

The background of the slide features a large, light blue crest of Slamannan Primary School. The crest is shield-shaped with a crown on top. The shield is divided into four quadrants: top-left shows a castle tower, top-right shows a stag's head, bottom-left shows a sailing ship, and bottom-right shows an eagle. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto 'A'NE FOR A'.

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Centre Progress Report**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title:** Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Centre  
Progress Report  
**Meeting:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 24 March 2022  
**Submitted By:** Director of Children's Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of Education Scotland's progress visit of Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 Scrutiny Committee is asked note:-**

**(1) the progress which has been made, particularly in the Early Learning and Childcare Centre; and**

**(2) that the Director of Children's Services staff will continue to work with the school to monitor progress towards meeting the identified areas for improvement.**

**3. Climate Change Implications**

- 3.1 The recommended decisions in themselves do not give rise to any material implications for the Council's climate change targets and obligations.

**4. Background**

- 4.1 The Inspection of Slamannan Primary School and Heathrigg Nursery was undertaken in January 2018 as part of Education Scotland's inspection programme.
- 4.2 Education Scotland published the report on 24th April 2018, which is in the form of a high level, parent friendly summary of the inspection findings. The report included evaluations of the key aspects of the work of the school measured against Quality Indicators. A number of strengths were noted as well as key actions for improvement.

### 4.3 Areas of Improvement

- Develop more effective strategic leadership and self-evaluation approaches which lead to improved outcomes for all children across the nursery and primary school. This should include a focus on continuing to develop effective partnerships, with parents and the local community, which will enhance and support children's learning.
- Improve learning and teaching across the school, ensuring an appropriate level of pace, challenge and differentiation. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps.
- Review the approaches that support children's learning across the school. In doing this, the school needs to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment for children requiring additional support in their learning.
- Raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data, and robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement.

4.4 Education Scotland re-visited Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Childcare Class (ELCC) 1 year on from publication of the report between the 23rd and 25th April 2019. The report can be seen in Appendix 1. The outcome of this visit stated that the Inspectors would return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of the letter and would discuss with Falkirk Council the details of this inspection.

4.5 On 13 March 2020, Education Scotland took the decision to pause all inspection activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic to allow schools and education establishments to focus on providing support to their colleagues, pupils and local communities. Officers from Children's Services as well as staff from Education Scotland continued to provide support to the school and ELCC. This work focused on continuing to develop the original actions agreed.

4.6 In September 2021, Education Scotland announced the phased return to scrutiny activity. Inspectors initially engaged with establishments and services that were due to have a further inspection. These progress visits had a particular focus on discussions with leaders and practitioners as to the impact of the pandemic and the actions the school has taken and continues to take to support recovery and improvement. Inspectors also discussed with staff the progress around the areas for development identified from earlier scrutiny activity.

4.7 Education Scotland carried out a visit to Slamannan Primary School and ELCC from 23 November to 25 November 2021. The outcome letter can be seen in Appendix 2.

## **5. 2021 Progress and Continued Development**

### **5.1. School**

- Positive approach to supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19. School staff, children and their families worked well together throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to overcome the challenges faced with remote learning.
- Staff ensured children and families with limited access to online resources were included in learning from home by developing fully resourced paper packs and developing a flexible approach to online learning.
- Staff implemented creativity approaches to support the transition for nursery children into P1 and the creative use of videos and social media, as well as staff in early years providing effective support for children and families moving from early learning to primary school.
- The headteacher has continued to build positive relationships across the school community. As a result, the school is a calmer environment for learning. Staff have continued to focus on developing positive relationships across the school, and in all classes. Through the collaborative development of a relationships agreement and ongoing work on self-regulated approaches, senior leaders, staff, children and parents recognise that relationships have improved significantly across the school community.
- Senior leaders are making increasingly effective use of intelligence gained from partners such as the home school liaison officer, educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, inclusion and wellbeing officer and Active Schools coordinator to inform their approach to health and wellbeing. This ensures children and families are supported increasingly well in their learning and wellbeing.
- Teachers are beginning to take a lead role in improving the school. They are working well as a team, sharing ideas and planning collaboratively. They take a lead role in tracking and monitoring the progress of children in their class, they are confident this is beginning to impact positively on children in their class.
- The new school motto 'Your Bright Future Starts Here' reflects the commitment to ensuring there are high expectations and aspirations for all children at Slamannan Primary School. The headteacher should continue to use the vision, values and motto to guide the work of the school.

### **5.2 ELCC**

- Engagement in self-evaluation is supporting practitioners well to make improvements. All practitioners are making more confident use of self-

evaluation frameworks within a culture of reflection and ongoing improvement.

- Practitioners welcome their designated leadership roles. This collegiate approach to improvement is sustaining the appropriate and agreed pace of change.
- Significant improvements have been made by practitioners to the learning environment. This is supporting children to demonstrate a high level of engagement, experience increased challenge and lead their own learning through the choices they make.
- Practitioners demonstrate their high level of respect for young children in how they value their thoughts, feelings and wishes. They strive to provide, on an individual basis, what all children need to make the best possible progress. Improvements to planning for individual needs have fostered a helpful and strengthened partnership approach between home and ELCC to meet the care and learning needs of all children.
- Professional learning, ongoing discussion and clear guidance is supporting practitioners to make effective observations of children as they play. Practitioners are increasingly using their observations to identify what children need to learn next.

