

26 August 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In May 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Gledfield Primary School. 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.

Gledfield nursery was mothballed in August 2024.

Improve further approaches to self-evaluation to identify and address areas of improvement. All staff should work effectively as a team to continue to improve the work of the school and nursery. They should do this with a continued focus on improving outcomes for all children.

Overall, positive progress has been made in taking forward this area for improvement.

In February 2025 the headteacher went on secondment to another school. They will be on secondment until June 2026. An acting headteacher took up post in February 2025. They will be in post until June 2025. At the time of inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for five weeks.

Following the initial inspection, the headteacher worked well with local authority officers to develop more robust approaches to self-evaluation. The headteacher has managed effectively the pace of change over the last year to drive forward improvement. The acting headteacher has continued to implement well the school's improvement plan to ensure improved outcomes for all children.

The headteacher has introduced new processes this session to evaluate the work of the school. These are beginning to increase the rigour with which they monitor the effectiveness of improvement. Senior leaders monitor children's written work, observe learning and teaching and review planning processes. This is helping to begin to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Going forward, it is important the acting headteacher continues to monitor the impact of school improvement on improving outcomes for children.

All staff engage positively with the professional review and development process. This provides staff with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their practice and identify and engage in professional learning. This is supporting staff well to take forward improvements within the school. All staff have engaged in professional learning with a focus on improving learning and teaching. This includes, professional reading, visiting other schools and undertaking training delivered by local authority officers. This is beginning to impact positively on their practice.

Since the initial inspection, the headteacher has taken positive steps to create a culture which promotes leadership at all levels. The acting headteacher continues to work with staff to undertake leadership roles to support school improvement. For example, teachers, support staff and parents are leading pupil leadership groups. All children across the school are now members of one of the pupil leadership groups. Children are proud of this work and how they are improving their school, for example, improving the school grounds and library. The acting headteacher and staff should continue to plan further opportunities for children to influence and lead meaningful change within their school.

The headteacher has consulted more regularly with children and parents to gather their views about the work of the school. They are using this information well to support school improvement and make positive change for all children. For example, children and parents were involved in developing the new curriculum rationale. Parents now receive regular updates on the progress of school improvement at Parent Council meetings. Parents are confident in how well the school is improving. They appreciate how invested all the staff are in improving outcomes for all children.

Overall, the headteacher has improved approaches to self-evaluation. They have worked well with staff, children and parents to improve the work of the school. Going forward, it is important the acting headteacher continues to manage the pace of change well to further improve outcomes for all children.

Improve approaches to learning and teaching to ensure all children experience consistently high-quality learning experiences across the school.

Overall, some progress has been made towards this area for development since the initial inspection. The local authority should continue to support the acting headteacher to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school.

All staff have worked together well to enhance children's learning environments. Teachers have improved the use of wall displays to provide examples of high-quality work and share expected standards with children. This includes staff and children working together to create class charters to recognise better children's rights. Children and staff work well together within a climate of positive and respectful relationships. Children work successfully independently, in pairs and in groups. However, too many lessons remain overly-teacher led with all children completing the same activity across their multi-stage class. Teachers need to provide further opportunities for children to take a greater lead in their learning and to experience activities set at the right level of difficulty.

The headteacher has worked with children and staff to create 'what makes an excellent lesson?' poster. The poster provides clarification for teachers on the expected features of learning and teaching that must be evident in all lessons. Going forward, local authority officers need to support the acting headteacher and teachers to develop and implement this shared lesson standard further. This should support them in further improving outcomes for all children.

The headteacher has worked with teachers to improve how they consistently share the purpose of learning with children. Teachers are beginning to use plenary sessions more regularly to help children reflect on their learning. Teachers use questioning to check

children's understanding. Teachers now need to develop their questioning approaches to support children to extend and deepen their learning. Teachers are better supporting children to develop skills and confidence in assessing their own learning and that of their peers. Teachers now need to provide helpful written feedback on children's work. This should support children to understand better what they need to do to improve.

