

16 September 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**Torrance Primary School and Nursery Class
East Dunbartonshire 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 the way the school tracks children's progress in learning, partnerships with others, learning through interdisciplinary themes and how the school provides an inclusive experience for all children. 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?

We found children in the nursery and primary stages learn and achieve very well. Children are highly motivated, confident and successful learners who thrive in an ethos which is stimulating, inclusive and caring. Children told us how much they are enjoying learning through the Creative Commonwealth theme. Children can be rightly proud of their extensive achievements which include art, dance, gymnastics and health. Children in the nursery were keen to retell the story of the three little pigs and to play outside in their real house of straw. They settle well on arrival in nursery and firm friendships are evident. They are becoming globally aware through learning about Fair Trade, examining food labels and gaining an understanding of where food comes from. They readily talk to staff and each other about their work which is helpfully captured in personal profiles. There is scope for staff to build on this good practice and continue to involve children more in planning with their parents what they will learn next. Children at the primary stages are friendly, highly respectful and happy at school. Through their involvement in a range of well-planned activities, children have a sound understanding of how to pursue and sustain a healthy active lifestyle. Children know what they are learning, almost all are able to talk about their learning, and know when they have been successful. Teachers' feedback to children is good and improving. 'Talk with the teacher' sessions and the recent revision of children's personal learning journals will build on children's knowledge of themselves as learners.

Almost all children are making very good progress in literacy and numeracy. In the nursery, children confidently communicate with each other and adults, listen well and respond enthusiastically to questioning. They show a mature attitude to early reading

and writing with many accurately writing their name and recognising words in the environment. In number, most children can sort, match, measure and count with ease during play activities and games. They use the language of number very well in activities linked to their construction topic. These real-life contexts provide a richness to children's learning. Almost all children in the primary stages are able to apply their literacy and numeracy skills very effectively in different areas of their learning. Children are highly articulate, talking knowledgeably about the countries of the Commonwealth. They can apply literacy skills in shared reading activities, finding and using information from texts of increasing complexity. Children write very well for a variety of purposes and, commendably, some children across the school are highly skilled at writing. In numeracy, almost all children are competent and accurate in mental calculations. Children show high levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics and a few have the potential to achieve more. This has been recognised by staff who are developing further their approaches to teaching mathematics. Children's skills in art and design are outstanding. Most children demonstrate very good agility and skills in physical education, more specifically in gymnastics.

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

Children receive outstanding support from the staff team. We found that staff work exceptionally well together to find the very best solutions to support your children as they learn within Torrance's nurturing environment. Every child is known to staff and those children with particular barriers to learning are identified early, supported very effectively and helped to gain the skills and confidence they need to develop and learn. Creative ways such as access to the 'Cool Room' are used to ensure all learners experience success in and out of school. The impressive range of agencies and partners meet often to think deeply about what will work best for individuals and groups of learners who may need extra help at certain times. In almost all of the lessons we observed, teachers provided carefully planned, exciting activities. Almost all lessons were meaningful and suitably challenging, meeting the differing needs of children. We have asked staff in the nursery to think about how they can offer additional challenge for a few higher-attaining children who are capable of learning at a faster pace. Curriculum for Excellence is being implemented very well. We noted the innovative way the teachers have developed interdisciplinary themes which children also help to plan. The school makes very effective use of a wide range of professionals, members of the community, parents, trips and visitors to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding of 'Our Creative Commonwealth'. The school has been working on a more focused approach to the teaching of science to ensure children make suitable progress. It would be useful for children in the nursery to have more opportunities to develop their independence. Effective transition arrangements smooth the way for children coming into school and moving on to Boclair Academy.

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

The school's approaches to evaluating how well it is performing are excellent. The headteacher's meticulous attention to detail and strong direction ensure children are supported exceptionally well by the school. Children's progress in learning is tracked using a simple but particularly effective system. This involves regular conversations between the headteacher and teachers, to build up a full picture of children's learning

and wellbeing. The headteacher also takes a very close look at the quality of children's work. She carefully monitors teaching and discusses learning plans very regularly with teachers and other agencies where appropriate. Teachers regularly and willingly share their practice. They also take an active part in continuing professional development activity in school and at cluster level. As parents, you appreciate that your views are sought and acted upon by the school. Children too have a voice which is listened to and taken seriously. The depute head and job-sharing principal teachers carry out their extensive remits very effectively. Together with teaching, support and janitorial staff, they are a strong and cohesive team who are fully focused on delivering education of the highest quality. The school is very well placed to build on the sector-leading areas mentioned in this letter to you.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Highly motivated, respectful children who demonstrate a love of learning and who are successful achievers both in and out of school.
- The school's outstanding success in meeting the needs of all children.
- Children's achievements in art and design and gymnastics.
- Productive, wide-ranging partnerships which contribute effectively to implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.
- The school's approaches to self-evaluation and tracking children's progress.
- The headteacher's strong leadership, ably supported by the depute head teacher and principal teachers, and teamwork which is underpinned by strong and effective professional staff development.

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

- Continue to use self-evaluation to secure further improvement across the nursery and primary 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 evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects of innovative practice which we would like to explore further. We shall work with the school and East Dunbartonshire Council to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.

Marion Burns
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/TorrancePrimarySchoolEastDunbartonshire.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.

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