

28 April 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**Luncarty Primary School and Nursery Class  
Perth and Kinross 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 new approaches to planning learning with children, and challenging children to develop their thinking skills. 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 at the primary stages and in the nursery class enjoy a positive learning experience. In the nursery class, most children select their own activities without adult support. They particularly enjoy developing skills of investigation through, for example, exploring snow and ice. Children play well together and are learning to share resources. They persevere when challenged by tricky puzzles. Across the primary stages, children are eager learners who are happy, polite, articulate and very well behaved. They are motivated by interesting learning activities. When given the opportunity, they enjoy working together in small groups. For example, children in P4 cooperated well in tasks to help them learn about Bannockburn. We have asked the school to further develop opportunities which encourage children to take more responsibility for their own learning. In most classes, children understand what is to be learned and the purpose of their work. Most staff use questioning well to find out what children know, and in the best examples, children are encouraged to develop their thinking and explain answers. In a few classes, staff used information and communications technology (ICT) well to support learning, for example at P7 to research data about casualty figures in world conflict. The school recognises the need to be more creative in its use of ICT to enrich learning across the curriculum. Children from P3 onwards participate weekly in school groups enabling them to develop leadership and take on responsibilities across the school. For example, the work of the Safe Travel Group has successfully increased the number of children walking and riding bicycles or scooters to school. The headteacher recognises the need to ensure all of the groups offer high-quality learning experiences and that younger children should also be included. In the nursery class and across the primary stages, children record their achievements in class learning logs and individual portfolios. In the best examples, these provide a very good illustration of children's learning and suggest

steps for improvement. Children at all stages demonstrate caring attitudes to the needs of others through regular fundraising activities. Children recently chose to support a Rotary Club project and raised funds to provide emergency shelter boxes. They understand the impact of these activities in helping others in the event of crisis at home or abroad.

In the nursery class, children are making good progress in developing their literacy skills. They listen well and are becoming aware of authors and illustrators. They can talk about their favourite books and enjoyed exploring Scots language in *The Gruffalo's Wean*. However, overall, children in the nursery class need to have access to more books and reading materials during play. Most children show an interest in early writing and almost all of the older children are developing skills in writing across the playroom. This includes taking orders in the class 'Chinese restaurant'. Overall, at the primary stages, children are making good progress in their literacy skills, but this is not consistent enough across all classes. Most children talk confidently about their learning but a few need to listen more attentively to the views of others and take turns during discussions. Children's writing is of a good standard, with some very good examples in P4 and P7. Across the primary stages, children read regularly in class. Older children can talk with confidence about character development in their study of the novel *Parvana's Journey*. Children in most classes have interesting opportunities to write for a range of purposes, usually linked to their current class theme for learning. At P5, children accurately recorded results of their food tasting experiments. Overall, most children are making good progress with mathematics and numeracy but this progress is not of a consistently high enough quality. From P3-P7, most children can count quickly and accurately. Older children applied their knowledge of direction when marking out a compass rose in the snow. By P7, children can use their skills in calculating percentages to find the best deals shopping on the internet. Across the school, most children have a growing understanding of the importance of pursuing an active and healthy life style. Older children confidently shared their learning with younger classes about the adverse effects of smoking. We have discussed with the school leadership team the need for children to experience consistently high-quality learning and teaching at all stages to ensure they achieve as highly as possible.

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

Across the primary stages and in the nursery class, staff provide a warm and welcoming learning environment. In the nursery class, staff support children to develop and learn well. They plan a range of relevant and interesting activities. However, in doing so, they need to ensure children are sufficiently challenged. In the primary classes, teachers and support staff work together flexibly to respond to children's needs. Tasks and activities in the majority of lessons are suitably challenging to meet children's needs. At times, in a few classes, the pace can be too slow. Staff should now ensure that higher-attaining children are appropriately challenged and that the pace of learning is appropriate across all stages and all areas of the curriculum. Children with additional support needs are included very well in all aspects of their learning and in the life of the school. This is of mutual benefit to all children in their learning at Luncarty Primary School. Led effectively by the headteacher, staff work closely with partners, parents and one another to identify when additional support for children's learning is required. Staff who work with children with

additional support needs work effectively as a team and support children and their families very well.

Staff provide children with interesting opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. In the nursery class, children enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on learning through play. Most staff across nursery and primary stages are increasingly confident using Curriculum for Excellence in their planning. They have recently developed a whole-school approach to linking learning across different areas and in involving children in planning what is to be learned. For example, children learning about the past interviewed a modern day soldier in their exploration of the impact of war on a community. However, these approaches are not yet consistently applied by all staff and there is a need to ensure progression, depth and challenge in children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. The school should continue to develop the curriculum as planned and ensure a shared understanding of standards and what is to be achieved through the curriculum. Staff agree that children would benefit from improved opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in music, art and drama. There is scope to make more use of the local area in children's learning. The school works with a range of partners to support learning. This includes a long-established partnership with a school in Bangladesh which is fostering global citizenship. There are effective arrangements in place for when children move from nursery into P1 and as children move through the primary stages. The headteacher and staff have embedded strong links with Perth Grammar School, ensuring children build on their learning when they enter S1.

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

The headteacher is a strong and effective leader who is well respected by children, parents and staff. She is well supported by the two principal teachers who serve as models for effective learning and teaching. As a leadership team, they know the strengths and development needs of the school well. The school continues to face challenges in continuity of staffing. The headteacher recognises this is having an impact on the school, and carefully deploys staff to make best use of experience and talents. Most staff are committed to improving the children's experiences and readily engage in a range of professional learning activities. This includes active participation in learning groups and research. This is having a positive impact at most stages of the school. Views of parents and children are sought through questionnaires and in engagement with the parent and pupil councils. Overall, most parents are very happy with the work of the school. The leadership team observe learning and give staff helpful feedback on their work. There is scope for this feedback to provide more challenge, as well as support. The headteacher and her team track children's progress in reading, writing and mathematics and use information gathered to take steps to improve children's experiences. This now needs to be extended to other areas of the curriculum. We are confident that, with continued support from Perth and Kinross Council, Luncarty Primary School will continue to improve.

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the nursery had no requirements and no recommendations. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no recommendations.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Well-behaved, enthusiastic and confident children who are fully involved in the life of the school.
- The school's commitment to inclusion, and arrangements and success in meeting the needs of children with additional needs.
- The commitment of staff to professional learning and improvement.
- The effective leadership of the headteacher.

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

- Continue to improve the curriculum to ensure children make suitable progress in all areas of their learning.
- Ensure self-evaluation leads to consistently high-quality learning and teaching across all stages.

### **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. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Perth and Kinross Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Susan Duff  
HM Inspector

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations and national care standards gradings, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/LuncartyPrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.asp>

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