

9 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2018, HM Inspectors published a letter on Locharbriggs Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dumfries and Galloway Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Build on the promising start to improving the health and wellbeing of the whole school community. Develop meaningful ways for staff to support children's understanding of their own health and wellbeing. Continue to promote respect and develop an ethos of positive relationships with everyone feeling valued and their voices heard.

The nursery class and school have made very good progress in improving health and wellbeing.

As part of the whole school community, the nursery class continues to provide a nurturing environment where the wellbeing of children and families is central to its day-to-day work. Children are happy and confident in the setting. They are developing good self-help skills and take increasing responsibility for their own safety. Practitioners are promoting and nurturing emotional wellbeing effectively. This builds children's self-confidence and meets their social needs. Children are learning to express their feelings. Staff listen to and take forward children's opinions and thoughts. Practitioners are focusing attention on the language of wellbeing in their everyday work. As a result, children are developing an awareness of what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Parents feel very welcome in the nursery and are actively encouraged to become involved in a variety of ways, for example stay and play sessions.

The school is a welcoming environment where children and their families are supported well. The headteacher is highly effective in his role as a leader of change and improvement across the school. He has gained the respect of the local community in a short time. Children, staff and parents appreciate his approachability and visibility around the school. Children are proud to identify with the school and all wear the new school uniform. Staff work closely together and morale is high. The headteacher and staff collaborate well with the wider community to ensure the best outcomes for children and their future lives. Family challenge events support parental engagement in wellbeing and expressive arts. Local volunteers, including parents, support the work of the school regularly and enhance children's learning experiences.

The school places a high emphasis on improving wellbeing. The headteacher and staff are implementing a wellbeing strategy effectively. As part of this strategy, the vision, values and aims of the school have been refreshed in consultation with children, parents and staff. The

refresh identifies five key values of wellbeing, teamwork, innovation, buzz and individuality. Children discuss these meaningful values together with enthusiasm. As a result, relationships across the school are highly positive and based strongly on mutual respect. Children are developing confidence and know how to get help if they need it. The headteacher and staff are implementing new approaches to positive behaviour very successfully. They make effective use of approaches to resolving difficulties and all children report that they feel listened to. Children's achievements are celebrated and a 'kindness award' is valued. The older children are proud of being good role models for the younger children in the school.

Improve leadership at all levels and approaches to self-evaluation that raise attainment. Improve the monitoring and tracking of all children including those with additional support needs in the nursery and across the primary classes.

The nursery class and school have made good progress in improving approaches to self-evaluation and leadership at all levels. Staff have improved approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress.

In the nursery class, practitioners are keen to continue to develop the setting. They have opportunities to lead identified improvement priorities. Practitioners value guidance and support to ensure that new developments are introduced at an appropriate pace and sustained. They are reflecting more confidently on what is working well and what needs to improve. Practitioners should give children greater responsibility in leading further change.

Practitioners are improving approaches to monitor and track children's progress across key aspects of their learning. They are implementing a system to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They should now develop further the progression ladders to make all children's progress across learning clearer. Practitioners create simple learning targets for children. A few children are aware of their learning targets and know what they have to do to achieve success. Practitioners should continue to develop a robust tracking system which gives a clear overview of children's progress across key aspects of their learning and development.

The headteacher's approaches to self-evaluation outline clearly the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Committed staff, engaged parents and active partners support the work of the school effectively. This is resulting in a significant and positive pace of change. Staff and parents value the headteacher's commitment to school improvement highly. Teachers take new responsibilities for leading aspects of school improvement. They plan initiatives to raise attainment, achievement and wellbeing of children. The headteacher should continue to build on parental involvement in improvement planning.

The quality of children's learning is increasing and shows promising signs of leading to improved attainment and achievements. The principal teacher and teachers monitor and track progress effectively. They meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss the progress of all children, including those with additional support needs. As a result, teachers take responsibility for their own classes and support targeted group work in literacy and numeracy well. Learning assistants support children's learning effectively. The headteacher makes appropriate use of Pupil Equity Funding to target support in numeracy.

Children are developing leadership skills through a number of school committees and action groups. They lead a number of pupil surveys in the school and gather data for the school's self-evaluation processes. Children listen and respond to one another respectfully. Children are developing skills for learning, life and work through their participation in these committees and action groups.

Continue to develop high quality learning and teaching. Ensure children in the nursery lead their learning and that it takes account of their needs and interests. In addition, focus on developing all children's skills as responsible citizens.

Good progress has been made across the nursery class and school to improve the quality of learning and teaching to take account of children's needs and interests.

In the nursery class, practitioners have a good understanding of how children develop and learn. Their nurturing relationships help children to feel safe and secure. Children have time and space to develop their interests through play. The learning environment provides a good range of opportunities for children to initiate and lead their learning. Practitioners interact well with children, sustaining their interest in activities. Practitioners should develop their use of different types of questioning to extend further children's thinking. Children benefit from real-life learning contexts through partnership working.

Practitioners have refreshed approaches to planning to ensure a more responsive approach. They have extended their use of floorbooks to allow children to be more involved in planning their own learning. Practitioners listen attentively and take children's interests and ideas into account when planning learning experiences. Children's voice is evident in floorbooks, which outline learning both indoors and outdoors. There is potential for children to be even more involved in planning their next steps in learning. This will help children to understand themselves better as learners and the progress they are making.

The nursery has its own enclosed outdoor learning area. Practitioners have a sound understanding of what quality outdoor learning involves including the promotion of creativity and problem-solving skills. Recent developments ensure there are highly stimulating areas to encourage children to be imaginative, investigative and curious through play. Children enjoy free-flow access to outdoor learning.

Approaches to learning and teaching are improving, including giving appropriate feedback and questioning. Staff use assessment well to plan learning that meets children's needs. Children are active participants in leading initiatives in their school. They are increasingly taking responsibility for themselves and supporting others. Children support the local community by participating in events such as Armistice Day and visiting residents of a care home.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dumfries and Galloway Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Kirsty Macnab
HM Inspector