

2 December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Littlemill Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (ECC). 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.

Senior leaders and staff should embed policies, guidance and processes to raise attainment and achievement for all children across the school and ECC.

Since the original inspection senior leaders and staff have made some progress in addressing this area for improvement.

Senior leaders and staff have taken positive steps to embed policies, guidance and processes to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school and ECC. This is beginning to have a positive impact on children's progress and attainment in literacy. The impact on children's progress in numeracy is not yet evident. Raising attainment, attendance and achievement must remain a key priority across the school and ECC.

Senior leaders have introduced improved arrangements to evaluate the work of the school. These are beginning to help staff to better identify strengths and areas for improvement that will raise attainment and achievement. Staff, through their analysis of data, identified the need to further address gaps in attainment for identified children. They have made this a priority in the current school improvement plan.

Since the original inspection, practitioners in the ECC have made progress in strengthening planning, policies and improvement processes. They now use national guidance to reflect on their practice and identify areas for development. Learning journals are now clearer and better used to plan next steps. These approaches are beginning to improve children's progress in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing.

Practitioners have worked closely with local authority staff to identify what the ECC does well and where it can improve. They have worked closely with the headteacher to make sure policies such as safeguarding and inclusion are clearly understood and followed. This has strengthened practitioner confidence and consistency in putting policy into practice. Practitioners have begun to use detailed care plans to tailor learning to each child's needs. In doing so, they have built strong relationships with children and families. As a result, children are making better progress in literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing. Practitioners feel supported and proud of the improvements they have made in the ECC. Senior leaders should give staff time and support to build on improvements and embed policies further. This will help them continue to raise attainment and achievement for all children.

Senior leaders have very recently revised the school's tracking and monitoring policy and procedures. They recognise that they need to embed this policy further. They need to enhance their use of data to track and monitor the progress of groups of children who require additional support or face disadvantage. Senior leaders have identified the need to develop a system to track and monitor the progression of children's learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum. This should ensure children build on what they've already learned and that gaps in learning are identified and addressed quickly.

Children continue to enjoy having their achievements recognised through class activities, assemblies, and displays. The ongoing use of individual awards and values certificates provides meaningful incentives and celebrates their successes. Children have begun to take on leadership roles such as eco committee members, digital leaders and house captains. These roles help children influence school improvements and build responsibility. Children now need to participate in achievements beyond the classroom more regularly. Senior leaders should develop systems to track children's participation and skills development in clubs and wider activities.

Attendance in June 2025 was 84%, which is below the national average. Senior leaders have continued to monitor children's attendance effectively. They have a good understanding of the different reasons for low attendance but have not yet made sufficient progress in improving attendance rates. This continues to impact on attainment and achievement for those children with low attendance. Staff now need to take further proactive measures to improve attendance levels. They also need to monitor lateness more closely and identify patterns. Senior leaders should work in partnership with parents to improve attendance and explain how it affects learning. This will help children make the best possible progress.

Senior leaders should support staff to develop further the use of assessments and data to track more clearly how much and how well all children progress over time. This information should be used to plan learning that challenges children to make the best possible progress.

Senior leaders and staff have made good progress in their use of assessments and data to track more clearly children's progress over time.

Practitioners within the ECC are making steady progress in using assessment and data to support children's learning and development. They have created new ways to better track each child's progress in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. They share information about children's progress during termly meetings and through daily observations. This helps them plan learning that is both intentional and responsive. As a result, most children are now making appropriate progress over time.

Senior leaders support practitioners well to use improved assessment approaches. They are now using their knowledge of children more effectively when planning meaningful and engaging learning experiences. Practitioners are becoming more confident in adapting learning to meet individual needs. This includes children who need extra help and those ready for more challenge.

Senior leaders have recently revised the school's tracking and monitoring policy and procedures to support them to better monitor children's progress and attainment. They now

have strong systems in place that give a clearer picture of how each child is progressing over time. This now helps them understand both individual and class progress, and identify any dips in learning.

Across the school, teachers have created a clear assessment policy and calendar. This is helping them to assess children's learning more consistently across the curriculum and throughout the year. Staff are becoming more confident in using assessment data to understand children's progress and plan next steps. Teachers now use a wider range of assessments when planning learning. This is supporting them to better meet children's needs. Teachers make more effective use of data to evidence the impact of interventions to support children who require additional support. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to support children with well-considered interventions. Staff now need to set clearer, more specific, measurable targets for children requiring additional support or challenge. They should fully involve children and parents in the regular review of these. This should support them in identifying clearly the progress children are making and their next steps in learning.

Teachers have improved planning for literacy to meet the needs of multi-stage classes more effectively. They make better use of national progression frameworks to support planning and assessment. Senior leaders and staff should now evaluate how well this improved approach to planning is supporting children to make better progress. They should continue to support improvements in planning across all curricular areas.

Senior leaders should continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school and ECC. This should ensure all children increase their ability to lead their own learning and are clear about their next steps and how they can be successful at school.

Some progress has been made towards improving the quality of learning and teaching, particularly in the ECC. Senior leaders and staff need to continue to focus on this area to secure sustained improvement across the establishment.

Practitioners in the ECC have made clear progress in improving learning and teaching. They have developed a responsive planning cycle that links closely to observations and practitioner dialogue. This cycle is helping practitioners to plan rich learning experiences based on children's interests that is extending their thinking. They create more engaging and purposeful spaces that are supporting children to explore and be curious. Practitioners use thoughtful prompts and questions to deepen children's thinking and sustain engagement.

Professional learning, including nurture and sensory training, has strengthened practitioner confidence and skills. They now provide more intentional and meaningful learning experiences. Practitioners have improved the quality of learning spaces and resources, both in the playroom and outdoors. This is supporting a few children to persevere, sustain concentration and develop problem-solving skills.

Across the school, children enjoy positive relationships and now feel more motivated to learn. Teachers give clear instructions and praise children's efforts. In the majority of lessons, teachers now share criteria that help children to be successful. Older children set and review writing targets. This helps them better understand their next steps in writing. All teachers

should now involve children in target-setting in more areas of learning. Most children now experience learning at the right level. Some children still need learning that provides them with greater challenge. Lessons continue to be teacher-led and this impacts on children's motivation and engagement. Children should spend more time learning independently, working in teams and exploring real-life contexts. Teachers should provide children with more opportunities to lead their own learning.

Staff created a learning and teaching statement to guide improvements. It outlines what effective learning and teaching should look like. Some features are now embedded, however other aspects of learning and teaching still need further work. Staff should continue using this statement to improve their practice. Senior leaders need to revisit the child-friendly version of the learning and teaching statement to help children understand the expectations and how these relate to their learning.

Staff have taken part in professional learning to improve their learning and teaching of literacy. They have used this well to improve the teaching of writing. Senior leaders should continue to support all staff to engage in high-quality professional learning and ensure they reflect on its impact.

Senior leaders now carry out regular classroom observations, planning discussions and sample children's work. Teachers use the feedback from these activities to support improvements to their practice. Senior leaders and staff should continue to use information from quality assurance to improve further learning and teaching across the school.

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with East Ayrshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with East Ayrshire 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.

Jennifer Wadley
HM Inspector