

31 May 2016

Dear Parent/carer

Inverkip Primary School and Nursery Class Inverclyde Council

We are trying out some new approaches to school inspection. You can find more information about these new approaches at the link below¹. Your school was inspected during March 2016 using new quality indicators for early learning settings² and schools³. You can find these new quality indicators at the links below. We focused our inspection work on aspects of leadership and management across the school, the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and how well the school is supporting all children to make progress and achieve as highly as possible. We also invited the headteacher to identify an additional aspect of the school's work for us to evaluate. The additional area selected was partnerships. This letter sets out our findings.

Children's progress and achievements

In the nursery, children are making good progress in developing their skills in early literacy and numeracy. Children listen well, are able to follow instructions and can recognise familiar letters and words. A few children are beginning to try to write their name and some common words. Most children are beginning to count and understand simple words used in mathematics such as full or empty. Children are currently interested in measurement and are beginning to appreciate concepts of tall, small, longer, shorter in appropriate play experiences. Across the primary classes, children make very good progress in their learning. They are provided with a strong range of opportunities to develop their wider achievements. Most children are developing their reading and writing skills well. Children are engaging with a wide range of texts and are able to read aloud with fluency. Children are regularly producing high-quality writing for a range of purposes. In numeracy and mathematics, the attainment of most children at the primary stages is strong. As a result of a recent renewed focus, most children are improving their skills in mental calculations. Staff provide motivating opportunities for children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in real-life contexts. For example, children in P5 developed their understanding of probability and chance through outdoor games. Those in P7 created a shop to explore profit, loss and the influence of market forces.

¹<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/about/principles/futureapproaches/index.asp>

²https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1_NIHeditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316.pdf

³http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533.pdf

Almost all children are making good progress and achieving well as they gain a good understanding of physical activity, social skills and their emotional wellbeing. Children are learning about how to keep themselves and others safe in a variety of situations. For example, children in P1 know their address and are aware how to call the emergency services in a crisis.

The school has a clear focus on raising attainment. As a result, most children make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff monitor children's progress carefully and regularly meet the senior management team to discuss children's attainment. They have a robust system to track children's progress and therefore can ensure all children's needs are being met.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Overall, the quality of children's learning in the nursery is good. Children are settled and happy in the playroom. They are motivated and engaged in their learning. Staff are working hard to ensure that learning is less adult-directed and based on children's interests. In the primary classes, children's learning experiences are very good in almost all classes. There is a strong caring, nurturing ethos across the school which focuses on children's rights and their responsibilities to others in society. The school has achieved the Level 2 Rights Respecting School Award. It has had very effective links over a number of years with Malawi through which children learn about their responsibilities as global citizens. Children lead activities to raise money for specific projects in their link school with enthusiasm. In all primary classes, children are motivated and have opportunities to lead the learning. Children's achievements in sports are a very strong feature of the school. The school was recently awarded a 'Gold Sports Award' for the considerable active health opportunities offered for Inverkip pupils.

The quality of teaching across the school is strong and interactions between staff and children in the nursery are positive. In most classes at the primary stages, staff give clear instructions and explanations and encourage children to learn in a range of interesting ways. After most lessons, staff provide helpful feedback to children to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Staff use a variety of assessment information to inform their teaching and inform them about how well children are developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. In the nursery, staff are working to improve their approaches to recording and assessing children's progress. The school has recently improved how it helps children with additional needs. In most lessons at the primary stages, tasks and activities are matched well to the needs of all children, including those who require additional support. Support staff provide children with well-judged help both in class and in the playground.

Promoting Partnerships

Staff in the nursery and at the primary stages have very good partnerships with parents and the wider community which support and enrich children's learning. For example, the nursery has developed Fun Active Parenting (FAP) workshops and Blooms Lending Library to extend home reading experiences for children. Micro-Morton, supported by Morton Community Trust, promote children's health and

wellbeing through a programme to develop their physical skills. The nursery benefits from parent volunteers who help read stories with children, and have helped design and support the recent garden project which offers children experience of planting, growing and harvesting vegetables.

The school is an example of good practice in supporting the Scotland/Malawi partnership. This well-established partnership makes good use of an 'app' to ensure that there is vibrant and effective communication with the school in Malawi. Children across the school are proud to be able to say a few phrases in Chichewa. The highly effective partnership with Active Schools, supported by a committed member of staff, ensures that all children are provided with the opportunity to participate in sports clubs. Commendably, staff in the school have met all of their partners to support delivery of health and wellbeing. Together, they have devised a calendar of events to support this throughout the year. Partners, such as community learning and development, are able to provide specialist input such as the 'booze buster programme'.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior management team work very well with the highly committed staff to create a school where children are motivated and well supported in their learning. Together they have focussed on ensuring that teaching and learning are strong. They are committed to ensuring the highest possible standards and success for all children. Staff willingly take on responsibility for school improvement and are confident in initiating change across the school.

Parents and children are given opportunities to contribute to the improvement process. There are well-established systems in place to help senior managers measure the quality of the school's work and identify any areas for improvement. Parents reported that all staff are approachable and contribute to the warm and inclusive ethos of the school. Together with staff, senior managers have begun to review the curriculum. They recognise the need to make the planning of learning, teaching and assessment less complicated and more consistent across the school. This will ensure that all children benefit from motivating learning activities and attain as highly as possible.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Very well-behaved, enthusiastic children who enjoy opportunities to lead their own learning.
- Very good relationships between staff and children which results in a positive, nurturing ethos in the nursery and at the primary stages.
- Very strong partnerships with parents and the wider community to enhance the curriculum and children's wider achievements.
- Examples of highly effective learning and teaching across the school.
- Effective leadership of the headteacher and senior management team resulting in effective teamwork across the school.

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

- Continue to develop the curriculum.
- Continue to improve how staff in the nursery and at the primary stages track and monitor children's progress.
- Take more account of the interest of children in the nursery when planning their learning experiences.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school has the necessary capacity to continue improving. 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, Inverclyde Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Sadie Cushley
HM Inspector

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.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.