

24 January 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Kinnoull Primary School
Perth and Kinross Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. Throughout our visit, we talked to many parents and children and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the school supported 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 school ethos, the development of Curriculum for Excellence, expressive arts and the impact of shared leadership. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

We found that your children are learning very well. They are enthusiastic, keen to do their best and actively involved in learning. Teachers make sure that children are clear about what they are learning and about the criteria that will be used to measure how well they have done. Their 'learning steps' jotters show progress in their learning from term to term. Staff are aware that this approach needs to be developed further. Children's confidence continues to grow because their successes and achievements are recorded and celebrated at weekly assemblies. Children need to become more involved in setting learning targets and recording their individual achievements from the school and beyond. Children care for each other and demonstrate good social skills. They really enjoy coming to school and feel safe and happy. Children benefit from a range of out-of-class activities including netball, guitar, choirs and a popular art club. The annual residential trip to Glenshee helps older children face challenges and work cooperatively in an outdoor setting.

Almost all children are making very good progress in English language and mathematics. Staff use Curriculum for Excellence effectively to measure children's progress. The signs are encouraging that children's attainment is continuing to improve from previous levels. New approaches to teaching reading are resulting in almost all children enjoying discussing texts and reading with confidence. Children in all classes are helped to develop effective talking and listening skills and most can listen and contribute effectively in groups. By P7, children write exceptionally well at length. They are producing extended pieces of writing which use sophisticated language and which engage readers very well. Last year, children achieved well-deserved success in a national writing competition. Across the school, teachers are helping children to develop their numeracy skills in real-life contexts. For example, children in P5 have practised planning itineraries through organising a camping adventure in Spain based around a fixed budget and best value. Children use information and communications

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technology (ICT) well to develop their skills in mathematics and numeracy. Children are also making very good progress in other areas of their learning, particularly in the expressive arts. Children's skills in music and art are strong. They sing with confidence and enthusiasm. Many enjoy playing the guitar and other string instruments. At all stages, children are developing a secure understanding of health and wellbeing. Their awareness of the importance of keeping themselves well emotionally is reinforced by, for example, the successful 'Bounce Back' resilience programme.

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

Children enjoy a broad and well-planned curriculum which meets their needs very well. The school is making good progress in improving the curriculum by using Curriculum for Excellence. Specialist teachers in physical education, art and music enrich children's learning experiences. Whilst accommodation for physical education in the school is limited, teachers make good use of local community facilities to ensure children benefit from regular, high-quality physical activity. More needs to be done to develop outdoor learning. Staff also need to further develop ways of linking learning in different subjects so that children can apply skills in different ways and understand the relevance of tasks to everyday life. Staff and children have produced a useful DVD to help children as they move from nursery into P1. For older children moving to Perth High School, effective procedures ensure that the transition is a successful one. The new school website is proving popular for keeping the community up-to-date with school events. The headteacher and staff are keen to continue to look for better ways to communicate with and involve parents.

We found that staff provide a very high level quality of care and support to all children in the school. The school is particularly effective at nurturing children with their families. As a result, children are settled and their emotional wellbeing is supported very well. Children who need extra help with their learning and behaviour are very well supported. The school uses a range of creative approaches to make sure children are given the individual help they need to succeed. Children who need additional challenge to help them fulfil their potential are given opportunities to extend their skills through targeted teaching designed to extend their learning.

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

The headteacher is well respected by children, staff and parents and has secured a culture of improvement. The principal teacher provides strong support for children's learning and behaviour. Teachers are very reflective and embrace new ways of working. They all play a role in helping to improve the school. The management team needs to continue to monitor new developments and ensure that all staff are supported as needed, when required. Children have a say in how to improve the school through, for example, the pupil council and the eco committee. The school now needs to implement its plans to extend such opportunities so that all children contribute fully. The school also needs to continue to extend ways of drawing on your views as parents to help evaluate the work of the school. We are confident that the school is progressing well and will continue to provide a high standard of education for all children.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- A very positive school ethos with confident and articulate children.
- Children who are actively engaged in their own learning.
- Children's achievements, particularly in the expressive arts.

- The standard of children's writing throughout the school.
- The approaches used to helping children who need additional support and challenge with their learning and behaviour.

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 develop the curriculum by using Curriculum for Excellence.
- Improve self-evaluation approaches to increase their impact on children's learning.

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 visits in connection with this inspection. The local authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of the schools.

Carole McKenzie
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.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=9168&type=2>

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