

23 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Forgandenny Primary School
Perth and Kinross Council**

We are trying out some new approaches to inspection. You can find more information about why we are doing this, and details of our new approaches, at the links below.¹

As you may know, in May 2016, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school following a two-working-day notification period. 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. Following on from what the headteacher told us we planned inspection activity which enabled us to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children are safe and respected in the school. All staff treat children with fairness and equity. Across all classes, children's learning is very varied and motivating. Almost all children show a keen interest during lessons. They enjoy working in pairs and small groups as well as independently. They ask pertinent questions of each other and of their teachers and collaborate well to deepen their thinking. Children understand the purpose of their learning and how it connects to the world of work and their lives beyond school. Their learning connects them to the wider local, national and global community. Through the partnerships which extend their learning greatly, children experience success in a variety of contexts including through sport, and in the performing arts. Children in the P5-P7 class recently participated in 'L'Art de Musique' engaging in workshops and performing at Perth Concert Hall. As well as gaining confidence from this experience they also learned more about famous artists through the songs they sang. A significant number of children have recently been selected to work with the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Children experience many well-planned learning visits to places of interest including the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Crannog Centre. These visits enable children to extend their creativity and curiosity. They are deepening their understanding of how the past influences the present and the future. In all classes, children contribute to planning and reviewing their learning using the new visual planning walls and learning

¹ [Trying out new approaches - Future approaches to inspection and review - Inspection and review](#)

logs. They use these to share their learning with parents. They are able to make appropriate choices about aspects of their learning. For example, children in P1-P3 make choices during activity time. The range of learning on offer enables them to apply their developing skills in challenging and creative ways. During the inspection they were able to describe their learning very well. They could talk about precipitation and explain the findings of their floating and sinking experiments. At all stages, children are developing well their digital skills and their understanding of when and how to use technology to enhance learning and/or solve problems. They are aware of how to stay safe when using the internet. Children in P4 used appropriate software to create their own advertisements promoting their calendar as part of an enterprise project. Children have also achieved significant success and deepened their understanding of science, technology and engineering through recent involvement in the 'Scottish Engineering Special Leaders' project.

Almost all children are achieving well and making appropriate progress in their learning. Children demonstrate awareness of the skills they are developing and can talk about the particular importance of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for their own future success. A few children at each stage are achieving beyond expected levels. Almost all children are making very good progress in listening and talking, reading and writing and in mathematics and numeracy. Most communicate very well orally using eye-contact, appropriate tone and pronunciation to good effect. Most demonstrate high levels of respect for their peers when listening to presentations. Almost all children enjoy reading and can talk about different types of texts which they have used during investigations and when reading for pleasure. At all stages, children use a range of strategies to achieve success as writers. Almost all children are confident in talking about their mathematics and numeracy. They apply this learning well in real-life contexts, for example in P1-P3 through measuring and recording weight in their baby clinic area, and in P4 through estimating height and length as accurately as possible. Children often use computer programmes such as 'Sumdog' to consolidate their numeracy skills with great success. The school performed very well and secured 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in a recent local authority 'Sumdog' competition. All three classes have recently started learning French. Children confidently use the language to greet each other and engage in simple conversations.

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

Children are very well supported by caring staff who know them well. Children's successes and achievements in and out of school are celebrated by the entire school community. As a result, children feel well supported and appreciate that their talents and skills are valued. The school's shared vision and values are evident in the positive nurturing "can do" culture within the school. All staff work hard to ensure all children are well supported and able to achieve lesson aims. Class teachers plan effectively so that tasks and activities are, in the main, well matched to children's varying needs. Most lessons were suitably brisk and challenging for the children involved. For a few children pace and challenge could be increased to encourage them to maintain high levels of motivation at all times. Support staff are skilled and very well deployed to meet identified needs for individuals or groups of children. There is good liaison between class teachers, visiting specialists, external services and support staff so that children's needs are identified and planned for. Parents are welcomed into school and encouraged to be involved in their children's learning including through events which

the children themselves lead. Commendably, the school has recently involved children in the formal parental consultation evenings with the aim of opening up learning conversations between teacher, parent and pupil. The school should continue developing this approach alongside continuing to provide opportunities for confidential teacher-parent discussions as required.

The school provides a rich and broad curriculum which is firmly grounded in the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff plan learning experiences that support children very effectively to be confident and successful. As a result, children are ambitious and eager to do well at school and in the future. Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are central aspects of all learning which staff have improved significantly in recent years. Planning learning is a shared activity securely led by class teachers but with high levels of pupil involvement. Contexts for learning are very relevant and explored through tasks and activities which children find engaging. Recent examples include a focus on refugees, rights and responsibilities which children responded to both emotionally and intellectually. Whole school projects such as 'The Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design' are appropriately differentiated to ensure progression in skills and knowledge across the curriculum for all stages. Science, technology and engineering feature strongly within these contexts. Children working at the early level designed new suitcases for Paddington building on their work on refugees. A few children in the upper stages chose to explore the building of the new 'Queensferry Crossing' and compared it with the other bridges over the River Forth as a personal research project.

Outdoor learning is an important strength of the curriculum. Children, parents and partners including senior pupils from neighbouring Strathallan School worked together to turn the school grounds into a unique and beautiful place to play and learn together. Strong partnership with 'Grounds for Learning' staff provides high-quality professional learning for school staff and exciting opportunities through which children learn more about how nature supports our lives. The school is actively involved in local community projects and has close links with the Parish Church. Inter-generational activity is encouraged through the community coffee mornings where children entertain their families and visitors to the village. All staff are resourceful and active in seeking new learning opportunities and partnerships which enhance the curriculum.

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

The headteacher has been in post for almost two years. She demonstrates very effective leadership which has brought considerable school improvements. The Principal Teacher is a highly-skilled practitioner and strong role model for staff and children. With a settled and cohesive staff team the school is a vibrant, inclusive environment which all children benefit from. All staff demonstrate commitment to continual improvement. A good example of this is their recent successful partnership with the educational psychologist through which staff explored new approaches to engage children in writing. They work together and with colleagues in other schools to reflect on their practice and discuss curriculum developments. They have recently become more engaged in work to strengthen their expertise in assessing and tracking children's progress. All children are actively involved in decisions about how to improve their school. They helped to develop a pupil-friendly version of the school improvement plan making it very visible to the whole school community. Community

groups bring children from different stages together to work on different projects. Through these, children improve their school, local and global environment and develop important skills such as communication and collaboration. This work has led to a recent second Eco Schools Scotland Green Flag being awarded to the school. In conclusion, Forgandenny Primary School has achieved a great deal in recent years and is well placed to continue going from strength to strength.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Children who are very well motivated and who actively engage in shaping their own learning experiences.
- Staff teamwork which has led to significant school improvements in recent years.
- A coherent, dynamic curriculum which reflects the school's vision, values and aims.
- Wide-ranging partnerships which enhance the curriculum and extend children's achievements.
- Very effective leadership by the headteacher.

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

- Continue to strengthen assessment and moderation and use the data to ensure all children experience appropriate pace and challenge across the curriculum.

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.

Patricia Watson
HM Inspector

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/ForgandennyPrimarySchoolPerthandKinross.asp>

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.