

18 September 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

**Clarkston Primary School and Nursery Class
North Lanarkshire Council**

In August 2017, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and North Lanarkshire 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 and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's/young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Develop a more strategic approach to managing change, informed through reliable evidence based self-evaluation. The senior management team now needs to provide stronger leadership and direction to the work of the school in order to facilitate distributed leadership. This will enable the school and the nursery to increase the pace of change as it addresses identified priorities.

The senior leadership team and staff continue to be highly committed to the school and promote a supportive and caring ethos for children to learn. They now work more closely together as a team, in partnership with the education authority and parents. Collectively the senior leadership team and staff identified clear priorities for the school, taking account of the action points from the previous inspection. Staff enjoy improved opportunities to take on leadership roles. Visits to other schools, working groups and professional learning enhanced their understanding of self-evaluation. The plans to extend the leadership team provide an opportunity to revisit the roles and responsibilities of all staff in relation to leadership and the planned priorities for improvement. There are examples of very good progress being made in significant aspects of the school's work. This includes staff taking on leadership roles, improvements in learning and teaching, with more children able to talk about their strengths and areas of improvement in learning. We asked the school to continue to build on this promising start. They should continue to develop leadership at all levels including the nursery. In addition, they need to ensure consistency in the implementation of high quality learning and teaching across all curricular areas and that the impact of improvements on raising attainment is informed by rigorous self-evaluation.

All members of staff should work together to ensure consistency in teaching and learning across the school. In doing this, they should improve approaches to planning learning and teaching and set tasks at the right level of difficulty to ensure that all children's learning needs are being fully met. This will ensure that children have the opportunity to consolidate and build on their prior learning.

Across the school teachers are more consistent in approaches to planning children's learning. We observed a number of very well prepared lessons with clear purpose and success criteria that children understand. Most children recognise the positive changes to how they learn and enjoy the planned 'challenges' to deepen their understanding. Establishing what children already know is now a focus across all classes. Wall displays and 'Big Books' provide helpful strategies for children's prior knowledge to be used when planning next steps in learning. As a result, most children's needs and interests are met more effectively. Children take increased responsibility for their learning which develops their leadership skills. Through recently introduced committees, they are beginning to be more involved in the life and work of the school. Moving forward, staff shared their plans to improve further the consistency of learning and teaching approaches in the nursery and across all classes. In doing so, there is a need to ensure that the new approaches lead to more depth of learning for the majority of children. At times the pace of learning for more able children is too slow. There is still room for improvement in the progress children make during interactions with key adults in the nursery. In addition, ensure that planned learning over a period of time has clear outcomes for all children.

Continue with the planned review of the curriculum to reflect more accurately the principles and entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence.

Senior leaders and staff have now developed a clearer rationale for the curriculum based on the school's vision, values and aims. Staff participated in a wide range of professional learning to support their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence. As a result, the curriculum is more relevant and helps children make better links in their learning. In the nursery, there is improved progression across the early level. Across the primary classes observed, teachers' questions have an increased focus on challenging children's thinking. We asked the school to continue, as planned, to develop an increasingly relevant curriculum. This should include an overview with high expectations for children's experiences using local and global contexts. Staff should monitor closely the implementation of the progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum. They need to ensure that curricular change improves outcomes for children.

Improve attainment through developing further the assessment and tracking of progress to ensure appropriate challenge and support for all children.

Approaches to quality assurance now make a more positive difference to learning and teaching across the school. Monitoring and tracking processes in place include focused discussions with staff and senior managers to plan learning. Observations of teaching undertaken by the leadership team are very detailed. Involvement in moderation activities and a wide range of assessment information informs staff of children's progress. These activities also improve staff confidence and accuracy in

recording children's progress using Curriculum for Excellence levels. There is a need to revisit the wide range of information available from assessments and monitoring and tracking. In doing so, staff need to use information and data about children more effectively. Analyses of data does not yet show well enough the progress of children from prior learning when they start nursery through to the end of P7. The school is working towards ensuring that the monitoring and evaluations of the improvements in literacy and numeracy are reflected in both children's experiences and attainment.

What happens next?

The school has made progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with North Lanarkshire Council regarding support to the school to continue to build capacity and improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with North Lanarkshire Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Elizabeth C Montgomery
HM Inspector

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