

22 May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

**Kilcreggan Primary School and Pre-5 Unit
Argyll and Bute Council**

In February 2016, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Argyll and Bute Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in March 2017. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found. The Care Inspectorate inspected the Pre-5 unit at the same time and that report will be available at www.careinspectorate.com.

Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the Pre-5 unit and school

The headteacher and her staff have continued to focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. Overall, the majority of children at the primary stages are now attaining national levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Improved arrangements for assessing and tracking children's progress are now beginning to help teachers build a more robust picture of children's progress in literacy and numeracy.

Across the primary stages, children's attainment in literacy is improving, most noticeably in reading. Most children are increasingly confident at sharing their ideas, thoughts and opinions. While children are more skilled at talking, there is scope at all stages, to improve further a few children's listening skills. Through children's involvement in the pupil council and eco-committee their views are encouraged and heard. By P7, children can read aloud a familiar piece of text with fluency and expression. They can identify the key ideas of a text and distinguish between fact and opinion. In writing, children are able to demonstrate an ability to create extended pieces of writing. Children in the focus group expressed a wish to have more regular opportunities to write longer stories. In numeracy, children at the middle stages accurately tell the time using digital and analogue clocks. A few can use the correct notation for common fractions. In shape, position and movement all children can name, identify and recognise a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects.

Children in the focus group were knowledgeable about gathering information and using graphs.

Children in the Pre-5 unit learn and engage well when activities are motivating and when they are interested in a theme or topic. The majority can work well together on chosen activities sharing toys and resources. Most children settle on arrival to the setting, a few still need support to ensure they gain the most from their time in the setting. We have suggested that practitioners review the use of the welcome circle and song as too many children are unsettled during this period. Most children can recognise their name in print and can identify their name card at snack time. A few children are beginning to have a go at writing their own name. Most children use mathematical language appropriately. When talking about the different species of toy dinosaurs they correctly identified the tallest, shortest and heaviest. A few children can count beyond 20 and can order numbers correctly within ten. Practitioners are still missing opportunities to extend children's thinking and deepen their learning. There is scope for practitioners to improve their interactions with children to ensure they make better progress in their learning, currently the pace of learning is too slow for a few children.

Improve learning experiences to provide children with more challenge in their learning

The learning experiences of children in the primary classes have improved since the original and follow through inspections. The environment now promotes a more positive ethos and almost all children enjoy school. Most children are actively engaged during their lessons. Almost all children take some responsibility for their own learning and show a greater level of independence. Almost all children are able to talk about what they know and how to improve their learning, for example through the use of sharing learning intentions and knowing the purpose of lessons. Overall, teachers use questioning more effectively to develop higher-order thinking skills. The language of learning is now better promoted in classes. Teachers need to improve the effectiveness of their feedback to help children build on their prior knowledge. There is still scope to support and challenge higher-achieving children.

Almost all children in the Pre-5 unit are happy and settled in the setting. Practitioners welcome parents each day in a highly supportive and caring manner. The changes to the physical learning environment and entrance area are much more conducive to learning. A few children who are still settling into the setting receive sensitive support from practitioners. As children arrive they take part in a welcome circle and song, not all children are benefiting from taking part in this activity. Most children are confident learners choosing from a range of high quality resources that meet most learners' needs. A few younger children need support to make appropriate choices during their play. At times too many children lose interest in their play and wander around the playrooms. Practitioners now need to judge when to intervene to effectively support learners during their play.

Develop the curriculum to ensure that children build on their knowledge and skills as they progress through the school

Staff in the Pre-5 unit and the school have worked together to produce a curriculum rationale which takes better account of national advice and local circumstances. In developing the curriculum in this way, practitioners and teachers show much greater ownership. Consultation has taken place with stakeholders about the school's rationale. The school is creating a three-year curriculum overview to ensure children are receiving their entitlement to a broad general education and progression in learning within multi-composite classes. This framework is supporting progression in learning whilst ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to needs. Children are more actively involved in planning learning activities. There is a greater focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Curriculum pathways are beginning to show clearer progression. These are used flexibly, allowing for the input of children and the creativity of teachers. This helps to provide greater personalisation and choice. In taking the curriculum forward it will be important to ensure that there is continuity and progression across the early level between the Pre-5 unit and P1.

Review systems for monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the school

As a result of a more stable staff team, the headteacher and her staff are in a stronger position to improve the areas identified for improvement at the original inspection and the last inspection visit in February 2017. We can see that the school has made positive progress with the arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and improving its work. The headteacher, practitioners, teachers and support staff have also made steady progress with reviewing and improving the curriculum. Children and parents have been included in helping to improve the curriculum. Parents value their increased involvement with the school.

The headteacher has adopted a more strategic approach to reviewing the work of the school. There has been a greater focus on using national guidance to evaluate how well children are learning. The use of data from standardised assessments and teachers' professional judgement is helping to build up a more robust and accurate picture of children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. The school is beginning to gather information on children's progress in health and wellbeing. A very early start has been made to planning a programme which ensures children gain skills that will support them now and in the future. We agree with the headteacher that a stronger focus on a skills based curriculum is a positive way forward in implementing the national guidance, Developing the Young Workforce. We have asked the headteacher and her staff to focus on improving the consistency of learning and teaching in the Pre-5 unit and across the primary stages. By focussing on these areas and embedding the improvements we observed during our visit to the school and Pre-5 unit we expect the school to be able to demonstrate further improvements in children's attainment and achievements.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will ask for a report on progress within one year of the inspection. This report will inform any

decision made by Education Scotland regarding further engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with Argyll and Bute Council that we intend to take.

Marion Burns
HM Inspector

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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