## **6. Continued Development**

### **6.1 School**

- Develop more effective strategic leadership and self-evaluation approaches which lead to improved outcomes for all children across the nursery and primary school. This should include a focus on continuing to develop effective partnerships, with parents and the local community, which will enhance and support children's learning. Teachers are now ready to increase the pace of change, however, it will be important senior leaders provide the right support to enable them to do this successfully.
- The headteacher has introduced several systems and processes to support school improvement and improve outcomes for children. Senior leaders should now take time to review the arrangements to clarify their purpose, identify potential duplication and ensure robust implementation and record keeping.
- Improve learning and teaching across the school, ensuring an appropriate level of pace, challenge and differentiation. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps.

- Teachers continue to develop confidence in their professional judgements about achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level. Moving forward, they should plan learning and teaching alongside assessment and moderation. This should ensure there is an appropriate flow to activities and that assessment and teacher feedback blend effectively into learners' experiences.
- There is increasingly effective practice in identifying the additional support needs of children. With staff, senior leaders have created a clearer overview of additional support needs across the school, including for those children that require support plans. Senior leaders should now work with staff to ensure support plans are updated regularly to evidence the progress and skills children are achieving.
- Teachers have made effective use of professional learning to develop their understanding of the range of evidence they can use to support their judgements on children progress within a level. Moving forward it is important for senior leaders to continue to facilitate regular and planned tracking and monitoring discussions with class teachers. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data, and robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement.

## 6.2 ELCC

- Staff in the ELCC team are enthusiastic, growing in confidence and have considerable capacity to continue to improve. They have developed a strong team ethos that is facilitating honest and constructive discussion and supports a culture of ongoing improvement.
- Building on improvements in the learning environment and observations, consideration should be made to how children's learning needs can be met more effectively through play, in a progressive way across the early level.
- Systems are now in place to track and monitor the progress children make in their learning. With their increased professional confidence and understanding, the team are very well placed to continue to develop this area.

## 7. **Consultation**

- 7.1 The school improvement team have worked closely with school and ELCC staff to provide support, challenge and advice. This support will continue to be provided moving forward.

## **8. Implications**

### **Financial & Resources**

8.1 None

### **Legal**

8.2 None

### **Risk**

8.3 None

### **Equalities**

8.4 None

### **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

8.5 None

## **9. Conclusions**

9.1 Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class are continuing to evidence improvement since the HMIE visit January 2018. Inspectors identified there had been good progress in addressing the areas for improvement in the ELCC, but recognised that the school needs more time to implement fully its priorities for improvement. Children's Services will continue to support and monitor the pace and effectiveness of improvement in the school. Children's Services officers will provide a report to Education Scotland about the school's progress within one year of the publication of the letter.

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### **Director of Children's Service**

Author – Rhona Jay, Acting Head of Education 01324 506681  
[rhona.jay@falkirk.gov.uk](mailto:rhona.jay@falkirk.gov.uk)

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – HMIE Further Inspection- Record of Visit (ROV)  
Appendix 2 – HMIE Progress Visit – Summary of Visit (SOV)

### **List of Background Papers:**

None

## Further inspection: record of visit (ROV)

### Purpose and audience

- This document (called the Further Inspection – Record of Visit or ROV) is provided within one working week of the publication of the letter to support the headteacher/head of setting in leading improvement. The findings and evidence in the ROV provide detail which will be helpful in guiding further planning and implementation of improvement.
- The ROV is provided for use by the education authority and headteacher/head of setting to which it refers. It is a technical document designed for use by education professionals.
- The ROV is not intended to be copied and distributed in its entirety. Headteachers/heads of setting should use their judgement in sharing particular sections of the document confidentially with others as appropriate to their areas of responsibility and interests.

### Contents

- The ROV is the set of notes used by the inspection team for the discussion of findings meeting on the final day of the continuing engagement visit. It may also contain further information that was prepared in advance of the meeting but which may not have been required in the discussion.
- The information in this ROV has been checked and edited to ensure that individual members of staff below appropriate levels of seniority and individual learners, or small groups of learners, cannot be identified and that it conforms to Scottish Government guidelines on the disclosure of data.
- The ROV is not an exclusive record of all of the evidence which underpins the evaluations as expressed in the published letter, and should not be regarded as such.

### Sources of evidence for the ROV

- In all inspections, inspectors visit learning activities in contexts appropriate to the establishment. They observe learning experiences and teaching, and talk to staff and children about learning and achievement, and other aspects as appropriate to the inspection. Inspectors evaluate children's achievements in different aspects of the curriculum, using direct observation, sampling of learners' work, and additional data as appropriate to the sector. Inspectors also have a range of professional discussions with staff who have responsibility for managing the educational provision, and other staff as appropriate. They take account of stakeholders' views, including those gathered through pre-further inspection questionnaires when these are used in a further inspection, and discussions with parents and other members of the community, as appropriate to the sector.
- Further inspections begin with the senior staff of the establishment sharing their self-evaluation evidence with the inspection team, showing how they are bringing about improvement. This evidence contributes to evaluations of the progress made since the original inspection.



