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27 November 2015

Education Services

Woodbank

30 Edinburgh Road

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To:

**All Parents and Carers of Pupils at
Collin Primary School**

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Dear Parent / Carer

**LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF COLLIN PRIMARY SCHOOL SINCE
EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT OF SEPTEMBER 2014**

Collin Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland in January, 2011. The inspection focussed on: 1) How well children learn and achieve; 2) How well the school supports children to develop and learn and 3) How well the school improves the quality of its work. Inspectors engaged the schools in continuing engagement visits in 2012, 2013 and May 2014. Education Scotland disengaged following this last visit, as a result of the significant improvements made by the school.

As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Education Services, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by the school since the publication of the Education Scotland report in September 2014.

How well do young people learn and achieve?

Children's attainment and the quality of learning experiences have improved. Pupils are now more aware of their strengths and have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve and make continued progress in their learning. Together with their class teachers, they identify targets in learning for Literacy and English, Numeracy and Maths, Health and Well Being and Inter-disciplinary Learning. These targets are reviewed throughout each term and pupils engage in reflection of their learning and achievements. In addition to this, P5-7 pupils complete a weekly reflection log and use these opportunities to reflect closely on learning, participation and next steps. Staff monitor and track individual children's progress through CfE Levels in Literacy and English and Numeracy and Mathematics. Class Teachers maintain raised expectations and continuous improvement in children's learning in literacy and numeracy is being achieved through increased pace, challenge, sustained effort and focus.

Programmes of learning and a rolling programme for inter-disciplinary learning give clear outlines of expectations and outcomes of children's learning experiences for all other curricular areas. In this way, the school is able to monitor and track pupils' progress for these areas. Pupils' progress and evidence of learning is shared with parents/carers at the end of each term through formal consultations, open afternoons and learning celebrations, with a detailed CfE report in June.

The Head Teacher and staff have developed their knowledge and understanding to interpret and use the information gathered from standardised and in-class assessments. Along with teachers' judgements, this information is used to inform interventions and to modify learning and teaching to meet children's needs. Raising attainment meetings are held termly when the Head Teacher and Class Teachers discuss each child's progress in learning. At the primary stages, children's attainment in Literacy and English, Numeracy and Mathematics continues to improve. Attainment is strong in P1-3 with most children exceeding national expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. At the middle stages, the majority of children achieved CfE First Level in Reading. Attainment in literacy and numeracy continues to improve in the upper primary stages. Focus is maintained on the quality of learning and teaching, tasks and resources. Accelerated Reading has been purchased to promote deeper enjoyment of reading and improve attainment and achievement. In Session 14/15, almost all P3-7 pupils' ability in reading and the reading age of all P2 pupils increased.

Data from standardised and class assessments continue to be used to identify gaps in learning for individual children and to effectively plan for interventions. Staff engage pupils in the planning stages of their learning so that the children have a clearer understanding of the intended learning and its relevance. The children participate in a wide range of learning activities, often set within real life contexts to deepen the level of learning.

Staff continue to deepen their knowledge and understanding in relation to assessing pupils' progress and achievement. They are making reference to the Significant Aspects of Learning and the progression frameworks to make confident and secure judgements about pupil achievement. They will continue to embed the Significant Aspects of Learning and progression pathways in the school's programmes of learning for Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Well Being. Staff are using the Significant Aspects of Learning and the progressive learner statements to plan assessments within learning and teaching of IDL topics.

Formal observations in classes indicate Assessment Is for Learning strategies are being used more consistently to involve children in their learning. In Session 14/15, teaching staff participated and contributed to the authority's Building Your Curriculum Groups for Numeracy and Modern Languages (1+2). Learning from this will support staff in reviewing the Programme of Learning for Numeracy, this session. Pupils in P1/2 were introduced to French in Session 14/15, with all pupils in P3-7 participating in an introduction to Spanish.

