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Dear Parent/Carer

**St Michael's Primary School and Nursery Class  
North Lanarkshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. Throughout our visit, we talked to many parents and children and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the school supported 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 breadth of achievement, how the school has been using self-evaluation and moderation, and impact of the leadership of all staff. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

**How well do children learn and achieve?**

Children are learning and achieving very well. In the nursery, children are confident and can make their own decisions about what they want to do. They like talking to staff about their learning. Children enjoy the freedom to play outdoors where they investigate the natural world and practise energetic physical skills. At the primary stages, children are ambitious and motivated to do their best. Through their actions and positive relationships with each other, they demonstrate the strong values of the school. Children explained to us the ways in which staff help them to build on their strengths and improve areas in which they are less confident. Children's learning profiles are beginning to illustrate and celebrate their learning clearly. Children make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. Many older children support younger ones with their homework and, as a result, have attained a Dynamic Youth Award. Children run their own stationery shop and have used the profits to benefit charities and purchase playground equipment. The youngest children take responsibility for their garden and perform songs for their families.

Almost all children are making very good progress in language and mathematics. In the nursery, some children can already take part in conversations and explain their thinking. They like to explore letters and sounds, write their own name, and they practise counting enthusiastically through having fun with songs and games. At the primary stages, children speak confidently when discussing their learning. They read very well in class. The youngest children are now able to work together to assess their own reading skills and give advice to each other. Children across the school write at length for a range of purposes which interest them. Children across the school have a very good grasp of number and can explain how to approach calculations, although they need to practise mental calculations more often. They

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use information and communications technology effectively to practise information handling skills. We found that children use numeracy skills confidently in different contexts, such as, in the stationery shop. Children in all classes are gaining a broad understanding of health and wellbeing. Children at the middle stages have discussed recent research about healthy eating and others have discussed rights and responsibilities alongside the values of the school.

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

Staff support children to learn very well. They provide a broad curriculum which recognises that all children need opportunities to achieve and celebrate success. They are building on children's knowledge and understanding of the world through recognising important local events and by finding out about Scottish history. All children learn outdoors through investigating nature and by taking positive action to address environmental issues. Staff share an enthusiasm for developing the curriculum through guidance provided by Curriculum for Excellence. The school is now in a strong position to develop further how children's progress in each subject is ensured when they are studying topics which link different aspects of learning. The school works closely with a number of partners, including the church, to enhance learning and has well-planned opportunities for local schools to work together on significant community projects. Staff in the nursery class support families very well as children enter the nursery and move through to P1. Transitions from P7 into St Maurice's High School are effective and are focused on how to build on children's learning and talents. Staff across the school are sensitive to the needs of children. Staff know families very well and are responsive to any concerns parents have. Staff provide learning activities which provide the right amount of challenge for children to make progress at their own pace. Staff take prompt steps when your children need extra help to succeed. Where appropriate staff prepare individual plans alongside outside agencies who give specialist support and advice. Support staff work very well with your children to help them with play activities and classwork.

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

The school has an exceptionally strong capacity to improve learning continuously because of the way it listens to children and parents and uses their views. The strong leadership of the headteacher has established a clear direction for the school and she is ably supported by the very effective depute headteacher. Together they have built a staff team with a shared ambition for all children. Teachers improve learning continuously by seeking and using children's views, discussing standards, and by evaluating learning in each other's classes. For example, they share the most effective practice and coach each other to ensure it is embedded. Children have a very strong voice in making their learning better. Staff discuss lessons with them and make adjustments to the tasks set as a result. The management team knows how well children are progressing and uses this information to work alongside staff to secure further improvement. The Parent Council and pupil council make very positive contributions to the life of the school. Parents have welcomed recent workshops delivered by the principal teacher and others. The pupil council is working effectively to progress its own improvement plan. As a result of all of these activities, the school has a very strong sense of community where children recognise that they are at the centre. In continuing to build on its strengths we are confident that the school will continue to improve and further enhance the high quality learning and teaching for your children.

This inspection of your school and nursery class found the following key strengths.

- Children are ambitious, motivated learners who practise the school's values.
- The quality of learning experiences and achievement.
- The teamwork of all staff and successful partnerships throughout the school and community which enhance learning.

- The very positive impact of all staff, children and parents on school improvement, led by the dedicated management team.

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

- Continue with plans to develop further how children learn and achieve through interdisciplinary learning.

### **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. The local authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

Shona E S Taylor  
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/StMichaelsPrimarySchoolNorthLanarkshire.asp>

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at [enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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