

# Summarised inspection findings

**Millbank Primary School (Bun-Sgoil Bruach na Muilne)**

The Highland Council

26 September 2023

## Key contextual information

Millbank Primary School (Bun-Sgoil Bruach na Muilne) is situated in Nairn, The Highland Council. The school has nine classes for English Medium Education (EME) and two classes for Gaelic Medium Education (GME).

The leadership team currently consists of the acting headteacher, the acting depute headteacher and the principal teacher. A further principal teacher post is vacant currently. The acting headteacher, who was previously depute headteacher in the school, has been in post for only a few weeks.

The school roll at the time of the inspection was 256 children. In September 2021, 3.1% of the school roll lived within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2.

The school attendance in 2021/22 was 94.5%. The attendance from 2022 to date this term is 91.92%.

The school has a nursery class, of which the acting headteacher is the designated manager.

The school has an enhanced unit, which consists of the Rainbow class and the Sparkle class. These classes consist of children with a variety of additional support needs.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Almost all relationships between staff and children, and most relationships between children, are positive and respectful. The 'Millbank Way' ('Dòigh Millbank') is evident in the ways that staff and children communicate with one another. There is a welcoming, nurturing ethos across the school. All teachers use praise appropriately to encourage and motivate children.
- Most children participate well in their learning. They are motivated especially in classes where they are able to contribute regularly to their learning. This includes discussing their learning with their teachers and peers. A majority of children agree that teachers ask their views about what they want to learn. A next step for staff across the school will be to use the views of children more consistently to influence learning.
- Children learn well in lessons that have appropriate challenge and pace to meet their needs. In most lessons, a few children would benefit from increased pace and challenge. The majority of children agree that they enjoy learning some or all of the time, and that they are comfortable in approaching staff with questions or suggestions.
- Increasingly, children support effectively the learning of their peers. Almost all children from P4 to P7 act as buddies for children from the nursery class to P3. They support the younger

children in literacy and numeracy as well as in other subject areas. Children across the school are working well together in outdoor learning activities, such as orienteering in the school grounds. Through these activities, they are developing valuable skills in teamwork and demonstrating further the values of the 'Millbank Way' ('Dòigh Millbank').

- Children use digital technologies appropriately in a few classes. These technologies help them to extend their skills in areas such as literacy and numeracy. Teachers are also using the technologies to support well the learning of a few children who require additional support.
- Almost all teachers ensure an appropriate purpose to their lessons. This is demonstrated through providing children with clear instructions and explanations. They also help children to understand appropriately what they will be learning. A minority of teachers also help children consistently to understand how they can be successful. This includes them having useful, regular learning conversations with children. A few teachers review children's learning appropriately at the end of lessons. Senior leaders should now support all teachers to develop this practice consistently across the school.
- Almost all teachers use questioning appropriately to support further children's learning. A next step for them will be to use questioning with increased purpose to deepen children's knowledge and understanding.
- All teachers and practitioners across the school are aware of children's individual needs. They seek to meet these needs well through a variety of interventions. This includes them working effectively with the enthusiastic and caring pupil support assistants. Teachers and practitioners should continue to provide targeted support and challenge that helps all children to achieve their full potential in learning.
- All teachers use a variety of assessment approaches to help children develop their knowledge and understanding effectively. This includes teachers providing children with regular, informal verbal feedback and marking children's jotters. It also includes them using formal assessments to help determine children's progress and attainment. A next step for teachers will be to develop more consistently their use of written feedback to support fully children's next steps. Increasingly, teachers analyse data from formal assessments. This is helping them to identify and target gaps in children's learning and to make more reliable judgements about children's progress. Most parents say that they receive helpful, regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing. They also say they receive information about their child's learning at the right time.
- Senior leaders are continuing to develop more robust processes across the school. This includes introducing a comprehensive tracking and monitoring system. This system shows clearly children's attainment and progression in literacy and numeracy in EME and GME over time. It also shows appropriate data for children in the enhanced support areas.
- Staff are engaging in appropriate professional learning linked to the moderation of children's work and understanding the National Benchmarks. This is supporting them to become more confident in applying national standards and making professional judgements. Staff should continue to engage in moderation activities around high-quality learning and teaching.
- Regular meetings are also taking place throughout the year between senior leaders and staff. These meetings focus on children's progress and attainment, and teachers' planning for learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers are becoming increasingly proactive in planning more appropriately to meet the needs of learners and improve attainment especially in literacy and numeracy. Increasingly, teachers take account of children's prior learning to inform their planning. This includes them planning appropriate interventions.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory and in numeracy and mathematics is good. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.
- Teachers have benefitted from professional learning around assessment, National Benchmarks and planning and tracking. This has increased their confidence in identifying progress across Curriculum for Excellence levels. As a result, attainment data is becoming more valid and reliable.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, a majority of children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment, in particular at early level writing.

