



24 March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Rephad 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. We subsequently returned to the school to look at how it had continued to improve its work and published another letter in February 2024 and in March 2025. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff. We heard from the acting 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 Care Inspectorate inspected the nursery at the same time and that report will be available at www.careinspectorate.com.

Improve leadership of the nursery and in doing so ensure senior leaders and staff more fully understand their roles and responsibilities and review current policies and procedures.

Senior leaders and staff in the nursery have continued to make positive progress in this area for improvement since the last inspection.

The acting depute headteacher and the nursery manager work together effectively through regular meetings and shared monitoring. They share a clear vision for the nursery. Their joint work is driving steady improvement based on a strong understanding of high-quality early learning and childcare. This is helping staff to improve the nursery in a way that is less dependent on inspection findings.

The local authority early years team continues to provide strong support to the nursery team. Their tailored advice has helped staff improve observation skills and self-evaluation. Senior leaders are now more confident and more independent in identifying what is working and what needs to improve.

Staff value the refreshed leadership approach and feel more confident in their roles. Most staff report better communication, respect and trust. Staff's morale and wellbeing have improved, and this is shown by greater staff ownership of improvement. All staff now engage in regular check-ins with senior leaders and receive personalised feedback on their practice. This helps staff identify their own professional learning needs. Working together, staff have developed clear expectations, such as how they will manage playroom areas and create



floorbooks. Senior leaders should use these expectations as part of their monitoring process to support consistent improved practice across the nursery.

Staff welcome the opportunity to have leadership roles and understand their responsibilities. They should engage in further professional learning which should help to support sustained, high-quality improvement.

Together, senior leaders and staff should develop how they gather information on how well the nursery is doing. It will be helpful to have clearer priorities and to check that changes are leading to improvements for children.

Senior leaders and staff in the nursery continue to make steady, positive progress in this area for improvement.

Senior leaders carry out regular checks of key areas in the nursery, such as accidents and medication. They share these responsibilities, which adds greater rigour to the monitoring of the work of the nursery. They are beginning to monitor learning and teaching. The local authority early years team provides helpful feedback to support and challenge senior leaders about this monitoring. This helps senior leaders to improve monitoring processes further. It is important that staff record this feedback, the actions taken and sustain improvements. This should support a clearer cycle of self-evaluation of the work of the nursery.

Senior leaders now use national guidance and evaluation tools more confidently. Staff increasingly evaluate their work as a team through regular discussions at staff meetings. They plan to observe each other's practice and have already agreed a shared view of high-quality learning. The nursery improvement plan sets out appropriate priorities. It is leading to improvements including better staff wellbeing, stronger support for learning for children who require it, and the introduction of new staff review processes.

Improve the quality of learning experiences for children in the nursery ensuring these build on prior learning and support their wellbeing.

Staff have made good progress in improving the nursery environment and quality of learning experiences.

All staff have developed indoor and outdoor spaces that offer rich experiences for children. These experiences help children build curiosity, creativity and enquiry skills. Staff now need to encourage children more consistently to take responsibility for keeping spaces tidy.

Staff work well together to agree clear standards for high-quality learning experiences for children. They are beginning to improve their questioning skills to help them extend children's learning. They should continue to review and refresh the environment to meet the needs of the youngest children and those who need greater challenge in their learning.

Staff have reviewed how they use playroom spaces to support children's wellbeing. They have created calm areas with soft furnishings. They now need to plan the flow of the day and

experiences provided more carefully to meet the wellbeing needs of all children. For example, they should ensure very young children can relax, supported by an adult, in a quiet space when they choose to do so.

Staff meet regularly to plan learning. They use floorbooks and daily meetings well to respond to and plan for children's needs and interests. Staff are improving their observations and use them to track children's progress effectively. They now need to develop further their understanding of early developmental milestones to support all children more effectively.

Across the school and nursery, senior leaders and staff should develop further approaches to planning and assessing progress for children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing. This should include working closely with parents and children.

Staff across the school and nursery have made strong progress in improving how they plan and assess the progress of children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing.

Senior leaders now review and update the overview of children's needs annually. This overview helps teachers in the school and learning centre, and staff in the nursery, plan appropriate learning for children who require additional support. Teachers in the school and learning centre and staff in the nursery now work more closely with support staff and parents to create individual educational plans. Together, they set specific and measurable targets for individual children's learning and wellbeing. Staff say this gives them clearer guidance on what children should learn and by when. They track children's progress carefully and use this information to plan children's next steps. Across the school and nursery, staff should involve children more in planning and reviewing their targets. In the nursery, staff need to extend the use of clear, specific targets for children's individual planning to next steps in learning for all children.

The acting headteacher timetables regular time for teachers to meet support for learning staff to discuss and identify strategies and resources to support all children. Teachers value this joint working and say it helps them plan effectively. Additional support for learning staff offer useful guidance, which increases teachers' confidence in using a wider range of resources and strategies to support all children. This is helping to improve outcomes for children who need extra help.

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.

Katharine Crombie
HM Inspector

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