
To: Education and Children Policy Board

On: 20 August 2015

Report by: Director of Children's Services

**Heading: Education Scotland Inspection of St Paul's Primary School,
Paisley**

1. Summary

- 1.1. St Paul's Primary School in Paisley was inspected by Education Scotland, in February 2015, as part of a national sample of primary education. The letter to parents and quality indicator evaluations, published by Education Scotland on 12 May 2015 are attached as appendices to this report. The letter to parents is also available from the director of children's services or from the Education Scotland website www.educationscotland.gov.uk
- 1.2. The purpose of the school inspection was to evaluate the quality of education. Inspectors assessed the school, with a focus on five quality indicators which were: improvements in performance; the quality of learners' experiences; meeting learning needs; the curriculum; and improvement through self-evaluation.
- 1.3. This was a very positive inspection by Education Scotland and the letter to parents identified four key strengths of the school. These were:
 - confident, courteous, enthusiastic children who discuss and evaluate their learning;
 - strong staff teamwork which supports children's learning and ensures it is stimulating;
 - children's learning experiences which help them develop skills for life and work; and
 - the leadership of the headteacher in creating an ethos where all involved in the school are committed to continuous improvement.

- 1.4. The report identified four areas for further improvement. These were:
- the school should develop further the curriculum;
 - as planned, the school should continue to raise attainment;
 - staff should continue to ensure that children's learning needs are met; and
 - with the support of the Renfrewshire Council, the school should ensure that planned developments continue to be supported.
- 1.5. Education Scotland was confident that the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, it will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, Education Scotland identified an aspect of innovative practice which they would like to explore further. Education Scotland has since worked with the school and Renfrewshire Council to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.
- 1.6. Children's services has an agreed set of procedures for responding to inspection reports. The school and the service will prepare an action plan indicating how they will address the points for action in the report, and share this plan with parents. In addition, the school will be supported in its improvement by children's services. Within two years of the publication of the letter to parents children's services will inform parents of the progress made by the school in addressing the main points for action.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the education and children policy board are asked to note the key strengths and the areas for improvement in the Education Scotland report on St Paul's Primary School.
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3. Background

- 3.1. Education Scotland reports are circulated to the local elected members, staff, parent council members and are made available on-line to the wider parent body. Copies are also sent to local and central libraries.
- 3.2. The report includes four recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will be addressed through an action plan, produced by the school and supported by children's services staff.
- 3.3. Progress on the action plan will be monitored by children's services staff on a proportionate basis. A report will be prepared within two years of the original inspection, detailing the progress made in implementing the action plan. This report will be made available to parents.
- 3.4. Children's services welcomes the process of audit undertaken by Education Scotland as supportive to continuous improvement in Renfrewshire schools. The inspection report will be used by the school and the service in the context of supporting and developing the quality of educational provision.

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

None.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Children and Young People

- High standards of education provision ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society.

Community Care, Health and Well-being

- By providing an environment which encourages care, welfare and development, establishments play a crucial role in developing children and young people so that they become responsible citizens. The school and nursery's success in promoting healthy lifestyles is evaluated as part of the quality assurance process.

Empowering our Communities

- High standards of education provision ensure that children and young people are given the best start in life so that they promote and contribute to a more prosperous, fairer society.

Greener

- Participation in the eco-schools programme encourages young people to become environmentally aware.

Jobs and the Economy

- The quality assurance process contributes to our young people becoming successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

4. Legal Implications

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.

5. Property/Assets Implications

None.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only.

8. Health and Safety Implications

None.

9. Procurement Implications

None.

10. Risk Implications

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

List of Background Papers

(a) None.

Children's Services

TMcE/AK/GMcK/LG

5 August 2015

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12 May 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

**St Paul's Primary School
Renfrewshire 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 many changes that have taken place. We also looked at how children's views are being used to improve the school. 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 the communication unit, all children are very well behaved, and enjoy their learning. In the communication unit, they are learning successfully through a variety of contexts which increase their confidence and knowledge. At the primary stages, almost all children are actively engaged and are very interested in what they are learning. They work very well in pairs and groups when discussing an activity or an answer. They help each other frequently to complete tasks and solve problems, for example when carrying out projects or investigations. Almost all children are very well focussed when working independently. All children contribute to lessons with confidence and enthusiasm and are taking responsibility for their own learning. As a result, they are becoming independent learners and are developing further their thinking skills. Staff use a range of creative teaching approaches to make learning more stimulating. They make learning more relevant for children through effective use of real-life contexts. Children feel their views are sought and acted upon and enjoy being involved in making decisions about their learning.

