

4 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Lochgilphead Joint Campus and Pre-Five Unit. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Argyll and Bute Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children, young people 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 and young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

At pace, senior and middle leaders should collaborate to improve the strategic leadership of all areas of the joint campus.

In the early learning and childcare setting, senior leaders have worked well with local authority colleagues and all practitioners to begin to improve strategic leadership. A very detailed action plan includes a breakdown of planned improvements, timescales and identifies the staff who are responsible for taking forward key changes. Senior leaders have an improved understanding of overall strengths and continued development needs.

Leadership of the primary department is strong. Senior leadership team remits have been redefined and this has had a positive impact on the pace of change across the primary stages. Senior and middle leaders have introduced processes to support staff in improving outcomes for children. Staff are working collaboratively and feel well supported to take forward change. They value the support from the senior leadership team.

Across the secondary stages, young people, including those who access learning at the learning centre, have increased opportunities to contribute to aspects of whole-school improvement. Opportunities include a new pupil voice group and the student voice research group. Senior and middle leaders are taking positive steps to act on the feedback from young people to improve focused aspects of the life and work of the school.

Overall, there remains a need to ensure that the all-through leadership of every stage continues to develop in line with the vision 'Where everyone thrives' across Lochgilphead Joint Campus.

At pace, senior and middle leaders should increase further the use of quality approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This should identify clear priorities for improvement that will have the greatest impact on learners' successes and achievements.

Across the early learning and childcare setting, approaches to quality assurance are improving. Practitioners now engage in a wide range of quality assurance, monitoring and audit activities, led by senior leaders. This includes essential observations of individual staff, learning environments and regular evaluations of record keeping. Practitioners' approaches

to monitoring and evaluating the work of the setting are becoming more thorough. Practitioners use these approaches to identify areas of strength and to inform where they can improve their practice further to improve children's experiences.

Across the primary stages, senior leaders and teachers have made positive progress since the initial inspection in designing improved approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Aspects of this work are beginning to have some impact on children's successes and achievements. Staff need more time to continue to monitor and evaluate these approaches to realise the aspirational impact across the campus.

At the secondary stages, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers are embedding recently developed approaches to quality assuring the strategic work of the school. This is helping, for example, to identify areas of effective practice and areas where more intensive improvement work is required to improve outcomes for young people. It is too early to see the impact on outcomes for young people that new approaches to quality assurance are having. However, there are early signs that how teachers now monitor pupil progress, for example across S1-S3, are beginning to lead to improved progress for young people.

Senior leaders and staff should continue to build timely positive relationships and expectations across the school. This should promote fairness, respect and behaviours in line with the aspiring values and vision of the joint campus.

In the early learning and childcare setting, children continue to benefit from nurturing, positive relationships that support children to feel secure. The team should continue to communicate and support one another to be more consistent in their practice as they implement recently agreed strategies for individual children. Practitioners should continue to make clearer connections with their campus vision and aims in all aspects of their practice.

At the primary stages, recent survey data demonstrates that most children feel safe, they have an adult they can speak to and that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Children speak very positively about their opportunities through the more regular, higher profile pupil voice groups. The creation of a child-friendly school improvement plan would support children to have a better understanding of the overarching priorities for the school. Staff need to ensure that all children continue to feel heard and that their views are valued.

At the secondary stages, all staff are addressing this area for improvement successfully. Senior leaders have linked the school values to the promotion of rights. Children's rights are becoming higher profile across all stages of the campus. Children and young people are beginning to make links with their learning and building relationships, to children's rights. This is helping to create a more positive and motivational environment for learning. A next step for leaders at all levels is to extend this work as part of developments to establish a whole-school, rights-based approach to learning and developing relationships across the campus.

Overall, senior and middle leaders and teachers are making very positive progress to build positive relationships and raise expectations across the campus. Children and young people report improving fairness, respect and behaviours in line with the aspiring values and vision of the joint campus.

At pace, senior and middle leaders and staff should develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. This should result in learners' experiences being consistently planned and delivered effectively, based on a relevant and dynamic curriculum.

In the early learning and childcare setting, practitioners are working well with colleagues from the local authority, to evaluate and improve learning spaces. They are also beginning to work more effectively to plan for children's learning. There are now early signs of children having access to more appropriate learning resources and routines that develop children's independence and choice. Practitioners are also implementing an extensive range of improvements, stemming from recent professional learning.

