

# Summarised inspection findings

**North Bute Primary School**

Argyll and Bute Council

29 April 2025

## Key contextual information

North Bute Primary School is located on the Island of Bute serving the local community of Port Bannatyne and surrounding areas. At the time of inspection, there were 24 children attending the school, organised across two multi-stage class. The headteacher has been in post since 2023. There have been a significant number of staff changes including several headteachers in recent years. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles one, two or three.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

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

- Staff at North Bute Primary provide an inclusive and caring environment. Children are polite, well-mannered, and happy. They experience positive relationships with staff who know them well. Families feel welcome in the school and regard it as an important part of the local community. Staff work together well to ensure children experience a positive ethos with a focus on children's rights. The recently revised vision of 'our family, our friends and our community' underpins increasingly the work of the school. The school values of kind, inspired, nurtured and determined, 'KIND', are well established and displayed clearly around the school and in classrooms. Staff and children model the school values well in their daily interactions. This supports most children to feel that they are treated with respect and encouraged to express their views and opinions.
- Staff work together effectively to ensure that strong and supportive relationships underpin the school's approach to behaviour. Increasingly, staff use positive approaches to supporting emotional wellbeing and conflict resolution to support children. As a result, almost all children across the school display consistent and high standards of positive behaviour.
- Children are keen, eager and have a positive attitude towards their learning. Most are engaged and motivated participants in learning. In most lessons, teachers provide regular opportunities for children to work together in pairs and groups. Most children work well together and interact positively with each other when completing tasks. In most lessons, teachers direct learning towards the whole class. As result, children are not yet leading their own learning regularly. Staff should provide children with increased opportunities to take greater responsibility for leading their own learning. This should include increased personalisation and choice in what and how children learn.
- Staff have worked together effectively to undertake professional learning focusing on improving the quality and consistency of learning and teaching. This is beginning to support the staff team to develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. In most lessons, teachers provide clear instructions, share the purpose of learning and help children understand what they need to do to be successful. However, this is not yet consistent in all lessons. Children are now ready to be more involved in creating measures of success to help them

have a deeper understanding of their learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to check for children's understanding. They now need to develop questioning techniques further to deepen and enhance children's learning and higher-order thinking skills.

- Staff working with the youngest children are at the early stages of introducing a play-based approach to learning. Young children respond enthusiastically to these learning opportunities. Staff should develop further their understanding of approaches to play, by engaging in professional learning and taking account of national practice guidance. They need to develop further their understanding of planning for quality interactions, spaces and experiences.
- All teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enrich children's learning experiences. In a majority of lessons, teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance children's learning. Children enjoy using devices to play educational games, carry out research and write stories. In a few lessons, children are developing their use of devices well to access, share and record their learning appropriately using online platforms.
- In most lessons, staff take appropriate account of the differing stage of children's development within multi-stage classes. However, a minority of children are capable of achieving more. While teachers provide activities at different levels within lessons, these are not yet of a high enough quality to meet the needs of all children. Teachers need to plan and provide a wider range of learning experiences that are set at the correct level of difficulty to further children's progress, including those children who require additional support or challenge.
- Staff have developed approaches to outdoor learning which help children learn about nature and their local environment. Staff have established a range of supportive partnerships with the local community and partners including the local post office and museum. This enhances children's learning. Parents and partners share their expertise and support the development of resources and outdoor learning environments. Children benefit from and enjoy learning in a range of contexts, including the local beach and forest areas.
- In a majority of lessons, teachers use formative assessment strategies to assess children's understanding. They provide verbal and written feedback to support children to understand how successful they have been. Children now need more frequent and specific verbal and written feedback to better support their understanding of what they are doing well and their next steps in learning. Across the school, staff provide opportunities for children to set personal targets. Staff should ensure that these targets are revisited regularly to enable children to better understand their progress in learning.
- Teachers use a range of assessments to help measure children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This includes a particular focus on the use of standardised assessments. Staff need to review their approach to assessment to ensure it informs more accurately their professional judgement of children's progress. This should include the use of high-quality assessments where children can apply their learning to new and unfamiliar contexts. Staff should strengthen their understanding of national expectations in line with national Benchmarks. Staff's confidence in the assessment of writing has improved though their engagement in moderation activities within the school and beyond. This practice should now be extended to other areas of the curriculum. This has the potential to further strengthen consistency of teachers' professional judgements of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Teachers plan learning appropriately over different timescales, including long-term and short-term. They use a range of curriculum learning pathways, including those developed by the local authority, to inform their planning. Staff regularly seek the views of children to identify areas of interest to inform planned learning. Children enjoy being consulted about what they

would like to learn. Teachers plan for each year group stage of learning. They now need to take greater account of the developmental needs of each child, including those who require additional support. This should ensure children make appropriate progress in their learning from their individual starting points.

- The headteacher meets teachers termly to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This approach should be extended to include other areas of the curriculum. Staff should use these discussions to evaluate the impact of targeted interventions on children's progress. This will better support staff to plan for equity and close gaps in children's learning.

## 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

**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**

- Children's progress and attainment is expressed in overall statements rather than for specific year groups. This is because of the very small numbers of children at each stage.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children across the school have achieved, or are on track to achieve, expected levels of attainment in literacy. Most have achieved, or are on track to achieve, expected levels of attainment in numeracy. A minority of children are capable of making greater progress in their learning.
- A majority of children requiring additional support are making satisfactory progress towards their targets in learning.