Pupils worked together to identify skills for working in groups and posters were produced for each CfE level to support this. P6/7 pupils continue to participate in J.A.S.S. (Junior Award Scheme Scotland) which plans, tracks and accredits wider achievement. In addition to this, all pupils have participated in 'Wider Achievement Afternoons' engaging in Spanish, Dancing, Ceramic Crafts, Bikeability, Nature Detectives, Gardening and Team Building Sessions. These provided opportunities for cross level working and to develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, as well as facilitating engagement with a number of partners - Active Schools, the MLPS team, Eco Schools, Parent helpers and community volunteers.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

In order to support children to develop and learn, all stakeholders participated in self-evaluation, using the SHANARRI well-being indicators. The findings have informed the School Improvement Plan for Session 2015/16. There are clearer arrangements in place to review and set targets for children who have individualised educational programmes. The Learning Support Teacher, Traveller Support Teacher and Traveller Support Assistant work closely with Class Teachers to identify, plan appropriate interventions and provide targeted support for pupils who have additional needs. Staff meet regularly with the Traveller Support Teacher to review the progress of Traveller pupils' learning and to prepare relevant resources. Initial Rapid assessments for Traveller pupils joining the school are carried out effectively and appropriate learning experiences are planned. Arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the Traveller Support Assistant will work full time in the school when new Traveller pupils enrol.

Pace and challenge are more appropriate, taking into account the needs of all pupils. The Classroom Assistant supports pupil learning more effectively - working with pupils to engage with tasks set by the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher, using appropriate questioning techniques and discussion to scaffold learning.

Children are making very good progress through CfE Levels and are attaining well in all areas of the curriculum. Further development of the curriculum has taken place with more coherent planning of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well Being. There is a strategic overview for the curriculum and staff engage in evaluation of the curriculum. All stakeholders were consulted during the curriculum review process. There is three year cyclical programme for Inter-disciplinary learning and learning contexts are created by the staff with increased pupil involvement. The curriculum rationale has been shared with the wider parent body. The overview for the Curriculum has been enhanced by including the alpha-numeric descriptors - giving a clearer outline of a child's pathway through P1-7.

An agreed policy for Homework has been created and shared with pupils and parents, clearly outlining expectations for homework and its completion. In literacy, 'Big Spelling' has been introduced in the P3-7 classes, with a view to assisting pupils to transfer skills in spelling. In writing, appropriate 'Write to The Top' criteria are placed within the Homework Jotters to support pupils and parents/carers. Homework tasks support and re-inforce class learning with pupils experiencing a range of tasks. This has been supported by a Homework Club, providing pupils with a supported session to complete Homework tasks. 67% of P3-7 pupils attend.

P5-7 pupils have established and run the school's 'Fruit Shack' which involves the pupils in sourcing, preparing and selling fruit at break times and making decisions as to how profit is spent.

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

The school has clear priorities for improvement. These are driven by recommendations within the Record of Visit (ROV) from Education Scotland's Continued Engagement visit and the school's self-evaluation. The priorities were discussed with staff, Parent Council and Pupil Council. Progress against identified areas for improvement is shared with staff and parents/carers regularly through Progress Reports at Parent Council meetings and in the school newsletters. Staff engage in self-evaluation using the Dumfries and Galloway paper - 'Building Capacity for the Future through Professional Dialogue'. In addition to this, staff use the authority's 'Raising Attainment Reflection Toolkit' to reflect upon and further improve individual and whole school practice to raise attainment and deliver excellent

learning and teaching. In Session 14/15, all staff, pupils and parents undertook self-evaluation based on 'SHANARRI' Indicators.

Children's progress in Literacy and Numeracy is monitored and tracked by the Head Teacher using school-created progression grids along with results of standardised and in-class assessments, including Accelerated Reading. All staff have engaged in Professional Reviews using the revised documentation, with targets clearly identified.

A 'pupil friendly' version of School Improvement Plan is prominently displayed and the Pupil Council have identified and taken responsibility for two elements of School Improvement Plan - Improving School Grounds and Safer Routes to School. This has been an area of success with the school working in Partnership with 'Dumfries Peoples' Project' to ensure a safer route to school. Games tables, planters and outdoor play equipment have been purchased. In addition to this, the school has recently secured a £10,000 grant from 'Awards for All Scotland' to improve the facilities in the school playground. Work will commence on this project in August 2015. Pupils have been involved in the design and selection of equipment.

The Headteacher's extended contract and the appointment of a Principal Teacher (Permanent) and Class Teacher has addressed concerns about the number of teachers in one year that some pupils have previously experienced.

Yours sincerely

Colin Grant
Director of Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning