropriate levels of attainment and are making very good progress from prior learning. Almost all children are continuing to make appropriate progress in mathematics and health and wellbeing. The introduction of more active approaches to literacy has increased pace and progress in spelling and writing for most children.

Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills and in using these across different areas of their learning. In the nursery and early years, initiatives such as the *Wee Green Spaces* is providing further meaningful opportunities for children to learn and use these skills to help them understand and care for the world around them.

Focussed *school based challenge weeks* and *Masterclass* activities created in partnership with schools within the Associated School Group are very well planned to ensure all children are provided with a range of opportunities which challenge and extend their learning across a variety of areas and to participate in wider social groups. These experiences are enabling children to develop a greater understanding of their own ability and to develop self confidence and independence in their learning.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

Staff are continuing to develop and extend the curriculum very effectively in line with Curriculum for Excellence. They have recently reviewed and refined the school's curriculum plan and in so doing have significantly improved the coherence and progression of learning across all the curriculum elements.

Working together, children and staff have redesigned the social subjects programme. This now fully reflects the key design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. The children demonstrated their high level of understanding of how and what they are learning within this area of the curriculum during a recent Education Scotland sharing of good practice event.

Very good progress has been made in developing the school's programme for science. The work involved in gaining accreditation within the *Primary Science Quality Mark* and the *Scottish Schools Education Research Centre* programme has provided excellent professional development for staff. This increased teacher confidence and knowledge and improved the pace, challenge and consistency of learning and teaching of science across the school.

Working with staff from schools across the Associated Schools Group, teachers have developed more robust assessment procedures which involve the children in setting and using success criteria to evaluate their own progress.

Whole school activities such as the *Healthy Road Show* involving partners from the wider community is enabling children, parents and the community to understand that health and wellbeing extends beyond physical activity and eating health foods. Very effective sessions for parents and children, working collaboratively on substance misuse, have extended personal knowledge and shared understanding in this area of the curriculum.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

We are confident the school is very well placed to improve the quality of its work. The headteacher continues to provide excellent leadership and strives to explore new and innovative approaches to further improve the quality of education for all children. Aply supported by a depute head teacher and principal teachers the headteacher continues to maintain a strong culture of participative leadership. Creative approaches, such as short term acting principal teacher posts, have been used to ensure all staff are given opportunities to lead on specific projects and initiatives. This has significantly increased staff confidence and maintained a strong focus on continuous improvement in learning and teaching to ensure all learners achieve well.

Partnership working continues to be a key strength of the school. Staff regularly work together to plan, sample and moderate children's work and visit each others classes to share and develop practice. This very strong practice extends beyond the school to the Associated School Group and commendably involves staff from both primary and secondary schools.

All children are actively involved in range of activities to collect information, to interpret this and to plan future developments to improve the school, e.g. *Health Road Show* where all classes were given specific responsibilities to work with partners to organise and manage this event. Children continue to confidently share their findings and report on progress at whole school assemblies.

Many pupils are a member of improvement groups e.g. ECO group, Junior Road Safety Officers, and the Charities group. The Pupil Council also leads on specific improvement activities.

Across the school children are developing their understanding of learning and are using this knowledge to make valued contributions to enrich learners' experiences. The Eco Committee and Active Schools' representatives have successfully co-ordinated, evaluated and awarded house points for homework activities. In partnership with staff, the Pupil Council members have observed other children's learning in science and created *good scientist posters* which are designed to encourage all children to learn science.

The school has a very strong culture of self-evaluation. Almost all children regularly evaluate their own work and that of others. Their views are regularly sought and they feel they are listened to and their ideas are valued and make a positive difference to the school. Children and staff continue to work together to take forward agreed priorities for improvement through a range of working groups. This work is regularly monitored and shared ensuring all staff, pupils and parents have a clear overview of the very good progress being made.

What happens next?

Overall, the school has made very good progress with the key aspects for improvement since HM Inspectors visited in March 2012.

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision and are confident that the school's self-evaluation procedures ensure continued improvement. As a result, no further visits will be made in connection with this follow-through report.

Yours sincerely



Gayle Gorman

Director of Education, Culture and Sport