

4 March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Ardersier Primary School. 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.

**Improve approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure a consistently high quality for all children across the school. This will help ensure that learning is meeting the needs of all children.**

There have been a number of changes in teaching staff since the original inspection in November 2023. The leadership of the school changed in November 2024 when a new acting headteacher took up post. While these changes have had an impact on the pace of strategic plans for improvement, this has not been as significant as it might have been. Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has worked effectively with the local authority and staff to address areas for improvement. As a result of this and the prior work of staff, some progress has been made in this area since the original inspection.

Since the original inspection, senior leaders have worked with teachers to develop a stronger shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. Teachers have engaged with professional learning to improve teaching approaches. This is helping to enrich children's learning experiences. Senior leaders introduced a focus on improving the presentation of children's work. This is helping to improve the standards of children's written work.

Teachers have established a more consistent approach to sharing the purpose of learning with children and providing them with feedback about their learning. Teachers are making better use of a range of assessments across the year to inform their judgements about children's progress and attainment. Teachers should continue to ensure information from assessments is used well to plan for children's next steps in learning.

In most lessons, children engage well in their learning. Children can become disengaged when learning is overly teacher led or not sufficiently challenging. Younger children would benefit from more opportunities for them to be creative and curious in their play and learning. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to focus on ensuring that learning is well matched to children's needs, interests and abilities. This will help to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

Overall while there are signs of progress, there remains areas of inconsistency in the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff now need to build on the progress made and continue to improve children's learning experiences.

**Review approaches to planning to ensure children's learning time is used well to support improved progress across all areas of the curriculum.**

The school has made sufficient progress in this area since the original inspection.

Teachers now have a better understanding of how to use assessment information when planning to support children to make improved progress. Termly planning now supports teachers better to identify specific gaps in children's learning.

The acting headteacher holds meetings regularly with teachers to discuss how well groups and individual children are progressing in their learning. This is beginning to help teachers to review and adapt their planning. Teachers should continue to focus on providing learning which offers appropriate pace and challenge for all children and helps them to make the best possible progress.

Children are now more involved in deciding what and how they learn. For example, older children chose areas of interest when learning about the Second World War. Planning now supports a few curricular areas, for example modern languages and science, to be taught discretely.

Teachers share a curriculum overview with parents termly. This provides parents with information on what each class will be learning that term. Staff should continue to liaise with parents to ensure the termly curriculum overview helps parents know what their child is learning.

**Improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy, targeting gaps in children's learning to ensure all children make the best possible progress.**

The school has made sufficient progress in this area since the original inspection.

Senior leaders have supported teachers well to improve their understanding of children's progress and attainment. The acting headteacher has introduced an increased focus on discussing the progress of individual children with teachers during termly meetings. This is helping to ensure more children make better progress.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved since the original inspection in November 2023. The majority of children achieved expected national curriculum for excellence levels in June 2024. Predicted levels of attainment suggest that overall, the majority of children are expected to sustain and improve levels of attainment this year. A minority of children are capable of making better progress. There is a need for staff to continue their focus on improving children's attainment.

A few children who require specific support with their learning have individual plans. Teachers should review the targets included in these plans to ensure they are specific, suitably challenging and that children's progress can be clearly measured. This will help to support improved outcomes for children who require additional support with their learning.

### 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.

Robyn McIlroy  
HM Inspector