

15 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 Patna Primary School, 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 to Patna Primary School. 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 new headteacher and local authority officer 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

Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and depute headteacher have been appointed to lead the school. This new team is providing strong leadership to the school community during the pandemic. The new headteacher has a clear focus on the health and wellbeing of children and school staff. She has prioritised the mental health of staff and children and offers support meetings and discussions to all staff on a regular basis.

Staff supported children well during the period of remote learning. They prepared specialised packs of materials to support their needs. Staff know children and their families well and this allowed them to provide personalised support. They collaborated with home-link partners to organise access to foodbanks. The new headteacher and staff have built positive relationships with parents. Staff developed a school app to improve communication with parents and children. Parents still make good use of this to link with the school staff. Staff helped a few parents to support their children's on-line learning more effectively by working with them to develop their digital skills. Staff provided additional time to support parents after school.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The new headteacher and depute headteacher have a clear understanding of the areas of the school requiring improvement. They now ensure all improvement activities focus on raising children's attainment. All staff have an area of responsibility which is resulting in an increased pace of change and strengthened leadership across the school. The commitment of staff to school improvement is raising aspirations for children. They have developed leadership skills in children through house captains and pupil leadership groups. As a result, children have increased opportunities to be involved in school improvement.

The new headteacher has provided learning opportunities for staff on assessing children's progress, improving learning and teaching and raising attainment. There are now noticeable improvements in these areas of work across the school. The new leadership team meet with

staff regularly to discuss children's progress and plan support for children to help raise attainment. Staff have improved approaches to assessing children's progress. They now have a better understanding of where children are in their learning through the use of a clearer approach to assessment. Staff should continue to develop assessments linked to the National Benchmarks to support their decisions on whether children have achieved a Curriculum for Excellence level.

All staff are now using the East Ayrshire Progression Frameworks for all curriculum areas to support their planning of children's learning. The new headteacher has developed links with external partners to enrich aspects of the curriculum. These partners include specialists in music and outdoor learning who contribute a range of enjoyable activities to encourage children to participate in their learning.

The new leadership team have improved how they make use of the pupil equity funding (PEF) since the previous inspection. Staff now use this funding to support raising attainment across the school. Last session staff used PEF to purchase new materials to support learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy. In addition, they have used it to fund additional staff to support children address gaps in their learning.

Children within the early years setting continue to have a positive experience in their learning. A new leadership structure helps support staff to continue to improve how they meet the wide range of children's needs. Children have opportunities to explore and develop their interests in the playroom and stimulating outdoor area. Staff meet regularly with the leadership team to review children's progress and plan for next steps in learning. As a result, children continue to make good progress in this motivating play environment.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. East Ayrshire Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Sadie Cushley
HM Inspector