

4 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Rephad Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the headteacher and Dumfries and Galloway Council. We subsequently returned to the setting to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in February 2024. Recently, as you may know, we visited the setting 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 setting 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 setting has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Improve leadership of the nursery and in doing so ensure senior leaders and staff more fully understand their roles and responsibilities and review current policies and procedures.

Following the last inspection, the local authority early years team have worked closely with senior leaders and practitioners to help them take forward this area for improvement. The local authority early years team has given clear advice and feedback that has supported senior leaders and practitioners to develop and improve their practice. The acting nursery manager has worked very well with practitioners to help them understand more fully their roles and responsibilities within the team. Practitioners feel increasingly confident in their role and are now ready to take on increased responsibility to continue to improve the environment and experiences for children.

The headteacher and acting nursery manager work well together. The headteacher has a better understanding of the features of quality early learning and childcare. She is more familiar with national practice guidance for early learning and childcare. Senior leaders now need to develop a shared, ambitious and sustainable vision for continuous improvement.

The nursery team, supported by the local authority should continue to work together to ensure this positive progress toward this area for improvement is consolidated and built upon.

Together, senior leaders and staff should develop how they gather information on how well the nursery is doing. It will be helpful to have clearer priorities and to check that changes are leading to improvements for children.

Senior leaders have in place a clear improvement plan. The improvement priorities have helped practitioners to take forward the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There are positive signs of this improving children's experiences. For example, practitioners now work together in pairs to plan learning experiences and use children's interests more effectively. Senior leaders now need to work with practitioners to create a structured approach to gathering information about what is working well in the nursery, and

what needs to improve. This should help the team to set new improvement priorities that build on the recent success and improve the areas that continue to need addressed.

The headteacher and acting nursery manager now routinely observe practice and review planning and observations. They provide general feedback to the team on what is working well and where the team could improve further the playroom and children's experiences. Senior leaders should now provide all practitioners with individual feedback on their strengths and how they can improve children's experiences. This will help practitioners to be clearer on their individual success and next steps.

Practitioners successfully led improvements through working groups including refreshing lunch routines and developing the outdoor area. Children have benefited from a calmer lunch experience and an outdoor learning space that excites and encourages curiosity. Senior leaders need to build on this positive way of working and support practitioners to lead other areas for improvement within the nursery.

Improve the quality of learning experiences for children in the nursery ensuring these build on prior learning and support their wellbeing.

Most children experience nurturing and positive relationships with adults. Children are happy and settle quickly into the nursery routines. Children now play and learn in one playroom and have free-flow access to an outdoor area. This is allowing all practitioners to work together and share ideas more easily. Practitioners have created a range of areas for children to play and learn within the playroom and outdoors. They now need to build on this positive start to ensure consistently high-quality spaces, experiences and resources within the playroom and outdoors. Senior leaders should work with practitioners to be more ambitious in the creation of spaces that engage, motivate and excite children. Children would benefit from more quiet, calm spaces within the playroom to allow them to rest and relax during their day.

The acting nursery manager has supported practitioners to develop approaches to planning learning experiences. Practitioners increasingly take account of children's interests and their learning needs. Children's learning profiles are beginning to provide a clearer story of their development and progress in learning. Senior leaders should now build on this to include next steps in learning for all children within their learning profiles.

Practitioners have explored different ways to use floorbooks to document children's learning. The acting nursery manager should now work with practitioners to develop this further to capture the increasing breadth and depth of children's experiences.

Across the school and nursery, senior leaders and staff should develop further approaches to planning and assessing progress for children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing. This should include working closely with parents and children.

Senior leaders and the acting nursery manager have taken further steps to improve approaches to supporting children who require additional support with their wellbeing and learning. Staff across the school and nursery have taken part in helpful professional learning to help them better understand the range of factors that might impact on children's learning

and development. As a result, staff plan increasingly appropriate supports for children who require additional support with their learning across the school and nursery.

Staff create individual educational plans outlining learning and wellbeing targets. Staff need to build on this to ensure children's targets are more specific and measurable. Senior leaders and staff should also establish more regular review and evaluation of children's plans. This should support them to check that the supports in place are leading to improved outcomes for children.

The headteacher and depute headteacher are aware that there remains a need to involve children and parents more fully in meetings to plan and review additional support. Parents would like more information about the supports in place to help their children make the best possible progress in their learning.

Overall, there has not yet been sufficient progress made towards addressing this area for improvement. Working together, senior leaders and the local authority now need to accelerate progress in this area.

What happens next?

The setting has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Dumfries and Galloway Council regarding the setting's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the setting within 12 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Dumfries and Galloway Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the setting, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Marion Carlton
HM Inspector