- The ROV may contain references to the way that Curriculum for Excellence is being taken forward in the context of the establishment. This may include progress in planning, prioritising and reviewing the curriculum, through the use of self-evaluation and improvement planning, and in applying key ideas and principles from Curriculum for Excellence. It may also include how the setting is working with partners and with its own staff to enable them to learn together to develop their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence ideas and put them into practice, supported by a plan for continuing professional development. There may be references to how Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes are being used to improve learning and achievement and how individual teachers are contributing to literacy and/or numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing. The ROV may also refer to how staff identify and measure improvements in learners' experiences and in standards of achievement; how they communicate with and involve parents, and how they collaborate to plan and support learners' progress. The extent to which references to Curriculum for Excellence are made in the ROV will depend on the range and nature of the areas for improvement which were previously set out in the letter sent to parents following the original inspection and which are used to shape the further inspection.

### Further inspection: record of visit (ROV)

<b>School/Setting Name</b>	Slamannan Primary School and Nursery Class
<b>Education Authority</b>	Falkirk Council
<b>MI undertaking visit</b>	Dennise Sommerville
<b>Date(s) of visit</b>	23 – 25 April 2019
<b>Publication date of original letter</b>	24 April 2018
<b>Letter publication date</b>	25 June 2019
<b>ROV sharing date (date ROV is sent out to EA/HT/HoC/CPPC)</b>	28 June 2019

#### Information made available by education authority

The headteacher provided the School Improvement Plan for 2018/19, a report and updated plan from an interim support visit made by the education authority in January 2019, and a report from a support visit to the nursery made by the education authority in March 2019. The headteacher used these documents to share progress made since the last visit. The local authority has allocated additional staff to the school to support development work to address the areas for improvement identified at the initial inspection.

#### Staff seen and inspection activities during visit

All teaching staff in classes  
 Teaching staff in the support for learning base and enhanced provision room  
 Meeting with support for learning assistants  
 Meeting with support for learning teachers  
 Nursery practitioners  
 Professional dialogue with primary school staff  
 Professional dialogue with nursery practitioners  
 Meeting with group of parents  
 Two numeracy pupil focus groups  
 Two literacy pupil focus groups  
 One general pupil focus group  
 Drop-in session for all staff  
 Self-evaluation meeting with senior leadership team and education authority representatives  
 Meetings with senior leadership team  
 Meeting with headteacher to discuss child protection/safeguarding and pre-inspection surveys  
 Learning walk and professional dialogue with headteacher  
 Professional dialogue with member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for the nursery  
 Review documentation

Lesson observations across the primary stages  
Observations in the nursery

### **Significant changes in circumstances since initial inspection**

The nursery has moved premises into the main school building. There is now a Principal Teacher (PT) with a designated remit for the nursery. The management structure within the nursery has been increased in light of the 1140 hours.

Two acting headteachers were in post until the appointment of a permanent headteacher in January 2019. The local authority has provided extra staff and support to senior leaders to help the school and nursery to improve.

The appointment of an acting deputy headteacher.

The appointment of a temporary second additional support for learning teacher.

The appointment of a temporary additional principal teacher in August 2018.

Several new class teachers have joined the teaching staff since the last inspection.

**Develop more effective strategic leadership and self-evaluation approaches which lead to improved outcomes for all children across the nursery and primary school. This should include a focus on continuing to develop effective partnerships, with parents and the local community, which will enhance and support children's learning.**

### **Nursery and Primary**

Overall, there has been satisfactory progress in this area for improvement.

- Practitioners have received support visits from the local authority to help them improve the nursery, and practitioners have embraced these changes. The strategic leadership of the nursery has improved, but given the move, increased hours and increased staffing, there is still significant work to be done to improve the nursery.
- The PT has led practitioners well in self-evaluation activities to involve them in reviewing the nursery. Practitioners have made an early start to engaging with 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' and the challenge questions. We ask that this is developed further with a clear focus on Quality Indicators 2.3 and 3.2.
- Daily huddles have been introduced to support practitioners to come together in evaluating provision. A few practitioners have visited other nurseries to help support improvement. They need to continue to develop approaches to self-evaluation within the nursery which involve practitioners, parents and partners to ensure continued improvement.
- The PT has begun to bring together nursery practitioners into an effective team who work together and share ideas to improve provision within the nursery. She has a clear vision for the nursery and recognises that approaches to professional learning are key to further improvement in order for practitioners to be involved in well-informed change. There is scope to improve the leadership roles of all practitioners within the nursery now that they are more settled within the school building.

