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Dear Parent/Carer

**St Pius' RC Primary School
Dundee City Council**

Recently, as you may know, my colleagues and I visited and inspected your child's school. Throughout our visit, we talked to many parents and children and we worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We wanted to find out how well children were learning and achieving and how well the school supported 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 how well it was developing the curriculum and staff training. We also looked at the involvement of partners in the life of the school. As a result, we were able to find out how good the school was at improving children's education. I would now like to tell you what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Overall, your children are learning well. They are happy, respectful, well behaved and interested in learning. They feel, quite rightly, safe and well cared for. They work purposefully in almost all lessons either individually or with a partner. All children enjoy working in groups. They need more planned opportunities for working together on shared tasks. Children feel valued and express their views which are taken into account when planning topic work. In most lessons, children are clear about the focus of their learning and how they will know whether they have been successful. Children respond well to the nine o'clock challenges each day and as a result settle into their work quickly. They need more specific feedback from staff about their strengths and how they can improve their learning.

Many children are achieving well but some could be doing better. They all participate in at least one out-of-class activity session each week to develop personal and social skills. Almost all children are benefiting from after school sport sessions on a weekly basis. This helps them to be more physically active and work more effectively with others both in and out of class. Children are developing their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Overall, whilst they are making satisfactory progress in English language and mathematics, many could be doing better. Almost all children listen and talk well in groups. Those at the early stages are making a good start to their reading and writing. This start needs to be built on more effectively as they progress through the school. Children in the upper school are being helped by the 'reading detectives' approach to English language and are making satisfactory progress in both their reading and writing. Children at the early stages are making a good start to their early number work. They can recognise, work confidently with and add numbers within ten. Children in the middle stages have a good understanding of shapes and their properties but are less confident with mental calculations including those involving time.

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Children at almost all stages need more frequent opportunities for mental mathematics and to problem solve in practical situations. Most children in the upper stages show confidence when working with decimals, fractions and percentages but need more opportunities to display and interpret data. They need to use information and communications technology (ICT) more often to support their learning in mathematics. At all stages, children are developing their health and wellbeing appropriately.

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

The school supports children well. In all lessons a good range of tasks keep children actively involved. In a few lessons, tasks are planned with sufficient difficulty to meet the needs of all learners. Overall, though, staff need to increase challenge for all and raise expectations. All staff meet the care and welfare needs of all children very well. Children requiring additional help are being very well supported. Support for learning staff work very effectively with teachers, children and other agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to ensure children make appropriate progress. Children experience a broad and well balanced curriculum with appropriate attention to all subject areas. Staff have recently involved children to improve approaches to planning for more relevant learning experiences. Children are progressing their skills well in ICT. A visiting specialist enriches children's skills in music. Staff are improving the ways they ensure progress in children's knowledge and skills in dance, drama and science. The school works well with partners including Dundee University and College to support children's health and wellbeing. Curricular links with St. Paul's Secondary School are progressing well, helping children to build more effectively on their prior learning. Curricular programmes in technology and art and design need further development and children need more planned opportunities to develop their understanding in exploring what it means to be a global citizen.

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

We are confident that the school can continue to improve the quality of its work. Staff are willing to share good practice and learn from each other. All staff are involved in leading or serving on whole school improvement groups and most have led staff development sessions such as on blogging and assessment. All staff and some children lead activities out of class to enhance children's achievements. Staff have introduced new ways of tracking children's progress. This work is at an early stage of development but there are some signs emerging that it is bringing about positive changes in children's learning and achievement. Staff have responded well to these improved approaches. The headteacher has put in place broad and ambitious plans for taking forward the school's work and has shared these with parents. Working alongside staff, he has led new developments very effectively and created a considerable momentum for ongoing improvement. He will need to continue to adapt the improvement plans and strategies more specifically to the school's needs as it improves.

This inspection of your school found the following key strengths.

- Children who are well behaved, respectful and interested in learning.
- Relationships and levels of pastoral care creating a positive and encouraging environment for learning.
- Staff teamwork in improving learning and extending children's achievements.
- Partnerships particularly with parents and the Church to support children's progress.
- The good start made by the headteacher in improving the work of the school.

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

- Improve levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy by planning more challenging tasks and activities.
- Improve the quality and consistency of feedback to children about their progress and what they need to do to improve.
- Take forward existing plans for developing the curriculum and tracking children's progress.
- Continue to implement existing approaches to evaluating the school's work including the sharing and adopting of good practice.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

Given the recent improvements 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. The local authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

Donald A. Macleod
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.hmie.gov.uk/ViewEstablishment.aspx?id=6677&type=2>.

Please contact us if you want to know how to get the report in a different format, for example, in a translation. You can contact us at enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us at BMCT, Education Scotland, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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