

26 November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2020, HM Inspectors published a letter on Lockerbie Primary School and Learning Centre. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dumfries and Galloway Council. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in September 2023. 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.

Improve leadership of learning, teaching and assessment at all levels, to ensure children's needs are met in full.

The school has made strong progress in this area for improvement.

Most children are keen and eager to learn and engage well in their learning. Learning and teaching is more consistent and links to meaningful and real-life experiences. Most children experience positive and supportive relationships. As planned, teachers should continue to embed the use of meta-skills to enable children to deepen further their understanding of how they learn.

Senior leaders have improved learning and teaching approaches using policies, guidance and professional learning. Teachers make effective use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching. Children receive more regular feedback about their learning in jotters and planned learning outcomes are shared with children. As a result, most children understand increasingly how they will know if they have achieved success. The development of a writing programme has supported high-quality feedback and identification of next steps in writing. This successful approach is to be further expanded across the school. Next steps should focus on identifying how to communicate children's learning and the progress they are making with parents and carers. There is a need for senior leaders and teachers to develop further the pace and challenge in most children's learning.

Teachers are now leading areas for improvement including enhancing the quality of learning and teaching. The planned curriculum refresh provides an opportunity to review current programmes, agree on rationales for key areas including play, outdoor learning, the use of meta-skills and children's rights.

Learning Centre:

The deputy headteacher has developed clear approaches to support staff to plan learning and work together. This is resulting in more consistent high-quality learning experiences for children and young people across the learning centre.

All children and young people are now receiving learning that is planned, assessed and delivered by qualified teaching staff. Most children and young people experience learning and teaching which meets their needs. Staff are beginning to find ways to make learning experiences more varied, using outdoor spaces and learning through play. Senior leaders should support staff to share expertise on play-based learning. This can ensure that all children in the learning centre experience high-quality learning through play, including where appropriate with older young people. Staff are keen to develop their professionalism and have a strong commitment to meeting the needs of children and young people. They are working as a team producing more informative pupil profiles and practical, relevant targets in learners' individualised education programmes (IEPs).

Ensure that children develop a broad range of skills, including those needed for greater learner participation.

The school has made effective progress in this area for improvement.

Senior leaders effectively developed programmes on skills linked to the school values. This provides clear guidance to teachers and staff which is helping to improve learner participation. All children have had the opportunity to develop their leadership skills through membership of leadership groups. As planned, this will continue this academic session. Skills are displayed across the school which link to learning in school and to increasing children's personal achievements. These include self-management, creativity, curiosity and collaborating. Senior leaders plan to continue to improve further children's awareness of their wider skills development and their essential place in the curriculum, their lives and learning.

Staff praise children's personal achievements through assemblies. Children receive house points, certificates linked to the school values and have their learning displayed in classes and around the school. Children experience success in a variety of achievements. Next steps are to reintroduce lunchtime clubs and after-school clubs and reestablish links with community partners. Improved communication with parents and carers can support the sharing of achievements and learning at home and further increase understanding of the school values. The relationships policy created in 2023 is used to promote positive relationships within the staff team and with children. It outlines effectively the common purpose of helping everyone learn in a nurturing, empathetic and respectful environment. Senior leaders plan to review the positive relationships policy and the equity and anti-bullying policy. This review will provide opportunities to share information with parents and carers and develop further an understanding of anti-bullying and preventative approaches.

Learning Centre:

Most learners are developing and improving their skills in language and communication. The improved communication between staff and children and young people is leading to learners better expressing themselves. Senior leaders should ensure that children and young people's views are sought about school decisions which affect them.

Staff are beginning to provide valuable experiences which will support learners to participate more broadly in the life of the school and community. They are experiencing new and unfamiliar settings, building their confidence in the community and becoming more active.

Across the school there are plans to improve how skills are tracked. This will assist staff when planning experiences and planning next steps in learning which focus on building key skills for children and young people.

Raise attainment and improve children's achievements.

The school has made strong progress in this area for improvement.

Senior leaders have implemented a system to track and monitor children's attainment and achievements. Most children's attainment and achievement is improving. There are processes in place to track effectively the progress and attainment of children who require additional support with their learning. Senior leaders and teachers are making better use of assessment information. This is helping to ensure that most children who are at risk of not achieving, are supported to make appropriate progress in their learning. The data is increasingly accurate and is beginning to build a more accurate picture of children's progress over time.

Senior leaders are monitoring more effectively approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment. This is beginning to impact on the quality and consistency of children's learning experiences and corresponding outcomes. Professional learning is improving progress in literacy and numeracy across the school.

Learning Centre:

The depute headteacher has recently implemented tracking and monitoring approaches to gather information about all children's and young people's attainment and achievement. There is now evidence that the attainment of children and young people is improving. This is achieved through more appropriate target setting for almost all children and young people.

Young people at the senior phase are now following programmes that will lead to the achievement of national qualifications. All young people working in the senior phase have relevant pathways for learning which include accredited courses. Young people's achievements have widened and include healthy eating awards and eco awareness awards. Children in the primary stages attend assembly, and achieve certificates related to the school achievements. Staff should prioritise celebrating achievements with learners and their families at planned events. This can enhance children and young people's sense of achievement.

What happens next?

The school has made effective progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dumfries and Galloway Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Louise Phillips
HM Inspector