

14 February 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

**Coalsnaughton Primary School and Nursery Class
Clackmannanshire Council**

In January 2016, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Clackmannanshire 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. The Care Inspectorate inspected the nursery class at the same time and that report will be available at www.careinspectorate.com

Improve children's progress and attainment in English and literacy and in numeracy and mathematics.

Assessment data within the school shows that there are improvements in children's progress in literacy and numeracy at all stages across the school. Within the nursery, children are developing their literacy and numeracy skills more effectively and naturally through their play. They listen well to each other in small groups and most can recognise their name in print. Children are now more regularly accessing early writing activities. Children are now more interested and keen to learn about numbers. Staff now need to ensure that progress within literacy and numeracy is well documented and regularly shared with parents. At the primary stages, children are now more confident and more actively engaged in their learning. They are much more aware of key listening and talking skills and can apply these in different contexts, for example, in their learning community groups. Across the school, children are now beginning to talk about and use a range of reading skills. This is helping them better access key ideas in the texts they are reading. As planned, the school should now develop further children's understanding and use of a wider range of vocabulary which will help improve the quality of their writing. Children are now writing for a greater range of purposes however there is still scope to improve the quality and frequency of writing across the school. Overall, children are gaining confidence talking about their mathematical thinking. Their confidence, accuracy and speed in mental calculation shows improvement. The school should continue with plans in place to raise the attainment of all children and bring overall attainment in line with national standards.

Ensure the learning needs of all children are effectively met.

Across the nursery class and primary stages, approaches to meeting the needs of children has improved. The new nursery environment is more engaging and better designed to meet the learning needs of all children, including the small number of children under three years of age. Nursery staff should now develop further the approaches already in place to help children make decisions about their own learning. Overall at the primary stages, tasks, activities and resources are now better matched to children's learning needs. As a result, children report that their learning is now more engaging and at the right level of difficulty. Teachers are now using a range of assessment evidence more effectively to plan learning experiences which build on children's existing skills and knowledge. Staff are now working together more effectively to plan appropriate next steps to help children improve. The additional teaching staff, funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, are providing good support in literacy and numeracy to meet a range of identified needs. Learning targets within individual support plans are more clearly set out with planned actions to help children improve. We have asked staff to ensure that these are written in a way that enable progress to be measured. The views of parents/carers and children are now sought and included within these plans more regularly. There is still scope to ensure that the pace of learning is appropriate for all children.

Develop the curriculum to ensure children build on their knowledge and skills as they progress through the school.

The school has made a very positive start to improving the curriculum. The newly developed rationale, created by staff, children, parents and partners provides a clear focus on raising attainment and achievement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Within the nursery class, there is now a clearer emphasis on providing a suitable curriculum for children. Staff are now using floorbooks in a more focused way to record children's interests and observations of learning. Staff now need to build on the early start made to joint planning across the nursery and primary 1 to ensure progression in learning for children across the early level. Working with staff from the local authority, the school has now created a curriculum overview which takes into account the unique context of the school. This, alongside the new core literacy and numeracy programmes, is supporting teachers to build on children's existing knowledge and skills. As a result of significant funding support from the local authority, the school have purchased a wide range of new resources to support learning in numeracy and literacy. For example, children now have a wider range of novels to study which is impacting positively on their enjoyment and developing their reading skills. We have asked the school to continue to develop their curriculum to ensure that learning pathways outline key knowledge and skills to support progression in learning across all curricular areas. The school continues to place a strong focus on working with partners to develop health and wellbeing and as a result, children's participation, leadership skills and confidence have increased. Commendably, the school has achieved their Sports Scotland Gold Award.

Ensure approaches to self-evaluation lead to year on year improvement in children's learning and progress.

Approaches to self-evaluation have improved across the nursery and primary classes. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the work of the school and are actively involved in the improvement journey. The appointment of permanent staff at various stages across the school has enabled staff to work more effectively as a team. They now plan and evaluate their work together in a more focussed way. Staff have undertaken significant professional learning activities and this is resulting in improvements in learning, teaching and assessment. Children are now more involved in their learning and feel that they have a greater voice in the school. Staff have worked with colleagues from other schools to increase their own understanding of standards and expectations for their learners. Approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress are now more robust and are leading to improvements in children's learning. We have asked staff to ensure that all self-evaluation activity focuses on the impact on children's learning. The headteacher continues to provide clear and focussed leadership and, as a result, there is evidence of positive improvement across the school.

What happens next?

The school has made positive progress since the original inspection with significant support from Clackmannanshire Council. We will ask for a report on further progress on the development of the curriculum and improvements in children's progress and attainment in English and literacy and numeracy and mathematics 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, you will be informed about the improvements the school has made, outlining any further action, agreed with Clackmannanshire Council that we intend to take. At this time Clackmannanshire Council will continue to support the school in taking forward improvements.

Louise Turnbull
HM Inspector

If you would like to receive this letter in a different format, for example, in a translation please contact the administration team on the above telephone number.

If you want to give us feedback or make a complaint about our work, please contact us by telephone on 0131 244 4330, or e-mail: complaints@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk or write to us addressing your letter to the Complaints Manager, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Livingston EH54 6GA.