- Since the last inspection, the school and nursery have had a period of uncertainty surrounding the leadership of the school, but have a permanent headteacher in post since January 2019. Parents now speak positively about the visibility of the new headteacher and how approachable she is to the parent body. Building on the work of the two acting headteachers, the senior leadership team have been successful in improving the climate for learning, and as a result, children's behaviour across the school has improved.
- A clear school improvement plan for last year, focussing on the main points for action has been put in place by the senior leadership team. This has begun to address the main areas for development and should now include the nursery improvement agenda. Given the level of need, the improvement plan has been largely driven by the senior leadership team to secure immediate improvement within identified areas. Staff now need to become more fully involved in leading change to develop more fully their understanding and develop ownership of change. Children should also now become more involved in the improvement process. There still remains much work to be done to improve the school, in particular to ensure that change has a significant impact on raising attainment and ensuring children's progress within the school and nursery.
- Staff, children and parents have worked together to establish clear vision and values for the school and nursery. This has helped all stakeholders be clear about the common purpose of the work of the school. Tracking meetings between staff and the senior leadership team have been established to discuss children's progress and plan interventions. The school's approaches to using data to inform staff about children's attainment and progress in learning are at an early stage of development in both the primary and nursery class. With staff, the senior leadership team need to improve the accuracy and range of assessment information used to inform staff judgements on children's attainment. This needs to be developed as a priority to ensure staff are informed accurately of children's progress in order to raise attainment. Work on self-evaluation is at an early stage of development across the school with staff beginning to look at the quality indicators of 'How Good Is Our School?' and 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' The senior leadership team now need to develop this more fully where staff and practitioners evidence evaluations and set targets for improvement.
- Given the significant leadership roles across the school and nursery, the headteacher now needs to ensure that there is clarity of remits for staff in promoted posts. The headteacher should monitor closely the impact of these remits on outcomes for learners. At present, children have few opportunities for leadership opportunities.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing partnership with parents and the local community to support children's learning. Communication with parents has improved, however, parents would like more frequent accurate information on children's progress.

**Improve learning and teaching across the school, ensuring an appropriate level of pace, challenge and differentiation. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps.**

There is an improving picture in this area for improvement, with senior leaders and staff agreeing that there is further work to be done to ensure more progress is made.

### **Nursery**

- Across the nursery, practitioners have started to work well with a range of external supports to improve the pedagogy within the nursery. Most practitioners have had the opportunity to visit other nurseries to observe good practice. Across the playroom and outdoor area, we observed a number of activities where children clearly showed interest and sustained their play for long periods of time. Practitioners are starting to use children's interest more effectively as starting points for learning, and are working to ensure learning becomes less adult directed. Children's experiences across the day and playroom are not always of consistent high quality with a clear focus on learning. There are often missed opportunities for learning within the play environment.
- Practitioners need to have clearer systems to ensure they become more familiar with children's learning needs and targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. In doing this, practitioners would be able to support children's progress in learning more effectively through play. Practitioners should review the playroom and outdoor area to ensure that it sufficiently engages and supports children to make progress in their learning. In the playroom and outdoor area, there are insufficient opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy. Across the nursery, practitioners should evaluate how children are accessing areas. This will help increase children's motivation to access a wider range of learning experiences.
- Children attend the setting for varying patterns of attendance. Greater consideration should be given to children who are accessing the nursery for full sessions to ensure they have opportunities for down time and comfortable seating. Practitioners should review how varied the experiences are for children accessing longer sessions over a day and over a week.
- Not all children are sufficiently challenged appropriate to their age and stage. Practitioners now need to ensure that children experience pace and challenge in their learning appropriate to their age and stage of development in order to make sufficient progress. Transition between the 0-3 and 3-5 room is not yet flexible enough to ensure experiences are developmentally appropriate for children. There is a need for 0-3 children to access the outdoor area within a safe space if required.

### **Primary**

#### **Strengths and progress identified during the visit:**

- Since the initial inspection, children's behaviour and their engagement in most classes have improved. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school. In almost all

classes, children are more focused on their learning. Where staff use praise and reward, these factors are contributing to improved levels of engagement and motivation for children. There is a nurturing and supportive atmosphere in classes and children in Slamannan Primary School are now more eager to learn.

- Staff are beginning to provide opportunities for children to participate and lead whole school initiatives such as pupil council and library leaders. Staff and children are enthusiastic about what they hope to achieve. **Staff express a commitment to further increase opportunities for the development of children's leadership.**
- Children's opportunities for learning have started to improve as a result of an improving focus on developing learning and teaching across the school. Staff have started to implement a number of teaching strategies to enhance children's learning experiences, including sharing the purpose of lessons and a few creative methods of delivery such as games and rhymes.
- Children say that there have been improvements in how they learn in class. They can identify how more active learning in some areas such as mathematics is now more enjoyable.

#### **Areas for further development identified during the visit:**

- Staff's approaches to learning and teaching across the school are still too variable. Staff are not yet meeting the needs of all children. **They need to review the pace, challenge and differentiation they provide to support better the learning needs of all children.** This will help ensure also that children have sustained focus, engagement and appropriate learning in their lessons.
- Staff are not yet consistent in their approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. The staff team should now move swiftly to develop consistent approaches to learning and teaching through the development of the **Slammanan Primary School 'good lesson'.** Teachers should engage further in peer visits which support ongoing improvements in learning and teaching. **They need to seek opportunities to become more involved in school based and cluster moderation, using appropriate and proportionate evidence to ensure that teacher judgements are rigorous and robust.**
- Staff's use of formative assessment strategies continues to be inconsistent across the school. The school needs to revisit how they use formative assessment strategies and agree a whole school policy to be consistently applied by all teachers. **High quality feedback by staff to children, using a variety of media, would support children to identify better next steps in their learning and be more aware of the progress they are making.**
- **Children are not yet making connections between aspects of their learning, which makes learning more relevant and engaging. Staff should consider how best they can support children to access opportunities for deeper learning across a range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Children also require increased opportunities to lead and become more independent in their learning. Staff have not yet developed children's ability sufficiently to set their own targets and take more responsibility for learning.**



- Across the school, staff's use of schemes and commercially produced resources to deliver lessons is constraining opportunities for them to be innovative and creative. **The school now needs to consider how to take the best elements of these resources and adapt them to maximise potential and improve outcomes for all children.**
- Staff are at the early stages of recognising children's wider achievements as part of learning. **They should continue to develop processes to ensure every child's wider achievements are tracked, monitored and celebrated. This will help build further children's self-esteem and success.**

**Review the approaches that support children's learning across the school. In doing this, the school needs to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment for children requiring additional support in their learning.**

Overall, there has been variable progress in taking forward this area for improvement.

