

23 September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Loanhead Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and East Ayrshire Council. 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 new headteacher should work collaboratively with all stakeholders to increase opportunities for leadership and improvement across the school. Children, parents and staff should be more involved in influencing and leading change through consultation and discussion.

Senior leaders and staff have made positive progress in this area for improvement.

The headteacher, together with staff, has now established more effective arrangements which they are using well to lead and influence change. Staff have worked collaboratively to develop approaches to improvement planning and reviewing the work of the school. Together, they have identified relevant and important next steps. Staff are now correctly focusing on learning, teaching and assessment, attainment and achievement, and the wellbeing and inclusion of children. Staff involvement in improvement planning has led to improvements in the consistency of learning and teaching and raising attainment across the school. The pace of change has been rapid and ambitious while remaining manageable. Senior leaders should continue to ensure the improvement plan is reviewed and evaluated by all staff on a regular and ongoing basis. This should help them to manage the pace of change effectively and ensure continued and sustained success in improving outcomes for children.

Senior leaders support staff to review the work of the school increasingly well. They consider a range of evidence and focus on the impact of their work on outcomes for children. As a result, staff have an increasingly accurate picture of the school's overall strengths and areas for continuous improvement. This is supporting all staff to work together to develop a culture of continuous improvement. As planned, all staff should continue to work together to develop consistently high-quality approaches to all aspects of learning and teaching across the school.

Since the original inspection, almost all teachers now have opportunities to lead areas of change and school improvement. Staff leadership roles are impacting positively on children's experiences and outcomes. For example, the recent work to review and develop approaches to assessment is supporting teachers to have a more accurate understanding of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. All children have opportunities to be leaders and inform change and improvement through an increasingly wide range of pupil leadership groups. Through these, many children lead on areas of school life and have opportunities to influence aspects of the life and work of the school. This includes being a house captain or

participating in pupil groups. Children from across the school participate in, for example, the rights respecting group. They share information with other children at assemblies and central displays. As a result, children are now involved more meaningfully in leading change and contributing positively to the school's improvement. As a next step, senior leaders should seek to involve children more regularly and formally in the evaluation of the school's work.

Since the original inspection, children now have a more frequent opportunities to share their views. The headteacher has established a pupil council to ensure the views of children from across the school are captured. This is supporting children across the school to feel that their views are valued and acted upon. Children increasingly influence improvements and see themselves as agents of change in the school. Parents provide their views on the work of the school through a parent and carer survey questionnaire. This includes, for example, the refreshed vision, values and aims for the school. Senior leaders consider carefully the feedback offered by parents and include this as part of their plans for further improvement. The headteacher shares plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding with the Parent Council. As planned, senior leaders should continue to involve parents and partners further in evaluating the quality of the school's work.

Teachers should plan and deliver more engaging and appropriately challenging tasks and activities which meet the needs of all learners. This will support children to be more engaged and accelerate their progress in learning.

Senior leaders and staff have made strong progress in this area for improvement. The headteacher has a clear vision and ambition for the school to provide high quality learning experiences for all children to fulfil their learning potential. This is now impacting positively on learning and teaching across the school.

The school community has worked together effectively to create guidance which sets out clear and consistent structure for staff to follow. Teachers report that they are feeling empowered to be more creative and innovative in their approaches to learning and teaching. In most classes, teachers match tasks and activities to the needs of children more appropriately. Most teachers use questioning to check for understanding. In most classes, there are increased opportunities for children to lead aspects of their learning. Children are more focussed when working independently and enjoy working together well in pairs and groups. Since the original inspection, tasks and activities are more stimulating and engaging. Most children say that their work is hard enough. Children are more involved in leading their learning and gaining greater independence. This is supporting children to accelerate their progress.

Staff have worked together to ensure there is a more consistent approach to planning learning. Since the original inspection, teachers now plan for assessment as part of planning for learning. Moving forward, staff should make increased use of the information they gain from assessments to further inform their planning for next steps in learning. This should help all children to make the best possible progress in learning and ensure appropriate levels of challenge for children who are exceeding their expected levels of attainment.

