

Your Ref:

Skills, Education and Learning Directorate

122-124 Irish Street

Our Ref: DISTRICT\INFO\QI\INDICES\ES\REPORTS\
A&E\JOHNSTONEBRIDGE PS\LET001-GB\EG

Dumfries

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To:

Any enquiries please contact:

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

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Dear Parent / Carer

LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF JOHNSTONEBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL SINCE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT OF APRIL 2019

Johnstonebridge Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland in February 2019. The inspection focussed on leadership of change, learning, teaching and assessment, ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion and children's attainment and achievements.

As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Skills, Education and Learning Directorate, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by Johnstonebridge Primary School since the publication of the Education Scotland report in April 2019. The report highlighted two main aspects for development. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these points.

Raise attainment and ensure that children make very good progress in numeracy and maths ensuring that opportunities for children to apply their numeracy skills across all areas of their learning are established.

The school's attainment in numeracy and maths has remained steady over the session and the measures that have been put in place since the inspection are beginning to show impact on children's attainment across the school. The new Progress and Achievement through a Curriculum for Excellence Level tracking is allowing the school to track attainment more effectively resulting in most children showing improvements in attainment for maths and numeracy. Numeracy levels and improved attainment are central to the school's priorities for improvement. A new assessment overview and the range of assessment now being used by the school staff, including 'Rich Task' assessments, are of higher quality and will ensure maximum opportunities for early interventions where appropriate. Time for professional dialogue between teachers, support staff, additional support for learning staff and other agencies has been planned to allow interventions to be timely and appropriate to individual needs. Moderation takes place at school, partnership

and cluster level to further develop all teacher's understanding and confidence in achievement of a level in numeracy and maths.

Staff have attended Maths Recovery, Closing the Numeracy Gap and Catch Up Numeracy training to develop strategies to raise attainment over time. Partnership staff have been revising the school's maths and numeracy planning documents to ensure appropriate coverage and progression through levels, increasing staff confidence and capacity to deliver and consolidate learning. STEM programmes are being implemented across the school and partnership to ensure better progress for pupils and allow them to apply and transfer their numeracy skills into other areas. All teaching staff have reviewed the technology programme to enhance numeracy and maths knowledge and skills. Digital learning is also being used more consistently by all to enrich the learning of pupils. This approach is beginning to impact on attainment throughout the school for most of our learners.

The school is empowering learners to have more say in the quality of their learning experiences by using 'How Good is OUR School' during weekly pupil groups. Outdoor Learning has been embedded into the school's weekly delivery of learning and teaching to develop numeracy and maths skills in new contexts and allow the transfer of key knowledge and skills to other areas. All staff attended Forest Classroom training and Learning Through Landscape training to upskill them in the delivery of numeracy and maths outside. Plans are being developed to implement this approach further next session.

The school's curriculum overviews have been updated to ensure that skills can be transferred to other areas consistently. All teachers are providing higher quality feedback and the learners are developing a more accurate understanding of what they need to do to improve as a result. Pupil profiles and assessments information have been reviewed to ensure coverage and opportunities for transferring learning to other areas are provided. Learning Discussions have been reviewed to focus on more effective target setting in numeracy and maths with clearer focus on pupils using learning intentions and success criteria to identify their achievements and next steps. Attainment Meetings with all teaching staff allow for in-depth professional dialogue around progress and data is being analysed with growing confidence. This is developing staff's ability to identify needs and interventions that support or challenge individuals.

Raise further children's attainment in literacy by developing a culture of reading for pleasure and enjoyment with more opportunities to write high quality pieces of writing across a range of real-life contexts.

The school's attainment in literacy is showing good progress across the stages, particularly in writing. There is positive impact on learning and teaching across the school with most children showing improvements in their attainment and progress through a Curriculum for Excellence level since last session. Staff engage regularly in professional dialogue to develop a shared knowledge and understanding of learning, teaching and best practice. This approach resulted in a new reading scale being developed by all teaching staff to track progress and achievement of a level. Staff plan to implement this next session. In addition, staff have been involved in planning a Paired Reading Programme across the school to help boost reading for enjoyment and raise attainment across literacy. This will be implemented and tracked next term. A variety of pupil led recording methods are used to share recommend books to peers which is working well and encouraging children to choose books independently in the upper stages. Rich Task Assessments are

now being planned collegiately across the partnership to allow for shared high standards and expectations. Moderation takes place at school, partnership and cluster level to further develop all teacher's understanding and confidence in achievement of a level.

The school has updated the literacy progression frameworks to ensure children's learning progresses within and across levels and these have been implemented successfully at all levels. The curriculum has a growing focus on the development of skills for the world of work and all staff are beginning to embed learning and teaching within real life contexts, supported by the school's new writing planners for all levels. The planners are allowing for more focussed teaching of key writing skills and teacher and pupil expectations have risen as a result of challenging dialogue about individual learning and how to use this to improve. The staff have identified the need for pupils to be involved in planning stages of literacy and how to apply their skills in different contexts. This will be implemented through staff led pupil groups and weekly child led skills sessions which aim to give pupils more ownership of their learning.

The school is beginning to use a broader range of digital technology to deliver, support and consolidate learning in literacy, which is impacting on learner's engagement and is beginning to show improvements in attainment. The use of outdoor learning to enhance literacy is underway and all staff have been trained through Learning Through Landscapes to support literacy outdoors. The use of iPads and digital technology is reinforcing a culture of reading for pleasure.

Reading resources were purchased by the school to update the scheme and additional support material which has had a positive impact on reading attainment and enjoyment for most pupils. Children are increasingly taking on roles to write posts for the school's social media platforms or newsletters. The teaching of writing is a focus for next session to further increase improvements in attainment in literacy; all staff will attend Talk for Writing training to build capacity. Writing is better linked to the refreshed contexts for learning and community events providing connections to real life. There is an increased, shared high expectation for all learners across all of the staff and through a well embedded nurture approach this is beginning to develop a culture for enjoyment and challenge which will in turn lead to improvement in attainment. There are plans to enable staff to learn with and from each other. Headteacher observations focussed on the pace and challenge in learning and feedback has given a sound starting point for peer observations to share best practice across the partnership. These, in line with all staff reviews, have provided a positive starting point to build on the skills and talents of the staff across the school.

Johnstonebridge Primary School demonstrates a good capacity for future improvement. This is the result of the hard work and commitment of the Headteacher, staff, children and wider school community. Due to the unforeseen COVID-19 lockdown, aspects that have not been fully implemented, will be taken forward as part of the school's recovery plan. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on their progress over the last year.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Brydson
Director Skills, Education and Learning