

1 February 2022

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 Holytown Primary School and Nursery Class, we said that we would engage with the school and nursery class to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Holytown Primary School and Nursery Class. 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, depute headteacher and local authority officers 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 provided children with a range of motivating experiences during the periods of remote learning, which helped to keep children engaged in their learning. Staff developed their digital skills well during this time. They are using their new skills well to support all children's learning, teaching and assessment and to communicate creatively with parents.

Senior leaders and staff continue to exercise a high degree of care for children and their families to minimise the effect of COVID-19. They meet regularly with parents to discuss children's progress and attainment. Staff across the school and nursery class are using a range of strategies to ensure they meet children's individual learning needs. They are placing an increased focus on the use of assessment to support learning and teaching.

### **Progress with recommendations from previous inspection**

Staff across the school and nursery class are continuing to develop consistency in learning, teaching and assessment, led effectively by senior leaders. Across all learning observed during the visit, children engaged well in work appropriate to their needs. They led aspects of their learning and worked confidently in groups, with peers and on their own. Staff encouraged children to explore different strategies to help them learn. All children behaved respectfully.

Senior leaders have been instrumental in bringing about improvements in the nursery class. At the early level of Curriculum for Excellence, staff now offer children experiences that are meaningful and contextualised. There is increased consistency across the early level experiences and outcomes that includes children engaging in more organised learning that promotes independence.

Staff across the school and nursery class continue to develop their understanding of standards and guidance, and to learn from one another. Staff are now tracking and monitoring children's progress more robustly. They meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss children's progress and attainment and to agree targeted support for children.

Engagement in professional learning has supported staff to deepen their understanding of the planning cycle and to link their planning of learning, teaching and assessment more effectively to individual children's needs. Practitioners have reviewed the balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning in the nursery. They have increased children's contributions to allow children to have more of a say in their learning. Children's input is valued well across the school and nursery class.

### What happens next?

Understandably, the school and nursery class have been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school and nursery class in connection with the original inspection. North Lanarkshire Council will continue to inform parents about the progress of the school and nursery class as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality its education service.

Celia McArthur  
HM Inspector