### **Nursery**

- Within the nursery there are a number of children with barriers to learning. Practitioners try hard to meet children's needs within the nursery when they encounter children in free play. Practitioners work with partners to support the learning of a few children. There is a need to urgently review children's progress to ensure they make progress in line with their own targets and that parents are involved fully in any review process.
- Practitioners have limited strategies to support children with barriers to learning and urgently require professional learning in a range of disorders. For example, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and English as an Additional Language. The senior leadership team should ensure that they monitor closely the provision for children with additional support needs. Practitioners need to ensure their professional learning supports children in achieving their targets. At present children's documents are in too many different places.

### **Primary**

#### **Strengths and progress identified during the visit:**

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders have led a helpful review of how additional support needs are managed across the school. This has resulted in a few changes being made in the arrangements for meeting the learning needs of children. School staff have started to improve the ways they identify and support children with additional needs to ensure they make appropriate progress. Targeted children are beginning to receive better individual/small group support in literacy and numeracy. This is beginning to have a positive impact on children's progress.
- The senior leadership team have worked effectively to ensure compliance with the Additional Support for Learning Act and its associated code of practice. They now have a better

overview of those children that require support plans. These plans are securely stored in an organised manner with clear signposts.

- Staff are becoming clearer about the criteria for staged interventions to support progress in children's learning. Regular meetings are now held to review the needs of children. The school has an improved record keeping system with minuted meetings which ensure better planning for key pupils. Meetings between staff and senior leaders to review and set targets are now better planned and dates are set well in advance.
- Additional support for learning assistants play an important part in supporting children's learning. They have an improved awareness of the needs and behaviours of the children in whose classes they offer support.
- Children facing specific challenges are accessing appropriate planned support in the enhanced provision. Staff know children well and offer them a range of learning activities. There are now regular meetings with support staff to improve communication and help ensure more effective deployment of staff to support individual learners and maintain flexible approaches.

#### **Areas for further development identified during the visit:**

- In most lessons observed, staff need to ensure that learning tasks and activities are clearly matched to children's learning needs. Staff's expectations and aspirations for children are still too low. Teachers need to increase their expectations of children and focus more clearly on intended learning to ensure that tasks and activities are always well-matched to appropriate next steps in children's learning. **The focus of enhanced provision and additional support for learning requires further review. This will ensure the needs of identified children are met as effectively as possible.**
- Senior leaders recognise that further work is required in ensuring children's support plans are of high quality and include better quality targets. Staff need to evaluate these targets more rigorously and robustly to ensure that children experience success and appropriate progress in their learning. The use of setting should be reviewed with immediate effect as it is not improving attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The school has introduced a number of new targeted interventions, some funded through the Pupil Equity Fund, to meet the needs of groups of children. These interventions should be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate they are leading to improvements in outcomes for children.
- Staff appreciate professional learning opportunities, and these now need to continue to be offered to ensure a shared understanding of inclusion and equity across the school community. In order to improve communication, the school should continue with plans to further develop ways to share information about children's progress in learning. We discussed with the senior leadership team ways in which the school can involve children further and engage parents to help support their child's learning.



- The senior leadership team and staff have started to work effectively to improve how assessment information is used to raise children's attainment. We ask that staff develop a framework for assessment that is clearly linked to learning and teaching. This will support teachers to make better use of assessment information and ensure that children's needs are being met in all lessons in all classes.

**Raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data, and robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement.**

Overall, there has been insufficient progress in taking forward this area for improvement. Improvements made need more time to show an increase in children's attainment.

### Nursery

- Practitioners have reviewed recently how they plan learning to include taking more account of children's voice. They now display planning and children's comments on the walls with the intention that children discuss their learning. Approaches to planning should be reviewed to ensure that practitioners plan effectively to ensure that children progress at an appropriate pace through the early level. Practitioners need to ensure effective two-way communication about children's needs from home and nursery for these very young children.
- Children's profiles do not yet sufficiently evidence children's learning and progress. Practitioners now need to ensure that 'all about me' information is more informative and that there is regular communication between nursery and home about children's needs and achievements.
- The senior leadership team now, as a matter of urgency, need to ensure that practitioners are aware of children's development within literacy and numeracy in order to establish accurate targets and identify next steps in learning and support these effectively in play.
- At present, experiences on the playroom floor meet the generic needs of the whole nursery. Practitioners need to provide more support and challenge through play and in their interactions with individual children. At present, there are missed opportunities for learning. For example, lunchtime and snack experiences and outdoors. Practitioners should develop a fuller understanding of attachment theory and how it impacts on children's learning.
- There is a need to ensure children's wider achievement is celebrated more fully across the nursery. Practitioners need to ensure that there is good communication between home and school so that the nursery is well informed of children's interests and achievements.

