

7 June 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Kenmore Primary School  
Perth & Kinross Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleague 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 developments in literacy and the impact of teachers' professional learning on securing improvements for children. 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?**

Children are lively and enthusiastic learners who are very proud of their school and local community. They respond very well to the school's active approaches to learning. At the upper stages, children demonstrate a responsible and independent attitude to learning. Children really appreciate the range and quality of learning experiences at school, especially the frequent opportunities to learn outdoors. Across the school, almost all children demonstrate their independence well and can organise themselves efficiently and quickly during their individual or group tasks. Children take responsibility for their own learning and help to maintain individual profiles that document and exemplify their progress in learning. Teachers should continue to develop this approach which empowers children to celebrate their own achievements. In doing so they should consider how digital technology can enhance and add value to this process. Teachers talk to children on a daily basis about their learning, including providing them with helpful feedback on how they can improve their work. The purpose of lessons is shared and reviewed routinely as part of learning. As a result, almost all children can talk about how well they are doing, what sorts of things they want to know and be able to do, and can identify their next steps in learning.

Children feel that their ideas and opinions are taken seriously by staff and they talk proudly about the work of the pupil council, eco committee and health and wellbeing group. In particular, they are very proud of their recent input in refreshing the school library. All children benefit from a range of educational visits and from visitors to the school. Older children develop confidence and resilience, and demonstrate their organisational skills very well by planning all aspects of their residential skiing trip to Glenshee.

The school has maintained high standards of attainment in recent years. Across the school, most children are currently making very good progress, in line with their levels of ability, in mathematics, reading and writing. A few children at each stage are making very strong progress in their learning and exceed national expectations. Children requiring additional support are making steady progress in their learning, through the active approaches to learning and teaching and well-judged assistance from teachers and support staff. This year the school has taken effective steps to improve approaches to literacy learning and teaching. As a result, children talk very positively about their 'literacy journey' and are now reading more often and more widely for pleasure. As part of their 'literacy journey', children across the school have engaged in a variety of motivating and stimulating experiences. For example, they visited the Edinburgh Book Festival to participate in author sessions; read their own poetry in the Grand Library of neighbouring Taymouth Castle; used digital technology to create their own stories and movie trailers for books; and organised a book fair. Staff should continue to build on these successful approaches to literacy by now focusing on extending further children's listening and talking skills.

Children say they enjoy mathematics. They appreciate the active and varied approaches that teachers use to introduce and consolidate different aspects of mathematics work. As a result, children are developing an appropriate awareness of how mathematical and numeracy skills are used across their learning and in real life. For example, as part of the work of the eco group, younger children enjoy applying their counting skills by taking part in the Big Schools' Bird Watch initiative, and go on to use the information they gather to produce a graph of the types of birds they spot in the school grounds. Children at P3 and P4 have grasped the concept of the link between multiplication and division very well. As a result, they can quickly answer division sums by using their knowledge of times tables. Children at P5 and P6 use their knowledge about time well to produce a timetable of the school day, incorporating digital and analogue formats. We have asked staff to review the programme for mathematics to ensure that children benefit from learning about financial education.

Across the school, children's knowledge about their own health and wellbeing is very well developed. Children really enjoy and benefit from participating in challenging physical activities such as skiing, orienteering, kayaking and mountain-biking. Children are particularly proud of participating in their annual 'Wee Robbie' challenge that includes running, cycling and kayaking. Children and all staff are enjoying participating in running and walking a 'daily mile'. Older children say they feel fitter and are more alert for learning as a result of this regular exercise.

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

The headteacher and staff are very clear that the curriculum at Kenmore Primary School enables children to develop a sense of identity and should equip them with skills for their future lives. This appropriate vision has been developed and shared successfully with the whole school community. Staff and children make the most of the rural location and historical setting of the school. They use the school grounds, woodland and nearby River Tay as important contexts for learning. As a result, there are frequent opportunities for children to learn outdoors and to foster a deep connection with their local community and environment. Staff have developed helpful approaches to planning using Curriculum for Excellence guidance that builds on children's learning as they move

through the school. Whole-school themes, such as learning about the local history of crannogs, provide exciting contexts for children to learn together across age groups, which adds to the 'family' ethos of the school.

Relationships between adults and children are caring and highly supportive. This helps to create a nurturing environment for learning where all children can achieve and feel valued. Classroom assistants and administrative staff play a key role in supporting children and in the wider life of the school. Teachers effectively identify children's individual needs and any barriers to learning. Where appropriate, the school liaises closely with partners and support agencies to ensure that the needs of children are met effectively. A few children require an individualised educational programme (IEP) to help them to overcome specific challenges in their learning. These IEPs are written in a child-friendly format and contain clear targets which are both focused and measurable. Overall, there is a well-considered balance of ways for children to learn in lessons, such as individually or in pairs and groups, which helps all children find a variety of ways to succeed. We have asked staff to continue to share effective practice in learning and teaching to ensure that tasks and activities within lessons are pitched at the correct level to challenge and support all learners. As the school and Perth & Kinross Council are aware, and are trying to resolve, the lack of reliable internet connectivity presents a significant challenge for staff and children. This diminishes the school's appropriate aim to prepare children for life and the world of work.

Almost all parents are very positive about almost all aspects of the school. Parents feel that the school communicates well with them. They are provided with regular updates on school events as well as information on what their children will be learning in class. Parents themselves provide valuable support and expertise to the school in a range of ways. For example by running after-school clubs; assisting with developing the school grounds; and teaching kayaking.

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

Kenmore Primary School demonstrates strong capacity to continuously improve. Together, the headteacher and principal teacher successfully promote a culture of teamwork which is clearly leading to improvements for children. Staff are developing robust systems to predict, track and monitor children's progress as they move through the school. The headteacher uses a number of important and helpful monitoring activities throughout the year to check on standards. These monitoring activities include observing lessons, holding individual discussions with all children about their learning, and ensuring there are frequent opportunities for professional dialogue amongst staff. A programme of coaching and mentoring, which is effectively carried out by the principal teacher, further enhances the school's approaches to staffs' professional learning. As a result, teachers are reflective about their own classroom practice and keen to research good practice out with their school. The impact of these successful approaches to self-evaluation are leading to improvements in literacy and in the development of curriculum planning and assessment. The school actively seeks the views of children, parents, staff and community partners as a core part of its work. Recent areas for consultation have included the school's vision, values and aims and approaches to improving literacy and health and wellbeing.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Children's genuine involvement in decision-making and in the life of their school and community.
- Rich learning experiences that enable children to make the most of the history, geography and culture of their local area.
- Strong partnerships with parents and community partners, which enhance the curriculum and children's experiences.
- Staffs' commitment to professional learning which results in improved outcomes for children.
- The leadership of the headteacher and principal teacher, and the dedication of all staff to providing a caring and motivating ethos for learning.

We discussed with staff and Perth & Kinross Council how they might continue to improve the school. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to share the best practice in learning and teaching across the school to ensure that tasks and activities are at the right level to challenge and support all learners.
- Continue to develop successful approaches to developing children's skills for learning, life and work.

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 visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Perth & Kinross Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Lesley A Johnstone  
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/KenmorePrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.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.

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