

28 January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2016, HM Inspectors published a letter on Calderbridge Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement, which we agreed with the school and North Lanarkshire Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in January 2018 and then again in March 2019. 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.

Since the last inspection, the school and nursery have had two acting headteachers. The second acting headteacher has been in post since April 2019, and was appointed in December 2019 as the permanent headteacher. She provides much needed stability to the school and nursery, and has put in place a clear action planning, focusing on addressing the main points for action. This has resulted in some positive progress in addressing each of the areas for improvement.

Strengthen the school's approach to self-evaluation in order to improve how the school tracks children's progress in learning to raise attainment further.

In the nursery, the new headteacher and senior leadership team have provided helpful support to practitioners to evaluate the nursery environment, and make improvements to children's experiences. Practitioners have visited other nurseries to identify good practice and identify how this can be used in the nursery. They are now included in regular meetings with the senior leadership team to review children's progress. The senior leadership team now need to ensure new approaches support practitioners further to meet the needs of all children.

Staff in the primary school have made a positive start to evaluating their own work, and identifying areas needing further improvement. They should continue to seek opportunities to share good practice and set clear targets for ongoing school improvement. They should continue to develop approaches to tracking children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels to ensure children's attainment improves further.

There is an urgent need to review the approaches that support children's learning across the school and nursery. In doing this, they need to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment for children with additional support needs.

Practitioners in the nursery know children well and identify children who need additional support. They now need to identify children who require further challenge in their learning. The nursery teacher and practitioners share regularly information on children's progress.

They should use this information more effectively to inform their daily interactions with children. This will help practitioners to support children make better progress in their learning.

In the majority of lessons in the primary school, staff provide interesting classroom activities, which support children to progress in their learning. Children have an increasing range of opportunities to learn independently and to take responsibility for their own learning. However, further work is required to ensure a brisker pace and more challenge in learning and teaching to ensure all children are fully engaged in learning.

Across the school, staff continue to improve how they meet the learning needs of children with identified needs. They have developed individual support plans for children, which are now much clearer. Senior leaders and staff should develop further the monitoring of children's progress to ensure all children's needs are met fully.

We ask the school to build on the current strengths and improve the consistency in teaching and learning across the school.

Practitioners in the nursery have worked hard to improve the learning environment and outdoor spaces, and most children sustain their interest in the range of activities on offer. The new senior leadership team now works more regularly in the nursery to model good practice, and provide feedback to practitioners to support further improvements. The senior leadership team should review how staff are used across the nursery. In doing this, they should ensure staff are able to interact fully with all children across the session, wherever they choose to play.

Senior leaders and teachers use local authority and national guidance better to evaluate learning and teaching in the primary school. This is supporting teachers to develop a shared understanding of effective practice. Senior leaders, with teachers, should continue to develop further this approach to ensure improved consistency in teaching and learning across the school, and all curriculum areas. They need to work further with children, to review approaches to target setting, to ensure these become a meaningful and integrated part of learning and teaching. Senior leaders and teachers need to develop an assessment strategy, which allows teachers to plan and assess children's progress more effectively.

The school needs to ensure that staff are supported in helping children build on prior learning effectively across all curricular areas. In doing this they need to consider how they reduce the bureaucracy currently involved in their approach to planning learning and assessment.

The senior leadership team and practitioners have reviewed the planning of learning within the nursery, and children experience a variety of curricular areas through skilful interactions. They now need to ensure new approaches to planning and tracking children's progress meet the learning needs of all children within the playroom and outdoors.

The senior leadership team and staff in the primary school understand the need to continue to develop the curriculum as an ongoing priority. They should develop further the use of progressive pathways for all curricular areas. This will allow staff to build on children's prior learning more effectively as they move through the school.

Across the primary stages, there is now a stronger emphasis on health and wellbeing. Most children feel safe in school and agree there is someone they can speak to if they have a concern. A few children, and a minority of parents, disagree that the school deals well with any instances of bullying behaviour. Staff should continue to work with parents and children to develop further approaches to behaviour management to ensure that every child feels safe in school.

Strengthen the leadership and direction of the school and nursery. In doing this the senior leadership team and staff need to increase the pace of change across the school.

The new headteacher has been successful in gaining the trust of staff, practitioners, children and parents. There is a much calmer and more purposeful environment for learning across the nursery and school. The momentum for change has increased; all staff and practitioners are more included in the change process; and feel more ownership of the improvement agenda.

The senior leadership team and practitioners have improved the layout of the nursery, and how children access resources to improve their learning experiences. They should build on this success and develop the nursery environment further to enhance children's creativity and explorative learning. They need to ensure that they maximise opportunities for children to develop fully their literacy and numeracy skills through play.

Staff in the primary school have worked well together, with the senior leadership team, to take forward improvement priorities in literacy, numeracy and the development of positive behaviour strategies. More time is needed to ensure these changes impact more fully on children's attainment. Staff and senior leaders need to continue to explore ways to engage parents further in their children's learning.

What happens next?

The school and nursery have taken positive steps to addressing the areas for improvement identified during the initial inspection. We are confident that they have the capacity to continue to improve. We will join North Lanarkshire Council officers in a review of the school's progress within 12 months of the publication of this report. North Lanarkshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Dennise Sommerville
HM Inspector