

4 September 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

**Newburgh Primary School
Fife Council**

In April 2017, 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 Fife 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.

The headteacher, together with all staff, should strengthen the leadership of change across the nursery class and school. In doing this, they should plan more effectively their priorities for improvement and the steps required to achieve these.

Since the initial inspection, there have been a number of significant staff changes across the nursery and school. Alongside extensive support from an Education Officer from Fife Council, these changes have resulted in positive progress to strengthen the leadership of change. The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of the current strengths and areas which require further improvement. Alongside the acting principal teacher, they are diligent in providing support and challenge to the staff team to focus on continuous improvement. We are confident that the actions they have taken to date, are the right steps required to move the whole school forward. Staff, pupils and parents have been involved in creating refreshed vision, aims and values for Newburgh Primary School. Children are beginning to be able to discuss these. There is now scope to explore these further through the life and work of the school to ensure children and parents feel a sense of ownership. Across the nursery class and the school, staff have undertaken a range of relevant and appropriate professional learning. As a result, practitioners in the nursery have refreshed and improved the environment and are now more confident in trying different approaches to support children's learning. They should now continue to ensure everyone is fully involved in taking forward improvements. Teachers at the primary stages are now beginning to use data to plan their learning and teaching and to track the progress of learners. All staff should continue to develop effective approaches to using this data through planning and tracking meetings to evaluate the impact of their work and plan next steps. There are now regular opportunities for staff to discuss their practice and agree next steps. This is

helping staff to begin to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations. This work is at the early stages. Since the last inspection, the majority of staff have undertaken leadership roles linked to school improvement priorities. The acting senior leadership team should continue to provide strategic leadership across the whole school to facilitate continuous improvement.

Strengthen the school's approaches to self-evaluation in order to improve how the school monitors the impact of their work to raise the attainment for all children.

There are now sound processes in place to evaluate the quality of education in Newburgh Primary School. Across the nursery and school, feedback from observations is helping all staff to develop a better understanding, both individually and collectively, of strengths and areas for continued improvement. In the nursery, improvement priorities are shared with parents and feedback is sought from them. This has supported parents being more involved in the improvement journey. At the primary stages, regular pupil focus groups are now being led by the acting headteacher and are being used to provide feedback on pupil views. Commendably, parents are now provided with termly updates on progress against the improvement action plans.

Staff are beginning to have a better understanding of the need for robust evaluation of their work and have begun to use national self-evaluation frameworks to support them in understanding national standards and expectations. All staff should continue to develop and embed a range of approaches to self-evaluation in order to improve how the school monitors the impact of its work to raise the attainment and achievement of all children. As planned, the school should continue to regularly seek the views of parents and children to enable all stakeholders to contribute to self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

All staff should work collaboratively to ensure that there is consistently high quality teaching and learning across nursery and school so that children at all stages make the best possible progress in their learning.

Across the nursery and the school, there are now increased opportunities for staff to talk together about learning and teaching. Teachers and nursery practitioners recognise the value of this dialogue and as a result, this is beginning to bring about improvements in practice. There is now an improved approach to planning, observations and assessment in the nursery. This is resulting in a more engaging experience for children. There is scope for greater opportunities for staff to work together across the early level to ensure children make the best possible progress as they move into P1. At the primary stages, the introduction of the four part lesson structure is helping to provide consistency of approach to learning and teaching across the school. As a result, children have a better understanding of the purpose of their lessons. Overall, there are greater opportunities for children to work together in pairs and small groups. This is beginning to help children to talk more about their learning. Commendably, almost all practitioners and teachers have undertaken a good practice visit to another setting to develop their knowledge and understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. Staff have valued these opportunities to learn from others and the majority are beginning to use this learning to improve their own

practice. Across the whole school, staff should continue to develop consistently high-quality learning and teaching which engages children and enables them to develop knowledge and skills. In the nursery and a few primary classes, there remains scope for a greater balance of adult-led and child-led activity. Since September 2017, there has been disruption to the early primary years class as a result of staff absence. This has impacted significantly on the quality of learning and teaching and therefore the progress of children. The school has worked hard to minimise this disruption.

Review approaches that support the learning of all children across the school and nursery. In doing this, staff should ensure that learning activities are sufficiently challenging and better matched to the needs of all learners.

Working with the acting senior leadership team, staff are now engaged more regularly in discussions about the progress of individual learners. This is beginning to provide staff with a clearer understanding of the progress of individual children. There remains a need for staff across the nursery and the primary stages, to improve the pace, level of challenge and range of differentiation to ensure that lessons are at the right level of difficulty for all children. In the majority of classes, there are groups of children who could achieve more. Developing curricular pathways from nursery to P7, and engaging further with the National Benchmarks will support staff to better understand standards and expectations. Staff should also develop further approaches to assessment and moderation. In the nursery class, practitioners are reflective and adapt their practice to support individual children. They should now work more closely with parents and partners to develop further strategies and actions to fully meet all children's learning needs. The whole school focus on developing conceptual mathematics has resulted in a clearer understanding of approaches to teaching calculations across the school. Working alongside teachers, Pupil Support Assistants provide a good level of support for identified children. Interactions are positive and well managed to help children achieve success.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. The extensive support from Fife Council has provided clear direction for continuous improvement. We will ask for a report on progress within twelve months 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, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with Fife Council, that we intend to take.

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.