

# Summarised inspection findings

**Easdale Primary School**

Argyll and Bute Council

3 September 2024

# Key contextual information

Easdale Primary School serves the Isle of Seil, the Isle of Luing, Easdale Island and surrounding rural area. The Isle of Seil is linked to the mainland by a bridge. A few children travel to school from Easdale Island and the Isle of Luing by ferry. The school roll is 31 children arranged across two multi-composite classes. The headteacher has been in post since November 2018. There is one full time equivalent (FTE) permanent teacher who has been in post since August 2023. There is also a 0.6 FTE temporary teacher who has been in post since April 2024. The headteacher has a 0.4 FTE class teaching commitment. There is one FTE principal teacher who is currently on leave. There is no acting principal teacher.

All children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles five and six.

The headteacher has full management responsibility for Easdale Pre Five Unit (Nursery class) which is situated within the school building.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ learning and engagement</li><li>■ quality of teaching</li><li>■ effective use of assessment</li><li>■ planning, tracking and monitoring</li></ul>	

- Across the school, there is a warm, nurturing ethos, which is underpinned by children’s rights. Staff and children have worked collaboratively to promote and develop children’s rights effectively. Almost all children are friendly, polite, and proud of their school. They confidently engage in the life and work of the school. The relationships between children and staff are very positive and promote children’s well-being. All children behave well most of the time. Children and staff have developed a school charter linked to children’s rights. Staff refer children to this regularly during lessons and children say this helps them to be fully aware of and respect each other’s rights. Staff have clear, agreed strategies to support children to regulate their behaviour. They use restorative conversations with children when children begin to disengage with their learning. This helps all children to regulate their behaviour well most of the time.
- Teachers plan tasks and activities which are mostly motivating, relevant and well structured. Almost all children are keen to learn. Children work very well together, with older children and younger children engaging in joint learning activities. Teachers plan a range of learning activities which meet the needs of all learners well in literacy and numeracy. In other curriculum areas they plan learning which is relevant and interesting to children. They need to ensure planned learning across the curriculum meets the needs of all learners.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning with children. In a few lessons, children co-construct what they need to achieve and do to be successful. Teachers use clear explanations and instructions most of the time to help children to understand their learning. Teachers use a range of questioning strategies well to support children to understand what they are learning and to make connections with prior learning. Older children use their higher

order thinking skills effectively to answer questions which require them to explain their thinking. Most children engage well in learning, particularly in group tasks and activities. All staff support skilfully a few children who require additional support to engage fully in learning at times. They use agreed strategies and routines and support these children well. There is a need to ensure that all children are engaged fully during direct teaching as they progress through the school.

- Younger children benefit from regular experiences to learn through play. Teachers take good account of the principles of play within national guidance. They plan activities that support children's literacy, numeracy, creativity, and curiosity. Children engage fully in activities, developing their communication and social skills well. Staff interact well with children to support and extend children's learning. Staff use observations to assess individuals' learning and plan next steps. Teachers and children record and plan children's learning together effectively in learning journals. They need to involve children fully in setting the next steps for learning and reviewing these regularly.
- Children experience outdoor learning using the school grounds, the beach, and the local community. This approach supports children to understand their unique local environment and ways to stay safe outdoors. Staff work well with partner organisations to enhance and extend children's learning. Teachers should develop this further to support children to identify more effectively the skills for life, learning and work that they are developing through this approach. Children use digital technology well to support learning in literacy and numeracy. For example, they read a range of texts on digital devices, and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in online games and programmes.
- Older children are developing their skills well in peer and self-assessment. They provide a few pieces of written feedback and clear verbal feedback to their peers which they link to agreed success criteria. Teachers should support all children to make this a consistent, more regular practice across the school. Teachers provide mostly verbal feedback to children. There is a need to record feedback more consistently on children's work. This should help children to understand and recall better how they have been successful and what they need to do next.
- Teachers plan children's learning across a range of timescales. Teachers use progression pathways effectively, linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes, in literacy and numeracy and mathematics to plan children's learning. They plan an overview of contexts for learning across the school year. They link these contexts well to a range of themes, such as children's rights, global goals and sustainability. Teachers link learning in social subjects, science, and health and wellbeing to CfE experiences and outcomes. As planned, they need to link this planning rigorously with CfE experiences and outcomes across the curriculum. This should help them to ensure all children experience full breadth and progression of the curriculum as they move through the school.
- All children are involved in planning learning which makes links across the curriculum. All teachers regularly check what children know and what they would like to learn next. Teachers are highly responsive to the interests of all children in their class. Teachers and children record this planning well in class planning floorbooks. Teachers now need to help children to identify the skills and knowledge they need to develop across the curriculum to help them plan their learning experiences more effectively. This should help children to have a better understanding of their own progress and attainment.
- Teachers use a range of diagnostic assessments throughout the year well, including national standardised assessments for Scotland. In addition, they use their daily observations of children's work, in a range of contexts, to inform accurate professional judgements about children's progress and attainment. Teachers need to review approaches to assessment

