

20 June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate visited Lochmaben Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher has created a nurturing ethos across the school, learning centre and nursery where children are valued and included. The positive relationships between staff and children support children's wellbeing well.
- Children in the school, learning centre and nursery are polite, well-mannered, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Children in the school and learning centre contribute effectively to the life of the school.
- In the nursery class, the nursery manager has a clear vision for improvement and identifies correctly the changes required to improve children's experiences.
- In the learning centre, staff have developed effective approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy. This is having a positive impact on children's progress against individual milestones.
- In the school and learning centre, all staff support children very well to have a clear understanding of how their wellbeing and rights relate to their daily experiences.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

- The local authority and senior leaders should support further the leadership in the nursery. This should include reviewing staffing and nursery routines to meet better children's wellbeing needs.
- In the nursery, staff should apply professional learning to improve their daily practice. They should improve the quality of the experiences on offer to help children to be more interested in their play and learning.
- In the nursery, senior leaders should support practitioners to use observation and assessment evidence well to plan effectively for children's progress. This will help staff build on what children already know and provide learning at the right level of difficulty for all children.
- In the nursery, staff should build on recently introduced approaches to planning to ensure a better balance of responsive and intentional planning.

- In the school, senior leaders should now review all curriculum and planning guidance. They need to ensure children develop skills progressively and revisit previously learned skills regularly.
- In the school, continue to improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- In the learning centre, staff should find ways to record and check children's development of skills and achievements across the curriculum. This will allow staff to plan children's next steps and build on their learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Lochmaben Primary School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	weak
Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	weak
Securing children's progress	weak
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the early learning and childcare setting using the quality indicators from [A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare](#). The framework supports settings, providers and inspectors to assess what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each setting, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well early learning and childcare settings are doing. The Care Inspectorate evaluations are also used by local authorities when considering how settings are meeting the national standard for funded early learning and childcare.

The Care Inspectorate's evaluations for the early learning and childcare setting are:

Detailed evaluations	Evaluation
Key question 1: How good is our care, play and learning?	weak
1.1 Nurturing care and support	weak
1.3 Play and learning	weak
Key question 2: How good is our setting?	
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	weak
Key question 3: How good is our leadership?	
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	weak
Key question 4: How good is our staff team?	
4.3 Staff deployment	weak

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had three areas of improvement. From these, three areas of improvement have not been met. As a result of this inspection, there are two requirements and five areas for improvement.

Requirements made by the Care Inspectorate for the early learning and childcare setting.

Requirement 1

By 30 June 2023, the provider must ensure that each child receives appropriate care and support, and their needs are met by the staff team. To achieve this, the provider must, as a minimum, ensure:

- a) Each child has a written plan which sets out how they will meet the child's health, welfare, and safety needs within 28 days of starting in the service.
- b) Personal plans are reviewed and updated by parents, at least every six months or sooner depending on the individual needs of the child.
- c) Personal plans support the service to remain up to date with each child as an individual through their changing play interests, needs and successes, identifying appropriate strategies to meet children's needs, support progress and help children to achieve their full potential.
- d) All staff are aware of and understand the information within the personal plans and use this to effectively meet each child's health, welfare, and safety needs.

This is to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, (SSI 2011/210) - Regulation 5(1)(2) - Personal plans; and Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15) and "My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23)

Requirement 2

By 30 June 2023, the provider must ensure children's health, welfare, and safety. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure that:

- a) Areas accessed independently by children are safe and secure.
- b) The service has a secure door into the playroom that always supports children's safety and individual needs.
- c) Children have an appropriate area to store personal belongings within a safe and accessible area.
- d) Robust safety measures are implemented to support a safe environment for children.

This is to comply with Regulation 4 (1) (a) (Welfare of Users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is safe and secure' (HSCS 5.17). 'I have an accessible, secure place to keep my belongings.' (HSCS 5.3)

Areas for improvement made by Care Inspectorate for the early learning and childcare setting.

Area for improvement 1:

Children's learning would benefit from rich experiences through a variety of opportunities provided to allow children to lead their own learning. This should include, but not limited to, staff supporting children's engagement through meaningful interactions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

Area for improvement 2:

To support children's health, welfare and safety, the provider should review access to the kitchen area within the playroom to ensure children are kept safe from harm.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is safe and secure' (HSCS 5.17).

Area for improvement 3:

To support service improvement, the manager and staff should continue to develop robust and routine quality assurance systems to ensure that the quality of the service is monitored and assessed effectively. This should include, but is not limited to:

a) Monitor staff practice and provide staff with constructive feedback to support them in meeting children's needs.

b) Carry out regular and effective monitoring and auditing of records and personal plans to ensure detailed and relevant information is gathered to support children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19).

Area for improvement 4:

To support the new manager to develop the service and to enhance positive outcomes for children, families, and staff. The provider should review the time allocated to complete and review managerial responsibilities, including the time allocated to the manager to ensure there is sustained improvement moving forward.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23). 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.' (HSCS 4.27)

Area for improvement 5:

To improve the continuity of care and better outcomes for children, the provider should review the current system in place to support individual children and the consistency of the staff team.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that; 'I experience stability in my care and support from people who know my needs, choices and wishes, even if there are changes in the service or organisation.' (HSCS 4.15) 'I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity.' (HSCS 4.16)

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#).

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the setting needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Dumfries and Galloway 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 Dumfries and Galloway Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made. As a result of the Care Inspectorate's findings and evaluations, further scrutiny intervention will be considered to support improvements in the early learning and childcare setting.

Gillian Frew
HM Inspector

Mags Milloy
Care Inspector