

23 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Bent Primary School
South Lanarkshire Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleague and I inspected your child's school. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children are learning and achieving and how well the school supports children 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 pupil voice and reading. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school is at improving children's education.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Across the school, children are happy, well behaved and keen to learn. They respond well to warm, nurturing relationships with staff which are a strong feature across the school. Staff have been successful in establishing a welcoming environment. Most children enjoy learning especially when they have the opportunity to work with others in pairs or groups. Staff are continuing to encourage children to learn in a range of interesting ways. They should ensure that children are provided with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and to learn skills in new and unfamiliar situations. In most classes, children know what they are supposed to learn during lessons. Teachers need to be more consistent in providing detailed feedback to children to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Children are given opportunities to improve their fitness through participating in a wide range of sporting activities. These include triathlons, athletics, and tennis. By raising funds for a range of charities throughout the year, children are developing an awareness of the needs of others both in Scotland and across the world. All older children have the opportunity to build their skills in resilience and working with others by taking part in a residential trip to Barcaple. Across the school, children believe their views are listened to and valued. All children are members of school committees such as the pupil council or Rights Respecting group. Pupil council representatives are proud of their contributions which led to the addition of a new trim trail for the playground.

At all stages, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. They are improving their knowledge of language and are able to ask and answer questions about the main ideas and purposes of texts. From the early stages, children are learning important listening skills and know what is required to be a good listener. Most children across the school are learning to build on the ideas and opinions of others. The majority of older children are writing

independently for a variety of purposes and are using a range of strategies to improve their spelling. In mathematics and numeracy, younger children are developing their understanding of measurement and numbers. They are able to compare objects by height and weight, and can add and subtract within ten. Older children are developing well their understanding of fractions, decimals, and percentages. Across the school, children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across other subject areas and in real-life contexts. Children engage in a range of activities in order to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They can explain what constitutes a healthy diet and are supported to make healthy food choices.

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

Staff know the children well and have a sound understanding of most of their learning needs. They provide a safe, comfortable climate for learning to take place. Across the school, learning activities are well matched to meet the needs of the majority of children. We have asked staff to ensure that all lessons move at a brisk pace with worthwhile, challenging learning. The school works well with a range of partners, such as psychologists and speech and language therapists, to help assess children's needs and plan strategies to support them effectively. Additional support plans are in place for children requiring extra support with their learning. Although the plans are generally of a high quality, they are not consistently used well enough by staff to support children's learning.

The school has set out its vision to provide a curriculum which reflects the climate and ethos of Bent Primary School. This is providing staff with a clear direction for developing the curriculum. Staff have made a positive start in developing suitable activities to help children with their reading and writing. However, overall, staff are at an early stage in taking this forward. There is little progress thus far in establishing a whole-school approach to developing learning activities in order that children make suitable progress across all subject areas. Children are beginning to benefit from new approaches such as 'Better Movers, Better Thinkers' focused on improving their physical skills. However, there are important areas of the curriculum that require further development. As staff develop the curriculum further, they need to ensure that children build on their prior learning as they advance through the school.

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

The headteacher has successfully built positive working relationships across the school. Parents, staff and children appreciate her open and approachable style of leadership. This has led to an increased commitment to school improvement. Staff are willingly volunteering to lead key areas of improvement. They should now focus on further improving how they track and monitor learners' progress. The headteacher has a range of ways of evaluating what the school needs to do to improve such as annual questionnaires and parent workshops. She now needs to ensure these evaluations leads to improvement in children's attainment, and the quality of learning experiences across the school.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Positive, nurturing relationships across the school established by the headteacher and staff.
- Well-behaved, happy children who are keen to learn.
- Effective teamwork amongst staff.

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

- Improve the curriculum and ensure challenge and progression across learning.
- Focus school improvement on raising children's attainment and achievement.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that most of the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with South Lanarkshire Council to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. South Lanarkshire Council will inform parents of the extent to which the school has improved within one year of the publication of this report.

Steven McPherson
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/BentPrimarySchoolSouthLanarkshire.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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