

To: Parents/Carers of pupils attending Catrine Primary School & Early Childhood Centre

Dear Parent/Carer

### **CATRINE PRIMARY SCHOOL & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE**

In June 2016 HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. The letter sets out a number of areas for improvement which they agreed with the school and with East Ayrshire Council. HM Inspectors subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had improved its work and published another letter in August 2017 and a further letter in August 2018. In the 2018 letter, Inspectors concluded that they would ask the local authority for an update on the attainment of children in the primary stages within 18 months of the inspection and that this report would inform any decision made by Education Scotland regarding further engagement with the school.

East Ayrshire Council Education Service has continued to engage with the school and Early Childhood Centre to support and monitor their improvement journey.

As part of the monitoring process, Julie Hope, Strategic Education Manager Curriculum Support, led visits to the school on 2 May 2019, 27 June 2019 and 30 October 2019. The May visit was to meet with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss progress towards the targets set in the letter of the 28 August 2018. Julie was joined on this visit by Graham McGinn, Strategic Education Manager, Performance and Assurance. They undertook robust, professional dialogue with the Head Teacher and Principal Teacher focused on the areas identified from the original inspection in June 2016 and on the subsequent Continuing Engagement Visits in June 2017 and June 2018. The Senior Leadership Team shared with them their views on the school and centre's improvement journey and shared evidence to support this.

Julie Hope and Graham McGinn then visited again in June 2019 to specifically focus on the attainment of children in the primary school reviewing the school's tracking information and the Teacher Professional Judgement Survey.

Data for 2018-19 shows that most children in Primary 1 achieved early level in literacy and almost all children achieved early level in numeracy. In Primary 4 most children achieved first level literacy and numeracy, with almost all children achieving first level in listening and talking. In Primary 7 the majority of children achieved second level in literacy and numeracy.

On Wednesday 30 October, Julie and Graham were supported by colleagues and their focus for this visit continued to be on the aspects for further improvement identified by Inspectors last year and they triangulated their previous visits by carrying out a number of learning observations and discussing learning with teachers and pupils.

To summarise, in respect of the areas identified from the original inspection in June 2016:

### **Improve the leadership for learning of the headteacher**

As stated in the Inspector's letter of August 2018, this aspect was already successfully overtaken given the appointment of the new Head Teacher. My team have reported on the strong culture of learning across the school with all staff actively engaged in their own learning and development and strongly promoting an ethos of learning with pupils and parents. The Head Teacher and Principal Teacher provide strong and effective leadership and are reflective practitioners who model approaches to continuing professional learning. All staff are trained in Active Literacy and Numeracy approaches and share their learning and support one another. These approaches are now embedded across the school, particularly in Numeracy and this has contributed to the positive improvements in attainment in this area. Work to further develop and embed the approaches to reading and writing are continuing. Staff have enthusiastically engaged with the supports available to them from the local authority.

The school improvement plan and the work across the school and Early Childhood Centre is now focused on raising attainment and this is clearly having a positive impact. Teacher and practitioners have leadership roles to support this work and there are strong collegiate approaches across the school and centre.

We continue to acknowledge the strong leadership and drive, passion and commitment of the Head Teacher as a real strength of the school.

### **Improve approaches to meeting the learning needs of all children, in particular those with social, emotional and behavioural needs**

The school provides a warm and nurturing environment to support all pupils. The needs of children are identified and shared with all relevant staff and children are well supported to engage with learning. Notably, since the appointment of the Head Teacher, there have been no exclusions and there is a purposeful and inclusive ethos across the school. Very positive relationships between children and staff are evident in all classrooms and in the early childhood centre. Children report that they feel safe and happy in the school and parents echo this view.

Individual plans are in place for children who require additional support and staff across the school are making good progress with providing suitable tasks and activities through effective differentiation. There is now more evidence of appropriate levels of challenge being provided for learners and this continues to be a focus for the school.

### **Improve self-evaluation, including effective monitoring and tracking children's progress to raise attainment**

The school and centre have introduced a three year approach to self-evaluation using the Quality Indicators in HGIOS4/HGIOELC. Their use of the QI Machine to facilitate dialogue and share evaluations has been shared with other schools in the authority. This self-evaluation is driving the priorities for improvement across the school and ECC.

The school and ECC have developed an annual assessment overview to provide a structured approach to assessment to support learning. The Head Teacher and Principal Teacher have engaged all staff in tracking and monitoring utilising the system provided by East Ayrshire Council. The ongoing engagement with this practice has meant that staff are now able to have robust tracking conversations with senior leaders about the attainment of their pupils over time. Staff meet with SLT three times during the session to discuss attainment and to identify where pupils require more challenge or other interventions for support. It is our view that this more rigorous

approach to tracking and monitoring, coupled with improvements in pedagogy, has had a significant impact on the attainment in the school.

Children across the school and centre are actively involved in creating and are aware of their own targets for learning. Learning intentions and success criteria are differentiated and appropriate to support learners in self-assessment. Children take responsibility for sharing their learning through e-portfolios and independently access digital tools to support this.

In conclusion, Catrine Primary and Early Childhood Centre have made significant progress since the inspection in April 2016 and we are confident that there is capacity across the staff in the school and centre to continue this improvement journey.

East Ayrshire Council Education Service therefore recommended to Inspectors that no further engagement from colleagues in HMI in relation to the original inspection is necessary. The Service will continue to support and monitor the school and ECC through our own internal processes. Education Scotland Inspectors have approved this recommendation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda McAulay-Griffiths', with a small flourish at the end.

LINDA McAULAY-GRIFFITHS  
**Head of Education**