

Your Ref:

Our Ref: DISTRICT\INFO\QI\INDICES\ES\REPORTS\
STEWARTRY\GELSTON PRIMARY\LET001-GB\EB\RL

7 February 2018

Children, Young People & Lifelong Learning

122-124 Irish Street

Dumfries

DG1 2PB

To:

**All Parents and Carers of Pupils at
Gelston Primary School**

Any enquiries please contact

Gillian Brydson

Direct Dial: 01387 260432

E-mail: gillian.brydson@dumgal.gov.uk

Dear Parent / Carer

LETTER REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF GELSTON SCHOOL SINCE EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT OF 30 AUGUST 2016

Gelston School was inspected by Education Scotland in May 2016. 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. Education Scotland awarded Gelston School evaluations of 'Good' for Improvements in performance, learners' experiences and meeting learners' needs. Improvements through self-evaluation and the curriculum were both awarded an evaluation of 'Satisfactory'. As part of the quality reporting arrangements of Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning, Dumfries and Galloway Council, I am writing to inform you of the progress made by Gelston Primary School since the publication of the Education Scotland report in August 2017. The report highlighted two main aspects for development. This letter sets out actions taken by the school in addressing these points.

Develop the curriculum further to reflect Curriculum for Excellence.

The wider staff team at Gelston have updated the Inter-Disciplinary Learning programme; topic and curriculum bundles are reflective of the school community and local area. Across the partnership, staff ensure that topics are relevant and that pupils have better opportunities to gain an understanding of their local environment. Links to the world of work are now more explicit and will continue as the school naturally expands its community links. The publication of Education Scotland's Assessment Benchmarks has increased staff confidence in assessment and moderation to support learner progress. Staff will now work to review curriculum planners to ensure that standards are reflective of the benchmarks, and will participate in a wider range of moderation activities.

The continued roll out of Primary Language Learning has embedded Modern Languages across the school. The Headteacher provided French input specifically for the Primary 7 pupils to ensure that they had covered the areas noted in the new Dumfries and Galloway Framework. This session, taster training in German will also be available.

A new mental maths programme has been developed, with clear progression pathways to raise attainment for all learners. The Principal Teacher attended monthly numeracy meetings at Castle Douglas High School, providing the opportunity to share ideas, planning and develop teaching materials across the wider cluster.

Sharing the learning between schools has strengthened the partnership between pupils, staff, parents and the communities. This will continue to build and develop over the school year.

Develop clear self-evaluation tracking systems to support further improvement in attainment and achievement.

A calendar of self-evaluation activities for the year ahead has been established. Focussed, classroom monitoring through Headteacher and peer visits takes place within the school and across the partnership, ensuring a continued focus on learning and teaching.

Termly attainment and achievement meetings take place where staff analyse data and identify effective strategies to support learning. Appropriate interventions are implemented to ensure continued progression in learning for all pupils.

Pupils, in partnership with their teacher, reflect on their own learning and can identify their strengths and next steps. Learning targets are set and reviewed regularly. A new reporting format has been introduced and has been received positively by the parent forum. Parental engagement will be further developed through a series of planned learning conversations throughout the year.

The School Improvement Plan is shared with parents, who are regularly informed of progress through Head Teacher updates at Parent Council meetings. There are regular newsletters that also provide a vehicle for communication with parents and carers.

Newsletters include the opportunities for parents to evaluate the work of the school and feedback is shared with the parents and the wider staff team.

I am confident that Gelston Primary School continues to demonstrate capacity for future improvement. This is the result of the hard work and commitment of the staff team, pupils and parents. Many of the development recommendations from the inspection were to further build upon secure and effective existing practice. The school forms part of a wider partnership where staff and pupils benefit from established collaborative approaches, aimed at delivering excellent learning and teaching. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on their progress over the last year.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Brydson
Head of Education