

17 May 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Craigmarloch School
Inverclyde Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents, children and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children and young people are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children and young people to do their best. The headteacher shared with us the school's successes and priorities for improvement. We looked at some particular aspects of the school's recent work, including communication, pupil voice and approaches to teaching music. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's and young people's education.

How well do children and young people learn and achieve?

Across the school, almost all children and young people are enthusiastic learners. Good relationships between pupils and staff and the well-designed school campus create a positive learning environment. In some classes, children and young people have a good understanding about what they are learning and what they need to do in order to achieve success in their tasks. This now needs to happen more consistently across all classes. Children and young people benefit from visits to the local and wider community to practice skills they are developing in school. For example, they use money when shopping in local supermarkets. These outings help them build up their knowledge and understanding of the local area, its history and culture. Children and young people are proud of their achievements and the contribution they make to their school. Young people in S4 are particularly proud of Café Connect which recently won a Social Enterprise in Education Award. They can identify the lifeskills they are developing through the café such as working with others and how they help raise money for charities. The majority of young people in S5 are working towards achieving the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award.

Overall, the majority of children and young people are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. They are developing well their communication skills using appropriate resources and systems such as signs, speech and visual symbols. At all stages, children and young people have opportunities to apply their communication skills through participation in educational outings in the local community. Some children and young people are able to read stories and texts across a range of genres. Across the school, some children and young people are able to write for different purposes. Learners are developing skills in number and other aspects of mathematics

such as shape and time. The school should now ensure that children and young people make better progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff should develop a better understanding of the strengths and capabilities of children and young people in order to help them reach their full potential. Young people at the senior phase achieve National Qualifications across a wide range of subjects. Almost all attend a local college. Young people say that they enjoy going to college and trying out new activities, particularly art and craft. A few children and young people are making good progress by participating in specialist therapeutic programmes such as rebound therapy and MOVE (movement opportunity via education). All young people who left the school last year have successfully moved on to college or placement in a social work community resource centre.

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

In the majority of lessons, tasks and activities are appropriately matched to the needs of most children and young people. Staff have access to a range of information about the additional support needs of children and young people. This information helps staff identify barriers to learning and plan appropriate tasks and activities. In a few lessons, staff use information about learners well to deliver high quality lessons which challenge children and young people. Staff now need to share this good practice to ensure lessons across the school consistently provide sufficient challenge. The school works successfully with a range of partners and other agencies to support the needs of learners. For example, a play therapist works with a few children and their families to help them overcome emotional barriers to learning. There are good opportunities for young people to access mainstream classes and activities, such as musical and social events within the Community Campus which includes Port Glasgow and St Stephen's High Schools. Parents are well informed about their child's progress through detailed reports and regular review meetings. The school has recently adopted a solution-focused approach to review meetings and those who attend are positive about this approach. The school should continue with its proposal to review how it plans for the needs of all learners through individualised educational programmes.

Staff recognise the need to develop the curriculum to ensure all children and young people have access to a broader range of relevant educational programmes. Working groups have been established to take forward curriculum developments. The school now needs to progress these developments at a faster pace and ensure that the curriculum allows for progression as children and young people move stages. Staff should improve their understanding of how programmes and courses within the Curriculum for Excellence can provide more challenge for learners. Curriculum developments should take account of agreed approaches to assessing learning and progress. The school's wide range of partnerships with the local business community is providing valuable work experience placements for young people. As a result of these work placements, a few have gained employment or extended voluntary work opportunities.

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

In the last two years, the experienced headteacher has supported the merger of two schools to the new community campus of Craigmarloch. She has been successful in

helping children and young people settle well into their new environment. More recently, senior managers have introduced new approaches to evaluating the work of the school. All staff, with the support of Inverclyde Council, need to establish more robust and rigorous approaches to self-evaluation. We have asked the school to identify areas for improvement and agree how these priorities will be progressed within given timescales. Staff should closely monitor the impact of these priorities to ensure they improve outcomes for all children and young people.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Well behaved, enthusiastic children and young people and the positive relationships they have with staff.
- Therapeutic programmes and their impact on helping children and young people improve their health and wellbeing.
- The purpose built learning environment which provides appropriate space and resources to support learning.

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

- Improve attainment and achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve pace and challenge in learning.
- Develop the curriculum to allow children and young people to make better progress in their learning.
- Improve approaches to self-evaluation and ensure these lead to improved outcomes for children and young people.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will link with Inverclyde Council to monitor on-going support for the school. The Authority will report on progress made within twelve months of the publication of this letter.

Monica McGeever
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/CraigmarlochSchoolInverclyde.asp>

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

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