Across the primary stages, children's learning takes greater account of Curriculum for Excellence national standards and expectations across almost all curriculum areas. In the majority of lessons, most children are engaged in their learning and articulate what they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Children have regular opportunities to work individually and in partners and in groups. In literacy and numeracy, children work well together to assess each other's progress. There is a need, as planned, for teachers to continue to have higher expectations of what children can achieve. This includes planning learning that is highly motivating and challenges children in their learning.

At the secondary stages overall there has been positive progress in this area for improvement. There remain important aspects that senior leaders and staff need to continue to improve. For example, there is a need to ensure that courses and programmes for young people are supported by appropriately high quality and motivational learning experiences. A minority of young people feel that expectations of them in S1 are too low. Staff should ensure that planning of learning consistently takes account of prior learning and challenges all young people appropriately.

Teachers know young people well. Senior leaders and pastoral support staff provide them with helpful information to support the needs of young people. Staff need now to take further steps to ensure that tasks and activities are tailored to meet the needs of all learners.

Children and young people report that the quality of their learning had improved over the last year. They welcome the more frequent opportunities to lead aspects of their learning. Staff at all levels in the primary and secondary departments are working collaboratively and enthusiastically to improve learners' experiences. They contribute strongly to leading staff professional learning activities.

Senior leaders should ensure that all children and young people, who need targeted support for their learning and development, have immediate and thorough support plans and processes in place.

Across the early learning and childcare setting, children who require specific agreed strategies and plans to meet their needs now have improved individual plans. Parents and carers are actively involved to complete records within appropriate timescales. Plans now include more detailed information about children's specific needs and contain agreed strategies to support their learning.

Overall, positive progress has been made in this area and the plans recorded for individual children are improving. Senior leaders should continue to support the team to develop appropriate targets that reflect children's changing needs, individual strengths and capabilities as they grow and develop.

Across the primary stages, senior leaders have reviewed approaches to meet better the needs of all children, including those with barriers to their learning. All children who require support with their learning have clearer individualised plans for support. These plans are shared and updated regularly with teachers. They now have a greater awareness of the children in their class who require targeted support and their staged intervention level.

Overall, staff are continuing to make progress in the implementation of individual support plans and processes for children who need targeted support in their learning and development. Senior leaders now provide more consistent support to the learning centre across the week. These improvements have been very well-received by staff by providing clearer leadership and guidance to support the learning needs of individual children.

Across the secondary stages, senior leaders and teachers are making positive progress to improving support plans for young people who need targeted support for their learning and development. Senior leaders have introduced a helpful local authority framework to help to guide staff to support young people who have additional support needs. This is supporting improved planning and review procedures. Positively, the majority of young people who require a support plan now have this in place.

At pace, senior leaders and staff should develop a clear strategy that results in accelerating children and young people's progress, attainment and achievement. This should include having effective processes to plan, track and monitor children and young people's progress.

Across the early learning and childcare setting, this area of work is at an early stage of development. Practitioners understand the need to further improve how they plan and monitor children's learning. The team is at the early stages of implementing new systems to monitor children's progress.

At the primary stages, senior leaders and class teachers, identify and plan interventions for children who are not on track to achieve expected national levels of attainment. They now review progress regularly and take appropriate actions to ensure they are supporting children to make the best possible progress. Teachers are at the early stages of aligning learning and teaching with the overall aim of raising attainment and achievement. Moving forward, there is still a need to implement effectively the strategy for raising children's attainment and achievement.

At the secondary stages, senior leaders have made positive progress with establishing a 'Raising Attainment Policy.' This helps to outline staff roles and responsibilities across the school. As planned, senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact of this policy on the progress of young people and their learning experiences in lessons. Senior leaders have also developed a helpful 'learner journey' to highlight progress pathways for young people from S1-S6. This is in its early stages of implementation and would benefit from some further development to meet the school value of 'ambition'.

Teaching staff have established an improved system across all secondary school subjects to monitor the progress of young people. Staff report positively about this in terms of being able to see learners' progress across all subject areas. Currently, it is too early to report the impact the tracking data is having on accelerating learners' progress. Moving forward, senior leaders should continue to support teachers at all stages to strengthen their judgments of young people's progress against national standards.

Overall, senior leaders and staff have begun to make positive progress in developing clear strategies with the aspiration of accelerating children and young people's progress, attainment and achievement. It is too early to evaluate the impact of progress in accelerating and raising attainment at all stages across the campus. This remains an area for improvement for senior leaders to progress at pace.

What happens next?

The school has begun to make progress in all of the areas for improvement. We will liaise with Argyll and Bute Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Argyll and Bute 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