Senior leaders meet with teaching staff three times per year to discuss children's progress and what support and interventions children may require. All staff now have a clearer focus on how to better support those young people who face barriers to their learning through a

range of targeted interventions. Where appropriate, interventions and supports are identified to improve attainment and outcomes for children, particularly in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This is helping to close identified gaps in learning. Staff are now able to evidence more robustly the progress that children are making in their learning.

Senior leaders and staff should ensure children who require additional support for learning are fully included and access their full entitlement to education. They should develop a clear whole-school strategic approach to promote health and wellbeing and ensure equality and inclusion for all children.

Senior leaders and staff have made significant progress in this area for improvement.

Senior leaders have now developed a whole-school strategic approach to promote health and wellbeing. This includes ensuring that all staff engage in professional learning on important areas of wellbeing and statutory duties. This is supporting staff to have a greater focus on the wellbeing needs of children across the school.

Children are supported to evaluate and discuss their wellbeing regularly with teachers and support staff. They reflect on their overall wellbeing and use an online tool to record how they are feeling. Senior leaders and staff now monitor the wellbeing of children and offer appropriate support to those who require it. Staff use helpful planners to deliver a clear programme of learning for wellbeing. This area of the curriculum should be further developed to ensure it is relevant and meaningful for children to help them to make links with their own lives.

Almost all children who have been identified as requiring additional support with their learning are more fully included when learning in class. Their wellbeing and learning needs are being met more positively, and children are supported increasingly well. Staff now follow clear processes to identify, track and support children who require additional support through child's plans and individualised learning plans. These are now reviewed regularly with the views of parents and children considered. The skills and experience of classroom assistants is now more focussed in order to maximise the support given to children. Senior leaders and staff plan well with classroom assistants. Support staff are fully aware of strategies, interventions and use of resources which support children to make the best possible progress.

Staff now have a greater understanding of their responsibilities in relation to statutory guidance. They have greater clarity on what targeted and universal support means. Staff recognise their responsibilities in relation to the development and detail in planning for children with needs. Interventions are planned and monitored carefully by class teachers and senior staff to evaluate their effectiveness. Senior leaders and staff should continue to measure the impact of support to ensure that all children are able to reach their full potential.

Senior leaders and staff should improve the consistency of assessments to ensure the reliability of teacher judgements about children's progress. There is a need for a clear focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school.

Senior leaders and staff have made effective progress in this area for improvement.

Senior leaders and staff have taken positive steps to raise attainment across the school. They can evidence improvements in attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and staff should ensure that raising attainment remains a key priority across the school, with a focus on writing and numeracy.

Senior leaders have taken positive steps to build the confidence of teachers in their use of assessment information. Teachers now have better information about how children are progressing in their learning. As a result of these positive improvements, the school's attainment data is now more reliable. Teachers now work with colleagues from other schools to discuss standards of work. This is supporting them to become more familiar with national expectations. This is leading to increased confidence among teachers to make judgements about children's progress and attainment.

Senior leaders have rightly prioritised closing the attainment gap for children who face the greatest challenges to their learning. As a result, most children who require additional support with their learning are now making good progress towards their individual targets. Staff should continue to use a range of data to identify which children would benefit from additional support and measure the impact of specific interventions. This will enable them to better understand which interventions are having the greatest impact on closing learning gaps and accelerating progress for children.

Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated in assemblies and in class. Children experience success in a variety of sporting events and community activities. Staff now use data more effectively to identify children who are not participating in activities and at risk of missing out. They plan appropriately to ensure that all children can achieve more widely and are developing skills for learning, life, and work. This is helping to develop children's sense of achievement and supports them to be more aware of the importance of their role in the school and community.

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. East Ayrshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Simon Gallon
HM Inspector