

5 November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Lincluden Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dumfries and Galloway 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.

Staff should improve approaches to promoting and supporting positive relationships and behaviour across the primary school.

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

Senior leaders have worked well with all parents, children and staff to develop a positive relationships policy. This policy identifies clearly the school's approaches and expectations to ensuring positive relationships and high standards of behaviour. All staff support children very effectively to understand these in classes, in the playground and at assemblies. Children talk confidently about how the approaches and expectations look and feel like for them in daily school life. As a result of this work, behaviour has improved and relationships between staff and children and children and their peers are increasingly positive.

Children respond well to their positive behaviours being recognised through awards shared in assemblies and classes. Staff link these awards clearly to the school community's agreed expectations and values. Staff help children to be able to talk about their behaviours and actions. This is supporting children to take responsibility and positive action towards improving behaviour further.

Senior leaders and staff know children well and identify and respond promptly to children's social and emotional needs. Staff have taken part in a variety of professional learning to support them with this. For example, they have improved their awareness of nurture, autism and trauma. As a result, staff are more able to identify strategies and approaches to support children in school. Senior leaders and staff have established strong partnerships with parents and partners. Together, they plan effective ways to support children's individual needs well. As a result of children's needs being better met, children are more engaged in their learning and behaviour has improved.

Staff need to review current approaches to learning, teaching and assessment in the primary school. They should plan lessons and activities at the right level to meet the needs of all children.

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

Staff, children and parents have worked together well to create a new learning, teaching and assessment policy. In addition, senior leaders have worked with staff and children to create a helpful visual which identifies what effective learning, teaching and assessment looks like in lessons. Senior leaders undertake regularly activity to help them evaluate the quality of learning and teaching and the use of assessment across the school. This involves senior leaders visiting classrooms to observe teaching, reviewing children's work and talking to children about their experiences. Senior leaders provide useful feedback to teachers individually following this activity to support them in identifying progress and further improvements. As a result of this work, children are more engaged in their learning and learning and teaching experiences are improving.

Staff have reviewed and updated their approaches to planning children's learning. This includes reflection on how well teachers plan at the right level of difficulty for individual children. Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss how outcomes of assessments could be used better to identify children's next steps for learning. As a result of these discussions, teachers are now using assessment information more effectively to plan learning that meets the needs of all children. This is having a positive impact on improving children's learning experiences and supporting them to make better progress.

Staff in the early years and learning centre have evaluated children's learning environments using national guidance. They have made changes to the classroom layout which supports successfully children's ability to be more creative and curious. As a result, children apply their learning in different ways and experience greater opportunities to learn successfully through play. Teachers should continue to use national guidance to support them as they develop further play experiences for children.

Staff should raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the primary school.

Senior leaders have taken positive steps to addressing this area for improvement.

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved. Most children achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy in June 2024.

Staff have worked well together and with their partners to provide a variety of interventions to support improvements in attainment. In particular, teachers at some stages have undertaken professional learning with a national improving writing programme. This has improved their confidence and skills in teaching writing. In addition, new approaches to teaching writing have had a positive effect on children's enthusiasm and helped to raise attainment in this area. Senior leaders should now share this good practice across all classes. Staff deliver health and wellbeing interventions to support specific individual needs. These interventions are having a positive impact on improving children's engagement and focus during lessons. As a result, attainment and progress is improving for these children.

Staff have trained a group of primary seven children to act as learning tutors to support younger children with phonics and handwriting. This is helping to improve outcomes for younger children. In addition, it provides older children with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills as they offer support to the younger children to discuss their learning and achievement.

The headteacher, working with all staff, should now develop robust systems to check on children's progress in the primary school. This will help staff to take appropriate action when children are not reaching the expected levels of attainment.

Senior leaders have made strong progress within this area for improvement.

Senior leaders have developed a new system and robust approach to track more effectively the progress and attainment of all children. Through this system, staff discuss children who are on track to achieve expected levels of attainment, are exceeding expected levels or who need further support. In addition, staff are using this information to plan targeted interventions which provide support and additional challenge for individuals. This is having a positive impact on improving the progress of children.

Senior leaders analyse whole school attainment data carefully to monitor the impact of the school's work. Senior leaders, support for learning staff and class teachers meet termly to evaluate the progress of every child in their class. Together, they review children's assessments and evidence of their learning and identify ways to raise attainment further. As a result, teachers are now taking more appropriate action to improve the progress of children.

Senior leaders and staff know their community well and have identified specific children whose progress may be affected by social and economic barriers. Senior leaders closely monitor and track the attainment and progress of these children. In addition, they provide additional support through a variety of interventions to minimise any impact. This is having a positive impact on increasing the progress for a few children. Senior leaders should now evaluate more effectively the impact of all interventions used. This will allow them to measure more clearly the impact these are having on closing the identified gaps in children's learning.

What happens next?

The school has made very positive 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.

Judith Reid
HM Inspector