

1 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Kingsford Primary School and Nursery Class, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officers the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

The staff team worked well together to respond to the challenges of COVID-19. They quickly developed skills in using a range of digital tools and platforms. This supported the continuation of learning for children during periods of remote learning. They also provided resources including jotters, papers and writing materials. Weekly check-ins with families proved invaluable in monitoring wellbeing and tailoring support for those who needed additional supports. Staff have been supported well to understand the challenges children may have faced during COVID-19 through a range of professional learning opportunities. Improved team working is supporting the school's improvement and its ongoing recovery.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The recently appointed headteacher had been in post for 14 weeks at the time of the visit. During this period, she has made a strong start to improving the strategic leadership of the school. She works closely with staff to identify priorities for professional development and improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school and nursery. The acting deputy headteacher leads early learning in the newly built nursery and at P1 very well. Since her appointment in April 2020, she has led significant change successfully. Staff value opportunities to contribute to shared leadership. Children are increasingly involved in decision making and evaluating the work of the school. The 'pupil leadership team' influences how the school can improve further. The revised quality improvement plan outlines clearly the areas staff will take forward for the current session and the next three years. Almost all staff are motivated to work together to ensure progress in the school's improvements. Professional discussions about children's learning and more effective use of assessment information is leading to increased confidence in making judgements about how well children are making progress. The headteacher and staff should continue to develop further their shared understanding of expectations to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

The senior leadership team (SLT) has clearly defined remits and responsibilities that build on their professional expertise and knowledge. The SLT's increasing use of school data is

leading to well-targeted support for children and effective use of resources to meet a wide range of children's needs. The school and nursery teams have an increased focus on sharing support fairly and provide support for families effectively. Relationships across the school and nursery class are positive and parents value the efforts staff make to ensure children are well cared for. Children are developing a good understanding of their own health and wellbeing. Learning outdoors is helping children appreciate the importance of health and physical activity. The school and nursery make effective use of the outdoor area and should continue to develop this further. Overall, the school and nursery are making good progress in supporting children's wellbeing.

School staff and nursery practitioners are committed to continuous improvement in their practice. Commendably, members of the support staff team are included in team discussions and training opportunities. Staff have made a promising start to developing a common understanding of how to support and challenge learning effectively. They should continue to build on the very positive start made to their ongoing professional development. They are working well together and developing positive relationships founded on mutual respect and trust. They demonstrate an enthusiasm to share good practice and accept support when needed. The team should continue to strive for consistency in high quality learning and teaching across the school and nursery and develop play-based learning further, as planned.

The school has recently introduced new approaches to developing phonics and spelling programmes. Children across the school are learning a range of skills. They use digital technology with confidence and can apply their new skills well in other areas of learning. The school and nursery are at an early stage in developing the curriculum. We have asked that they continue to refresh approaches to ensure children are building on their skills across all stages.

The headteacher has made good progress in reviewing the school's approaches to meet the needs of all learners. Children who have additional support needs, are identified through assessment and discussions with staff. Children's needs across the school and nursery are collated and resources shared appropriately. Information is shared with staff and used effectively to support improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. Teachers are developing confidence in making professional judgements about the progress children are making. Staff across the nursery and early level classes observe individual children in their play and learning. The information is used well to build on children's learning. We have asked the school to continue with its strong focus on learning outcomes for children to ensure improvement in children's attainment and achievements over time.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have also been making progress in taking forward the areas for improvement from the original inspection. We recognise that the school needs some more time to implement fully its priorities for improvement. We have asked Aberdeen City Council to provide us with further information about the school's progress within one year of the publication of this letter. We will work together with local authority officers to agree what will happen next. Should we require another visit to the school, we will inform, parents/carers. Otherwise, Aberdeen City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality its education service.

Susan Gow
HM Inspector