

23 August 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

**Forth Primary School and Nursery Class
South Lanarkshire Council**

In February 2015, HM Inspectors published a letter on your child's school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to parents and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff how the school has continued 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 how well children are now learning and achieving and how the school is continuing to support them to do their best. This letter sets out what we found.

How well do children learn and achieve?

Across the nursery and the primary stages, children continue to be proud of their achievements and show a positive and respectful attitude towards their teachers and each other. In the nursery, children now have greater opportunities to make more choices during their play, for example, choosing from a range of resources to build a tower. Children in the primary classes work well together. The recent introduction of the 'go for green' positive behaviour system and approaches to developing children's understanding of 'rights based learning' has improved the learning environment in the classrooms. Across all classes in the school, staff share the purposes of lessons with children. This is helping children understand what they are learning during lessons. There is still a need for staff to provide consistently higher quality feedback to help children understand what they need to do to improve. Children across the primary stages are now involved in the pupil voice committees.

Children in the nursery class are now developing a wider range of skills through their play. They enjoy listening to stories being read to them and show a keen interest in books. We have asked staff to extend the range of books available for children across the playroom to help them better understand how books can be used to find information. Children are now more able to develop their early reading and writing skills through increased experiences available in the playroom. For example, children enjoyed creating lists in the café and copying captions for their displays. Children are better developing their skills in using early number in their play such as making bar charts of the colour of their eyes. Through their play they are now developing a better range of mathematical language. Staff now need to develop further their approaches to recording children's individual progress. At the primary stages, children work well independently and in groups to complete learning tasks.

The introduction of 'blooms bulbs' is giving children more regular opportunities to talk about their learning and explain their thinking. For example, older children speak positively about how this approach is helping them to better understand what they are reading. Children now have opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, for example, writing a persuasive letter to a local councillor requesting more trees in the area. However, children continue to require much more regular opportunities to write within writing lesson and across the curriculum. Children continue to enjoy numeracy and mathematics and are beginning to apply their skills in a wider range of contexts. Across the school, children are aware of their learning targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They now need to better understand what they need to do to achieve their targets.

How well does the school support children to develop and learn?

Staff in the nursery have made very positive progress in developing the outdoor play area and children now have free access to more natural, open ended resources to explore and use in creative ways in their play. Nursery staff have increased children's experiences in using technology and they now have more regular opportunities to take part in early science experiences. Across the school, staff have recently begun to develop a rationale for the curriculum and we have asked them to involve parents and children more in this work. Staff have worked well together to create an improved programme for the development of social studies. They have worked well with children to improve their approaches to teaching health and wellbeing and as a result, children now have a greater understanding of how the choices they make impact on their own health and wellbeing. There remains significant work required to review and develop whole school programmes of study to ensure children can make suitable progress in their learning across all areas of the curriculum. At times, the pace of learning remains too slow and children are sometimes engaged in tasks which do not yet provide a sufficient level of challenge. Staff have worked together to improve their approaches to transition at all stages so that they can more effectively build on what children already know. We have asked staff to continue to develop ways of effectively sharing children's progress with parents.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

Staff in the nursery and across the school continue to be hardworking and committed to working together to improving the work of the school. All staff have specific leadership roles and they now work together more effectively to take forward improvements. Staff have worked together with children and parents to create a clear vision and set of values for the school and nursery which set out what the school wants to achieve for its children. This should now provide the direction for taking forward school improvements. Since joining the school in February 2016, the acting headteacher has provided strong leadership for the school. She has worked effectively with the staff team to ensure there is a shared understanding of what needs to be improved and how to achieve this. Staff recognise that there remains significant work to be undertaken to improve approaches to monitor and track children's progress in learning. We have asked staff at all stages to ensure they now develop a whole school approach which enables them to build on children's existing knowledge, track progress and plan next steps in learning effectively. Staff are now

more confident in supporting each other to improve aspects of their teaching. They should now build in time for greater opportunities to talk to each other, and with staff from other schools, to develop a greater confidence in the reliability of their judgements about children's progress. Overall, approaches to evaluating the work of the school and nursery are still not as effective as they could be and as a result, children's experiences and achievements are still not of a high enough standard. Staff now need to place a greater focus on monitoring how well their work improves children's experiences and achievements. Parents are pleased with the improved communication from the school and nursery. For example, the termly curriculum newsletters are helpful in outlining what children will be learning. Overall, the majority of parents feel that their views are sought and taken into account. The school should continue to build on the effective partnership with the Parent Council to ensure greater involvement of parent views in taking forward the work of the school.

What happens next?

Although there have been improvements in some aspects of the work of the school, overall, there still remains much to be done to ensure sufficient improvement. Staff now need to continue to work together, with clear guidance from the headteacher, to develop further the curriculum, tracking children's progress and approaches to self-evaluation to bring about the necessary improvements. The school needs to make further improvements to ensure the quality of the overall provision. As a result, our Area Lead Officer will work with South Lanarkshire Council to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. We will return to carry out another further inspection within one year of publication of this letter. We will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.

Louise Turnbull
HM Inspector

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