### Primary

**Strengths and progress identified during the visit:**

- The school is focusing on improving attainment across the school. Small improvements can be seen in attainment in literacy and numeracy. There is significant scope to improve this further.
- The school's approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress are at an early stage of implementation. Staff are keen to make more effective use of new approaches being introduced and are developing an understanding of what is expected.
- Regular and planned tracking and monitoring discussions with class teachers, by the senior leadership team, are beginning to help to improve teachers' ability to track, monitor and assess children's progress within a level. These discussions need to be more robust with staff identifying clear actions to help raise children's attainment. The senior leadership team are encouraging all staff to use Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes and national benchmarks for assessing a level in literacy and numeracy.
- Across the school, children show a more positive and respectful attitude towards their teachers and peers. They are developing their skills in working collaboratively in a range of curricular areas. Children's opportunities for learning have improved as a result of a focus on improving behaviour across the school. The school's positive behaviour approach is helping children earn rewards for positive behaviour, and understand the impact of disruptive behaviour. Children are positive about this approach, and say that it is resulting in better behaviour.

#### **Areas for further development identified during the visit:**

- Whilst there have been improvements in attainment across the school, overall there remains significant scope to improve the attainment of literacy and numeracy for all children. There continues to be a significant need for staff to improve progression and pace in learning. In order to raise attainment further, staff should better maximise opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across learning.
- The school does not have sufficient, good quality and robust data, of a range and type necessary to judge accurately children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. This limits the ability of staff to make important decisions about learning and teaching, and to confirm their own judgements of when a child achieves a Curriculum for Excellence level.
- There remains significant work to be undertaken to improve approaches to monitor and track children's learning. Staff would benefit from developing a better understanding of the purpose of tracking and monitoring and use this knowledge to develop a more robust whole school approach which tracks progress better, identifies learners' needs and informs next steps in learning more effectively. The senior leadership team need to continue to develop the skills of staff in using assessment data to inform teaching and learning.
- Staff recognise that their current professional judgements on how well children are progressing in their learning and achievement of a level are not yet based on valid and

reliable evidence of learning. The senior leadership team need to continue to build staff confidence in assessing when children have reached a level in all areas of the curriculum, using the national benchmarks. Developing more robust approaches to moderation within the school and across other schools will help develop a greater shared understanding of standards and expectations.

- The school does not have robust evidence of data over time. The headteacher has taken early steps to ensure data is gathered. As this develops, there is a need to develop the skills of staff in using assessment data to better inform tracking and monitoring of children's progress.
- The school should continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that there are flexible curriculum programmes and pathways in place to support progression for children's development of skills within all curriculum areas. In doing so, they should ensure that they use the principles of curriculum design, to ensure programmes are relevant, provide depth of learning, and are sufficiently challenging.

## **Safeguarding**

Details of any additional strengths or areas for improvement since last inspection.

- The school should review procedures and protocols regarding medication.
- The school should ensure all logs, for example complaints, incidents and bullying, are organised better to identify any interventions and support children's wellbeing.
- In the pre-inspection questionnaires, 9% of children and 43% of parents feel the school does not deal well with any bullying. We have alerted the school and education authority to these issues. The school and education authority have assured us that appropriate action will be taken to address this.

### What happens next?

The school has made limited progress since the original inspection and needs more time for improvements to develop further and have a positive impact on children's attainment. We will liaise with Falkirk Council regarding the school's capacity to improve, including, support needed to ensure children make appropriate progress. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 18 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Falkirk Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to parents informing them of the progress the school has made.

## Summary of visit to Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class

### About this summary document

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) have prepared this document following a recent visit to Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class (ELCC) that they carried out along with officers from Falkirk Council. It contains more detail than the letter we sent to parents/carers. We hope that schools and settings will find this document helpful to continue to support recovery, renewal and improvement work.

### About our visit

We made the commitment some time ago to revisit Slamannan Primary School and ELCC following a previous inspection, and our recent visit was arranged to fit in with the school's individual circumstances.

All of the activities undertaken by HM Inspectors during the visit were discussed in advance with the headteacher and with local authority officers. Taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic, some activities have been carried out remotely.

The visit included discussions to consider the progress made by the school since the original inspection. HM Inspectors also explored the impact of the pandemic on the school and setting as well as the actions being taken to support recovery. HM Inspectors recognise that some priorities may have been paused or overtaken as the school responded to the pandemic.

#### **Current context of the school – impact of COVID-19 and steps the establishment is taking in relation to COVID-19 recovery**

The COVID-19 pandemic and periods of remote learning have understandably slowed the pace of improvements within Slamannan Primary School and ELCC. Staff, children and their families have demonstrated great resilience and perseverance during the past 18 months.

Parents faced significant challenges in accessing the in-school learning provision during the first period of remote learning. The rural location of the school and changes to the location of the provision, resulted in children being unable to take up the offer. When the provision was relocated to the school building, a greater number of children were able to access the support. In addition to this, the rural location meant there were challenges with broadband connectivity. However, all staff worked hard to overcome this challenge through the creation and distribution of paper packs and other learning resources. In addition, the flexible approach to online learning delivery ensured that all children and families were able to participate in learning at home. Staff were very creative in their approach to supporting children with the transition into P1. Online videos, creative use of social media and the deployment of staff from the ELCC in the P1 class, supported children and families as they moved from the ELCC to the school. Parents valued the approach taken by the school.

