

Education Scotland, Unit 7, Ground Floor Suite, Blair Court, Clydebank Business Park, Clydebank G81 2LA

t 0141 435 3550 f 0141 435 3555 e Deborah.heaney@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk W Clydebank@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

Textphone 01506 600236¹

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Dear Parent/Carer

Kilchrenan Primary School
Argyll and Bute Council

Recently, as you may know, I visited and inspected your child's school. Throughout my visit, I talked to parents and children and I worked closely with the headteacher and staff. I 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 me the school's successes and priorities for improvement. I looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including the impact of outdoor learning, the work done to improve how well children work together and how the school works with others. As a result, I was able to find out how good the school was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what I found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

I am confident that children learn and achieve well. They are motivated to learn and enjoy coming to school. I found that children have been improving how they work together in different groups and are now doing this well. Older children guide younger children to do their best within their new clan groups. Children benefit from discussing and agreeing personal targets for improving their learning with staff. They are developing new personal learning plans which in time will show all of their achievements and progress towards their own targets and those set by staff. These plans will also help staff to monitor and track children's progress and achievements more clearly. Children respond enthusiastically to the extensive opportunities to learn outdoors. For example, they grew vegetables to make soup and raised fish to release into a nearby loch. These and other experiences helped the school to gain two Eco-Schools Scotland green flag awards. Children's knowledge of the geographic, historic and economic features of their local area is developing well. They respond well to the regular visits to explore local woodland and are gaining a deep understanding of the differences between the seasons as a result. Children are beginning to extend their own learning and are developing their personal, social and physical skills well. They display confidence in using literacy and numeracy skills across their learning when they are outdoors. Children explain what they are learning about through descriptive vocabulary. They are improving the effectiveness of their listening skills due to the focused work by staff. Children cooperate well together to solve problems and have become more secure in their understanding of numeracy through real life contexts. In the classroom, staff are improving their approaches to the teaching of reading and writing to increase children's rate of progress. At the moment, progress in writing is not strong enough for a few. They recognise that they need to make more effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enable children to practise their skills independently.

¹ This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as this will not connect.

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

Staff care for and know your children very well. The acting headteacher deploys all of the adults in school very effectively. This enables them to provide the best levels of individualised support they can to respond to children's learning and development needs. Staff now need to increase the levels of challenge in learning for a few children and also help them to take more responsibility for themselves. Staff know that they now need to improve children's individualised learning plans and involve parents and relevant partners. Staff provide a broad curriculum through which children are gaining a deep understanding of the local area. Opportunities to work with and learn from the local community are increasing and are well planned to enable children to use their skills in different ways. Staff are continuing to implement changes to the curriculum to ensure that it takes full account of Curriculum for Excellence. They are using their successful work within health and wellbeing to review how they build on children's skills in literacy and numeracy across learning. They should continue with the work they have begun to improve how they plan for and assess children's learning across the curriculum.

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

All staff who work in the school are highly committed to ensuring the best outcomes for individual children. Teamwork is very effective and it is good that staff enable children to be included in activities alongside their peers from other schools. The acting headteacher knows the school very well. As part of a very recent school review process, she identified key strengths and areas for further development which will ensure the school builds on its strengths. Staff now need more opportunities to discuss their work and the ways in which they can contribute to school improvement. Staff enjoy very positive, supportive relationships with parents and the school community. They continue to explore new ways of building on children's learning experiences and are investigating how children could work more closely with those from other schools. Staff have become part of a local teaching and learning community and this is enabling them to share good practice in learning and teaching with other schools. I am confident that the school is well placed to continue to improve the quality of its work.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- The use of the outdoor environment to motivate children and enable them to achieve new skills.
- The increasing opportunities for children to work in close partnership with their local community.
- Staff who are skilled at creating an inclusive and caring environment for children to learn and succeed.
- The leadership of the acting headteacher who is building on the school's strengths and taking forward priorities for improvement.

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

- Further improve children's learning experiences and skills and help them to make more progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Continue to improve approaches to planning by using Curriculum for Excellence.
- Continue to improve personal learning planning and ways staff track and monitor children's progress and achievements.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

On behalf of Education Scotland, I am satisfied with the overall quality of provision. I am confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, Education Scotland 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 ES 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.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=9106&type=2> .

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 or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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