

21 June 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Golspie Primary School and Nursery Class The Highland Council

In April 2014, HM Inspectors published a report on your child's school. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another report in June 2015. 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 how the school has continued 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 how well children are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

We found that children in the nursery continue to learn and achieve well. They are now situated in the main school building and are successfully working with other classes and participating fully in whole school activities. Across the primary classes the quality of children's learning and achievement has improved. Children in most classes are clearer about what they are expected to learn and have a better understanding of what they can learn next. Learning conversations between children and their teachers and the use of learning logs have become more regular and increasingly effective. In most lessons learning is more active and children show more engagement with their learning. Teachers are now sharing practice and visiting other schools to see good practice and as a result, experiences for children in each class have improved. Most children show leadership skills by contributing to a committee and these are beginning to have a positive influence on the life and work of the school. This work needs to continue and build momentum. Children's individual achievements are recognised and celebrated.

Children in the nursery continue to make steady progress with their learning. Children's profiles are now being used more effectively to detail children's learning. As the profiles are developed further we ask that the nursery involve parents more in setting targets within these. The acting headteacher and staff have worked well together to improve how they assess children and how they use assessment information to improve children's progress. Across the primary classes, children are now making better progress and show greater levels of attainment. The school should focus on continuing to build on this good work. The school has taken positive

steps to improve the pace of learning in literacy and numeracy. Overall, children in each class demonstrate through their literacy and numeracy tasks that they have improved their skills in reading, writing and numerical calculations since the last inspection. They read with fluency and are beginning to understand the styles of different authors. Children write regularly for a range of purposes and are much clearer about how to improve their own work. Staff are clearer about the areas children need to improve in mathematics and numeracy and are addressing this well. The school has improved the library resources to motivate children to read for pleasure. They have increased the range of resources to help teach reading skills through more motivating texts.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

In the nursery, staff have continued to build on children's strengths through the range of approaches to meet children's learning needs. Across the primary classes staff now plan lessons which are set at the right level of challenge to meet most children's learning needs. Learning assistants and the support for learning teacher play an important role, supporting individuals and groups of children to reach their learning targets successfully. Staff have identified children who need increased challenge in their learning and have taken positive steps to help meet their needs more effectively. The school has involved a range of partners to help support the inclusion of all children within the school and the community. Most parents are supportive of the school and the improvements being made. A few parents would like better communication between home and school, for example, home school diaries. Parents would appreciate more detail about children's progress in their learning. As a result of recent improvements made to assessment of children's learning, the school are now in a better place from which to provide more accurate information on children's progress. We ask that the parent council and the school develop a closer working relationship to help the school on its improvement journey.

Staff now share a collective understanding of the curriculum they provide. Over the past year, they have worked hard to improve how they use Curriculum for Excellence in their classrooms and across the school. The acting headteacher has provided clearer direction to staff on the curriculum. She has put clear systems in place to guide and support staff's understanding of how children make progress in their learning from P1 to P7. Teachers are using these well and they are helping demonstrate what children are learning and how much progress they are making through the school year. Extending planned learning opportunities from nursery to P1 will support even more continuity in learning and progress. Staff know what they need to do next to maintain the positive progress they have made in improving the curriculum. They want to continue to build learning for sustainability through offering children more opportunities to learn in and about the outdoors. There is scope to continue to establish helpful partnerships with the community and local business to enrich the curriculum.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

The Highland council have provided significant support to the school to enable them to make improvements to the school over the last year. The acting headteacher has given clear leadership and direction to the school. She has worked well with the staff

team to improve the structure and guidance in the curriculum, assessment and tracking children's progress. She supports and encourages staff well. As a result there is now an improved ethos of learning across the school. Staff demonstrate a commitment to improving the outcomes for children. They recognise they need to continue to challenge each other to ensure a meticulous approach to the quality and consistency of children's learning experiences in each classroom. They have made a start to establishing a clearer picture of children's progress over time. This will help them make confident decisions about what is working well for children and what needs to improve further. The school has made clear progress in taking forward the aspects for development. It must ensure the pace of change continues to be brisk and ensure that children are able to reach the highest standards. We encourage parents to work with the school as it builds on this strong start and continues on its improvement journey.

What happens next?

There have been significant improvements to the quality of learning and teaching and children's engagement in their learning. Staff have improved how they meet the diverse range of needs within the school. The school have correctly identified that there is scope to improve the curriculum, meeting needs and attainment further. Although the school has now clearer leadership and direction to its work there is still further work on the school's improvement journey and also no permanent headteacher in post. As a result, our Area Lead Officer will work with The Highland Council to build capacity for improvement and will maintain contact to monitor progress. Parents will be informed of the extent to which the school has improved. We shall ask The Highland Council to provide us with a progress report within one year of the published report and decide at that point whether a further inspection is required.

Sadie Cushley
HM Inspector

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