### Listening and talking

- Most children across the school listen well for instructions and are keen to answer questions in class. A minority of children need to be encouraged further to approach staff with questions or suggestions. At early level, almost all children listen well to each other and take turns during discussions about their emotions and what makes a good friend. At first level, almost all children listen and respond appropriately and contribute well to discussions about their learning. At second level, almost all children listen well to instructions, work cooperatively in paired activities and contribute well to discussions. A few children need to develop further their listening skills to take increased account, and be more respectful, of the views of their peers.

### Reading

- At early level, all children are increasing their knowledge of sounds and can use these to spell common words. While most children read and share their stories confidently, a few children need to develop increased confidence in reading. At first and second levels, most children can read fluently for understanding and use expression, appropriate pace and tone. A minority of children are developing skills in this area, especially in relation to using expression that demonstrates understanding. Most children can identify and discuss easily the writer's style, use of language and the effect this has on the reader. They understand clearly the difference between fiction and non-fiction and enjoy sharing their author preferences. A few children speak passionately about the different types of text they can access. They emphasise the importance of using the school and community library on a weekly basis.

### Writing

- At early level, children are making very good progress in their writing. Almost all children can write sentences with a capital letter and full stop. A few children are able to write independently and can write at length with good use of vocabulary. At first level, most children can write

independently for a variety of purposes and genres. They use simple punctuation appropriately and can spell most common words correctly. At second level, most children are using punctuation and paragraphs to structure their writing. They can write for a range of purposes and audiences. They convey information confidently and can describe and share experiences. They can use figurative language, such as similes, to engage the reader. There is early evidence in a few classes which shows that a new writing approach is having a positive impact on the quality and quantity of children's writing. It is resulting in well-structured writing in a few classes. Teachers should work on developing increased consistency in writing across all classes to impact more positively on children's outcomes across the school.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Across the school, a majority of children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment, in particular at the end of second level.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, most children can recognise and order numbers to 20. Most children can identify a few coins but would benefit from developing their knowledge of all coins to £2. Most children can explain the differences between tallest and smallest but need to develop further other key vocabulary related to measurement. At first level, most children confidently multiply and divide by 10 and 100. They can count on and backwards in 2s, 5s and 10s. Most children can confidently identify the value of all digits in numbers to 1,000. The majority would benefit from increasing their speed in recalling multiplication facts. At second level, most children can confidently identify the value of digits to 1,000,000. Most have a good understanding of the relationship of fractions, percentages and decimals. A minority of children need to revisit the use of different number operations in calculations to support them as they complete word problems.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Almost all children at early level can recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At first level, most children can locate information using compass points and simple grid references. Most can identify and use the correct measurement for length, weight and volume. At second level, most children can identify regular and irregular shapes. They understand the key features of a circle such as radius, circumference and diameter. Most children can calculate the size of angles but would benefit from reviewing the names of different types of angles.

### **Information handling**

- Most children at early level can gather information and place this correctly on a pictogram. Almost all children at first level can collect, organise and display data using simple bar graphs. Most children at second level can represent data effectively on different charts such as Venn diagrams and graphs. The majority of children at second level would benefit from learning more about the different ways that scales can be used to represent a variety of data.

