

14 December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of All Saints Primary School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to All Saints Primary School and the Communication and Language Base. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Senior leaders and staff at All Saints Primary School and the Communication and Language Base (the base) know their children and families very well. Staff care very much about the children, and their work is based on a strong sense of compassion. The impact of COVID-19 has undoubtedly been very significant for the whole school community. Anxiety levels are high because of the presence of the virus. Many families and staff have been affected seriously, including coping with the death of loved ones and other long-term impacts of the pandemic. The headteacher has maintained a strong focus on following guidelines and protocols to keep people safe. The wellbeing of children, families and staff remains a very high priority for the school.

All teachers completed assessments with children on their return to school to identify gaps in their learning and wellbeing. This helped staff to provide learners with the support that they needed to address these gaps. Senior leaders and teachers work closely together to monitor the children's progress. The addition of three additional teachers is helping to support this work. The headteacher also used additional funds to employ a nurture teacher for the upper school. This work is in the early stages but is already making a positive difference. Overall, children across the school and in the base are settled and happy, and are engaging well in their learning.

Staff continue to provide valuable and much appreciated support to families through the school's Hive. This includes providing help to access wider supports in the community, and organising family learning activities.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The headteacher and staff have made very good progress in taking forward areas for improvement following the inspection in November 2018. Senior leaders have strengthened approaches to involving children, parents and other partners in improving the work of the school. The restrictions and other priorities as a result of the pandemic have slowed down

this progress but the headteacher intends to revisit this as soon as she can. Similarly, teachers have refreshed and reviewed the curriculum. This includes the development of learning pathways and the planning of better connections in children's learning. Teachers in the base plan effectively together, and with colleagues, to support opportunities for children to be included in mainstream classes. The headteacher recognises that the curriculum now needs to be revisited along with the school's vision, values and aims. She is aware of the need to continue to involve all stakeholders in this. Senior leaders have also worked hard to improve teachers' use of assessment information to plan next steps in children's learning. This includes a focus on the use of questioning to help children to understand what they need to do to improve.

The principal teacher of the base led significant improvements effectively since the inspection. Professional learning for staff to meet the needs of the children is ongoing. This is improving consistency of approaches. Learning is planned well to meet individual needs, and takes learners' interests thoughtfully into account. Teachers and support staff work together well to improve the learning environment in the base. This includes making improvements to lighting, sound, and better use of learning spaces such as the sensory room. Children in the base benefit from trusting relationships with all staff. There is consistency in the use of language and visual images to support children. Staff are skilled at promoting positive behaviour and redirecting children to prevent situations escalating. This helps learners in the base to be calm, happy and fully engaged in their learning. Regular inter-agency meetings and effective partnership working is now in place. This is leading to improving targeted support, such as the use of play therapy. As a result children in the base are making very good progress in their learning. Children are managing split placements with mainstream schools well and a few children have returned successfully to mainstream classes full-time. As the constraints of the COVID-19 protocols ease, teachers should continue to develop inclusion opportunities with mainstream classes.

Importantly senior leaders have adapted their priorities in response to the pandemic. This includes planning for social distancing, health and safety, and a focus on wellbeing. Staff are working hard to close gaps in children's learning that have arisen after the lockdowns. We have asked the headteacher to continue to support teachers in making professional judgements about children's progress.

What happens next?

The headteacher and staff, supported by the local authority, have been responding well to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges have had a significant impact on the work of the school and the base. Staff are implementing well-considered plans to support recovery. The headteacher and staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Inverclyde Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Liz Angus
HM Inspector