

18 September 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Colquhoun Park Primary School and Nursery Class
East Dunbartonshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We 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 us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including raising the pace and challenge of learning and the development of new approaches to assessment and moderation. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Overall, children learn and achieve very well. In the nursery, children have settled well and are enthusiastic learners. They are forming friendships and communicate confidently with staff to choose their own activities. At the primary stages, children enjoy school and are highly motivated to learn. They have good relationships with staff and with each other. They feel safe and well cared for and think that the school is helping them to become more confident. Children work well together in small group activities. They enjoy many opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and to work independently. They regularly discuss their own learning outcomes and how well they have achieved them. Children's learning is enhanced through the use of the school grounds and frequent trips and visits.

Across the school, children achieve well in a range of citizenship, cultural and sporting activities. Children work with staff and other adults to gain Eco-Schools Scotland awards and to raise funds for charities. They have achieved recent success in a British Council project on international education. All children enjoy taking part in school shows and presentations at assemblies. In the nursery and across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In the nursery, children listen very well for instructions and information. Almost all can recognise their own name in print and can count and order numbers to ten or beyond. At the primary stages, children listen and respond well to staff. They speak purposefully, take turns and confidently offer opinions. At all stages, children are developing their reading skills very well. They write extensively for a variety of purposes. Children at all stages are confident in

mental mathematics activities and are improving their accuracy in written calculations. They enjoy tackling problem-solving challenges and most are increasingly using appropriate strategies to do so. Children use computers well to organise and present their work in mathematics and other subjects.

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

The school supports children to develop and learn very well. Across the nursery and primary stages, all staff use the principles of Curriculum for Excellence to plan children's learning. In the nursery, staff take account of children's interests very well in planning learning activities. Many of the themes are developed in meaningful real-life contexts. At the primary stages, staff use national advice on Curriculum for Excellence very effectively to provide motivating and challenging learning experiences. The school plans the development of children's skills in literacy and numeracy through a balance of work in English language and mathematics and in interdisciplinary learning topics. Teachers engage children in discussions about what and how they will learn at the beginning of topics. Staff regularly promote health and wellbeing and make good use of the outdoors for learning. Children are prepared for and supported very well in transitions from the nursery to the primary school and from P7 to Boclair Academy.

There is a very strong ethos of care and inclusion across the nursery and school. Staff know all children very well and provide a calm and supportive environment for learning. They provide tasks and activities appropriate to the needs of all learners, including the more able and those experiencing difficulties. Learning support assistants and the network support teacher provide high quality support in class. The school uses rigorous procedures to identify and assess children in need of additional support in their learning. Staff use comprehensive plans to monitor and review their progress. Children are successfully encouraged to share their learning at home through the school's home learning programme. The school has very effective partnerships with external agencies to help support the most vulnerable children.

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

Staff use a range of appropriate procedures very effectively to evaluate the quality of their work and, as a result, have achieved significant improvements in the quality of children's learning in recent years. These procedures include rigorous and supportive observations of classroom practice by senior managers. The school has developed a comprehensive and innovative system to assess, monitor and track children's achievements and progress. Staff are highly motivated, work well as a team and share good practice with each other. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and clear direction for the school. She is ably supported by her depute, who oversees the work of the nursery very effectively, and two principal teachers. Together, they are ensuring that the school continues to improve.

This inspection of your school and nursery class found the following key strengths.

- Children's enthusiasm for learning and their pride in the school.
- The inclusive ethos and robust approaches to meeting children's needs in the nursery and across the school.
- The leadership of senior managers in managing change and improving outcomes for children.
- Effective teamwork amongst nursery and primary staff and their commitment to securing improvements.
- Innovative systems for assessing and tracking children's progress in order to ensure greater achievements.

We discussed with staff and the education authority how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to embed the range of successful developments that are improving the quality of children's learning experiences.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified an aspect of innovative practice which we would like to explore further in order to share the practice with others. As a result we will work with the school and local authority in order to record and share more widely the innovative practice. We will ask the school, in discussion with the local authority, to let parents know the outcome of the innovative practice visit(s).

Jim Bruce
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/ColquhounParkPrimarySchoolEastDunbartonshire.asp>.

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