### **Attainment over time**

- Teachers are now using the recently introduced tracker to monitor and track effectively literacy and numeracy for individual children over time. In addition, regular professional dialogue around planning and gathering attainment data is leading to staff having a clearer understanding of individual progress and attainment over time. As a result, children's attainment is now beginning to be monitored carefully and analysed effectively. Senior leaders should now use all data to help identify progress and attainment of different cohorts and groups of children. This will help to monitor the impact of school improvements on improving outcomes for children's attainment. As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop further teachers' confidence in making judgements about children's achievement of a level in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders plan to extend this tracking of attainment in all curriculum areas.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Across the school, children demonstrate increasing levels of confidence through participation in a wide range of activities. These include swimming, netball, athletics and football as well as gardening, quizzes and dance. A few older children recognise the skills they are gaining and how these can be applied in their learning. Children's achievements are celebrated regularly in assemblies, newsletters and through the local media. Many children proudly display their achievements around the school building.
- Children enjoy a range of leadership opportunities through groups such as Eco Group, Digital Leaders, Healthy Hearts, Pupil Council, Junior Road Safety Officers and as House Captains. A few older children are learning important life skills through paired reading and buddying younger children. Most children participate in fundraising to support local and national charities including the local foodbank. Alongside parents' efforts to support families through the cost-of-living crisis, children are beginning to understand the importance of recycling. Raising funds for Ukraine and Syrian earthquake survivors is helping them understand their role as global citizens.
- The school tracks children's achievements both within and outwith school. Children not involved in any groups or clubs can be identified and supported to take part. The school is not yet capturing the full range of achievements and skills for all children. A more explicit focus on tracking skills for learning, life and work would help to address this.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff know their children and families very well. They are very aware of the needs of all children including those most deprived or those facing additional challenges. Teachers across the school strive to promote equity across all learning opportunities for all children in an inclusive ethos.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively through providing additional staffing. These staff facilitate targeted interventions for individuals and groups of learners. Senior leaders and staff monitor and evaluate these targeted interventions effectively during termly planning and tracking meetings. This is ensuring that interventions and targeted approaches support children to accelerate their progress in learning. Senior leaders should now ensure that analysis of data for different cohorts of learners articulates more clearly their progress in closing the attainment gap.

## Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

Millbank primary school (Bun-Sgoil Bruach na Muilne) hosts an enhanced provision for children from Nairn at the primary stages who have a wide range of additional support needs. Children are allocated a place in the enhanced provision through The Highland Council's Joint Admissions Group. All children follow individualised learning programmes based on their learner profiles. At the time of the inspection, 12 children attended the enhanced provision across two multi-composite classes. A few children have opportunities to interact and engage with mainstream peers.

### QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Across the enhanced provision, staff have developed a supportive and nurturing learning environment. All children enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff understand the needs of the children very well. 'All About Me' profiles and pen profiles contain useful information, which helps staff to understand each child and their needs. They also identify strategies to support children in their holistic wellbeing, care and learning. Staff provide children with regular opportunities to be independent using clear routines across the day. They observe children closely and respond appropriately with well-timed interventions to support children in their learning. Staff use individual strategies effectively to support children if they become disengaged or distressed. They also help children to regulate their emotions and re-engage in their learning as required. As a result, children feel safe, included, and confident in seeking support when required from known and trusted adults.
- Almost all children are engaged in activities that suit their needs. Children are supported well to work in a range of group and individual tasks and activities. In a few lessons, children find their learning activities too easy or too difficult, resulting in disengagement. Teachers need to ensure that all learning activities are of an appropriate level for children, providing sufficient challenge. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of children's sensory, communication and developmental needs, particularly for learners who find attention to task engagement more difficult. Staff should ensure that they engage in clear, targeted planning to reduce any barriers to learning for children.
- Staff make effective use of the local community. Almost all children enjoy regular opportunities to engage in activities such as horse riding and swimming. These activities support and extend children's learning in other contexts and provide them with a sense of improved wellbeing. A few children participate in learning activities alongside peers in mainstream classes. This provides these children with social experiences, helping to develop further their social and communication skills.
- Teachers use routines, visual symbols, an exit board and signs well to provide clear explanations and instructions. Teachers should continue to develop total communication strategies, including the use of visual symbols and bespoke communication approaches, to better support children's transition throughout the day. This will also help children to participate as fully as possible in all areas of learning.
- Teachers provide regular feedback to children using verbal praise. A few children are encouraged to check their own work and participate in relevant learning conversations. Recent moderation and tracking meetings are beginning to impact positively on teachers' confidence in meeting the needs of all learners. Senior leaders should continue to support staff in developing the range of skills required to meet the diverse learner needs. Teachers should continue to develop their approaches to planning and assessment. This includes using Education Scotland's continuum of engagement and support codes. This will help them to evidence and monitor more effectively children's progress over time.