across the curriculum to develop a more consistent and rigorous approach to understanding of children's progress across the curriculum. All teachers have engaged successfully in moderation of children's work in writing, within school and with colleagues from primary schools in the local authority. They meet three times a year to moderate their professional judgements of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This is helping them to make accurate professional judgements about children's attainment.

- All teachers meet three times a year to track and monitor effectively children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They use local authority tracking proformas and pathways to identify the progress children are making within CfE levels. Teachers make effective use of data gathered from diagnostic assessment to identify successfully gaps in children's knowledge and understanding. They use this information well, alongside tracking data, to identify children who require targeted support with their learning, this includes children who are impacted negatively by personal and socio-economic circumstances. Teachers plan and provide targeted support as part of their daily class work. This is helping all children to be fully included in the work of the class. All teachers now need to track children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.

## 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.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

- The headteacher monitors the attendance of children regularly and closely. Attendance is in line with the national average. There are robust procedures in place to ensure children's safety if they are absent from school. Persistent absence of 10% or more is an issue for a few children. Should a child's attendance dip below a benchmark, staff will notify the parent and agree support to help the child attend school. The headteacher has worked closely with a few families whose children required support with their attendance. For those children who have required support, there has been a significant increase in their attendance.

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Due to the small size of the school roll, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- Overall, attainment is good. Almost all children are on track to achieve expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy and mathematics. Children who receive targeted interventions are making good progress against the expected measures of the intervention.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Almost all children are making good progress in literacy and English. A minority of children could be making even better progress.

#### Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen well to their teachers and peers. Younger children ask relevant questions and answer other's questions appropriately. They follow simple instructions well. They need to develop further their skills in using appropriate body language when listening to adults, such as facing the speaker and making eye contact. Older children engage well with each other and adults in discussion. When working in small groups, older children build on each other's ideas by asking questions or offering thoughts developed through their experiences. Older children enjoy presenting their learning to adults at family learning days. A minority of children need to improve their skills in turn taking in discussion.

#### Reading

- Younger children read familiar texts fluently. They use decoding skills well, such as blending, and context clues, to help them read words they are less sure of. Younger children know the difference between a letter and a word. They need to develop their understanding of the features of fiction and non-fiction texts. Older children explain well how they would use the author and blurb to help them make decisions about which book to choose to read. They read clearly and fluently and use expression well to enhance their reading. They answer a range of literal and inferential questions about texts well. Older children need to develop their skills in skimming text and note taking.

## **Writing**

- Younger children are beginning to form letters legibly. They are beginning to write simple sentences about their experiences. They need to practise their writing skills more regularly and with greater focus. Older children create interesting characters and settings to write imaginative stories. They use ambitious vocabulary and alliteration well to enhance their writing. Older children are adapting a script for a play which they plan to present to the local community. This is helping them to understand the role of speech by characters in their writing. Older children develop writing plans which they use well to organise their ideas logically. Across the school, a majority of children need to improve the presentation of their work.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Almost all children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children could be making even better progress.

