

30 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Mauricewood Primary School and Nursery Class
Midlothian Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues 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 the impact of the early numeracy programme, children's understanding of their own progress in learning and the support for children requiring additional help with their learning. 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 and nursery, there is a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos in which children feel safe and happy. Children in the nursery are happy, confident and play very well together, including in the well organised outdoor play spaces. They discuss their learning with enthusiasm. They are developing their independence well through tasks such as selecting resources and personal hygiene routines. Across the primary stages, children settle quickly to tasks. Behaviour in classrooms and throughout the school is exemplary. The children benefit from good relationships with each other and work well together on tasks. Children feel valued and respond well to the encouragement and support from their teachers. They are developing their understanding of what it means to be a good learner. The 'learning journey' work is supporting their understanding of their next steps in learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is encouraging children to play an active role in their own learning. The school should continue to build on this work, supporting all children through use of effective assessment and feedback on their learning. Digital technology is used well to enhance learning across the school and children are developing the relevant skills. At all stages children engage in a wide range of learning opportunities beyond the classroom, including the P7 trip to Benmore, regular use of the local Beeslack Woods, visiting the Sky Skills Academy and trips to places of historic interest.

Children participate in a range of activities which are supporting them in achieving success. The school recognises and celebrates children's achievements well, in displays around the school including the 'shooting stars' wall in the nursery, in assemblies, through school newsletters and on the school website. Children benefit from a range of sporting activities which improve their fitness levels and develop their

team working skills. These activities include athletics, rugby, football and taking part in sports competitions with local schools. Children across the school develop a good understanding of the needs of others through a range of fundraising activities for local and national charities. They have raised funds for children with Downs's syndrome and sang Christmas carols in the local community to raise money for dementia charities. Children in the upper stages are developing leadership skills through their 'task squads' work. They plan and undertake a range of duties with mature responsibility, including dinner hall helpers, playground organisers and class support work. Across stages, children serving as members of the Learning Council and Healthy Living, Healthy World groups take an active part in leading improvements in the school. Staff should continue to help children understand and reflect on the skills they are gaining through their achievements and awards.

In the nursery, children are making very good progress in their learning. Children's skills in early literacy and numeracy are developing very well. They are developing their ability to listen to adults and other children and they engage well in conversations. Older children recognise their name in print and can write their own name on paintings. They are developing their understanding of number and some can apply this in their play. Children are developing their awareness of a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of exercise, healthy eating and good hygiene practice. Across the primary stages, children are making good progress in their learning in language and literacy. They listen well to explanations and instructions and speak confidently with their peers and adults. Children at all stages write effectively for a variety of purposes and in a range of contexts, including imaginative writing, news reports and letters. They are making appropriate progress in developing their reading skills, engaging well with a variety of texts. Across the school, children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics with good progress emerging as the school embeds new approaches to learning and teaching. Teachers should continue to develop activities which are relevant to the children and support their learning in mathematics and numeracy. Children are progressing well in their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They can describe how to keep themselves safe when crossing roads and when using the Internet. They have a good awareness of the dangers of harmful substances. The school now needs to develop approaches to have a clear view of children's progress in all areas of the curriculum.

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

In the nursery, staff have a good understanding of each child's needs, both as learners and as individuals. They work well together to create a welcoming and caring environment and are attentive to the children's emotional needs. Staff plan an appropriate range of learning, resources and activities which support children in making decisions in their play. Across the primary stages a range of appropriate tasks and activities are well matched to meet the needs of children. The school has appropriate systems for identifying and supporting children who may require additional help with their learning. Teachers are very effective in using a range of strategies to support individual children within their own class. Learning assistants provide valuable support to groups and individual children. Parent volunteers helpfully support learning in literacy and numeracy across classes. Children from the nearby armed forces base are very well supported. Their social, emotional and learning needs are very well met

with appropriate sensitivity. The school works very well with a range of partners to support the needs of children and their families.

Across the nursery and primary, staff are planning learning using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence. The curriculum in the nursery offers children a wide range of learning experiences which promote enjoyment and choice. At the primary stages, the school has a broad curriculum which provides children with opportunities to develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Staff have developed programmes across the different curriculum areas along with some topic work which integrates learning across different subjects. The school-wide approach to developing 'Visible Learning' is informing the on-going development of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, numeracy, English and literacy programmes. The science programme is providing children with opportunities to develop their understanding of some key ideas. At P6, children are enthusiastically carrying out an experiment with seeds from space as part of the national Rocket Science study. In taking forward further improvements to the curriculum, the school needs to simplify approaches to curriculum planning. Staff should ensure that there is planning for progression using the experiences and outcomes in different contexts.

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

Staff are highly committed to improving their work in order to improve outcomes for children. They participate in regular professional learning opportunities to improve aspects of the work of the school. They also take forward aspects of the school improvement plan through working groups. There is currently a strong focus on taking forward the early arithmetical learning programme along with 'Visible Learning'. Teachers are evaluating these programmes to ensure they are improving outcomes for children. Class teachers monitor pupil's progress in English and literacy, and mathematics and numeracy. They meet with promoted staff each term to review the progress of children in their class and discuss appropriate ways of raising attainment. Staff should continue to work on developing assessment to ensure that reliable evidence of progress is available across curricular areas at all stages. The school needs to have a more systematic and shared approach to gathering evidence about what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- The supportive and inclusive ethos where children are happy, polite, settled and enjoy learning together.
- Staff who are keen to improve their professional practice in order to improve children's learning and achievement.
- The flexible approaches taken by staff to meet the range of social, emotional and learning needs of children.
- Highly motivated nursery children who are actively engaged in making decisions about their learning.

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

- Continue to develop the curriculum to provide progression in all aspects of learning.
- Continue to improve approaches to assessing and tracking children's learning, helping them to understand their own progress and achievements.
- Improve approaches to school self-evaluation with a clear focus on improving outcomes for children.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, Midlothian Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Carol McDonald
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/MauricewoodPrimarySchoolMidlothian.asp>

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