

21 August 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Comrie Primary School and Nursery Class  
Perth and Kinross Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and we worked closely with the headteachers 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 headteachers shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including staff's approaches to planning learning, developing skills, assessing children's progress and working in partnership with parents and the wider community. 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 learn in a very welcoming and nurturing environment. Children enjoy nursery and school. They feel safe, respected and listened to. Children in the nursery classes benefit from consistently high quality learning experiences. They achieve very well. Almost all confidently take part in discussions to plan their learning. They often choose activities which develop their independence and deepen their understanding. They could have more planned opportunities to learn beyond the immediate nursery environment. All children in nursery are learning well how to show respect to others and develop friendships. They have made a strong start in their early literacy and numeracy skills. They listen attentively to stories, enjoy making their own books and are confidently able to count and use money in the nursery garden shop.

Children's achievements in the primary classes are strong. All children demonstrate a range of communication, teamwork and leadership skills through the school committees and initiatives such as Comrie in Colour and the regeneration of Cultybraggan. Children make a positive difference to their school and the community. Many children achieve success in sporting and cultural activities. As individuals and in teams they often gain awards for their efforts. Almost all children participate in clubs and activities that enable them to develop new skills, extend their interests and which contribute positively to their health and wellbeing. The school choir, for example, is a very popular activity which increases children's self-esteem. From P1 to P7, children increasingly take responsibility for planning and assessing their own learning during lessons. However, staff have work to do to ensure this

happens effectively in all classes. Across the primary stages, most children are achieving appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy and can apply these in a range of contexts. By P7, many children demonstrate strong writing skills and depth in understanding of mathematics.

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

Staff are sensitive to children's social and emotional needs. They are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding children and promote equality and fairness across the whole school. Nursery staff skilfully reflect on their conversations with children to gauge children's understanding. They adapt tasks and activities well to ensure all children are actively engaged and make appropriate progress in their learning. In most primary lessons, most tasks and activities are well matched to build on children's previous achievements. A few staff need more support to plan learning which more effectively takes account of children's varying needs and abilities. The team of specialist support staff use a range of approaches very well to ensure vulnerable children enjoy school and achieve success in the targets set for them. As a result of this highly effective support, children with specific learning needs are making very good progress.

Children in the nursery and primary classes benefit from a very well planned curriculum. In the nursery classes, children talk about what they already know and often decide what they would like to know next. Staff effectively help children to see links between different aspects of their learning, for example, children plant and grow vegetables which they prepare and eat at snack time. From nursery to P7, many parents and members of the wider community share their skills and talents with children. Staff plan opportunities for skills development well through interesting and relevant social studies, and science contexts that deepen children's understanding of the world. From P1 to P7, staff have successfully improved learning in mathematics by introducing active learning approaches which challenge children to think more deeply. Staff would benefit from increased opportunities with schools across the cluster, to plan and further improve continuity in children's learning from nursery to P1 and from P7 to secondary school.

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

The headteachers manage the school very well. They have established a job-share arrangement which puts the needs of the school and the community first. Through effective communication and a flexible approach to their shared responsibilities they have secured the confidence and respect of staff, pupils and parents. They value the views of staff, pupils, parents and others who link with the school. The school is highly valued as an integral part of the wider local community. Many children demonstrate leadership attributes. All staff contribute to discussions about school improvement priorities. A few take more significant leadership roles which enhance the curriculum and enliven children's learning. Increasingly, staff work together to evaluate and improve their own teaching skills. They need to continue sharing the good practice which exists across the school to ensure children's learning experiences are consistently strong at all stages.

This inspection of your school and nursery class found the following key strengths.

- A positive, caring and inclusive environment for learning.
- Partnerships with parents and the wider community which enhance learning.
- A rich variety of learning opportunities which focuses on developing skills.
- Highly skilled nursery staff who very effectively meet children's learning needs.
- Effective targeted support to ensure children with specific learning needs make very good progress.

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

- Continue to strengthen approaches to assessment, tracking and monitoring.
- Ensure consistently high quality learning experiences which build appropriately on children's prior achievements.

### **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 evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects of innovative practice which we would like to explore further in order to share the practice with others. As a result we will work with the school and local authority in order to record and share more widely the innovative practice. We will ask the school, in discussion with the local authority, to let parents know the outcome of the innovative practice visit(s).

Patricia Watson  
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/ComriePrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.asp>

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](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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