

15 May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Mount Carmel Primary School
East Ayrshire Council**

In April 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 East Ayrshire 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/young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

**Improve strategic leadership to support a systematic approach to change.
This requires to be led by senior managers but involve all staff in both
identifying and taking forward appropriate strategies.**

In the last year there have been several changes to the leadership of the school. Since August the principal teacher is now acting head of school and a new acting executive manager has been put in place. This allows for appropriate leadership of the school while maintaining the leadership of the faith community. The senior leadership team has been successful in gaining the confidence and support of staff, pupils and most parents.

The pace of change has increased with the appointment of the new interim management team in August 2017. All staff are now much more included in the change process and as a result have much more ownership and involvement in improvements taking place. The leadership team has tackled appropriate initial priorities to ensure the smooth running of the school. They now need to continue to work with staff to maintain the pace of change and ensure the ongoing involvement of staff in school improvement. The leadership team now needs to use the information from school evaluation to give clear strategic direction to the work of the school.

Staff, parents and children have worked well together to review the approach to behaviour management across the school. This has resulted in a calm, more purposeful environment for learning and almost all children report that they enjoy their learning. Early improvements have been made to the management of additional support needs and numeracy and mathematics. Staff have been provided with more

opportunities to lead school improvement. Communication across the school and with parents has improved. However, there remains work to be done in how the school informs parents about children's progress in their learning. The new leadership team has established a range of quality assurance procedures to monitor the work of the school. It will take time for this to have an impact on improving outcomes for learners.

Improve monitoring and tracking of children's progress and attainment across all curriculum areas to ensure that they achieve as highly as possible.

The school's approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress are at an early stage of implementation. Staff are developing their understanding of what is expected when children achieve a level and they are keen to make effective use of new approaches to support their judgement. Across the school, regular and planned tracking and monitoring discussions with class teachers and the senior leadership team are beginning to help improve teachers' ability to track, monitor and assess children's progress within a level. The senior leadership team is encouraging all staff to use the benchmarks for assessing a level in literacy and numeracy and is using the education group to help moderate teacher's judgements.

The work on tracking and monitoring children's progress will be enhanced further by a clearer structure to the curriculum which will support staff in planning learning, teaching and assessment. More work needs done in linking assessment to planned learning and teaching.

Develop a shared understanding of the wellbeing agenda across the school. Improve the management of support for those requiring additional help with their learning or wellbeing.

Children are now more aware of the wellbeing indicators and children's understanding of these is being developed during focussed class lessons and through assemblies. There are strong relationships across the school and children are now very well behaved and more focussed in their learning. The school's approach to nurture has improved with focussed sessions in the nurture base for a few children. Plans are in place to develop the nurturing principles across the school. The school has improved its approach to developing an understanding and addressing issues relating to bullying. This should continue to be a focus as the school develops further its work on health and wellbeing and children's rights.

The school has improved how they meet the needs of children with additional support needs. Overall, parents and children are more fully involved in the process. Meetings with parents and other agencies to review and set targets are now well planned and dates are set well in advance. Documentation and recording of this process is now better organised.

There is a need to ensure that the leadership team support staff in developing their understanding of differentiation and reduce the amount of whole class teaching to better meet children's needs.

Raise attainment across all stages.

Staff are now more actively engaged in moderation processes within the school and education group. This is beginning to develop a shared understanding of achievement of a level and agreement of standards and expectations. Although it is too soon to see real evidence of improved attainment and achievement, children are becoming more confident in their tasks and are beginning to talk more readily about what they are learning. Commendably, staff have developed improved approaches to digital technology across the school. Children are motivated and responding well to these new learning opportunities.

As the school moves forward there needs to be a continued focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. As yet not enough children are achieving appropriate levels and there are still significant gaps in their learning that need to be addressed. The school is now well placed to introduce further developments which focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.

What happens next?

The school has made progress since the original inspection however there remains significant work needing done to continue to improve the school. We will liaise with East Ayrshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within twelve months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with East Ayrshire 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.

Dennise Sommerville
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.