

16 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2019, HM Inspectors published a letter on Patna Primary School and Nursery Class. 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 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's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

**Improve learning, teaching and assessment by raising expectations of what children can achieve; and by ensuring an appropriate, progressive curriculum is in place for all children.**

Staff have made good progress on improving the quality of learning and teaching across the school and the supported learning centre (SLC). There has been satisfactory progress in providing progression in learning within the curriculum offered to children. However, more now needs to be done to ensure that staff have higher expectations of what children can achieve. At present, children's attainment, particularly at the first and second levels, is not high enough. The headteacher needs to provide clearer leadership and direction to help staff improve the accuracy of assessment information. At present, the assessment of most children's attainment is inaccurate.

Practitioners within the nursery have made good progress in this area for improvement. They have visited other nurseries to improve their practice. As a result, they have made positive changes to the playroom to ensure children have access to a wide range of resources. Children now engage in more imaginative play. Practitioners ensure that planning and tracking of children's progress is now more streamlined. East Ayrshire Council have made positive changes to the nursery by providing an exciting outdoor area. Children now have the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills and develop their imaginative play outdoors.

Relationships between staff and pupils remain a positive feature of the SLC. There is now a need to provide children with greater pace, challenge and higher expectations within their planned learning. Staff should now concentrate on improving individual learning plan targets to focus more on improving wellbeing and reducing children's barriers to learning. The headteacher should review the make-up of the two classes within the SLC to ensure children experience learning appropriate to their age and stage of development.

**Develop robust and rigorous self-evaluation approaches to inform appropriate improvement priorities and increase the pace of change.**

There has been insufficient progress made on this main point for action across the school and the SLC. Overall, the leadership team need to ensure that information on children's attainment is accurate. They need to take steps to ensure that all improvements made across the school result in improved attainment. The leadership team have improved the range of ways in which they gather evidence on the work of the school. They seek the views of staff, children and parents on a range of topics. They are beginning to include children more in evaluating the work of the school. Staff are more involved in change and have their say in school improvement. However, this is at an early stage of development. East Ayrshire Council provides the school with a helpful way to track children's progress. Staff need clearer guidance on how this should be used to track children's progress effectively. A significant number of parents would like more frequent information on their children's progress.

Practitioners have been successful in evaluating the work of the nursery. In doing this, they have increased the pace of change. They have made good use of national guidance to evaluate the quality of provision within the setting. In addition, practitioners have visited a significant number of nurseries to learn about good practice within and outwith the local authority. They have made good use of online profiles to fully document children's progress and identify next steps in learning. As a result, they have raised their expectations of what can be achieved within the nursery.

**Strengthen leadership at all levels in order to raise attainment for every child.**

There has been satisfactory progress made in increasing leadership opportunities across the school, but insufficient progress has been made on raising attainment. This needs addressed as a matter of urgency.

All staff across the school and the SLC have led recent school improvement initiatives and support staff take the lead on improving progress for small groups of children. This is increasing the sense of teamwork to help drive forward the pace of change. However, this is at an early stage of development. Overall, there is a need to strengthen the leadership and direction of the school. The headteacher should ensure that all monitoring and support activities contribute to raising children's attainment. There is a need to provide staff with clear leadership on assessment and the use of National Benchmarks to ensure accuracy of teacher judgement on achievement of a level. There is a need to identify gaps in learning and address these gaps in learning without delay. The headteacher should ensure good use is made of Pupil Equity Funding to have a direct impact on raising attainment.

Practitioners and senior staff within the nursery are developing their leadership skills well. They receive effective guidance from East Ayrshire Council visiting support staff to help improve the nursery. Practitioners are proactive in taking forward areas for improvement. As a result, the pace of change in the nursery is brisk, with children showing good progress in their learning.

### What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we identified areas where improvements are still required. In light of the current circumstances, we will liaise with East Ayrshire Council to discuss our findings and support for the school. We will provide you with an update on next steps once the school has reopened.

Sadie Cushley  
HM Inspector