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Dear Parent/Carer

**St Stephen's RC 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, additional support for learning and using Glow as a tool for learning. 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?

Almost all children are motivated learners who respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. Relationships between staff and children are very positive. Children can talk about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how the school helps them to achieve this. Almost all children work well together in groups sharing ideas sensibly and maturely. Increasingly, children are taking responsibility for planning their work with their teachers. In all classes, teachers help children to reflect on their learning. This is helping children to recognise their strengths as learners and understand what they can do to make their work better. Children set themselves goals for improving their work and we have asked teachers to help children make these more personalised so that individual progress is clearer. We think the school will be able to do this by building on the good practice of children leading learning conferences between teachers and parents. Through regular use of Glow, children share their learning effectively between home and school. Children experience success in various sporting and cultural events and enjoy celebrating their achievements at assemblies.

Overall, most children are making good progress across all areas of their learning. We think the school's plans to improve children's attainment, especially in writing, are well judged. The way in which children learn through whole school topics is helping them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in relevant and meaningful ways. For example, at P6/7, children had used their skills in mathematics and numeracy to design and make toys during technology lessons.

¹ This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as this will not connect.

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

Staff know your children very well and take seriously their shared responsibility for supporting and developing children as individuals. The school provides particularly strong support for children who need additional help to make progress. A significant minority of children receive very effective support from highly skilled and knowledgeable pupil support staff. The school works well with parents and other professionals to help those children who require individualised educational plans to make progress. Teachers provide a wide range of tasks, activities and resources to meet the needs of children with different abilities, particularly in English language and mathematics. We are confident that teachers will continue to build on the existing ways they assess children's learning to make sure all children are suitably challenged. All staff have helped to develop and implement changes across the school taking account of Curriculum for Excellence. The school has a clear vision for your children to learn, and to develop their faith, based on the teachings and values of the Catholic Church. The school makes sure children receive a broad curriculum and helps children to see meaningful links in their learning across subjects. Children have good opportunities to learn useful skills by serving on committees and by taking part in events in school and in the wider community. Staff are now in a strong position to help children understand more clearly how these experiences contribute to their overall learning and development.

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

The school has established a range of very effective ways to monitor and improve the quality of education it provides. For example, the headteacher visits classes and meets with groups of children to talk about their learning. Staff meet regularly to reflect on what is working well and what can be improved. Together, they are developing ways to track children's progress more closely. Children influence decisions which affect them, including what they learn and how they learn it. The pupil council is proud of its achievements, particularly in providing suggestion boxes around the school. You, as parents, have many opportunities to comment on the work of the school and to influence and support developments. The Parent Council supports the school well. The headteacher provides strong, sensitive and very effective leadership. Together with staff, she has an accurate picture of the things that the school does well and what aspects could be improved. Consequently, we are confident that with your continued support the school will continue to provide a happy place in which children learn.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- Well-behaved children who increasingly guide their own learning and are keen to learn as well as they can.
- Caring staff who fulfil effectively their shared responsibility to develop every individual child.
- High-quality support for children's additional learning needs.
- The leadership of the headteacher in securing her community's active support for the work of the school.

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

- Help children to use feedback on their learning to set personal goals for improvement.
- Continue to develop the curriculum in order to raise attainment and further develop approaches to monitor this.

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 its schools.

Elaine Merrilees
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=6697&type=2>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact 01506 600200, or write to us at the above address or e-mail: feedback@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk.