

19 September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2020, HM Inspectors published a letter on Lockerbie Primary School, Learning Centre and Nursery Class. 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 July 2022. 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.

Most children engage well in their learning. The majority of lessons are interesting and motivating with a good use of resources. The majority of learning experiences are calm and provide an appropriate environment for children to enjoy their learning. In most classes, relationships between children and staff are positive. As a result, children are confident in talking about their learning and demonstrating what they are able to do.

Teachers share learning appropriately with children at the beginning of lessons and help them understand how they will know if they have achieved success. Children would benefit from more specific feedback from teachers about their learning, particularly in jotters and written work. Teachers should make better use of digital technology for example, to provide feedback to children and their parents.

Learning Centre:

The acting depute headteacher is working closely with staff to begin to improve learning, teaching and assessment. This work is impacting positively in a few classes and in these classes, there are early signs that learning and teaching is appropriate to the needs of children and young people. However, these improvements are not evident across the school. As a result, in the majority of classes, children and young people are not fully engaged or achieving success. There is a need for all teaching staff across the school to work together to improve learning and teaching.

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

A key focus of the school's recent improvement work is to develop children's skills to allow them to engage more fully in their learning. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the relationships and children's engagement in classes at almost all stages. Teachers and support staff are developing children's essential listening and talking skills to allow them to

participate fully in learning activities. This is beginning to allow children to become more respectful of other people's views.

Senior leaders and staff are at the early stages of building key skills for learning, life and work into children's learning experiences. They should now consider how they can embed these key skills into the recently developed system to monitor children's progress. This will be a positive step to monitoring children's overall development and progress through the stages.

Senior leaders and teachers have recently developed a variety of opportunities to recognise and celebrate children's wider achievements and successes. For example, they celebrate success through assemblies and using an online application. As a next step, senior leaders plan to include families in creating regular updates for the whole school community, around children's wider achievements.

Learning Centre:

Most children and young people are developing skills in language and communication. The introduction of new approaches to assessing communication is beginning to help staff understand the best ways to support the individual communication needs of children and young people. These new approaches are at the early stages of implementation. Senior leaders, educational psychologists and staff should now continue to implement approaches and make sure all children and young people are able to communicate as well as possible.

A few children benefit from learning alongside their peers in the co-located mainstream primary and secondary schools. These opportunities allow children to develop friendships and social skills. As planned, senior leaders should seek further opportunities to include children and young people from the learning centre into the mainstream schools.

A few children and young people are developing some life skills. There is a need to support all children and young people better to develop independence and life skills.

Raise attainment and improve children's achievements.

Senior leaders have recently developed a new system to monitor children's attainment and achievements. This will help to support and challenge all children to make better progress in their learning. As a next step, senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for teachers to engage in quality assurance activities with colleagues beyond the school setting. Over time, this will help to provide teachers with a clearer picture of the national standards and expectations for children's achievement at each stage of their learning.

Senior leaders and teachers are developing as a priority, improving learning and teaching in literacy. This priority is beginning to show improvements in children's literacy skills. There continues to be inconsistencies in children's learning experiences in literacy and numeracy. At a few stages, not all children are making expected progress in their literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders should continue with plans to monitor the quality of planning learning, teaching and assessment across literacy. At a few stages, children are not making expected progress.

Learning Centre:

The acting depute headteacher is beginning to implement approaches to monitoring information about how well children and young people are attaining and achieving. This is at the early stages of implementation. Whilst a few children are achieving their targets, too many children are not making sufficient progress in their learning. Senior leaders and staff should review children's and young people's individual targets to ensure they are appropriate to their needs and lead to improved attainment.

Only a few young people at the senior phase are following programmes that will lead to the achievement of national qualifications. There are very few accredited programmes across the school. Young people have the capacity to achieve much better. Currently, teachers are not providing them with programmes or courses that allow them to do so. We have advised the senior leadership team that accredited programmes should be in place for young people in the senior phase, as a matter of urgency.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Dumfries and Galloway Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Dumfries and Galloway 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.

JohnPaul Cassidy
HM Inspector