

29 March 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**St Kenneth's Primary School and Nursery Class
South Lanarkshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and 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 children's wider achievements, children's involvement in the life of the school and active approaches to learning. 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?

In the nursery class and at the primary stages children have very positive learning experiences. In the nursery class, children are confident and motivated learners. They benefit from the calm, relaxed and happy learning environment which provides them with the freedom to decide where and what they will play with. There is lots of fun as children balance on stilts in the outdoor area, take photos of each other and giggle with delight as they move outside in the wind with scarves. Most children sustain interest and commitment to task, for example, as they explore the properties of magnets and in their imaginative play within the home corner. Children have increasing opportunities to talk about and plan their learning. Across the primary classes children's behaviour is exemplary. They benefit from strong Catholic values which underpin everything the school does. Children are confident, articulate and clearly proud of their school community. They are motivated in their learning and keen to learn and improve. Children talk knowledgeably about their targets in learning and their progress in achieving these. Almost all children talk positively about their learning experiences. Most children stay on task for all aspects of their learning in their classes and work effectively individually, in pairs, trios and small groups. In the upper stages, children demonstrate well-developed skills in collaborative group activities. These skills were particularly strong in their group reading tasks. In all classes, children make very good attempts to assess their own learning and that of their peers. This is supporting children to be very clear of their strengths and areas they need to improve. Children's learning profiles have recently been improved to support them to reflect on and take more responsibility for their learning.

In the nursery class, children are making very good progress in developing their early literacy and numeracy skills. They are confident communicators and are keen to talk to each other and adults. Contexts such as, the newly hatched chicks provide a lovely and spontaneous way for children to share and develop their listening and talking skills. We have asked staff to continue to develop opportunities such as these to give children more open-ended and natural ways to develop these key skills. Children develop their early reading and writing skills as part of their play. They relish their shared storytelling sessions, 'A Book and a Blether', with older children from P7. Children count regularly as part of their play and demonstrate their understanding of 2D shapes as they construct rockets.

Across the school, staff have worked hard to create a culture which recognises and celebrates children's individual and collective achievements. House assemblies and whole school awards contribute to this ethos. Children have been successful in a wide range of activities and sports at local and national level. These successes are shared regularly with parents and the wider community through the school website, newspaper articles, newsletters and assemblies. Commendably, staff take very good account of and meticulously monitor each individual child's progress to ensure all children have opportunities to enjoy success in a variety of areas. Children are developing a strong understanding of global citizenship and support international charities very well. In the last year, they have raised a significant amount of money to assist different charities. Admirably, it is the children who identify suitable charities to support. At all stages, children are making very good progress in developing their English language and literacy, and numeracy and mathematical skills. Almost all children confidently contribute to class and group discussions. They enjoy sharing their personal responses to books with many able to describe well the style of their favourite authors. In P2, children identify and respond to the humour in their Katie Morag story book, while in P7 children analyse well the writing style of Charles Dickens. Children have many opportunities to write for interesting and real-life contexts. In all classes, children benefit from the opportunities they have to engage in mental maths activities. Their problem solving skills are well developed and utilised effectively. This was very evident as they interpreted bus timetables in P4 and calculated different salaries in P6. It is pleasing that the school is exploring new ways for children to apply their numeracy skills in other areas of school life. A very good example of this is the newly formed credit union, 'Savvy Savers' which is organised by older children. Providing children with meaningful opportunities to apply and extend their learning in different contexts is a particularly strong feature of the school. Skilfully, a group of older children delivered a highly successful computer club, 'Senior Surfers', for older residents in the community.

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

The way in which the school meets the needs of learners with additional needs is commendable. Very careful tracking of children's progress helps staff identify children who may need additional support or extra challenge. Teaching and support staff work well together to plan personalised learning opportunities for children to ensure they are well supported and making suitable progress. The Senior Management Team (SMT) oversee and review the progress of all learners to ensure all make appropriate progress. The school works well with a range of partners and specialists to secure the best possible outcomes for children. Staff work hard to involve children and parents in

this process. In the nursery, staff clearly know children and their families very well. All parents appreciate the high level of care shown by staff to their children. In most primary classes tasks and activities meet the needs of learners. In most classes lessons are brisk and follow-up tasks are appropriate. This very good practice now needs to be more consistent across all classes. The school has fostered strong partnerships with parents and has developed very positive links with the Parent Council. All parents who responded to the questionnaire are very happy with the school and believe the school is well-led.

Taking very good account of Curriculum for Excellence, staff provide children with a broad and interesting curriculum. In the nursery class, staff respond well to children's interests to shape activities and the learning environment. Children benefit from regular opportunities to learn outdoors. At the primary stages, staff have recently refreshed aspects of the curriculum to make it more relevant, taking better account of children's interests and ideas. We have asked staff to continue to develop these approaches. Staff have created progressive pathways for all curricular areas. A particularly strong feature of the school is its approaches to assessing children's learning. Staff along with SMT carry out regular assessments to ensure children are working at appropriate levels and make continuous progress. To support continuity and progression in children's learning, staff work closely with colleagues from St Andrew's and St Bride's High School. The curriculum is enhanced through a range of visitors to the school who enrich learning, for example, as part of their World War II topic, great grandparents shared with older children their experiences of being evacuees. The school also benefits greatly from the regular visits and involvement of the local parish priest.

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

St Kenneth's is a school that is continually improving as a result of its strong approaches to self-evaluation. Children, staff, parents and the wider community all help to identify the school's strengths and areas for future development. Improving learning and ensuring children make the best possible progress is at the heart of the school's work. The headteacher sets high expectations and is aspirational for all children who attend St Kenneth's Primary School and Nursery Class. She encourages staff to undertake leadership roles, providing them with many opportunities for professional learning and for sharing effective practice. Staff readily identify and share good practice with each other. There is a very strong sense of teamwork across the whole school, which extends to the committed and conscientious cleaning and janitorial team. Staff who are new to the school appreciate the very positive support they receive from their colleagues and the SMT. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership of the whole staff team. She sets a very professional and inclusive tone. The whole school community rightly hold the headteacher in the highest regard and value the contribution she is making in St Kenneth's. She is ably supported by the highly effective deputies. Together, they relentlessly track and monitor all aspects of children's learning to ensure all children are appropriately challenged and supported. All staff value the support and leadership of the headteacher and deputies. The principal teachers undertake their remits with great energy and commitment. The school strives to make continuous improvements for your children. In recent years, the school has extended children's wider achievements, improved the curriculum, support for learning, and the quality of

teaching. It has worked hard to give children a stronger voice in improving the school. Raising attainment is a key priority for all staff. We are confident that this school will continue to improve and provide a calm, stimulating and positive environment for its learners.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Confident, polite and well-behaved pupils who are fully involved in the life of their school.
- Children's wider achievements and how these are carefully tracked by staff to ensure children enjoy success across their learning.
- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Team work and commitment of the SMT and staff team to ensure high quality learning experiences for all.
- Robust approaches to self-evaluation to secure continuous improvement.
- Exceptional leadership of the headteacher dedicated to secure the best possible outcomes for all children.

We discussed with staff and South Lanarkshire Council how they might continue to improve the school and nursery class. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to refresh the curriculum as planned.

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 aspects of innovative practice which we would like to explore further. We shall work with the school and South Lanarkshire Council to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.

Jackie Maley
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/StKennethsPrimarySchoolSouthLanarkshire.asp>

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