Across the school and communication unit, children have gained awards for various activities. They have recently gained their first green flag from Eco-Schools Scotland. The school has also achieved Fairtrade status and children participate enthusiastically in Fairtrade events. Children are gaining success in sports and musical activities, such as athletics and dancing. Through all of these and other similar activities, children are becoming more confident and developing both their citizenship and leadership skills. Across the school, children are developing their literacy and numeracy skills well. At all stages, children enjoy reading and can speak knowledgeably about the different authors they have read. Following changes to teaching approaches, children's writing skills are improving and their vocabulary is extending well. At P1 and P2, children use songs and routines to reinforce their learning. The school should continue to develop its approaches to teaching reading and writing, with the aim of improving children's literacy skills. Children are learning successfully the purpose of mathematics through activities linked to everyday

experiences and contexts and are making suitable progress. The school should develop further children's skills in solving mathematical problems using a range of contexts. The school needs to continue to build on the strong start to improving children's attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. The school has plans in place to address this aspect.

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

Across the school and the communication unit, staff and children work very well together. In the communication unit, tasks and activities provide children with appropriate levels of challenge. Staff in the unit have developed different activities that effectively support children in their learning. Across the primary stages, staff provide children with tasks that are well matched to the learning needs of most children. Staff should continue to plan tasks and activities that provide children with suitable levels of challenge. Class teachers and support staff work very well together to meet children's learning needs. The school works closely with parents, keeping them informed of their child's learning needs and progress. It works effectively with a range of external partners and together they are supporting children successfully in their learning. The school should continue to review the progress of children requiring support in their learning to ensure that their targets are achievable.

Across the school and the communications unit, staff are working confidently with Curriculum for Excellence. The curriculum links closely with the school's aims and its Gospel values. In a short space of time, teachers have reviewed and developed most areas of the curriculum, as well as sharing ideas and resources. They have refreshed their planning approaches so that they are now more streamlined and more effective in delivering the curriculum. For example, they have produced a variety of topics that are exciting and help children apply their knowledge and skills across different curricular areas. As a result, children are experiencing a broad and balanced curriculum and the school has plans to further develop the curriculum. The school supports children well as they move from nursery to P1. Arrangements to support children when they move from P7 to St Andrew's Academy are very well organised and effective. The school should continue to develop its curricular links with its nurseries, and St Andrew's Academy to ensure children make suitable progress as they move from stage to stage.

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

The headteacher has a very strong and clear vision of continuous improvement for the school. The headteacher and the depute headteacher have successfully established a team approach to self-evaluation which enables teachers and children to lead improvements. The senior leadership team have developed an ethos where staff are constantly evaluating and improving their work. The depute headteacher and principal teacher provide the headteacher with valuable support, and staff with advice and guidance on developing the curriculum. As a management team, they provide helpful feedback to staff about how they could improve children's learning experiences. The senior leadership team and teachers frequently ask children about their learning and use children's suggestions to improve the school further. Staff are very reflective practitioners and participate regularly in a variety of professional learning opportunities to improve their teaching approaches. Staff are tracking and monitoring children's performance continuously and in detail, to ensure that children are making suitable progress in their learning. The additional support by Renfrewshire Council over the past year has helped the school improve and we would ask that this level of support be continued. Parents are regularly consulted through questionnaires and the Parent Council. The headteacher has made improvements as a result of their comments.

This inspection found the following key strengths:

- Confident, courteous, enthusiastic children who discuss and evaluate their learning.
- Strong staff teamwork which supports children's learning and ensures it is stimulating.
- Children's learning experiences which help them develop skills for life and work.
- The leadership of the headteacher in creating an ethos where all involved in the school are committed to continuous improvement.

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

- The school should develop further the curriculum.
- As planned, the school should continue to raise attainment.
- Staff should continue to ensure that children's learning needs are met.
- With the support of the Renfrewshire Council, the school should ensure that planned developments continue to be supported.

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 evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified an aspect of innovative practice which we would like to explore further. We shall work with the school and Renfrewshire Council to record the innovative practice and share it more widely.

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Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school?*¹. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for **St Paul's Primary School**.

Improvements in performance	good
Learners' experiences	very good
Meeting learning needs	good

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

The curriculum	good
Improvement through self-evaluation	very good