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2 November 2016

**Education Services**

Woodbank

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To:

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

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**LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF CREETOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND  
EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE (ELC) SETTING SINCE EDUCATION SCOTLAND  
REPORT OF 15 DECEMBER, 2015**

Creetown Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting was inspected by Education Scotland in September 2015. 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. Education Scotland awarded Creetown Primary and ELC an evaluation of 'Good' for Improvements in Performance, Learners' Experiences and Meeting Learning Needs. An evaluation of 'Satisfactory' was awarded for The Curriculum and Improvement through Self-Evaluation. The Care Inspectorate awarded the ELC setting gradings of 'Good' for the Quality of Care and Support, the Quality of Environment and the Quality of Staffing. An evaluation of 'Adequate' was awarded for the Quality of Management and Leadership. 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 Creetown Primary and ELC setting since the publication of the Education Scotland report in December 2015. The report highlighted two main aspects for development. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these points.

**Continue to improve the curriculum to ensure that learning is relevant, and that all children can make suitable progress across all areas.**

A Mathematics and Numeracy programme, incorporating the Significant Aspects of Learning has been developed. The school has revised their Mathematics and Numeracy overview for the year, ensuring all aspects and concepts are being taught. This has ensured continuity and progression across this area of the curriculum. Standardised assessments have shown that this is having a positive effect on attainment.

The school has revisited their curriculum with Curriculum Overviews now showing progression and coherence in all curricular areas, thus providing continuity for the learners. The school has created a three yearly Curriculum Overview which links all Experiences and Outcomes. School staff has agreed a Literacy programme which ensures learners are experiencing writing in all genres. The school has revisited their Health and Wellbeing programme and agreed a two yearly rolling programme to ensure skills are being taught and revisited more frequently and that there is greater depth of learning. The school has taken cognisance of the work carried out through the Authority Building Your Curriculum groups. Interdisciplinary Learning bundles and themes have been revisited and agreed, making these more relevant to the learner's environment.

The Science programme has been planned and moderated at Cluster Level. Moderation across the Machars Cluster showed a consistent shared understanding of attainment at each level. Working across the Cluster has led to a focussed approach to teaching Science and provided greater opportunity for practical activity. Science activities set within Douglas Ewart High School provided opportunity for learners to lead learning and share their skills and knowledge with their peers.

This session, the school plans to engage further with advice from the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and the local authority to raise attainment and close the gap. The school plans to use the draft Literacy and Numeracy Benchmarks to ensure there is sufficient depth and progression for learners across composite classes. As a school, staff will assess the impact of these benchmarks. The school plans to engage with all curricular benchmarks when they are published.

To secure improvement in mathematics and numeracy, the school staff will work with their partnership school to plan rich assessment tasks and high quality learning and teaching activities, linked to Place Value. These will be moderated through joint collegiate sessions. This will ensure progress towards agreed Numeracy Benchmarks and a joint understanding of expected standards in the school and across the Partnership.

The school will engage with Education Scotland's Achievement of a Level Poster and consider how this could be annotated with an agreed plan to raise attainment and support teacher professionalism. Through this, the school will agree which Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing Benchmarks to focus on this year. Staff will plan together, observe in each other's classrooms, team teach and assess the same areas to produce a shared understanding of expectations and standards.

The school will continue to make good use of all assessment information to provide support and challenge for all learners.

**Ensure that approaches to self-evaluation result in improvements for children at all stages.**

School staff are continuing to review assessment approaches to ensure learners are engaged in meaningful learning conversations with teachers and peers and that meaningful learning conversations take place between staff, learners and parents.

All teaching staff have engaged with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Career Long Professional Profiles and evaluated the impact of their professional learning on learning and teaching.

Planning and classroom practice have been monitored by the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher has shifted the focus of her classroom monitoring practice. Observations now follow the GTCS format and focus on whether the learner's needs are being met. Teaching

staff receive feedback with regard to their planning for learning. This feedback now includes links to 'How Good Is Our School? 4', focusing on Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion, Raising Attainment and Achievement and Creativity and Employability.

Staff have met termly with the Head Teacher to discuss learner's progress in Literacy and Numeracy. From this, the school has evaluated the usefulness of programmes in place and moderated the degree of support required in classrooms.

Staff have agreed to track aspects of learners' Health and Wellbeing using a new school document and plan to evaluate the impact of this, next session.

As part of the School Improvement Plan, all staff carried out individual research projects aimed to raise attainment. Literacy projects to raise attainment in reading at Early/First level proved to encourage boys to read more and were effective at promoting parental engagement. Some of these projects will now be developed across the school and partnership. Staff found that a small test of change was an effective way in which to evaluate and learn from current and future classroom practice.

The school will continue to assess the impact of self-evaluation to ensure it results in improvements for all learners. With a view to evaluating the school's current system and replacing it with a more effective model, the Head Teacher has made contact with a school signposted by Education Scotland for their particular strength in tracking and monitoring.

The school plans to use the Challenge Questions set out in 'How Good Is Our School? 4':

1.1 Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement, and to engage with National Improvement Framework Driver: School Improvement to continuously evaluate improvements.

The School Improvement Plan (2016-17) identifies a priority to revisit and revise the Parental Engagement Strategy to find better ways of encouraging parents and the wider community to engage with self-evaluation of the school.

The school demonstrates capacity for continuing improvement. This is the result of the hard work and commitment of the Headteacher, staff and children, and the growing commitment to working in partnership with the partner school and Cluster colleagues. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on their progress over the last year.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Brydson