

3 June 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2020, HM Inspectors published a letter on Lawfield Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Midlothian Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work and published another letter in March 2023. We returned to the school again to look at how it had continued to improve its work and published another letter in April 2024. 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 learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

### **Raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school.**

Overall, at the primary stages, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy has increased significantly over the past year. Most children at P1 and P7, and the majority at P4, are now on track to achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy. Almost all children at P1, and the majority of children at P4 and P7, are on track to achieve expected levels in numeracy. This increased attainment is due to a number of factors, including improvements teachers have made to classroom environments, better teaching approaches and more provision of additional support for children. Staff have taken part in meaningful, high-quality professional learning and this has increased the reliability of their assessment approaches.

In the nursery, most children now make appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy. Children's progress in numeracy is stronger than in literacy. The range and quality of literacy opportunities that practitioners plan for children in the nursery has increased. Staff's planning for literacy and numeracy is now more evident in the playrooms and outdoor area. Children respond well to the increased daily focus on rhyme and story. Children's individual learning journals now demonstrate more effectively their progress over time.

The most important factor in raising attainment across the nursery and primary stages has been the highly effective leadership of the new headteacher. The headteacher has set a clear, strategic vision for improvement and is very skilfully managing the pace of change. Children and staff are responding very positively to the increased expectations the headteacher has of them. The headteacher's whole-school approach is successfully developing effective collaborative working across the entire staff team. Across the school, there is now a much greater sense of teamwork. This is leading to increased consistency in practice, underpinned by staff's engagement in high-quality professional learning. Staff welcome the headteacher's 'back-to-basics' approach and the purposeful activity to ensure improvement. They feel listened to, consulted and informed. Staff's confidence and pride in their school and nursery has increased measurably as a result.

Staff's approach to tracking and monitoring children's progress and attainment has improved in both the school and nursery. At the primary stages, staff use data with increasing effectiveness to identify gaps in learning, and where children require additional support. Teachers' termly planning and attainment meetings are now more robust. These meetings enable staff to review children's progress and identify next steps. This is beginning to ensure staff maintain a continuous focus on children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff's use of data to plan next steps in learning has improved significantly.

In the nursery, practitioners have recently introduced an online tracking system to monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This is beginning to strengthen staff's understanding of children's progress in learning over time.

Staff have engaged fully with high-quality professional learning to help improve children's attainment. Senior leaders make sure that this learning aligns with the school's improvement priorities. This approach helps everyone understand and use effective strategies to improve children's attainment. Midlothian Council's Raising Attainment Team has offered valuable support to increase staff's skills and confidence in teaching literacy and numeracy. Staff appreciate these professional learning opportunities and see how this helps improve children's levels of attainment and progress.

At the primary stages, teachers' judgements of children's progress in learning are now much more reliable and in line with national expectations. Staff have engaged in a range of appropriate moderation activities, including visits to other schools. This is helping to increase staff's confidence in the making judgements about when children have achieved a Curriculum for Excellence level. In the nursery, practitioners are beginning to strengthen their observations of children's learning to better assess their progress.

Support for learning staff work more closely in classrooms alongside teachers. This revised approach is enabling staff to better meet the needs of all children across the school. The nurture early years practitioner, support for learning teachers and learning assistants are working closely with the teachers and senior leaders to provide targeted support for small groups of children to address gaps in learning. These intervention groups are successfully improving children's attainment.

Staff now have a far greater focus on celebrating children's achievements across the school. Opportunities for children to engage in lunchtime or after-school clubs have increased significantly. Children are particularly proud of their involvement in a range of curriculum-based activities and sporting tournaments. This is helping more children to develop skills for learning life and work, and to experience success.

**Ensure children benefit from consistently high-quality learning and teaching, which includes increasing opportunities for children to lead their own learning.**

Overall, the quality and consistency of learning and teaching has improved significantly over the past year. All staff now implement the 'Lawfield Way', an agreed learning and teaching toolkit. As a result, key features of effective learning and teaching are more evident in classroom practice. Staff across the school have increased expectations of what children can achieve and the pace of learning is increasing. Children are now ready to take greater

responsibility for their own learning. This is not yet a regular feature of children's learning experiences.

Almost all staff across the school and nursery contribute to creating a positive learning environment, bringing the school's vision, 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' to life. Staff have improved the quality and consistency of classroom environments making them more purposeful, welcoming and supportive.

Staff have benefited from professional learning with Midlothian Council's Digital Learning Team. As a result, staff's frequent use of digital technologies is evident across the school and nursery. Children across the primary stages use digital devices confidently to support their learning. This motivates and engages them well in tasks and activities.

Staff are in the process of reintroducing a play-based approach to learning at P1. They are taking appropriate account of national guidance to plan the use of space, the quality of their interactions with children and the experiences they provide. Teachers have visited other schools to observe good practice and have taken part in relevant professional learning to inform this work. This is supporting staff to provide more purposeful learning opportunities for children.

All teachers plan together in pairs or trios. This is contributing to a better consistency and quality of planning across the school. Almost all teachers use data more effectively to plan learning experiences. In the nursery, senior staff have recently worked with the headteacher to refresh approaches to planning. Nursery planning now better reflects national practice and Curriculum for Excellence guidance.

**Improve assessment approaches across the primary stages. Ensure all teaching staff use information gathered from children's learning and assessment activity more effectively to plan learning experiences which meet the needs of all children.**

Overall, staff have made significant progress in improving their use of assessment across the school. This is impacting positively on children's progression in learning.

Staff work together very effectively to secure better outcomes for children through more effective approaches to assessment. The headteacher introduced a new assessment toolkit in August 2024. New learning, teaching and assessment policies are also now in place. Teachers are implementing these new policies very well across the school. Their implementation of a clear assessment calendar ensures that regular, consistent and purposeful assessment activity takes place across the school year. Staff analyse the data gained from assessments increasingly well. Teachers are becoming more skilled in the use of data and have increased expectations of children's attainment and achievement.

### What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Midlothian Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Pamela Adamson  
HM Inspector