

3 June 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Stratherrick Primary School and Nursery Class. 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.

The headteacher and staff should ensure children's learning activities are of a consistently high quality and set at the right level of challenge for all children.

The headteacher and staff have made some positive progress in this area for improvement.

In the majority of lessons, teachers are providing children with learning and teaching appropriate to children's age and stage. Teachers have established calm and purposeful learning environments, which helps most children to focus on their learning. Children enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other for almost all of the time. A minority of children are less engaged when learning is not at the right level of difficulty. Teachers need to ensure all children have learning experiences and teaching appropriate to their level of need and ability.

Children are now more involved in making decisions about what they are learning, for example in topic work. They work together to identify what they already know and what they would like to find out. In most lessons teachers encourage children to co-create success criteria. This is helping children identify what they need to do to be successful. Teachers need to ensure they differentiate learning intentions and success criteria to make them more appropriate to the different groups of children being taught. Teachers have made a positive start to developing a play-based approach to learning in the early years. They have adapted the learning environment, creating classroom zones which support children's learning experiences. In moving forward, teachers should now provide children with access to more open-ended tasks to further develop children's creativity and curiosity.

In most lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. In a few lessons, teachers ask questions which extends children's thinking and stimulates curiosity. All teachers should work together to improve their questioning to better support children's higher order thinking skills.

The headteacher and teachers have agreed 'what makes a good lesson' guidance. This clear framework details agreed approaches to learning and teaching. The headteacher should continue to work with teachers to apply the agreed standard to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching.

Teachers have increased the use of the outdoors and real-life learning experiences well to motivate children. Children are enthused by these experiences. The headteacher must now work with teachers to review the curriculum offer for children. This should support children to experience a planned and progressive curriculum, which builds on their learning as they move through the school. Children who require additional support in their learning or wellbeing have individualised learning plans. The headteacher and teachers should continue to ensure that targets set inform planned learning for these children. This should support teachers, parents and children to have clearer measures of children's progress.

There has been some progress in taking forward this area for improvement. The headteacher and staff need to continue to work together to further improve the consistency of high-quality learning and teaching. This should support all children to make better progress in their learning. Teachers would benefit from further professional learning in planning high-quality learning that is set at different levels of difficulty. They recognise that this is an important step in ensuring all children make the best possible progress.

The headteacher should improve the approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress. This will ensure that practitioners and teachers have a clear understanding of children's progress in all aspects of their learning.

There is now a more strategic approach to tracking and monitoring children's progress over time. The headteacher and teachers use the local authority tracking document to record children's progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school. Across the school, the majority of children are making appropriate progress from their prior levels of attainment. A few children across the school are capable of achieving more. Increased challenge in literacy and numeracy, in particular writing, should support children to make greater progress in their learning.

The headteacher meets with teachers termly to discuss children's progress. During tracking meetings, the headteacher and teachers discuss if children are on track, not on track or exceeding expectations. Teachers appropriately identify children who require additional support with learning. Pupil support assistants provide children with valuable help in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher and staff should now more clearly measure the impact of these interventions. This will support them in determining whether interventions are helping to accelerate children's progress and raise their attainment in literacy and numeracy.

In the nursery, practitioners are now using the local authority early level trackers to record children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They also use the local authority pre-school development milestone trackers to ensure children are reaching the age-related expected levels. As a result, practitioners know children well. Practitioners recognise that a next step is to provide greater levels of challenge for a few children.

Teachers are using the local authority's skills tracker well to track and monitor children's achievements in and out school. This includes tracking the associated skills development for all children across the school. In the nursery, practitioners use children's individual profiles to record children's wider achievements.

The headteacher and staff have made positive progress in improving approaches to monitoring children's progress in learning across the school and nursery.

The headteacher and staff should improve further approaches to assessment to continue to improve children's attainment and achievement.

The headteacher has developed a clear assessment calendar. This outlines to teachers the assessments that they should complete across the year to gather information on children's progress. As a result, teachers have a better understanding about the progress children are making in their literacy and numeracy learning. There is not yet one system to record all children's assessment data. The headteacher should now develop a more consistent way of recording assessments. This should support teachers better to use the information more effectively to inform planned learning.

Teachers help children to complete surveys about their wellbeing. Teachers are beginning to use this information well to plan the health and wellbeing curriculum. They identify children who may require individual support with a specific aspect of wellbeing. As a result, all children feel safe at school.

In the majority of lessons, teachers use praise well and provide supportive verbal feedback. They should now further develop approaches to providing high-quality written feedback more regularly. Teachers are at the early stages of developing learner profiles across the school. When developed further, these should help children to record and share significant learning across the curriculum. Teachers need to consider how they can further involve parents in this process. This should support parents to receive more regular information about their children's progress.

Teachers have worked with each other to moderate their expectations of children's progress and their understanding of achievement of a level. The headteacher should look for ways for teachers to work with colleagues from other schools to strengthen their approaches in making professional judgement about children's attainment.

The headteacher and teachers have made some progress to improving approaches to assessment. They should continue to build on the work undertaken this session to further improve children's attainment and achievement.

Overall, the headteacher needs to continue working with all staff to further improve the work of the school.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection, particularly in approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress. However, the school requires more time and further support from the local authority to make sufficient progress across all areas for improvement. We will liaise with The Highland 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 The Highland Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Victoria Morgan
HM Inspector