

25 April 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

**St Augustine's Primary School
North Lanarkshire Council**

In May 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 North Lanarkshire Council. 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 in the four areas for development identified in our previous letter.

1. Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school

We found that children continue to be proud of their school and are especially pleased with the many opportunities they have to achieve in a range of different areas such as in sports teams and after school clubs. Most children are benefiting from more effective learning and teaching approaches in their classrooms. They enjoy and overall, feel more challenged by their lessons. Most teachers now have more regular learning conversations with children. As a result children have a much clearer idea about what they are expected to learn and how well they are progressing. Most children learn enthusiastically together through cooperating successfully in groups to complete tasks. In P6 and P7 children are now more independent in their learning and are developing responsibility through the leadership opportunities provided for them. Teachers have worked very hard to improve the environment for learning throughout the school. Professional learning opportunities provided by North Lanarkshire Council have enabled teachers to improve the quality of learning experiences in their classes. We have asked the school to continue to improve the consistency of effective teaching to ensure all children receive high-quality experiences across the school. Whilst behaviour in classrooms is positive overall, children raised with us concerns about the poor behaviour of a few in the yard. This is impacting negatively on how safe some children feel outdoors and the extent to which they enjoy their breaktimes. We have asked the senior management team to work with the school community to resolve this.

2. Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy

Teachers in the school are taking forward a number of initiatives to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. As a result we found that children are making better progress in these key areas. Their knowledge and understanding has improved and they are more able to apply the skills they have gained. At P7 children's confidence in working accurately with measurement, shape and handling data is much improved. Support staff continue to enhance the learning of a number of children across the school and a recent reading initiative has produced positive results. Teachers monitor and track the progress of individual children using a range of assessment information and discuss these results regularly with the senior management team. More time is needed for teachers to develop their understanding of how this assessment information can be used to raise attainment.

3. Improve the curriculum for all children

The school is continuing to improve the pace at which it now implements Curriculum for Excellence. Spanish has been introduced across the school. Improvements in the approach of the school to the Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) learning programme are supporting the development of children's digital learning skills. Staff are continuing to improve their planning and teaching of Science. Progress in improving the curriculum has unfortunately, at times, been adversely affected by staff absence. Staff are working closely with North Lanarkshire Council to develop and bring consistency to the programmes for literacy and numeracy. This is working well and has increased staff confidence in the teaching of these curricular areas. Teachers have improved how they plan for learning to ensure children make progress across the curriculum. They now need more time to consolidate this work and to make sure all children are able to build on their previous learning as they progress through the school. Staff should continue to work with the national guidance and with other schools to ensure expectations of standards are high enough. We discussed with the school its next steps in improving the curriculum further.

4. Provide professional learning opportunities for all staff to ensure a shared and agreed understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation to improve the school

Staff in the school value the professional learning opportunities they undertake and have worked hard to address the improvement agenda set as a result of the last inspection. We found there is a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children. Staff in the school have made a good start to working closely with each other. They would now benefit from sharing the examples of effective learning and teaching better with each other to bring about greater consistency in all of the classrooms. The senior management team set a challenging pace of improvement across a very broad range of areas. We discussed with them how a focus on a smaller number of key priorities now would help bring about a clearer common purpose and support improvement. This would enable staff to share responsibility for leading on improvement. Self-evaluation to bring about sustained improvement over time is at an early stage. Staff and the wider school community would value greater involvement in the improvement agenda. This would help them to work

together to determine how they can build on their strengths and look forward to building an aspirational future for the school. There remains significant concern amongst the school community about the staffing difficulties experienced by the school and the negative impact this has had on the pace of improvement. We have asked North Lanarkshire Council to continue to work with the school to resolve this issue in order to continue to improve the outcomes for all children.

What happens next?

The school has made some steady progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with North Lanarkshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return within one year of the published report to carry out a further inspection of the school. We will discuss with North Lanarkshire Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Shona ES Taylor
HM Inspector

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