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SANDHEAD-DRUMMORE PRIMARY\LET001-CG\EB\RL

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Education Services

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30 Edinburgh Road
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To:

**All Parents and Carers of Pupils at
Sandhead & Drummore Primaries**

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Dear Parent / Carer

**REPORT ON PROGRESS OF SANDHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY CLASS
& DRUMMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY CLASS SINCE EDUCATION
SCOTLAND'S INSPECTION REPORT OF 25 MARCH 2014**

Sandhead & Drummore Primary Schools & Sandhead Primary's Nursery Class were inspected by Education Scotland in September 2011. The inspection focussed on: 1) How well children learn and achieve; 2) How well the school supports children to develop and learn and 3) How well the school improves the quality of its work. Inspectors engaged the schools in continuing engagement visits in November 2012 and January 2014. Education Scotland disengaged following this last visit, as a result of significant progress made by the school.

As part of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Education Services' arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of education, I am writing to let you know how the school has continued to improve since Education Scotland's report of 25 March 2014.

Developing the Curriculum

Since the inspection very good progress has been made in developing the curriculum. Staff across both partner schools have had the opportunity to work together to develop curriculum structures, which are now in place for the eight curriculum areas. All teachers use the school network to access planning tools which support the curriculum, providing more engaging learning experiences for children. New planning formats clearly link Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes with expected learning intentions and success criteria. These set high expectations and provide clear pathways of progression from early, through first and into second level of Curriculum for Excellence.

A three year rolling programme of interdisciplinary learning for science, social subjects, technologies and health & wellbeing builds successfully on the children's prior learning and

ensures coherence, progression and depth of learning. Across both schools, children meet the same interdisciplinary themes within the same year, allowing for greater opportunities for both pupils and staff to work collaboratively across the South Rhins partnership. Work is continuing across the schools to further develop the Expressive Arts and Religious & Moral Education curriculum into a similar format.

The schools' approach to building the curriculum has been seen as good practice and shared at local and national level. Teachers from both schools contribute to Dumfries and Galloway's curriculum development groups. The Head Teacher is a member of the Building your Curriculum Leads Group, and co-facilitates development within the Broad General Education for Science.

Meeting Children's Needs

Active learning approaches continue to develop across both schools. Children contribute to planning learning experiences with staff. These are delivered at a suitable pace and meet the needs of all learners. Effective questioning continues to develop well across both schools.

The schools have been building strong links with a number of local groups and organisations, including Logan Botanical Gardens and RSPB Mull of Galloway Reserve, to ensure learning is active and relevant. Outdoor Learning continues to develop within South Rhins Primary Schools. Both schools have been involved in the Beach School Project and all school staff are now taking these ideas forward in their own teaching and when planning pupils' learning experiences.

Children now have increased opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum. Computers, netbooks, interactive whiteboards and digital cameras are used consistently across the schools to support learning in each classroom. Observations and monitoring show these are used daily. The partnership has recently purchased green screen technology which will further enhance the ICT provision within the schools.

Additional Support for Learning Pupil Support Plans are fully implemented and communicated to all staff, as appropriate. Plans are monitored to ensure expectations are met, and are reviewed and evaluated regularly. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities for supporting children's learning. Regular consultation continues to take place between class teachers, the head teacher and Additional Support for Learning staff to ensure the schools continue to meet the needs of all learners.

Children's Engagement in Their Learning

Children's engagement in learning is enhanced through teachers' use of formative assessment approaches. Almost all lessons observed included clear learning intentions and success criteria. Learning conversations between the learner and teacher take place daily. In Literacy and English, Numeracy and Mathematics, children are much clearer about their strengths and next steps in learning. All staff have improved the quality of feedback they give to children about their learning. This supports children to be more confident in describing what they are learning and the skills they are using. The schools

have further developed these learning conversations to involve parents in the process and have further developed approaches to 'Parents Night' and reporting to parents.

Across both schools staff, pupils and parents are much more familiar with the Personal Learning Planning process. All children from Nursery through to Primary 7 now have a reflection folder which travels between home and school on a regular basis. Teachers and learners are regularly recording learning in these folders, encouraging the children to be much more aware of what they are learning. As a result, children are more able to talk about their progress. The reflection folders link closely to the school curriculum overviews, teachers' planning and the newly developed monitoring and tracking systems. Profiles have been completed by all Primary 7 pupils. The evidence from their school reflection folders proved very useful to the children as they worked on these.

Attainment and Achievement in Literacy and English Language and Numeracy and Mathematics

Across both schools children's understanding of mathematics has improved and attainment is increasing. Children's skills in mental calculations involving number are more accurate. New active maths materials have been introduced and are having a positive impact on the learner's experiences.

The schools have introduced new approaches to teaching writing and this is having a positive impact on attainment. Children now create a broader range of texts across different areas of learning. More children write at length. Across both schools children are engaging with a broader range of texts, including novels and reports on the internet. They are confident in reading information contained in websites, making notes and then using their notes to create texts.

Tracking systems continue to develop across both schools. A greater range of data is now being used consistently. This is providing additional evidence to inform progress and attainment. The Headteacher meets with staff to discuss information from standardised assessments and ongoing classroom assessment to help ensure children are making progress in learning. Information from assessments and teachers' professional judgement are used to identify next steps and to improve learning and teaching.

The commitment of staff and the effective leadership across both schools have ensured very good progress in addressing the Education Scotland's recommendations. The schools continue to demonstrate significant capacity for improvement. I congratulate all the staff and children, as well as parents and the wider school community, on the very good progress made over the last year.

Yours sincerely

Colin Grant
Director of Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning