

1 October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2022, HM Inspectors published a letter on Teanassie Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and The Highland 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 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.

The acting headteacher and staff team need to improve approaches to learning and teaching to provide learning experiences of a high quality which meets the needs of all children, including those who have barriers to learning.

The headteacher and staff team across the school and nursery have made positive progress in improving the overall quality of learning and teaching. Staff have engaged with range of professional learning this session. As a result, they now have a better understanding of the key features of high-quality learning and teaching. The headteacher has introduced robust measures to monitor and improve learning and teaching. These measures are having a positive impact and as a result, learning and teaching has improved across the school.

The headteacher, staff and pupils have discussed and agreed what makes an effective lesson. They have created an 'ingredients recipe' of the key elements which should be included in all lessons. This is supporting a more consistent and effective approach to the structure and delivery of lessons.

Across the nursery and school there is a calm and purposeful learning environment. Most children are actively engaged in their learning and are keen to contribute their ideas and opinions. They work individually, in pairs and in group activities, supporting each other well during collaborative tasks. Children are now ready to have a greater role in leading their own learning.

In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. They share the purpose of learning and support most children well to understand how they can be successful. Teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. They are increasingly using questioning to enrich and extend children's learning. Across the school and nursery, staff use digital technologies, such as interactive whiteboards and tablets, well to support children's learning. Pupil support assistants are supporting children with identified learning needs well. Across the school, the pace of learning should be brisker.

The headteacher has introduced a new consistent approach to planning this session to ensure that children build on previous learning across all curricular areas. Teachers have created a three-year rolling curriculum programme to support effective planning for multi-stage classes. Teachers now provide well planned learning activities which meet the needs of most children. A few children would benefit from greater challenge in learning.

Children across the school and nursery are increasingly motivated and engaged in learning as a result of teachers seeking their views more routinely and regularly.

The headteacher has improved approaches to plan for children who require additional support in their learning. Targets are now more detailed and have a greater focus on learning across the curriculum. This is supporting individual children's understanding of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

As planned, staff should continue to improve approaches to delivering high-quality learning and teaching across the school. This should include increased opportunities for children to take greater leadership of their learning.

Improve children's progress and attainment across the curriculum, with a clear focus on literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher and teachers have made positive progress in addressing this area for development. The overall quality of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics has improved since the original inspection in March 2023. Most children achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking, reading and numeracy and mathematics in June 2024. The majority of children achieved expected levels for writing. Children with additional support needs are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Across the school there are a few children who exceed national expectations in literacy and English and numeracy. Attainment in writing remains a priority for improvement. As planned the headteacher and staff should now work together to develop a strategy to raise attainment in writing.

The headteacher has created new monitoring and tracking processes which provide a more robust system for tracking children's individual progress over time. This supports teachers well to know where children are in their learning and plan appropriate next steps to raise their attainment in literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher and staff identify children who require additional assistance with aspects of their learning. They then put in place a range of supports, such as digital programmes and literacy resources, to help these children make progress. Going forwards, staff need to carefully monitor the impact of these supports on raising children's attainment. This will help them to determine how successful targeted approaches have been in accelerating progress for identified children.

Staff track children's participation in clubs and committees within the school and local community. Staff use this information well to ensure equity of opportunity throughout the school and to support children who may be at the risk of missing out. They introduced a skills for life framework this session. This is helping children to describe the skills they develop through their achievements in and out with the school.

The headteacher uses additional funding to promote children's engagement and participation in wider experiences. Older children have successfully participated in an outdoor learning programme for a block of time. Children's confidence, motivation and engagement in learning increased as a result of the intervention.

Staff should take prompt action to develop whole school approaches to assessment that provide robust information about children's progress and inform next steps for learning and teaching.

Overall, the headteacher and staff have made positive progress over the past year to improve assessment approaches across the primary stages. They have created a new streamlined assessment calendar which indicates which aspects of children's progress in areas of the curriculum will be assessed and when. Teachers now assess children's learning more regularly across the year. As a result, they have a fuller understanding of each child's attainment. The headteacher meets with staff termly to discuss children's attainment and to plan appropriate next steps in learning.

Teachers have worked with each other and colleagues in other schools to develop their understanding of national standards. As a result, teachers are more confident in making more robust professional judgements about children's progress.

Teachers are developing learner profiles across the school. These will support children to record and share significant learning across the curriculum. Children are at the early stages of setting their own personal targets in learning. This work should be developed further to support children to have a clearer understanding of their next steps in learning across all curricular areas. Staff should continue to support children in profiling their progress and achievements in their learning and consider how they can involve parents further in this process.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will ask for a report on progress within one year of the inspection. This report will inform any decision made by Education Scotland regarding further engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with The Highland Council that we intend to take.

Victoria Morgan
HM Inspector