17 November 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Sanquhar Primary School. 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 October 2025. 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.

The headteacher, with support from the local authority, should ensure they prioritise school improvement based on robust self-evaluation to improve the pace of change. Senior leaders and staff should ensure there are clear action plans with manageable, achievable targets for key areas of school improvement.

Since the last inspection there has been further positive progress in this area for development.

Senior leaders and staff have developed a clear, focused school improvement plan. Most staff and most children feel a greater sense of ownership of this plan, and an increased pride and sense of belonging as a result. Children have been involved in developing a pupil friendly version of this improvement plan which is now clearly displayed in the main school reception area. This is helping them to feel a part of the school's decision-making process. They are supported to them to have a greater voice in school improvement priorities through their work as captains and vice-captains and as part of the pupil voice groups. Senior leaders continue to implement improvement and change at a brisk pace.

Senior leaders are taking a more consistent approach to classroom observations as part of their quality assurance processes. They have provided staff with clearer guidance on classroom standards and expectations through the recently implemented teaching and learning policy. This is beginning to improve children's experience in class. Senior leaders should ensure that staff have more regular opportunities to engage in discussions about their practice and visit each other's classroom spaces to share aspects of their teaching.

Staff provide children with opportunities to develop a range of important skills such as communication and teamwork, through the pupil leadership groups. Staff should continue to empower children to lead on key areas of school improvement.

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Senior leaders now ensure that all staff, children and parents are fully consulted on how Pupil Equity Funds (PEF) are used to support children impacted by socio-economic disadvantage. All teachers and skilled pupil support staff continue to work with targeted children, closely monitoring their progress, attainment and achievement. This is supporting the work being done across the school to address any gaps in learning.

Learning Centre
The recent refurbishment of the Learning Centre (LC) has enhanced the learning environment through the addition of a third classroom and an outdoor learning area. This is supporting the delivery of the curriculum and provides children with improved experiences. The LC has a clear improvement plan, with priorities visible and understood across the setting.

Staff are beginning to lead aspects of the improvement priorities, for example curriculum development and outdoor learning.

The headteacher should work with all staff to develop more rigorous approaches to monitoring the quality of learning, teaching and assessment to ensure this is of a consistently high quality across the school and learning centre.

There has been positive progress made in this area for development.

The headteacher and staff now carefully monitor class work and classroom practice through a range of self-evaluation activities.

In all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning with children and how they can be successful. A new learning and teaching policy ensures children experience consistency in their learning. Children helped to develop a child friendly version of this which has been shared across the school. This is helping to increase children's understanding of what learning should look like in their classroom.

A recently introduced writing initiative is supporting children to be more reflective learners as teachers work with children to further develop the tools for writing. Children talk confidently about what they can now do and the skills they are developing. They are proud of the progress they are making in writing. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to ensure that all children have regular opportunities to write independently, to apply their skills and show what they can do without support.

Children's achievements both inside and outside of school are celebrated well. Children are proud to talk about their achievements and can do so at weekly assemblies. Staff celebrate children's achievements effectively through displays, an online platform to share with parents and a local newspaper. They support children to be confident in what they can do and recognise well the skills they are developing.

Staff work together and with children to improve learning environments across the school. Classrooms have been redesigned to be inclusive and calm. The use of dyslexia friendly text

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ensures that information displayed is accessible to everyone. This important piece of work has improved children's engagement in learning and their ability to remain on task.

To help monitor children's progress senior leaders have developed an assessment calendar, which clearly identifies the range of assessments used with children across each stage in school. This provides clearer information on children's progress over time.

Learning Centre
Staff within the LC work collaboratively with colleagues and partners. They work well with partners such as allied health professionals to ensure children's needs are met well. For example, allied health professionals have recently supported staff to learn about sensory circuits and heavy work, to support children with regulation and engagement in learning.

All staff are tracking learners progress bi-monthly for literacy and numeracy. A consistent tracking spreadsheet, developed by LC staff across the local authority, will be implemented this session to track children's attainment over time.

Staff should improve approaches to planning across the curriculum to ensure all children in the school and learning centre receive depth, breadth and progression in their learning. They should improve approaches to planning for children who require additional support with their learning.

There has been positive progress made in this area for development.

Staff now have a more consistent approach to planning across the school. This helps them meet the needs of all children more effectively. Teachers have an increased understanding of the knowledge and skills children have been taught in previous stages. They now plan learning that builds on, consolidates and extends children's prior learning. Children are involved in planning their learning using 'Know, Want to Know and Learned' grids. They talk positively about some of the learning experiences they have taken part in as a result of their planning input.

Teachers have worked together to develop a plan for learning through play which ensures children build on their learning in a planned and progressive manner. This still needs developed further. Teachers should continue to develop their role in supporting and enhancing children's learning through play.

Staff have recently undertaken training to raise attainment in writing. Staff now provide children with tasks at an appropriate level. This is supporting children to develop confidence in their writing.

Learning Centre
Almost all children learn during purposeful visits to places such as the local library, emergency services and community park. These visits support children to develop their understanding of the wider community and apply learning in real-life contexts, including developing their awareness of road and person safety.

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Most children require support using alternative augmentative communication, for example symbols and communication boards. Staff teach children to develop their skills in communicating for eating and drinking consistently. Staff should continue to develop children's skills in using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). This will support children to communicate more independently across the school and a range of contexts. Staff should work with mainstream class teachers to maximise opportunities for children to learn alongside their peers.

What happens next?

The school has made good 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.

Teri McIntosh
HM Inspector

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.

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