Staff successfully developed their approaches to communicating with families during periods of remote learning. Relationships between families and the school are much stronger as a result of these changes. This has strengthened family engagement, particularly with key groups within

the school community, for example, traveller families. The school is building on this success to develop further their approaches to family engagement.

### **Safeguarding**

The headteacher has taken appropriate steps to address the areas for improvement cited at the most recent inspection.

**Develop more effective strategic leadership and self-evaluation approaches which lead to improved outcomes for all children across the nursery and primary school. This should include a focus on continuing to develop effective partnerships, with parents and the local community, which will enhance and support children's learning.**

**Working together, local authority officers, senior leaders and HM Inspectors identified strengths, progress and areas for further consideration during the visit.**

The local authority has provided the school with intensive support to address the identified areas for improvement, including providing additional capacity within the leadership team. This 'team around the school' approach is beginning to impact positively on the progress made, particularly in the ELCC. The senior leadership team would benefit from continued support and challenge from the local authority to develop further the strategic leadership of the school.

### Early learning and childcare class

Staff in the ELCC team are enthusiastic, growing in confidence and have considerable capacity to continue to improve. Staff from the local authority have provided intensive support that empowered practitioners to lead improvements in their own context. All practitioners have engaged in extensive professional learning and can articulate clearly the benefits to their practice. The practitioner team have a high level of respect for the acting senior early years officer and very much appreciate support for their own wellbeing provided during recent challenging times. Together, they have developed a strong team ethos that is facilitating honest and constructive discussion and supports a culture of ongoing improvement.

The headteacher is updating her knowledge and skills to support the development of more strategic and informed leadership of the ELCC. A principal early years officer has recently been appointed and will take up post in the near future. Moving forward, it will be important that the roles and responsibilities of the new senior leadership team are clearly defined to ensure that progress is maintained and developed further.

Engagement in self-evaluation is supporting practitioners well to make improvements. All practitioners are making more confident use of self-evaluation frameworks within a culture of reflection and ongoing improvement. Staff engage in regular informal reflection through, for example regular 'huddles' to discuss the quality of learning being provided. The voice of children and families has been strengthened within approaches to improvement through meaningful opportunities to be involved in developments such as the recent consultation to rename children's learning journals.



Practitioners welcome their designated leadership roles, for example leading on outdoor learning and literacy. This collegiate approach to improvement is sustaining the appropriate and agreed pace of change.

#### Primary school

Currently, school improvement priorities continue to be informed by inspection findings. Senior leaders and staff should now use self-evaluation more effectively to identify priorities based on the current context and needs of the school.

The headteacher has continued to build positive relationships across the school community. As a result, the school is a calmer environment for learning. The refreshed vision statement and values are a stronger feature of the school. The new school motto 'your bright future starts here' reflects the commitment to ensuring there are high expectations and aspirations for all children at Slamannan Primary School. The headteacher should continue to use the vision, values and motto to guide the work of the school.

The headteacher has introduced a number of systems and processes to support school improvement and improve outcomes for children. In particular, there has been a focus on introducing systems to track and monitor children's progress. This is leading to increased opportunity for professional dialogue with class teachers about children's learning and progress. Senior leaders should now take time to review the arrangements to clarify their purpose, identify potential duplication and ensure robust implementation and record keeping.

Teachers are beginning to take a lead role in improving the school. They are working well as a team, sharing ideas and planning collaboratively. Teachers are now ready to increase the pace of change, however, it will be important senior leaders provide the right support to enable them to do this successfully.

Children are at the very early stages of taking a lead role in their school. They talk positively about roles, such as house captains, and the jobs for which they have responsibility. There is significant scope to increase their involvement in evaluating the work of the school and supporting school improvement.

**Improve learning and teaching across the school, ensuring an appropriate level of pace, challenge and differentiation. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps.**

**Working together, local authority officers, senior leaders and HM Inspectors identified strengths, progress and areas for further consideration during the visit.**

#### Early learning and childcare class

In the ELCC, practitioners have made significant improvements to the learning environment. This is supporting children to demonstrate a high level of engagement, experience increased challenge and lead their own learning through the choices they make. Positive examples include the development of the outdoor space, block play and the introduction of woodwork. Practitioners have worked hard to develop how they plan for children's learning. As a result, children now benefit from an interesting and stimulating range of learning opportunities.

Practitioners plan for learning in response to both the interests and learning needs of children. This system is well developed with all practitioners making valuable contributions.

Professional learning, ongoing discussion and clear guidance is supporting practitioners to make effective observations of children as they play. Practitioners are increasingly using their observations to identify what children need to learn next. Careful documentation of learning in children's 'nursery story books' provides a helpful way to engage children in discussion about their learning. Practitioners recognise this could be developed further and have plans in place to take this forward.

Building on these improvements, consideration should be made to how children's learning needs can be met more effectively through play, in a progressive way across the early level. Senior leaders have correctly identified the introduction of play pedagogy in P1 as a next step. This will build on the positive ELCC experience of Slamannan's youngest children.

### Primary School

Staff have continued to focus on developing positive relationships across the school, and in all classes. Through the collaborative development of a relationships agreement and ongoing work on self-regulated approaches, senior leaders, staff, children and parents recognise that relationships have improved significantly across the school community.