Since the initial inspection, the headteacher has worked well with teachers, to improve learning and teaching in numeracy. Teachers have participated in professional learning to support them improve how they plan and teach mathematical concepts. Teachers are becoming more confident in planning numeracy learning which better meets the needs of all children in their class. Attainment in numeracy across the school has improved as a result. Moving forward, a focus on planning, teaching and assessing writing could support teachers to accelerate children's learning and progress in writing to improve attainment.

Children use digital devices positively to support their learning. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to using technology creatively and progressively across the curriculum to further enhance children's experiences. Children in the younger class are able to extend their learning through play. Staff have reviewed the learning environment to provide improved learning spaces, including construction and role play areas. The acting headteacher should continue to support staff to engage in professional learning. This should support them to better plan a range of learning experiences which are appropriate to all children's age and stage of development.

Review approaches to planning for each curriculum area to ensure children experience progression, breadth and depth in their learning. This will help ensure teachers plan lessons and activities that are well-matched to all children's needs.

Staff have made some progress to improve approaches to planning across the curriculum.

The headteacher has reviewed and updated the school curriculum rationale, in consultation with staff, children and parents. This is now more reflective of the context of the school. Children benefit from strong partnership working to enhance their learning experiences across the curriculum. This includes learning for sustainability and outdoor learning experiences, using the school and local community as a context for learning.

The headteacher has provided clear direction and guidance to teachers on the expectations for the planning processes. They have implemented progression frameworks for all areas of the curriculum. Teachers are at the early stages of using these frameworks to plan learning experiences which build on children's prior learning and skills. The acting headteacher needs to work further with teachers to help them plan appropriately challenging learning experiences that are well-matched to the needs of all children. This will help ensure children experience progression, depth and breadth in their learning.

Teachers continue to implement French and Gaelic in line with the Scottish Government's languages plan. The school community demonstrate enthusiasm for embedding Gaelic learning in the curriculum. Staff should continue to develop a progressive pathway for Gaelic (Learners) in line with national advice and to meet targets within the Council's Gaelic plan.

Staff have worked with children to further improve the school library. This supports well a culture of reading for enjoyment. The pupil-led library group have improved the range of books in the library, including ensuring children have access to equality and diversity resources.

Going forward, the acting headteacher now needs to support teachers further in implementing and embedding these processes. This should ensure that all children experience learning that is well-matched to their needs.

Continue to develop approaches for checking children's progress. Staff should improve how key information is used to help raise attainment and achievement for all.

Overall, positive progress has been made towards this area for development. The headteacher has improved approaches for checking children's progress. Staff's improved knowledge and use of data about children's progress over time should help them to better raise attainment and achievement for all.

Following the initial inspection the headteacher has reviewed the school assessment calendar. Teachers now assess children's learning in a more planned and regular way. Assessment data is at the early stages of providing teachers with a holistic picture of children's progress.

Teachers have undertaken work to improve their shared understanding of expected standards. They have worked well with local authority officers and colleagues from other schools. All teachers should now engage in further moderation activities across all areas of the curriculum. This should help to increase further teachers' confidence and reliability when making judgements against national standards.

The headteacher has improved the effectiveness of the school's approaches to tracking and monitoring children's learning in literacy and numeracy. Staff are using the new tracking system to record children's attainment and to predict how well children will make progress. As robust attainment data is gathered over a longer period of time, the acting headteacher should be well placed to better evidence the progress of cohorts and groups of children as they move through the school. As a next step, the acting headteacher and teachers should consider how they will assess and track children's progress in other areas of the curriculum.

During tracking and monitoring meetings, senior leaders work with teachers to identify children who require additional support with their learning. The pupil support staff, funded through Pupil Equity Funding deliver well-considered literacy and numeracy interventions for these children. Teachers meet fortnightly with the pupil support staff to monitor closely the range of interventions in place for children. This helps them to ensure interventions contributing to improving outcomes for children.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection, particularly in approaches to self-evaluation. 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