

30 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Bearsden Primary School
East Dunbartonshire Council**

In September 2015, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well children are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Across all stages in the school, almost all children have positive and stimulating learning experiences. Children are benefiting from the challenges set by staff through high expectations and taking greater responsibilities. They are developing skills for learning, life and work through motivating activities that engage them very well. Children can evaluate how well they are achieving and are expected to think about what they need to do to improve. Almost all children have developed skills in cooperating together when learning in small groups. They are actively involved in their learning and enjoy positive relationships with staff. High quality teaching approaches are now more consistent across the school. The positive learning experiences are leading to children becoming leaders of their own learning. Children support one another well through regular opportunities to peer evaluate. They know what they need to do to be successful learners. Staff are developing children's literacy and numeracy skills through effective use of digital technologies. The school is making growing use of digital media to share its work and children's successes.

Across all stages in the school, we are pleased almost all children are now making strong progress overall. The increased expectations and improved planning for learning has led to very good progress in numeracy and literacy. Children's learning is well supported at points when they move from stage to stage and ensures better progress is made. Staff know how well children are progressing through their use of a range of assessment information. The strong focus they have had in developing writing and its assessment has led to children now producing written work of the highest quality. Progress in numeracy and mathematics is also strong and children are encouraged to think about how they apply their skills in a variety of real contexts such as using money and carrying out surveys. Children can talk confidently about

the strategies they use when problem solving. Overall, staff are now tracking the progress of all children very well and know what to expect children to achieve. We are pleased with how well children are learning across the curriculum. Children are increasingly taking responsibilities for their learning and have a much greater say in how to improve the school. Their contribution to and leadership of a wide variety of improvement groups is developing well. Children now have a better understanding of health and wellbeing and the importance of healthy lifestyles.

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

In almost all lessons observed during the visit, teachers are providing effective support and challenge for almost all children. The pace and challenge for the highest attaining children has improved significantly. High expectations and encouraging children to think about their learning has ensured they are progressing well. Pupils requiring support are also making better progress through the well-judged lessons and support provided by staff who work alongside teachers in classes. Staff encourage children to talk about their learning and their next steps. We have asked the school to continue to review its approaches to developing children's personal learning targets. The development of class charters and the strong focus on rights and responsibilities has led to improved relationships amongst children. Children are confident about talking to staff and say that they know how to get help if they need it. The school has made improvements to involving parents in children's learning and has successfully reviewed the ways in which parents are kept informed about the progress children are making. Staff work effectively with parents to ensure they are well informed and involved in their children's learning. Homework supports learning and the sharing of achievements through the electronic dojo system which encourages children to talk with parents about their learning.

Staff have developed a clear understanding of what they want children to achieve through Curriculum for Excellence. They have identified their values and used the school's locality as a unique feature for relevant contexts and outdoor learning. This has helped children to develop a sense of identity and pride in their school. The ongoing development of programmes of study and how children build on their skills over time is leading to better progress overall. This has been particularly successful in writing for a wide variety of purposes and in mathematical problem solving. The staff should continue to develop the curriculum programmes for all areas of learning, as planned. The school has improved many aspects of its work to ensure all children learn as best they can. Staff ensure appropriate support for pupils is provided when necessary. The improved focus on tracking attainment and achievement and approaches to identify children with additional support needs helps inform learning groups and the next steps in learning. The school should further strengthen partnership working with Bearsden Academy and its associated primary schools to support development of the curriculum and shared understanding of standards.

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

The headteacher has successfully shared his vision for the school and his leadership of change is supported by staff and parents. He has improved teamwork amongst staff, raised expectations and developed a positive school ethos. Staff now take an

increasing role in leading the school's improvement priorities. This has successfully improved the quality of learning and teaching, the curriculum and raised attainment. The recent appointments of an acting deputy headteacher and acting principal teacher has already had a positive influence on the school's improved approaches to teaching. All staff are committed to their continuing professional development and share their strengths effectively with one another. The senior leadership team has increased opportunities for professional dialogue with staff and is developing a strong culture of self-improvement. Everyone we spoke to during our visit is supportive of the school and proud of its achievements. Overall, the pace of change is well-judged and the positive impact of developments is evident throughout the school. With continued support from East Dunbartonshire Council and the increased involvement of yourselves as parents and carers, the capacity of Bearsden Primary School to continue to improve is high.

What happens next?

As a result of the very good progress made by the school as outlined in this letter, 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, East Dunbartonshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Susan Gow
HM Inspector

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