

28 January 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

**St Andrew's RC Primary School and Nursery Class  
Dundee City Council**

In October 2012, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff. We heard from the acting headteacher and other staff how the school has continued to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the acting headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out how well children are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

**How well do children learn and achieve?**

Children are now proud to be at St Andrew's RC Primary School. They contribute effectively to the wider life of the school, and are learning well. Children in the nursery play very well together and enjoy the range of activities provided within the playroom and outdoors. Across the primary stages, the quality of children's learning experiences has improved significantly. Almost all children are well-behaved, motivated and enthusiastic learners. They now show respect towards one another and work well together. They enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers and told us that the school is a much calmer and happier place to be. Children now engage more confidently in class and group discussions, listening attentively to each other's views and opinions. Teachers have improved the ways in which they involve children in planning and evaluating their learning. Children now receive much better feedback on their learning but would still benefit from a more consistent approach to this by teachers across the school. At all stages, children have a greater say in decisions that affect how and what they learn as well as those relating to the life and work of the school. They continue to take on responsibilities willingly and their increasing confidence is supporting them to achieve personal success within and beyond the school. These achievements have been recognised at local and national level, including the highly successful 'Honeybee' project. Children work very closely with the local parish and community and now participate confidently in a range of local events.

Overall, children are now making much better progress and achieving well across all aspects of their learning. At all stages, the school has a much clearer view of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and their health and wellbeing. Senior managers now discuss children's progress and attainment with teachers more

regularly. In the nursery, children continue to make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The nursery and P1 'Learning Together' sessions support children to settle well into their P1 class and build well on their prior learning and achievements. Improved approaches to planning learning and teaching are having a positive impact on children's attainment in reading and writing. At P5 to P7, literacy circles are being used well to improve children's reading skills. Children in P6 consulted with their peers to choose books for the library and increase interest in reading for pleasure. Children's listening and talking skills are greatly improved as evidenced at a whole-school assembly and through presentations made to wider audiences outwith the school. Teachers should continue to focus on improving children's writing skills across their learning. Overall, children are more fluent and skilled in their mental and written mathematical calculations. They are now making very good progress in developing their understanding of aspects of health and wellbeing. Weekly food and nutrition lessons and a greater range of sporting activities support children well to make healthy choices and lead a healthy lifestyle.

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

Across the school, children are supported to develop and learn well. Nursery staff continue to plan relevant activities related to children's interests and needs. At the primary stages, teachers now begin lessons effectively, providing clear explanations which include discussions of previous learning. Staff plan tasks and activities at the right level of difficulty for most children. The pace of learning in some lessons is still not brisk enough to ensure good progress is being made. Overall, the school has significantly improved its arrangements for assisting children with additional support needs. The depute headteacher now monitors children's progress more closely to ensure learning needs are being met. Together with class teachers, support staff now provide appropriate assistance to children who need it. Children benefit from a more balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum developed in line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff are now linking together different areas of learning so that learning makes more sense to the children. The school has established very productive links with a range of partners to enhance children's learning and skills for life and work. Activities delivered by staff at the local college are raising children's aspirations in important areas of the curriculum such as science and technology. Links with local businesses are helping to develop children's enterprising and problem-solving skills. Staff have continued to improve the effective arrangements in place for children starting school at P1. Children's progress in learning is improving as teachers share their skills and knowledge to develop the curriculum from nursery to P7. The P7 healthy transitions programme delivered by S2 pupils from the associated secondary school supports children well to move into S1 with confidence.

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

The school has achieved a clear sense of common purpose and direction under the leadership of the acting headteacher. She is ably supported by the recently-appointed depute headteacher and principal teacher. Together, they provide strong leadership, setting high ambitions and expectations for children's achievements. The acting headteacher has put in place a number of key processes for engaging staff in continuously improving the school. These approaches are now

more rigorous and systematic. Senior managers regularly visit classes to evaluate learning and give helpful feedback to staff. They recognise the need to continue to build on approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress across all areas of learning. Staff are increasingly taking on leadership roles including through their 'Professional Pals' learning, teaching and assessment groups. Overall, there is a much stronger ethos of professional learning and improvement. Increasing numbers of children are making valuable contributions to leadership in the school and carry out these roles effectively. The children feel, justifiably, that their views and opinions are sought and acted upon. The Parent Council continues to support the school well. Parents worked closely with teachers to review the school's approach to homework.

### **What happens next?**

Overall, the school has made significant progress in improving the quality of education. The acting headteacher has led the school well through the many challenges faced, particularly in relation to the high turnover of staff. Under her leadership, staff are continuing to improve the curriculum and the quality of learning, teaching and attainment. Stronger leadership and teamwork are supporting the school to realise its renewed vision for the children of St Andrew's RC Primary School. In sustaining and securing further improvement, Dundee City Council should continue to work with the school to create stability in staffing.

As a result of the clear evidence of improvement, 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, Dundee City Council will inform parents about the school's progress.

Fiona Robertson  
HM Inspector

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.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0141 282 5000, or e-mail: [complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.