#### **Attainment in literacy and English**

- Overall, a majority of children are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. A minority of children are capable of greater progress.

#### **Listening and talking**

- Across the school, most children listen well to staff and each other in teacher-led activities and group tasks. Younger children express their ideas well and show their understanding by answering questions. Most older children contribute to group discussions confidently. They listen carefully, recount experiences and build on the ideas of peers well. Across the school, a minority of children need support to develop their skills further in listening and talking.

#### **Reading**

- Younger children recognise most initial sounds correctly. They now need support to develop their confidence in using known sounds to read familiar words. Across the school, most children read well with fluency and expression, appropriate to their age and stage. They use a range of appropriate strategies to help them read new and unfamiliar words. Children are not yet confident in recognising the features of non-fiction texts. Older children offer a personal preference for authors and the type of books they enjoy. As children move through the school, they explain clearly how the author, cover or title influences their choice of books when reading for enjoyment. They are less confident answering more complex questions about the texts they are reading.

#### **Writing**

- Younger children form lower case letters correctly. They are not yet writing simple sentences or creating their own stories without adult support. As children move through the school, they are developing their writing skills appropriate to their stage, including punctuation, connectives and

interesting vocabulary. They spell most common words correctly and have spelling strategies to support them when spelling unfamiliar words. Children do not yet write for a variety of reasons and different purposes. They need more support to develop their writing skills. This includes continued writing practice for real-life audiences and for different purposes across the curriculum.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy.

## **Number, money and measure**

- Younger children order numbers to 20 and identify the number before and after correctly. They are developing their confidence in adding and subtracting numbers within 10. As children progress through the school, they identify confidently the place value of digits within numbers to a 1000. They need support to develop their ability to solve two-step problems. Older children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers to 100,000 confidently. They order, simplify and compare fractions with increasing confidence. They round numbers to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. They are less confident calculating area and perimeter of shapes. Older children need more opportunities to improve their ability to apply number processes to word problems.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Children name and discuss features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects successfully, appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children understand and use correctly the language of position, including in front, behind, forwards and backwards. They need support to develop their understanding of symmetry. Older children describe angles accurately using appropriate language, such as acute, obtuse and reflex. They are less confident discussing the relationship between 3D objects and their nets or using a broad range of mathematical vocabulary, such as the properties of circles and triangles.

## **Information handling**

- Younger children match and sort items well by colour, size, and shape. Older children extract key information and answer questions correctly from a range of graphs and tables. All children need opportunities to practise applying data and analysis skills regularly in a wide range of real-life, rich contexts including the use of digital technology.

## **Attainment over time**

- Attainment over time is variable for different cohorts of children. Overall, attainment is satisfactory and there is capacity for improvement. Staff should develop a clearer focus on evidencing how they are measuring and improving children's progress. They are not yet tracking children's progress in learning across curricular areas beyond literacy and numeracy.
- The headteacher monitors the attendance and late coming of children across the school. The staff know children and families well and work closely with them to support improved attendance when necessary. This includes sharing attendance information with individual families when absence is higher than expected. Overall, children's attendance is above the national average. There are no children on a part-time timetable and there have been no exclusions in recent years.

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

- Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated in a variety of ways. These include school displays, sharing learning through an online platform and assemblies. Children are proud of their achievements including national accreditation on their work on children's rights. Children gain confidence and achieve success within and out of

school, for example, through activities such as annual sporting events and music performances. Children play an active role within their school and local community. This is supporting children to develop as effective contributors and responsible citizens. All children have class roles and responsibilities. A few are working with the extended school community to develop the school garden. Children plan a range of events to raise money for local and national charities. They make clear links with their fundraising and are developing key skills in their role as global citizens in supporting good causes.

- The headteacher tracks children's achievements and participation in clubs and activities. Staff are aware of children at risk of missing out and target support for those children not participating in achievements. Staff should now discuss and track the skills children are gaining from their achievements and link these to skills for learning, life and work. This should help children to make links between their achievements, learning and progress.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff understand the social, economic and cultural factors that impact on the lives of children and their families well. They have taken positive steps to minimise the cost of the school day and signpost families to relevant community resources for support. The Parent Council supports the school well by providing financial support for a range of experiences, and playground equipment. The headteacher places an importance on ensuring children living on the island have the same opportunities for learning beyond the classroom as children on the mainland.
- The headteacher has allocated Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide a range of universal and targeted interventions. This includes providing digital resources to support interventions to improve children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. There are early signs that this is improving outcomes for children across the school. Staff need to strengthen their approaches to measure the impact of these interventions on children's attainment and achievement.



## Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher shares and seeks feedback from parents on the use of PEF. Plans are shared with the Parent Council as part of planned school improvement review. The headteacher should continue to involve parents and children more fully in determining the focus of PEF to address any poverty related attainment gaps.
- Children at all stages of the school learn French from P1 to P7 as part of 1+2 approaches to learning languages. From the early level onwards, they experience lessons that build on previous learning and develop their knowledge of the French language. Children also learn British Sign Language. Across the school, children receive their entitlement to religious and moral education and teachers follow guidelines for religious observance. Children experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children benefit from well-planned transitions into the school from nursery. There is a well-established transition programme for children to transfer to secondary school. There are also enhanced transition arrangements to meet individual learners' needs, for example, when individual learners transition from P7 to S1.

## 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.