

17 December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Raigmore 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 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.

Senior leaders should improve the strategic leadership of the school and nursery. They need to review progress towards school improvement regularly throughout the year and keep track of how well changes led to improvement.

Although some positive progress is evident within the school, insufficient progress has been made to improve the nursery provision.

Following the original inspection, senior leaders, with support from local authority officers, created action plans for both the primary and nursery. These plans aimed to address the main points for improvement identified in the original inspection. Staffing changes, including the arrival of a new headteacher in August 2024, limited the overall pace of change across the year. The new headteacher should ensure there is sufficient rigour and pace in taking forward the programme for improvement. Strong strategic and consistent guidance to support necessary improvement is required. The local authority should take prompt action to ensure that remaining important weaknesses in the nursery are addressed.

All staff should work together to improve the quality and consistency of learning, teaching and assessment across the school and nursery. Teachers and practitioners should make sure learning activities are motivating, well matched to each child's needs and build on prior learning. In the nursery, staff should also improve the quality of the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors.

Greater progress has been made to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching in the school than in the nursery. In the nursery, children continue to enjoy positive relationships with practitioners. Practitioners are kind and caring. For the most part, there is a calm ethos across the setting. However, there has been insufficient progress in improving the quality and consistency of learning and teaching in the nursery. While there is evidence of improvements to aspects of the nursery environment, both indoors and outdoors, there is considerable scope to develop this further.

In the school, teachers have worked together to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes high-quality learning and teaching. They have engaged in professional learning, lifting staff confidence, and ensuring a whole-school approach. This sustained focus on 'what makes a good lesson?' is beginning to impact positively on classroom practice. Staff use an increasing range of feedback strategies to support children to reflect on their learning. There

is now greater consistency in the use of language across the school. As a result, children are becoming more able to talk about their own learning.

Staff are developing a more consistent approach to assessment across the primary stages.

Senior leaders should ensure all children with additional support needs have clear plans in place, that are reviewed and updated regularly. The role of class teachers should be strengthened in meeting all learners' needs.

There has been limited progress in relation to this area of improvement across the school and nursery.

Senior leaders streamlined planning for additional support needs and made these more accessible. The development of a more robust strategic overview of additional support needs, including the nursery, is at a very early stage of development.

Staff are very sensitive to the needs of identified groups of children within the school, such as those connected with the armed forces. The recent arrival of a significant group of children from Afghanistan has led to the provision of tailored support, including English as an additional language.

Class teachers are becoming more involved in the delivery of universal support. Each teacher now has an additional support for learning folder that is reviewed each term. Staff should continue to develop their skills in setting specific, measurable targets for children. Teachers should continue to engage in regular professional dialogue with senior leaders and support for learning staff to ensure the needs of children are being met. Staff need to strengthen further the involvement of parents and children in target setting and tracking progress over time.

All staff should have a clear focus on raising attainment of all children across the school and nursery. Senior leaders and staff across the school and nursery should use information on children's progress more effectively to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Greater progress has been made to raise attainment in the school than in the nursery. There has been limited progress in taking this area of development forward in the nursery. While nursery practitioners are increasing opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, there is considerable scope to develop this further.

Across the primary stages, levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy have risen. The majority of children achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in June 2024. This reflects an increase of 17% in literacy and 25% in numeracy when compared to June 2023. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. A minority of children across the school are capable of achieving more. Staff should continue to raise their expectations of what children can achieve and ensure that learning activities are sufficiently challenging.

Senior leaders meet class teachers termly to discuss children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Teachers demonstrate increasing confidence when discussing attainment data. Staff are beginning to implement a more consistent approach to planning. Planning better reflects the learning needs of different groups of children. Staff understanding of children's progress across other areas of the curriculum remains an area for development.

What happens next?

The school has made insufficient progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with The Highland Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with The Highland Council the details of this inspection and how the local authority will support improvement. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Pamela Adamson
HM Inspector