

21 December 2021

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 Uphall 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 Uphall 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 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

Uphall Primary School and Nursery Class faced significant challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the school community worked well to support each other and overcome the challenges. The calm and effective leadership provided by the headteacher ensured children, families and staff were well supported. The staff team demonstrated a real commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for all children.

Local authority and school improvement plans have a strong focus on recovery and improvement. Health and wellbeing is central to these plans and there are signs of the positive impact this is having across the school. Staff have created individual wellbeing and learning supports to meet the needs of all children. The headteacher continues to use staff flexibly to manage staff absence. This is supporting continuity of learning for all children. Teachers continue to use digital platforms effectively to support children who are isolating to access their learning. The school continues to strengthen its relationships with children and their families through regular communication.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The headteacher has re-energised the school. Children and staff confidently shared their successes, the challenges they have faced and steps they have taken to support recovery and renewal. Children spoke proudly of each other and staff. All staff, led by the headteacher, have made significant progress in addressing school improvement in a number of important ways.

Positive relationships continue to be a strength. This is evident in all areas of school life. The pandemic has further strengthened relationships across the school. Staff and children are very supportive of each other emotionally and practically. This includes daily check-ins, a wellbeing focus for all assemblies and counselling for children who need additional support. Children show a commitment for everyone to be included. All staff recognise that continued

professional learning, self-evaluation and partnerships with families will be key in ensuring a healthy level of wellbeing within the school community.

Positive and effective teamwork at all levels is now a strength of the school. The headteacher has brought a clarity of vision, consults effectively and pays close attention to the wellbeing and professional learning needs of staff at all levels. As a result, staff now make a valuable contribution to improving all aspects of the school through self-evaluation and leading improvement priorities. Teacher leadership groups with a focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are informing positive changes to the curriculum.

Good progress is being made in improving the quality of learning and teaching. The headteacher and staff recognise that this needs to be a continuing priority. Most children are settled in class, respectful to their teachers and peers, and stay on task. Effective professional learning is helping to bring about greater consistency in the quality of learning and teaching in all classes. Children spoke positively about their teachers efforts to provide interesting learning experiences during periods of remote learning.

The headteacher and leadership team are focused on improving outcomes for children. They have established clear structures to ensure effective planning and tracking of children's progress is in place and is reviewed regularly. Importantly, throughout the pandemic and resulting transitions into and out of school, the headteacher has ensured staff take full account of the varying extent to which children have progressed in their wellbeing and learning. Close relationships and regular work with families has enhanced this work.

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. West Lothian 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.

Marion Carlton
HM Inspector