

18 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Braehead Primary School and Early Years Centre (ELC), we said that we would engage further with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Braehead Primary School and ELC. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Braehead Primary School and ELC has been affected by COVID-19 through long periods of isolation for staff, children and parents over the last 18 months. Parents we spoke to told us that overall, the headteacher and staff worked hard to support children and their families during this time. They speak very positively about the support the headteacher and the staff team provided during periods of remote learning. The school hub was well attended and provided a safe base for children to learn alongside their friends and work with a variety of teachers. Staff used digital technology very well to provide online learning for children and regular wellbeing check-ins. The school provided children with digital devices and supported parents and children in using these effectively. Commendably, staff offered practical assistance to families such as food boxes and paper copies of learning materials, and distributed these to homes. Upon children's return to in-school learning, senior leaders and staff took significant steps to address children's wellbeing needs. As a result, they provide a nurturing environment to help children flourish and learn.

Staff have taken positive steps to address the impact of the pandemic on children's attainment. They are making effective use of a range of assessments to identify gaps in learning to ensure children continue to make progress. Support assistants provide helpful support to individual children. All staff take actions to support children's wellbeing needs and provide a nurturing environment to help them flourish and learn.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The drive and passion of the headteacher and senior leadership team support staff, children and families in Braehead Primary very well. The appointment of a permanent headteacher, a deputy headteacher and a principal teacher bring stability to the school. Together, they provide strong leadership and clear guidance to manage change well. They are highly valued by staff, children and their families. All staff are clear about the aims of the school and are focused on improving outcomes for children. The deputy head and the senior team in the ELC provide practitioners with very clear direction and support. They effectively support staff

to continue to improve approaches to the learning environment, planning and assessing children's progress.

All staff are active in planning, implementing and evaluating change. The leadership team are effective in promoting a culture which involves staff, children and parents in making decisions about school improvement. Staff now make it a priority to seek the views of children and parents and have introduced a calendar of activities to gather regularly feedback about the work of the school. Parents that we spoke to report that communication across the school has improved significantly since the last visit. Parents are now more involved in their child's learning and they feel part of the school community. They review their child's progress using online profiles and class blogs.

Children are now more involved in decision making across the school and are more active in their learning. Children now have more opportunities to work in groups, pairs and independently on tasks and activities in classes. Children report they find their learning enjoyable and most children are engaged in their learning. They are provided with opportunities to use digital devices during lessons, which promotes their independent learning skills. A few children who require support to remain on task are well-supported by classroom assistants. Staff have continued to implement the school's positive behaviour policy. As a result children are now more settled in class and are ready to learn. They have developed well their approaches to creating a nurturing school to help meet children's wellbeing needs.

In the ELC, staff provide children with opportunities across a wide range of learning, including outdoors. In P1, children learn through play, which is more suitable to their age and stage of development. Children access all areas of learning through motivating well-planned play experiences. Across the school, teachers provide learning experiences which are now more suited to children's needs. As a result, there have been improvements in the pace and level of difficulty of planned learning. Staff should now build on the good start they have made and continue to develop their skills in delivering consistently high quality lessons.

The curriculum now provides children with experiences across a broad range of learning. Staff now provide children with learning opportunities which better meet their needs and are more relevant to their local context. New literacy and numeracy planning pathways enable staff to plan for children to learn key skills and knowledge as they move from stage to stage. Children reflect on their learning in discussion with their teachers. This is helping them to understand where they are in their learning. They set targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children enjoy sharing their learning targets with their parents using an online platform and parents have good opportunities to share in their child's learning.

Staff now use an increased range of methods to plan and monitor children's progress in learning. As a result, they now have a more accurate picture of where children are in their learning and can more effectively use assessment information to identify when children have achieved a level. Staff in the ELC have created useful online profiles that record children's journey in their learning, which they share with parents. They should now build on this good work to improve the ongoing in class assessment. The leadership team have improved how they capture children's attainment at key points in the year. Together with staff they now track and monitor children's work more regularly. This helps staff to support children build on their

learning as they move through the school. As a result, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is beginning to improve.

What happens next?

Understandably, Braehead Primary School and ELC has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. South Ayrshire Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Helen Mulholland
HM Inspector