

15 January 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**Kinlochberrie High School
The Highland Council**

In January 2010, HM Inspectors published a report on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in November 2009 and at aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well young people are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Most young people enjoy school and feel that they are treated fairly and respectfully. In most classes, relationships between staff and young people are positive and, as a result, young people are attentive and keen to learn. When they are given the opportunity, young people now take more responsibility for their own learning. At times, however, lessons are too teacher-led and young people are not always sufficiently clear about what they have to learn. Young people are developing greater confidence in evaluating their own work and that of others. They use information and communications technology regularly to enhance and reinforce their learning. Overall, there is still work to be done to ensure that learners' experiences across the school are of a consistently high quality. The high expectations for young people's learning in most classes now needs to be shared more widely across all classes. Staff have identified and are addressing the need to improve arrangements for homework.

Young people continue to achieve well in a wide range of activities in class and in the wider community. At the upper stages, young people gain a sense of responsibility by helping younger pupils and by raising funds for a wide range of charities. At all stages, young people developed teamwork and leadership skills during a recent outdoor learning residential experience. Increasingly, young people receive accreditation for their achievements including, for example, coaching and sports leadership awards. Over recent years, young people have successfully achieved Nuffield Science Bursaries and gained entry to a space school organised by NASA. Overall, the attainment of young people shows some promising signs of improvement. Staff now need to raise young people's attainment in some subjects where there is room for further improvement.

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

Staff have made some recent, important improvements to the curriculum. As a result, young people at S1 to S3 now benefit from a curriculum which is suitably broad. Staff are now more confident in planning courses for young people in line with national advice. For example, young people have increasing opportunities to link aspects of their learning and to work together. Staff are developing positive links with associated primary schools to help young people make a confident start at S1. In a few subjects, there is scope to improve courses at S1/S2 to ensure that they meet the needs of all learners. At S4 to S6, young people experience a broad and flexible curriculum. There are good arrangements in place for young people to develop relevant skills for work as a result of courses, such as, maritime skills, childcare and rural skills. Young people are very well supported as they prepare to leave school and almost all move on to positive destinations. Staff know young people well and are aware of their needs. They continue to work effectively with a range of agencies to help support young people in their learning. Staff provide young people with good opportunities for additional tuition and help outwith the school day. Staff need to continue to work together to improve the consistency of challenge for all young people in their learning.

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

Staff are keen to learn new skills and are very willing to take responsibility for important aspects of school life. Almost all staff now participate in a programme of learning visits which helps them to share good practice across the school. The headteacher has made a positive impact during her short time in post and has already led some important improvements. Staff should now look to improve their approaches for monitoring young people's progress and attainment and in agreeing strategies for improvement. Most parents feel that they are consulted well and have good opportunities to give their views. They are increasingly confident that their views are taken into account.

What happens next?

Staff have made positive progress in improving some important aspects of the school. The curriculum experienced by young people at S1 to S3 now meets their needs more successfully. The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of parents, staff and young people and the ethos of the school has improved. There are some promising recent improvements in how staff monitor the quality of education which they provide. These approaches have not yet had time to make sufficient impact on the quality and consistency of learners' experiences. There remains scope to raise levels of expectations for what young people can achieve. We will make a further inspection visit within a year of the publication of this letter. We will then inform parents about the extent of progress which the school has made.

Alistair Brown
HM Inspector

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.