

22 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2017, HM Inspectors published a letter on Clarkston Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and North Lanarkshire Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in September 2018. 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.

Develop a more strategic approach to managing change, informed through reliable evidence based self-evaluation. The senior management team now needs to provide stronger leadership and direction to the work of the school in order to facilitate distributed leadership. This will enable the school and the nursery to increase the pace of change as it addresses identified priorities.

The headteacher has appointed a new leadership team who work well with the staff. The school community has a stronger focus on implementing the school values through clearer roles and responsibilities. As a result, the school continues to promote a caring, supportive ethos for all children to learn. The school improvement plan takes account of areas for development identified within the last inspection. Almost all staff use their skills and talents well, enthusiastically taking on leadership roles in working groups. However, while a number of initiatives are making a positive difference, there is limited progress in managing the pace of change towards agreed priorities for improvement. After a very good start in taking forward some areas for improvement, the pace of progress is now too slow. There is a need to ensure that the nursery is included in all improvement activity.

As a matter of urgency, the school needs to revisit the priorities for improvement and ensure changes are managed effectively. Staff need to limit new initiatives and ensure that all actions lead to improved experiences and achievement for children.

All members of staff should work together to ensure consistency in teaching and learning across the school. In doing this, they should improve approaches to planning learning and teaching and set tasks at the right level of difficulty to ensure that all children's learning needs are being fully met. This will ensure that children have the opportunity to consolidate and build on their prior learning.

Most children across the school continue to be motivated and engaged in their learning. When given the opportunity in leadership roles, a minority make positive differences to the life and work of the school. Helpful progressive planning guidance supports teachers to plan literacy and numeracy experiences across the curriculum. Teachers continue to work together to improve the consistency of learning and teaching. A few initiatives, including

additional resources, such as new reading books and play equipment, support children's learning. However, tasks are not consistently set at the correct level of challenge and the pace of learning in the classroom for the majority of children continues to be too slow.

The school should now revisit improvements to learning and teaching across the nursery and school. In doing so, ensure that improvements are very well planned and link to the needs of the school.

Continue with the planned review of the curriculum to reflect more accurately the principles and entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence.

The curriculum's clear rationale developed by senior leaders is based on the school's vision, values and aims. Planning guidance takes greater account of what children already know through more relevant experiences and contexts. Volunteers from local businesses are encouraged to support children in their learning about the world of work. Digital technologies support a few areas of children's learning and staff have higher expectations of what children can achieve. Staff need to revisit the curriculum overview and ensure it is clearly organised and progressive from the nursery class through to P7.

Improve attainment through developing further the assessment and tracking of progress to ensure appropriate challenge and support for all children.

Approaches to quality assurance continue to be implemented across the primary classes and are beginning to be developed in the nursery class. Discussions about each child's coverage of the curriculum take place between class teachers and senior leaders. Staff discuss assessment information and how well each child progresses in literacy and numeracy. The school needs to further review the effectiveness of these meetings to ensure all staff have a clearer knowledge of children's progress and achievements. There are a few initiatives leading to improved attainment for children, however, there remains scope for attainment to improve further

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we identified areas where improvements are still required. In light of the current circumstances, we will liaise with North Lanarkshire Council to discuss our findings, next steps and support for the school.

Elizabeth C Montgomery
HM Inspector