- Most children are provided with a range of sensory-based resources and toys that offer play-based learning opportunities. Most children have regular access to free-play and structured play activities. As a result, they are beginning to explore, and problem solve more creatively. Staff should continue to use play opportunities to develop children's social skills, such as turn taking and communication. Staff should take further account of national guidance to strengthen their work. More planned opportunities for learning outdoors would enhance play development.

### **QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement**

- Taking account of individual learner profiles, most children are making appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy from prior levels of attainment.
- Taking account of individual communication profiles, most children are developing well their listening and talking skills. Most children would benefit from staff having greater consistency in using children's individual communication strategies more frequently. These include them developing alternative and augmentative communication to meet better the communication needs of all learners.
- Most children are developing well their numeracy and mathematics skills. Most children working on milestones can demonstrate an appropriate awareness of numbers and identify them in familiar sequences. Most children can follow a 'now and next' activity sequence or follow a simple timetable. At early level and first level, most children are able to demonstrate a greater understanding and use of numeracy strategies. They can count, use money and explore and collect data for specific purposes. Most children across the stages would benefit from using more frequently their numeracy and mathematics skills across the curriculum. They should also use these when engaging in external visits. This will help them to develop a greater understanding of the relevance of numbers in their lives.
- School data illustrates that most children are making appropriate progress with their learning, engagement and wellbeing over time. Senior leaders and staff now need to ensure the assessment and tracking of children's progress over time is more sensitive. It should also capture more effectively the small steps in progress learners are making within Milestones. Teachers should engage further in moderation activities. This will improve their confidence in making professional judgements of how well children are attaining and making progress with their learning. It will also help them to have a greater shared understanding of engagement and supports required to maximise learning. Staff need to continue to work with other colleagues to moderate their practice and set standards for learning which provide all children with appropriate challenge.
- Across the enhanced provision, children's achievements are recognised and celebrated effectively in class, in newsletters and through digital platforms. Children's achievements are displayed prominently across the school. Children are proud of their achievements. Senior leaders and teachers track children's wider achievements and participation in leadership groups. In taking this forward, senior leaders and staff should develop ways to support better children's understanding of the skills they are developing. They should also ensure that children can achieve progressively in ways that meet their needs.
- Senior leaders and staff understand the additional support needs and socio-economic background including the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation profile of children and their families. They provide regular and ongoing support to alleviate any challenges faced by children and families.

## Quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education

**Context:** Bun-Sgoil Bruach na Muilne (Millbank Primary School) has an established Gaelic Medium provision for children at the primary stages. The sgoil-àraich provision is elsewhere in the town. The Senior Leadership Team is now at a stage to strengthen further the provision by using self-evaluation resources bespoke to Gaelic, such 'The Advice on Gaelic Education' for self-evaluation.

### QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Staff and children are proud of the school's Gaelic provision. Almost all children understand the purpose of learning Gaelic and the benefits of bilingualism.
- Staff and children enjoy very positive relationships. Almost all children are very eager learners of Gaelic. They are motivated and engage well in their learning. They interact very well with staff, with each other and with visitors to the school. They contribute effectively to the life of the school within various leadership and citizen groups.
- Children in C4-7 have opportunities to lead learning in Gaelic in the C1-3 classroom, and in some English medium classes. A few children have presented in Gaelic at whole school assemblies. This is helpful in promoting an interest in the language within the school. The headteacher should embed this practice in a more strategic way as part of the curriculum rationale. This should raise expectations of how children in EME can engage with Gaelic in meeting the school's aims and vision.
- Staff are good role models in their use of Gaelic. They have created an environment where Gaelic is valued and encouraged to be used at all times. Children experience high-quality total immersion learning experiences for most of the time. As such, they have a secure foundation in the language and are developing very good fluency. It would be helpful that temporary class cover continues children's immersion learning and teaching rather than have children taught through English. The children enjoy and respond to active, well-organised activities within the classroom and outdoors. Children often converse in Gaelic with each other in the classroom. They should be encouraged to do so more consistently, including in activities beyond the school. Almost all children attend a weekly after-school homework club, which is helping children to become more fluent in the language and to focus on individual needs in Gaelic.
- Staff use ongoing and standardised assessments, designed for learning through Gaelic and English. This data is used diagnostically to identify areas of improvement to plan targeted interventions, and in measuring children's progress. Staff regularly moderate assessment decisions. However, a next step for them will be to establish cross-school links for moderation in Gaelic. Teachers need to develop a bespoke Gàidhlig language progression framework to support learning, teaching and assessment.
- Staff are making some progress in implementing the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. They should continue to increase the promotion of GME with the local playgroup and parents.

### QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- As there are small numbers of children at each stage, broad statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children. Overall, children in Gaelic Medium Education are progressing well in numeracy and mathematics and literacy in Gàidhlig and English. Children at C1, C4 and C7 are on track to achieve their expected level of attainment with a few exceeding.

## **Literacy in Gàidhlig and English**

- Children are making good progress in literacy and Gàidhlig and in their use of Gaelic across the curriculum.
- Across the classes, almost all children communicate clearly, audibly and are confident in expressing their ideas and preferences. They listen well to others and take turns. Older children work well in pairs to discuss and plan writing tasks.
- Younger children identify sounds and use correct grammatical structures through a range of effective total immersion approaches such as singing and games. Their language will be developed further by learning through well-planned play.
- Most children read a range of texts fluently for understanding in both Gaelic and English as appropriate to their stage of immersion. They use expression, appropriate pace and tone.
- As children move through the school, they plan and create their own stories with increasing independence. Older children produce pieces of extended writing in English and Gaelic. They use paragraphs and more complex punctuation accurately, such as speech marks and apostrophes. They write for a range of purposes using accurate spelling. Children would benefit from writing for a range of purposes more regularly. A few children need support to present their work to a better standard when producing texts.

## **Numeracy and Mathematics**

- Children are making good progress in numeracy and Mathematics, with a few exceeding. Almost all children can use a wide range of Gaelic terminology to explain numeracy and mathematical process at their appropriate level.

## **Number, Money and measure**

- Across classes, most children have a good understanding of number, money and measure. They carry out calculations accurately as appropriate to their age and stage, applying their knowledge and skills to problem solving scenarios. Children should develop further their application of numeracy and mathematical skills in real-life contexts.

## **Shape, Position and Movement**

- Younger children identify a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects and discuss their properties (as appropriate to their level). Older children have a good knowledge of angles. They can work out angles from measurements given and identify angles in outdoor settings.

## **Information Handling**

- Younger children have limited experience in information handling. They recognise bar charts and can explain why they are useful. Older children can identify pie charts and use their knowledge of percentages to explore them. Children at all stages are not confident in analysing data at an appropriate level.

## **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children's development of Gaelic language, skills and their knowledge of culture and heritage is supported well by Gaelic partners, such as Fèis Rois and Fèisean nan Gàidheal.
- Children have developed important skills and confidence in performance through participating in a successful drama performance in the Community Centre. This was supported by partners such as Comann nam Pàrant and Fèisean nan Gàidheal. The performance increased the visibility of Gaelic language across the school community. All C7 and P7 children are working

enthusiastically on a Gaelic song which they will perform together at their Leavers' Assembly in June.

- Most children participate in out of school activities, such as shinty and football. Children speak in Gaelic within these sports as immersion opportunities. They do so with other children from various schools. This develops further their use of language. Children value these opportunities and enjoy success, especially in shinty competitions. Almost all children develop further their skills in performance by participating at the local Mòd, and a few also participate at the national Mòd. Regularly, these children receive commendations about their level of fluency in Gaelic. A few children attend Sradagan Summer Clubs and residential experiences by Fèis Rois to extend their specialist vocabulary. Children talk about these enthusiastically, especially linked to how the opportunities enhance their fluency and enable them to network with other learners of Gaelic. Children show initiative in how they use Gaelic outwith school. They get together informally to play shinty and create their own movies in Gaelic.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff know all children in the GME classes well, as well as their families. They provide support as required to meet their needs, alleviating any challenges faced by them. Children and their families appreciate this support.

## Other relevant evidence

- The school library was refurbished recently with the support of the Parent Council. It has a comprehensive selection of books. Children from P7 apply to be librarians and are timetabled to support classes when they visit the library. The school had an artist in residence last session, who worked with the P7 children to support them to write their own books.
- Well planned transitions between the school and a nursery for GME in the community centre, CALA Cròileagan (Playgroup), support Gaelic language acquisition as children begin their journey in Gaelic Medium Education. The headteacher should continue to consider whether children would benefit from the introduction of GME at the nursery stages.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.