Staff are at the very early stages of developing their approach to play-based learning. They should continue to monitor and evaluate rigorously the impact of this approach on children's learning and progress.

Senior leaders, in collaboration with staff, children and parents have agreed what effective and inclusive learning, teaching and assessment should look like. Further work is now required in taking forward aspects of what an effective and inclusive lesson looks like in practice. This should include the use of formative assessment strategies. Senior leaders should support teachers further in their use of assessment to ensure they gain a better understanding of the progress children make.

Teachers still need to ensure they differentiate tasks and activities for all children sufficiently in order to support appropriate pace and challenge in learning.

Teachers continue to develop confidence in their professional judgements about achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level. Moving forward, they should plan learning and teaching alongside assessment and moderation. This will ensure there is an appropriate flow to activities and that assessment and teacher feedback blend effectively into learners' experiences. Involving children more in planning their learning would increase further children's voice across the school, and would empower their leadership and ownership of learning. This will create also opportunities for greater breadth and depth in children's learning.



**Review the approaches that support children's learning across the school. In doing this, the school needs to improve the planning of learning, teaching and assessment for children requiring additional support in their learning.**

**Working together, local authority officers, senior leaders and HM Inspectors identified strengths, progress and areas for further consideration during the visit.**

### Early learning and childcare class

In the ELCC, practitioners demonstrate their high level of respect for young children in how they value their thoughts, feelings and wishes. Each child is treated and valued as a unique individual. Practitioners strive to provide, on an individual basis, what all children need to make the best possible progress. Improvements to planning for individual needs include the refresh of care plan formats. The new approach has fostered a helpful and strengthened partnership approach between home and ELCC to meet the care and learning needs of all children.

### Primary School

The commitment of children, staff, parents and partners to the shared vision, values and aims of the school community underpins the school's ongoing approach to wellbeing. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the needs of their children and the local community. They are responsive to the context of the school, and the health and wellbeing needs of the community.

Senior leaders are making increasingly effective use of intelligence gained from partners such as the home school liaison officer, educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, inclusion and wellbeing officer and Active Schools coordinator to inform their approach to health and wellbeing. This ensures children and families are supported increasingly well in their learning and wellbeing.

Senior leaders continue to work effectively to ensure compliance with the Additional Support for Learning Act (2009) and its associated code of practice. There is increasingly effective practice in identifying the additional support needs of children. With staff, senior leaders have created a clearer overview of additional support needs across the school, including for those children that require support plans. Senior leaders should now work with staff to ensure support plans are updated regularly to evidence the progress and skills children are achieving. Staff should now create plans in child-friendly language and ensure smarter targets, which enable children to connect well with their targets and next steps in learning.

Senior leaders have used Pupil Equity Funding to increase capacity to support children who require additional support with their learning. As a result, staff are able to provide targeted support for a number of children in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. They should continue to monitor and evaluate regularly this support to ensure that it is leading to improvements in outcomes for children.

Children facing specific challenges enjoy their learning in the enhanced provision. Staff working in the provision use the school's nurturing ethos to provide targeted support for identified children. The focus of the enhanced provision has been under review this session to meet better the needs of children who attend the setting. It will be important to monitor and evaluate regularly the impact of this on children's progress in learning.

**Raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data, and robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement.**

**Working together, local authority officers, senior leaders and HM Inspectors identified strengths, progress and areas for further consideration during the visit.**

### Early learning and childcare class

In the ELCC, systems are now in place to track and monitor the progress children make in their learning. Practitioners recognise that systems now need time to embed and refine, for example as local authority systems move online and professional learning continues. With senior leaders, they are at the early stages of exploring all available data to support improvements to the progress children make in their learning. With their increased professional confidence and understanding, the team are very well placed to continue to develop this area.

### Primary School

Class teachers take a lead role in tracking and monitoring the progress of children in their class. They currently use the local authority tracking and monitoring system to record progress and identify children who are not on track to achieve. Although they are at the early stages of using this data to plan learning to address identified gaps, they are confident this is beginning to impact positively on children in their class. Teachers value the potential of the system to build an accurate picture of children's progress over time. They should continue to build on this positive start to planning universal and targeted support to raise attainment for all children.

Teachers have made effective use of professional learning to develop their understanding of the range of evidence they can use to support their judgements on children progress within a level. Staff use of progression pathways, an annual assessment overview and increased collaborative planning are leading to a greater consistency in professional judgements. Teachers recognise the benefits this brings, particularly in building on prior learning at points of transition. They confidently articulate the role summative assessment has in supporting their professional judgements.

Moving forward it is important for senior leaders to continue to facilitate regular and planned tracking and monitoring discussions with class teachers. They should ensure that records are maintained to evidence plans to support children who are not on track to achieve expected levels of attainment. They should also use this data at a whole school level to identify gaps and trends to ensure all children work to their full potential. Consideration should be given to a 'team round the class' approach where cohorts are identified as not being on track.

## What happens next?

Understandably, the school and early learning and childcare class has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had an impact on the work of the school and ELCC. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have also been making progress in taking forward the areas for improvement from the original inspection. Whilst there has been good progress in addressing the areas for improvement in the ELCC, we recognise that the school needs some more time to implement fully its priorities for improvement identified at the original inspection. We have asked Falkirk 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, Falkirk 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.