

8 March 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Netherlee Primary School and Nursery Class
East Renfrewshire 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 improvement in sporting opportunities, 'Big Picture' approach to planning learning and parental involvement in the 'Chooseday Club'. As a result, I was able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

There are examples of outstanding practice in the way children learn and achieve. In the nursery, children are happy, settled and interested in the motivating play activities inside and outside. We observed children working well together and concentrating for long periods of time exploring numbers and making 'mud cakes' in the outdoor kitchen. Staff in the nursery are working to improve further children's skills in knowing themselves as learners through a range of approaches including increased involvement with their 'Learning Books'. Across the primary classes, children's experiences are excellent. They benefit from a highly supportive and stimulating environment which motivates them to learn. Children work very well together in a range of situations including independent learning tasks. Through 'Community Learning' they work with children in different stages of the school and explore areas of interest such as 'Japanese culture', 'unusual careers', 'lacrosse' and 'architecture'. They are developing well their knowledge of themselves as learners. For example, children at P1 sent questions to children at P6 about space as part of their science investigation of night and day. Children at P6 chose digital presentations as the most effective way to share their answer with the younger children. The extensive range of out-of-class activities includes the 'Chooseday Club' which is led very well by parents. An impressive range of sporting activities, the symphony orchestra, choir and instrumental groups are well attended and children excel in a motivating environment while developing important skills for life. Success and high aspirations are promoted through displays in the 'achievement alley' and throughout the school. This includes the eye-catching 'Nurner Prize' learning wall and the international links with Pokola Primary in Zambia and a school in Sydney, Australia. Closer to home, the initiative 'Beyond Netherlee' is helping to reinforce expectations by highlighting the successes

and career pathways of former pupils. Children talk in detail about their strengths and next steps in learning literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The school is continuing to develop further children's knowledge of themselves as learners across all curricular areas.

Overall, most children in the nursery make appropriate progress in early literacy. They listen well in group situations and show a well-developed range of talking skills including a developing awareness of Scots Language through 'talking homework'. Most recognise environmental print such as 'STOP' and 'GO' and a few can create their own signs. In early numeracy, most children make appropriate progress and are confident with numbers to ten. We asked the school to continue to develop children's skills in early literacy and early numeracy across learning in a range of real life contexts. Netherlee is a very large primary school and the impact of the improvement plan on the high numbers of children is noteworthy. As a result, over the past three years, the improvements in children's attainment and achievements are outstanding. Data provided by the school and Education Authority shows very high and steadily increasing levels of progress for children in literacy and numeracy. In addition, the development of successful, confident, and responsible children through participation and achievement in sports and the performing arts is excellent. Overall, almost all children at the primary stages make very good progress from previous levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics and in literacy and English. Across the school, there are plans to improve further approaches to moderation and continue the progress already made to improve children's skills in problem solving. Children listen well to each other and by P7 are developing confidence in debating skills through brisk and engaging activities such as 'verbal boxing'. They write well for a range of purposes including creating poems in French for national poetry day. In mathematics and numeracy, children enjoy learning. The daily focus on developing their mental agility helps them to demonstrate rapid recall of facts. Older children understand strategies such as 'BODMAS' and the rule of 'Fibonacci's sequence' to help them solve problems. They use digital technology well to create spreadsheets with formulae to calculate projected profit from goods they purchase and resell at the Christmas Fair. In discussions about their mental health and wellbeing, children describe articulately and with confidence how they are supported to understand their own feelings. In religious and moral education, children at P5 articulate very well their knowledge of Judaism artefacts. We asked the school to continue, as planned, to ensure all children make very good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding across their learning.

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

The whole school focus on health and wellbeing supports children very well to develop and learn. In the nursery, there is a nurturing and caring environment and key workers know groups of children as individuals and as learners. They meet regularly to share observations of children's learning. We asked the nursery to continue to develop staff skills in identifying children's learning needs ensuring that experiences are consistently set at the appropriate level of challenge. Tasks, activities and resources at the primary stages provide children with appropriate levels of challenge in their learning. This is very effective in literacy and English and in numeracy and mathematics where overall learning is brisk and engaging. Overall, staff plan effectively with partners and parents to support children needing additional help with their learning. Of note, is the very

positive work of the Educational Psychologist that supports individual children and families as a whole. We discussed with staff ways to improve further the use of resources and setting targets for children needing additional help with their learning.

The school curriculum has a clear focus on raising children's attainment and achievement with a focus on health and wellbeing. It aims to provide the best learning experiences and opportunities for children. In the nursery, staff plan learning taking account of children's interests. Changes to the playroom and outdoor learning space are encouraging children to use their imagination more in their learning. We asked the nursery to continue to develop the curriculum with minimal interruptions to play and ensure that learning takes account of what children already know. Across the primary classes, staff work very closely together to plan learning that takes account of national guidance. Teachers are encouraged to be creative and use meaningful opportunities for children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, partnerships with parents and the local area are used purposefully to enhance programmes and link learning across different subjects. For example, children work closely with local businesses to reduce vandalism in the local area. At P5, children develop their writing and technology skills enthusiastically organising the 'Tartan Tea' for senior citizens. Of note, is the work with partner schools to enrich children's learning and staff understanding of science. The school has clear plans to continue to improve the curriculum further including the effectiveness of assessment across all curricular areas.

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

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is supported by a strong leadership team who take forward their remits very successfully resulting in a very effective pace of change in raising attainment and improving the ethos of the school. The school's approaches to monitor and improve the quality of learning and teaching are outstanding. The headteacher with the leadership team provide clear direction and work extremely well with staff to embed a strong ethos of improvement. Staff willingly take on responsibilities for improving their own professional skills and the work of the school. Many have additional qualifications and strengths that benefit children and family learning. Improvements take very good account of children, parents, staff and partners views. Pupil voice is strong, examples include, the school committees where children accept responsibility and develop their skills in leadership. Children directly involved in the leadership groups speak with pride and knowledge about the difference they make to the school. Improvements to learning and teaching and attainment in literacy and numeracy are strong. In addition, the focus on sport and the 'Chooseday Club' initiative is an example of school staff and parents working very effectively together. This initiative is now led very successfully by parents and attended by the majority of children. There is clear evidence of the school's work impacting very positively on children's experiences and attainment. We have confidence that the school has the capacity to continue to maintain and improve the high-quality learning experiences for children.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Articulate, confident, motivated children with high aspirations.
- The outstanding learning experiences of children and the development of their health and wellbeing.
- The effective involvement of parents in the work and life of the school.
- The outstanding approaches to monitor and improve the quality of learning and teaching.
- The very high and improving levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and shared leadership of the staff team.

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

- Continue to take forward the school's vision and areas for improvement as planned.

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 an aspect of innovative practice through the 'Chooseday Club' initiative which we would like to explore further. We shall work with the school and East Renfrewshire Council to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.

Elizabeth C Montgomery
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/NetherleePrimarySchoolEastRenfrewshire.asp>

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