

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 Lady Alice 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 to Lady Alice Primary School and Nursery Class. 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**

Over the last twenty months, senior leaders and staff put in place many new arrangements required as a result of periods of school closure and remote learning. The local authority supported the school very well throughout the pandemic by interpreting and sharing Scottish Government guidance and advice. The headteacher has skilfully managed the challenges of staff absence, remote learning and school improvement. Senior leaders continue to deal effectively with their responsibilities and with the impact of restrictions on children and families.

To support recovery and children's return to school, senior leaders and staff have prioritised the wellbeing of their children and families. Staff have responded effectively to the emerging needs of the local community as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Senior leaders and staff worked together to develop further their communication approaches during the pandemic. Parents and carers report the levels of support, care and communication received as being essential to their family wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff across the school and nursery class have been committed to improving their technology skills to deliver online learning and support for all children. Staff provided a variety of resources including paper based packs, films to help develop digital skills, and online learning materials. All learners were planned for and supported on an individual basis.

To support recovery and children's reconnection with the school and nursery class, staff prioritised the importance of transitions and all processes were reviewed and updated. Children making the transition between the nursery class and P1, and P7 to S1, were supported by virtual tours, interactive maps and sharing of information leaflets. The P1 class teachers held successful individual 'Meet and Greet' meetings with each parent and child in June 2021. Parents and carers valued this highly individualised approach and the school will continue this in the future. Well-managed transitions across the primary and between stages, and for those children with additional support needs ensure children feel safe, respected and

included in their learning. The supportive school environment continues to be a strong feature of Lady Alice Primary.

Senior leaders and staff recognise the importance of effective partnerships to support recovery, help identify wellbeing concerns and address gaps in children's learning. Partner providers including the local authority Educational Psychology service, a Barnardo's family support worker and a Community Learning and Development attainment challenge worker assisted school staff with the delivery of learning packs and food parcels. They also supported parents and carers to access digital tools and devices. These approaches have deepened existing positive relationships between families and the whole school community.

### **Progress with recommendations from previous inspection**

There has been very good progress in strengthening approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, including the nursery class, to drive forward necessary improvements. The headteacher is supported well by the depute headteacher and depute head of the nursery class. Collectively, they provide good strategic direction for the school and nursery class. They have encouraged and created a joint approach to making improvements. This has led to positive changes across the early level. These include improvements in the quality of the learning environment, children's levels of engagement in their play and their interactions with adults.

Senior leaders continue to develop the school's systems for planning and tracking children's learning. As a result, staff are now able to demonstrate more clearly to parents the progress children are making with their learning and identify next steps. The headteacher and depute head of the nursery class work together to agree the actions the nursery class needs to take to ensure experiences, spaces and interactions for children are improved further.

There has been good progress in improving approaches to learning and teaching in the nursery class. Use of national practice guidance for early years in Scotland has led to improvements in the learning environment. As a result, children's engagement, independence and their ability to increasingly make choices and decisions about their learning has improved. Since the original inspection, the outdoor learning space for the nursery class has been significantly developed. It is now a more stimulating environment where children access resources independently, develop problem solving skills and experience open ended materials that support creativity and team work.

Building on existing good practice in the nursery class, practitioners have made significant progress in further developing approaches to assessing children's progress in order to raise attainment of all. Children in the nursery class are making better progress in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. The depute head of the nursery class has led improvements in the quality of planning in the nursery class. She supports the nursery team to develop approaches to respond to children's interests and build upon what they already know. Practitioners are developing the use of on-line journals to share learning and observations. These enable parents and carers to comment on their child's learning and share information with the nursery.

There has been very good progress in streamlining approaches to planning to ensure improved outcomes for children who require additional support. This ensures all children

make the best possible progress. The depute headteacher has played a significant role in the implementation and evaluation of updated approaches, systems and policies. There are positive and productive relationships with agencies that provide and support the school with training, information and resources. This supports children with additional and complex needs. Parents comment very positively about the support they have received from the school which has helped their children make the best possible progress.

### What happens next?

Understandably, the school and nursery class have been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school and nursery class. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. They 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. Inverclyde 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.

Louise Phillips  
HM Inspector