

14 January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2018, HM Inspectors published a letter on Glassary Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Argyll and Bute 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 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 approaches to self-evaluation based on a range of robust information and data. Use this to identify appropriate school priorities and implement change in a measured and well-paced way.

A new acting headteacher has been in post since June 2019. Staffing within the school is undergoing considerable change. The acting headteacher has brought a calm approach to the leadership of the school. Staff and children are responding well to her leadership style of involving all staff and children in decision making. The new acting headteacher has been successful in involving staff more in school improvement. Staff feel their views are listened to and that they now have more say in planned changes. Staff have worked well together to begin to improve the quality of learning and teaching in classes. Approaches to planning and tracking and monitoring of children's progress have been adapted and simplified to make this more meaningful for staff and children. Although there are signs of improvement, there remains much work to be done to ensure information on children's progress is accurate and clear. Working closely together, staff feel they are now better placed to become more involved in self-evaluation and improving the school. More progress is required on this main point for action.

Improve learning, teaching, assessment and approaches to moderation to raise attainment for all children.

The school has made satisfactory progress towards improving learning, teaching and assessment approaches. Teachers and support staff have positive and supportive relationships with all children and there is a purposeful and settled ethos for learning in classes. In most lessons, children are clear about what is expected of them in their tasks to help them to achieve. Teachers now encourage children to participate in planning and leading aspects of their own learning. Support staff provide highly effective assistance and targeted intervention for individual children, in order that they are included fully in their classes. There are appropriate plans in place for children who require additional support. Since the original inspection, teachers have explored together what 'good' learning and teaching looks like. As a result, there is now a better understanding across the staff team of features of good practice. Teachers have made changes to how they plan for learning and teaching, and aspects of this are working well.

The new approaches to learning and teaching are not yet leading to improved attainment in literacy and numeracy. The necessity to now introduce appropriate progression pathways for each curriculum area will support teachers to improve learning and teaching and children's attainment further. The acting headteacher is aware that teachers need to continue to develop their confidence in making better use of assessment information to inform children's next steps in learning. They have made a positive start to sharing standards within the school and with their partner school in Tayvallich. Teachers are keen to research good practice in other schools and should continue with plans to do this.

Review the curriculum structure to ensure appropriate breadth and balance of experiences. In doing this, develop progressive pathways and programmes for all curriculum areas to ensure children can build on their previous learning effectively as they go through the school.

Staff have made a good start to including children in their learning within their topics, by encouraging them to identify what they would like to learn. Staff are using progression pathways in literacy and numeracy to help them identify next steps in learning more effectively. They have made an early start to improving resources in literacy to help motivate children to read and write. Staff are using the current curriculum structure, as designed by the previous headteacher, to support them in delivering a balance and breadth of learning experiences across the year. However, staff need to be more involved in designing the curriculum, to ensure they have a fuller understanding of how this can be used to the best effect within classes. The current approach to the curriculum needs to be streamlined and simplified. Clearer progression pathways in all curricular areas would support staff to ensure children move through Curriculum for Excellence levels at an appropriate pace. The acting headteacher should support staff to plan more effectively to meet the range of children's needs and abilities within the classes. There is a need, as a matter of urgency, to establish a clear programme for literacy across the school, in particular for children in P1-3 in order to raise attainment. Overall, more work is required to meet this main point for action.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress towards addressing the areas for improvement set out in the original inspection. We will liaise with Argyll and Bute Council to ensure the school continues to build on this progress and develops further its 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 Argyll and Bute 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.

Sadie Cushley
HM Inspector