

**REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12 FEBRUARY 2014**

**REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND CONTINUED INSPECTION OF ST ANDREW'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**REPORT NO: 67-2014**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland Continued Inspection Visit of St Andrew's RC Primary School

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Director of Education to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement contained in the report.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

## **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

4.1 St Andrew's RC Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMI) in June 2012. They published a report on their findings on 30 October 2012. HMI indicated in the report that St Andrew's RC Primary School and Nursery Class needed additional support and more time to make the necessary improvements. Therefore, it was their intention to engage in an interim support visit, work alongside the local authority and maintain contact to monitor progress. It was also their intention to return to evaluate progress in improving provision within one year of the publication date of the report. HMI would report back to parents on the progress made since the original inspection. This visit was carried out in November 2013 and Education Scotland published a report of this visit on 28 January 2014.

4.2 The following areas for action were agreed with the school and education authority at the time of the original inspection:

- Raise children's attainment across all aspects of their learning
- Ensure approaches to support for learning meet the needs of all children
- Improve the curriculum in line with the Curriculum for Excellence
- Introduce effective approaches to self-evaluation which will improve the quality of education, including arrangements for tracking children's progress.

- 4.3 Education Scotland have indicated in the report that the school has made very good progress in each of the areas identified. Some of the important areas of progress are listed below:
- Quality of children's learning experiences has improved significantly
  - Children are now proud to be at St Andrew's RC School and almost all are well behaved, motivated and enthusiastic learners.
  - School is much calmer and happier
  - Improved approaches to involving children in planning and evaluating learning.
  - 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 school.
  - Achievements recognised at local and national level e.g. "Honey Bee" Project
  - Improved transitions across the school e.g. "Learning Together" sessions
  - Improved approaches to planning learning and teaching
  - Improved listening and talking skills
  - Children are more skilled in mental calculations and written mathematics
  - Very good progress in developing understanding of health and well-being.
  - Significant improvement in arrangements to support children with additional support needs.
  - Very productive links with a range of partners to enhance children's learning and skills for life and work e.g. Dundee & Angus College
  - School now has a clear sense of common purpose and direction
  - Strong leadership in place, setting high expectations and ambitions
  - Key processes in place to engage staff in continuous school improvement, which are rigorous and systematic.
  - Increased leadership among staff contributing to a much stronger ethos of professional learning and development
  - Supportive Parent Council
  - Significant progress in improving quality of education, with stronger leadership and teamwork supporting the school to realise its renewed vision for St Andrew's RC School
  - No further visits from Education Scotland with regard to this inspection.
- 4.4 Education Scotland as well as indicating in the report that very good progress has been made since their last visit, identified next steps to continue improvements across the school.. Some of the important areas for continued development are listed below:
- Consistency across all classes with regard to pace of learning and quality of feedback to children
  - Continue to focus on improving children's writing skills across their learning
  - Continue to build on approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress of learning
  - DCC should continue to work with the school to create stability in staffing.
- 4.5 The school and authority have worked closely together to progress the action points identified by HMI.
- 4.6 Overall this is a very positive report that indicates the very good progress that has been made by the school in the last 16 months since the original inspection. 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, HMI will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. As part of its arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress.

**5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environment assessment, anti-poverty and equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues.

**6.0 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Democratic and Legal Services and the school's Head Teacher.

**7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

Michael Wood  
Director of Education

January 2014

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.