

23 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2019, HM Inspectors published a letter on Loudoun-Montgomery Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and North 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 both the interim headteacher and current headteacher together with 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 class at the same time and that report will be available at www.careinspectorate.com.

Improve learning, teaching and assessment.

The school has made good progress in improving learning, teaching and assessment.

Relationships across the school and nursery class are nurturing and caring. Most children engage well in their learning. Teachers and practitioners know children very well as individuals. The quality of learning and teaching across the school and nursery class is improving. Teachers and practitioners engage well in a range of learning opportunities, which support these improvements.

In the nursery class, children are supported effectively by practitioners, whose positive interactions extend and deepen their learning. Overall, most practitioners use open-ended questions well to encourage children to think and discover solutions for themselves. Practitioners have worked together well to develop further children's learning journals. Overall, these are capturing the significant learning for each child. Practitioners are developing their confidence in using new planning approaches based on local guidance. They observe children and take account of their interests and needs when planning learning experiences. Senior leaders use professional dialogue with practitioners to discuss children's progress and intervene with appropriate supports when required. Practitioners should continue to develop processes for observing and planning children's learning.

Across the school, teachers share effectively what children are learning and their steps to success. Teachers review this regularly to help children to see the progress they are making. Across the school, all children set individual targets linked to health and wellbeing and listening and talking. This helps children to identify their next steps in learning. Senior leaders have identified the need to engage parents more in this process to ensure they are fully engaged in their children's learning. Children are becoming more consistently engaged in their learning. They show increased confidence in describing what they are learning. In most lessons, learning experiences better reflects the needs of children. As a result, children engage well in appropriate tasks matched to their needs. Teachers make better use of the outdoor spaces to enhance children's learning experiences. Senior leaders have developed clear approaches to ensure assessment informs teachers' planning of learning and teaching. Teachers discuss regularly children's progress with senior leaders. This supports teachers

planning of learning experiences and helps identify appropriate interventions to ensure children make continued progress.

Ensure appropriate processes and support are in place to improve outcomes for all children, in particular those with barriers to learning.

The school has made good progress in establishing appropriate processes and supports to improve outcomes for all children.

In the nursery class, practitioners and children increasingly use the language of the wellbeing indicators in their daily practice. Senior managers have put in place procedures to make sure that significant events and information relating to children's wellbeing are appropriately recorded and monitored. Practitioners have reviewed children's plans and all children who face barriers to their learning have individual plans in place. These are created in consultation with families and other partners, where appropriate. Practitioners should continue to ensure all relevant information relating to children's wellbeing is easily understood by staff and accessible when required.

Across the school, teachers continue to develop children's understanding of wellbeing and the impact this has on their lives. In most classes, teachers provide better differentiated learning approaches, including the use of appropriate tasks and activities suited to the needs of all children. The management of record keeping for children with additional support needs has improved significantly. Senior leaders now have a helpful overview of supports in place for all children. Processes are in place to consider the needs of children and to identify appropriate interventions. Teachers and senior leaders use plans appropriately to support barriers to children's learning. They review and update these plans regularly in consultation with families. Staff should continue to develop children's targets to ensure they are specific and measurable. This should ensure these have maximum impact on children's progress.

Develop robust approaches to self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. Develop strategic leadership and leadership at all levels to drive forward improvements at an increased pace of change.

The school has made good progress in developing robust approaches to self-evaluation and establishing strategic leadership at all levels.

The local authority appointed an experienced interim headteacher who initiated changes across the nursery class and school. She established a detailed action plan with specific, clear and measurable outcomes. This has led to a brisk pace of change across the school and nursery class which is well supported and embraced by all staff and the wider school community. This is impacting positively on both children and their families. She led effectively the review and refresh of the vision, values and aims across the nursery and school. The values are understood fully by the whole school community.

In the nursery, the newly appointed team, alongside existing practitioners has formed a welcoming and inclusive environment. They are supportive and respect each other's skills and knowledge. All practitioners have leadership roles and are increasingly involved in reviewing the work of the nursery. They welcome feedback to support children's experiences.

Practitioners should continue to develop their roles and responsibilities in improving the work of the nursery.

Across the school, all staff now lead on aspects of the school's development work. Senior leaders now provide robust, high quality feedback to teachers, which is improving the quality of learning and teaching. Staff engage in a range of useful professional learning opportunities. This is leading to better learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy. Teachers provide children with opportunities to develop their leadership skills through various committees. They should continue to involve children more in identifying ways to improve their school.

Raise attainment, focussing on developing planning, progressive pathways and an understanding of national standards through effective moderation.

The school has made good progress in these areas of work.

In the nursery, practitioners support children to make continued progress in literacy by introducing a wider range of books. Practitioners have attended training on numeracy development and feel more confident in this area. In health and wellbeing, practitioners support children to talk about their emotions using the wellbeing indicators. Children who experience barriers to learning are well supported by practitioners. They use a range of information to demonstrate the progress children are making in their learning and to plan future supports. Practitioners should continue to explore a range of approaches, which support all children to make progress in their learning.

Across the school, teachers have developed appropriate expectations across a few curricular areas. They should continue to develop these across all curriculum areas. Senior leaders have developed systems to check on children's progress and to monitor the impact of any identified interventions. An appropriate plan is in place to support the spending of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This has been agreed with the school community. Teachers have increased ownership of all assessment information relating to children progress and attainment. They use this information more effectively to inform learning and teaching approaches. As a result, attainment levels at P4 and P7 are beginning to improve in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders continue to develop opportunities for teachers to develop their understanding of national standards. This supports them to make more robust and reliable judgements about children's progress.

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. North Ayrshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Scott Lavery
HM Inspector