

22 May 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

**Alexander Peden Primary School
North Lanarkshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. The nursery was subject to an inspection at a later date. A separate letter to parents of children in the nursery will be published shortly. Throughout our visit, we talked to 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 view of its successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work. These included the impact of the school's work on improving the curriculum, its arrangements for meeting the needs of children who required additional support with their learning and the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance children's learning. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving children's education. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Children have a very positive learning experience in the school. They are safe, happy and very well cared for. Children engage enthusiastically in their learning and are highly motivated. They treat each other with mutual respect and are responsible and confident learners. They work very well together in pairs and groups on a wide range of activities. They are active in and take responsibility for their learning. They get very good opportunities to share, explain and explore their knowledge and understanding with each other. They do this very well. Teachers share the purpose of lessons with children very well. Staff are involving children in assessing their own progress. As a result, children have a good sense of their strengths and what they need to do to improve, particularly in literacy.

Children achieve very well in the school. They achieve success through a wide range of school and out-of-school activities and their achievements are celebrated regularly. As a result, children are very proud of their achievements and have good levels of self-esteem. Children develop their leadership skills very well in a variety of roles. They also develop their citizenship skills very well through participation in enterprise projects and fundraising for a number of charities. The school has achieved a Community Challenge Award for this work. The school has achieved a

green flag for its environmental work. Overall, children are making very good progress in developing their literacy skills. They are able to write well for a wide range of purposes. They are very good at listening to each other and sharing their ideas and thoughts orally across their learning. They read a wide range of texts well. Attainment in mathematics is strong. Most children have well-developed numeracy skills. They are able to undertake accurate mental calculations and can confidently identify a range of shapes and plot coordinates. They know how to make use of different units of measure, including time and can make effective use of problem-solving strategies in their work.

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

Children are very well supported in their learning and, overall, their learning needs are very well met. Staff are particularly sensitive to children's personal and social needs. In most lessons, learning tasks, activities and resources are well matched to the needs of individual learners and groups. There is scope in some numeracy and mathematics lessons to make tasks more challenging for some children. The school makes very good use of ICT to enhance and support children's learning. Arrangements for meeting the needs of children who require additional support with their learning are very effective. Children's learning needs are identified very well and appropriate support plans are put in place. These contain clear and specific targets. They are reviewed regularly. In reviewing plans, the school works closely in partnership with parents and other services and agencies.

The school has taken a number of positive steps in developing the curriculum taking good account of Curriculum for Excellence. In doing so, it has worked very effectively with a wide range of partners. These include a local hospice, the Forestry Commission and a specialist marine facility. The improvements in the curriculum have been particularly effective in literacy and health and wellbeing. As a result, children are able to develop their literacy skills in a wide range of contexts and they are encouraged to adopt healthy and active lifestyles. The school has introduced more opportunities for children to make good connections in their learning across subject areas. In developing the curriculum further, the school should ensure that these approaches enable continuity and progression in the development of children's knowledge, understanding and skills in all curricular areas. There is scope to ensure that coursework in mathematics and numeracy are consistently challenging. There are very well-planned transitional arrangements with the nursery and associated secondary school. These include transitional projects for children moving from P7 to S1 that have been developed by staff working across local primary schools and the secondary school.

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

Staff work very well together as a team. Teachers have worked together very effectively in taking steps to improve the curriculum and children's learning experiences. As a result, children have access to a very good learning experience. The school has a range of approaches to improving its work. These include the regular observation of learning and teaching by the headteacher. Staff also regularly work in each other's classes and observe learning. Teachers discuss this work and give each other helpful feedback. The school has taken steps to record children's

achievements and monitor and track children's progress in their learning. There is scope to make these approaches more formal and systematic. The headteacher monitors teachers' forward plans regularly. The school now needs to ensure that, over the course of a year, children in all classes have appropriate experiences in all curricular areas. The school provides appropriate opportunities for staff, children and parents to contribute to priorities in the school improvement plan. Each year, the school provides you with an informative, accurate and well-judged evaluative report on the quality of its work.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- Responsible and confident children.
- Teamwork amongst staff in improving children's learning experiences.
- The high quality of children's learning experiences in the school.
- Arrangements for supporting children's learning.

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

- Ensure that children experience continuity and progression in their learning in all areas.
- Develop more systematic approaches for recording, monitoring and tracking children's progress and achievements.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's overall approaches to self-evaluation are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The local authority and school will inform you about the school's progress as part of their arrangements for reporting to you on the quality of education provided by the school.

Chris Webb
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/AlexanderPedenPrimaryNorthLanarkshire.asp>

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