

14 January 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**Scourie Primary School
The Highland Council**

Recently, as you may know, I inspected your child's school. During my visit, I talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. I wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children to do their best. The headteacher shared with me the school's successes and priorities for improvement. I looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including numeracy and mathematics, writing and support for learning. As a result, I was able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

The school is improving how well children learn and achieve. Staff have been focussing on improving children's behaviour. As a result, there is a calm and welcoming learning environment across the school. Most children enjoy school. They concentrate well and keep on task in the classroom. They are learning to work both independently and in small groups. Children are motivated when taking part in activity-based tasks. They are positive about new approaches to setting and reviewing targets for what they will learn in literacy and numeracy. This is helping children gain an awareness of what they are good at and what they need to do to improve. Increasingly, children are involved in reviewing their own work and the work of others at the end of lessons. This is encouraging them to think more about their learning and to achieve success. Staff should continue to develop approaches to target-setting and to supporting children in discussing and reviewing their learning.

Children are not making enough progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Staff are aware of the need to improve children's skills in these areas and are taking action to improve children's attainment. Children are confident and articulate when speaking during class discussions. They can recall main events from texts they have read. Children are less skilled in analysing texts more deeply. They do not yet write well enough for a variety of purposes. The school now needs to implement, as planned, a programme for developing children's skills in writing. Across the school, children's skills in number and measurement need to be developed further. Children enjoy practising their skills in numeracy and mathematics using information and communications technology and games. They now need to apply their skills better to solve problems in numeracy and mathematics. Children achieve well in a range of sporting activities outwith the classroom, including shinty and football.

Within the school, there has been a focus on developing children's skills in music and, as a result, most children can play a musical instrument and many participate in the school band.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Staff are improving how they support children to develop and learn. They now provide children with more varied opportunities to learn. Staff are developing their confidence in using Curriculum for Excellence guidance to plan children's learning. Visiting specialists, for example in art and design, enhance children's experiences. Staff are working closely with other schools in the associated schools group (ASG) to review the programmes for science and social studies. Together with the ASG, they are planning interesting ways for children to apply the skills they have learned through projects such as the 'goblin racing car'. Staff now need to ensure they plan learning which provides progression in children's knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of the curriculum. Staff have reviewed arrangements for supporting children who require additional help with their learning. They identify children who need support and put in place additional planning to help children make progress. The learning support teacher and pupil support assistants provide valuable support for those children who require additional help. Staff now need to make sure they provide children with tasks at the right level of difficulty, particularly when planning whole-class activities. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They value the many opportunities to support children in their learning through taking after school clubs and helping with school activities.

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

Since taking up post, the headteacher has gained the respect of children, parents and staff. She has an accurate view of what is working well in the school and what needs to improve. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear guidance for staff. Staff work very well together as a team. They are highly committed to improving the work of the school and have put in place changes which are making children's learning experiences better. Staff now need to ensure they monitor and track children's learning carefully to ensure all children make appropriate progress. Parents feel they can offer their views and opinions to help the work of the school. They support recent changes in the life and work of the school. Overall, approaches to self-evaluation have not yet had enough impact on improving children's progress and achievement.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Welcoming school ethos.
- Partnership with parents and the community to support children's learning.
- Teamwork and commitment of staff to improving the work of the school.
- Positive changes made by the headteacher.

I discussed with staff and the Highland Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what I agreed with them.

- Meet children's learning needs more effectively to improve their progress.
- Continue to review and update the curriculum in line with Curriculum for Excellence.
- Ensure approaches to self-evaluation improve the work of the school.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with the Highland Council to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to carry out a further inspection within eighteen months of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

Janie McManus
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/ScoriePrimarySchoolHighland.asp>

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 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.