## **Number, money and measure**

- Younger children identify numerals and count backwards within 20. They add and subtract successfully within 10 and calculate double numbers up to 10 accurately. They identify coins and use a clock face to identify o'clock times. They need to develop their skills and understanding in estimating and using measure. Older children round whole numbers to the nearest 1,000, 10,000 and 100,000 accurately. They read and record time in both 12 and 24-hour notation and convert between the two. They require more practice in calculations bridging across hours and parts of hours. All children need to improve their skills in solving written number problems.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Younger children name common two-dimensional shapes and simple lines of symmetry. They need to develop their knowledge of three-dimensional objects. Older children describe a minority of properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They now need to extend their knowledge and understanding of shapes. For example, they need to develop their knowledge of circumference, radius and diameter.

## **Information handling**

- Younger children apply counting skills well to interpret a simple chart. Older children use a range of digital technology to organise and display data accurately.

## **Attainment over time**

- Overall, children make good progress over time in literacy and numeracy from their prior levels of attainment. There was dip in attainment across literacy and numeracy following the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, attainment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Staff clearly identify gaps in children's learning and provide targeted support to close the gaps. Staff do not yet assess children's knowledge and understanding robustly across all curriculum areas. They need to do so to help them to gather data about children's attainment and progress across the curriculum.

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

- Across the school, staff share and celebrate children's achievements in school and the community on wall displays and assemblies. This is building a sense of pride and confidence in all children.
- Children are developing their leadership skills and citizenship skills well through the wide variety of well-planned activities, such as learning together sessions. This includes work on children's rights, global citizenship, and environmental issues. All children are involved in the



pupil council. They lead on activities to raise funds for charities chosen by the children and developed an eco-charter with actions to protect the environment. Children are developing skills in citizenship well and promoting positive relationships within the community through an intergenerational project.

- Teachers are at the early stages of recording children's achievements. They need to develop a progression framework for the skills children develop as they move through the school. Teachers need to track children's achievement more closely and identify the skills children are developing. They also need to identify children at risk of missing out and support children appropriately so that all children have equal opportunities to achieve.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff are fully aware of the socio-economic circumstances of their children and families. Senior leaders have developed clear plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This includes recruiting staff to provide targeted interventions for children in writing and numeracy. Staff also facilitate swimming lessons for children in P1-3 and work with partners to promote children's understanding of local opportunities for life, learning and work. There is currently no poverty related attainment gap. Senior leaders need to analyse data gathered more rigorously. They should identify and consider gaps between cohorts of learners and identify targeted work to help close such gaps. The targeted interventions in numeracy and writing are helping to improve children's attainment and progress.
- Senior leaders are committed to reducing the cost of the school day. The Parent Council raise funds through bake sales and community events. They subsidise the cost of trips and resources for all children. Older children are developing well their understanding of equity by selling home baking regularly to the community and providing a toy swap shop for all children.



## Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education each week. Teachers plan children's learning in physical education using learning cluster frameworks linked to CfE experiences and outcomes and benchmarks. As a result, children experience progression in their learning of physical skills as they move through the school.
- The headteacher consults the Parent Council on how best to invest PEF. As planned, senior leaders should consult with the school community more widely including staff, children and partners.
- All children receive their entitlement to learn 1+2 modern languages. Teachers use a progression vocabulary framework to teach children Gaelic. Children also learn French or Spanish as they move through the school.
- Children have access to an attractive library. Older pupils led the development of the library successfully. They organise the fiction books into categories, for example, space and familiar authors. There is a separate area for non-fiction books which children access regularly.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Teachers plan a wide range of activities throughout the school year to support children as they move from the pre five unit to P1 and as they move through the school. Older children develop their leadership skills successfully by supporting younger children in a variety of well planned activities. For example, all children engage well in cross-stage paired reading activities where they enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction books together. Children in Primary 7 are supported well as they move from P7 to S1 through a range of activities in school and at the associated secondary school.

## 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.