

21 May 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

**Rothesay Joint Campus
Argyll and Bute 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 the ethos of the campus as a learning community with improved behaviour, improving approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and how staff support all children and young people to achieve positive outcomes, including through partnership working. 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 joint campus, children and young people get on well with each other and with staff. Most are well-behaved and courteous and enjoy their learning. In the nursery, children are enthusiastic about taking part in group activities. Staff intervene sensitively and carefully to extend their learning. Children share their 'learning journeys' with key workers and their parents. This is helping children to become more involved in discussing their own learning. At the primary and secondary stages, most children and young people are motivated to learn and respond well to staff. They work well on a range of individual and group tasks. When given the opportunity, children and young people enjoy being independent and taking responsibility for their own learning. They have increasing opportunities to assess their own work, reflect on their learning and how they can make progress. A few teachers provide high-quality feedback to children and young people about their learning and progress. This helps children and young people to have a clearer understanding of their next steps in learning. There is scope to make this effective practice more consistent across the campus. Children and young people's learning experiences are enriched through participation in a wide range of school and community events and through educational visits.

Children in the nursery are achieving well. They take on responsibilities related to the nursery's pupil council and campus eco committee. They are learning about sustainability as they work with a local community enterprise, Bute Produce. The nursery has worked closely with parents and the wider community to provide children

with a stimulating and challenging outdoor learning area. At the primary and secondary stages, children and young people develop their confidence and skills through a wide range of activities in the campus and community. They develop their skills in performance by participating in many music and drama events, both locally and in the wider community. Staff provide many activities for children and young people to be active and engaged as global citizens. This includes strong links with Malawi and fundraising for local and national charities. Children and young people achieve individual and team success through being involved in a wide range of sporting activities. They develop leadership skills through roles such as P7 Young Leaders, Sports Leaders and school captains and house captains.

Almost all children in the nursery are making appropriate progress in their development and learning. They are developing their listening skills and are keen to take part in conversations. They are learning to count and can use numbers in their daily activities. Children are learning to take responsibility when preparing snacks and by taking part in activities. A majority of primary children are making satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. At S1-S3, teachers are developing approaches to tracking young people's progress across the curriculum. As part of this work, they need to gather a range of evidence to ensure that all children and young people are making appropriate progress. Overall, in S4 to S6 young people perform well in national examinations. There is scope for improvement in some subjects, particularly at Credit level. Young people have also been successful in gaining awards in Skills for Work courses, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation (ASDAN) awards and Personal Development awards. A high proportion of young people progress to higher and further education.

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

Staff in the nursery know children very well as individuals. They are aware of their progress and interests and plan relevant activities for each child. A wide range of indoor and outdoor activities and resources are available to provide appropriately challenging learning. Staff are clear about their responsibilities for identifying and supporting children with additional needs. Across the campus, teachers plan tasks and activities which meet the needs of most children and young people. Teachers need to share consistently higher expectations for what children and young people can achieve. Staff care about children and young people and are committed to improving how they meet their needs. They are knowledgeable about the children and young people they work with and have developed strong relationships to support their learning. All children and young people with more complex needs have individualised educational programmes (IEPs) with targets that are regularly reviewed, updated and shared with parents and carers. There is scope to ensure that targets match identified needs more closely. Guidance and support teachers provide information to staff on individual children and young people. However, more advice on strategies and approaches to support these individuals is required. We have asked the school to take action to ensure that all staff are well supported in meeting the needs of all children and young people.

Across the broad general education from nursery to S3, staff are working together to develop learning opportunities and courses which provide more active and relevant

learning. At the primary stages, programmes in literacy and English and mathematics and numeracy provide children with opportunities to progress in their learning. Teachers are developing programmes in other subject areas as well as opportunities to learn and make links across subjects. At the secondary stages, courses in S1 and S2 have been developed to provide a broad general education. There have been frequent changes in staffing, and difficulties in filling teaching posts in some subject areas. This has adversely affected the development of more innovative approaches to the curriculum. At S3, young people are beginning to specialise in subjects as they move towards the senior phase. The school are aware of the need to review the curriculum to ensure that young people have continued breadth of learning to the end of S3. The curriculum from S4-S6 provides young people with a range of opportunities for developing their skills and gaining appropriate qualifications. The campus engages very well with a wide range of partners who make positive contributions to children's and young people's learning both in and out of school. Staff should continue to plan approaches for developing children's and young people's skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across their learning.

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

The campus has a good range of approaches for improving its work. Staff are reflective and keen to develop professionally. Teachers and senior staff regularly visit lessons to observe learning and provide feedback. Across the campus, staff engage in professional dialogue to support improvements. They have opportunities to lead improvements through campus working groups. Reviews at the primary stages and in secondary departments use a range of evaluative activities which lead to improvements in learning and teaching. The majority of parents feel the school takes their views into account. A few parents would like the school to work with them more closely to meet the needs of their children. Children's and young people's views are regularly sought and are beginning to inform improvements. We have asked the school to ensure that the campus improvement plan focuses more clearly and consistently on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Since appointment to the Joint Campus, the headteacher has taken forward the vision for One Community, One Campus, One School. She has met the challenge of bringing staff from different stages together as a learning community and providing them with leadership opportunities. Members of the senior leadership team provide valuable support and encouragement to staff. There is a need to review their roles to ensure that their skills and experience are used more effectively.

This inspection found the following key strengths.

- Children's experiences in the nursery.
- Well-behaved and courteous children and young people.
- Partnerships that support the involvement of children and young people in the life and work of their community.
- The care and commitment shown by staff across the campus in building positive relationships with children and young people.

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

- Improve the curriculum to raise the achievement of all children and young people.
- Improve approaches to meeting the needs of all children and young people.
- Provide appropriately challenging learning opportunities across the curriculum.
- Continue to develop improvement planning to focus more clearly on outcomes for children and young people.

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. With support from Argyll and Bute Council and Education Scotland, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements. Our Area Lead Officer will work with Argyll and Bute Council to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. Parents will be informed of the extent to which the school has improved.

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/RothessayJointCampusArgyllandBute.asp>.

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