

Summarised inspection findings

Rhu Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

19 August 2025

Key contextual information

Rhu Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in the village of Rhu, Argyll and Bute. It is part of the Hermitage Academy cluster of schools.

The school roll is currently 168 children organised across seven classes. A minority of families are attached to the local military base. This results in significant fluctuations in the school roll over time. An established headteacher and depute headteacher lead the school.

In February 2024, a few P6–P7 children were registered for free school meals. Most children live in quintile four of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. A few children live in quintiles three and five. A minority of children require additional support with their learning.

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	

- All staff promote nurturing and respectful relationships, and they know their learners well. The ‘Rhu Bee’ values of be inclusive, respectful, ambitious, resilient, and empathetic are embedded within the ethos of the school. These support children effectively in working towards the school’s vision of ‘learners rooted in the community and reaching for the stars.’ Children speak positively about their relationships with staff and the positive environment which supports their learning. Staff demonstrate care and compassion in their interactions with children and have created a positive rights-based ethos across the school. Staff have worked with the children to create class charters which are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are able to talk about their rights and those of others and why these are important. The rights are understood well and are embedded by staff and children in the life and work of the school. This successful work has been recognised through national accreditation at gold level. As a result, almost all children across the school display high standards of behaviour and are respectful to adults and each other.
- The headteacher and staff have developed a useful learning, teaching and assessment policy to support the delivery of high quality learning and teaching across the school. This is at the early stages of implementation and is beginning to be used consistently by staff across the school. The headteacher should build on this positive start and ensure that quality professional learning focuses on the key features of effective practice underpinned by research, professional reading and highly effective practice in other schools.
- In almost all lessons teachers provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions. Almost all children are attentive throughout learning times and cooperate very well in pairs and groups. Children show a positive attitude to learning and engage well in experiences across the curriculum. They are keen to achieve.

- In a few lessons, pupils have opportunities to exercise choice and lead their own learning. As a next step, teachers should plan more learning experiences which encourage curiosity and time for children to lead their own learning.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning and how children would demonstrate success. In a few lessons, teachers co-construct success criteria with children. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to construct steps for success with children consistently across the school. This should help all children to know how to be successful in their learning and give them further opportunities to lead their learning.
- Almost all teachers use questioning well to elicit information, check children's understanding and build on children's responses. As a next step, teachers should develop further their use of questioning to support all children to extend and deepen their learning. This includes developing children's higher-order thinking skills. This should help them to ensure that the needs of all children are met, including those who require additional support or challenge.
- In all lessons teachers provide children with regular, informal verbal feedback. Children use this feedback to help them improve their learning. The quality of written feedback across the school is variable. Senior leaders should support teachers to establish a consistent approach to feedback and how it is used to inform and support children's progress in learning.
- In most lessons, teachers use digital technology well to support learning. For example, they use interactive screens to support whole class lessons. Children use tablet computers and laptops well to research and present information. Teachers should build further on their approaches to planning digital skills and technologies. In doing so, they should ensure that all children access a range of digital devices more regularly and develop their digital skills further.
- Learning spaces have been developed effectively with children indoors and outdoors to enhance learners' experiences. Children welcome the opportunity to take their learning outdoors. Staff have worked with partners very well to enhance children's outdoor learning experiences. This is supporting them to develop well their skills relating to sustainability.
- Teachers are at the early stages of implementing a play-based approach to learning at the early level. The headteacher and teachers should now engage further with national practice guidance and professional learning to inform their practice. Staff have adapted learning environments to provide mainly adult-initiated opportunities for learning through play. Teachers should now provide more open ended, child-initiated activities to extend children's thinking and learning in their play. In addition, they should ensure that learning spaces and all play opportunities allow children to deepen and enrich their learning. As teachers develop play approaches further, they should use their observations more closely to inform planning.
- The headteacher and teachers have developed a comprehensive assessment calendar which includes both formative and summative approaches. This supports teachers' professional judgements and confidence in determining Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) attainment levels. As planned, staff should reflect on and evaluate the impact these assessments have on determining the progress children make in learning.
- All teachers plan well for children's learning across a range of timescales. They use progression frameworks linked to CfE experiences and outcomes across all curricular areas. This supports them well to ensure that children build on their prior learning. Teachers involve children in planning and reviewing their learning which makes links across curricular areas. For example, they ask children what they already know, what they would like to know and what they have learned about a topic. This is supporting children well to be motivated and engaged in their learning.

- Teachers discuss children's attainment informally within school. They have engaged in moderation activities with colleagues outwith the school in numeracy and writing. This supports teachers well to have a clear understanding of gathering robust and reliable assessment evidence. This also supports them to demonstrate effectively children's achievement of, and progress towards CfE levels in these areas.
- Senior leaders track individual children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They meet with teachers six times per year to discuss all children's progress, including those with additional support needs. This helps staff to identify children who require additional support in learning and provide appropriate literacy, numeracy and wellbeing interventions. Senior leaders and teachers should develop further how they evaluate the impact of interventions to determine their effectiveness in closing gaps in 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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. A minority of children exceed national expectations across all levels. Most children who require additional support in their learning are making good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English. A minority of children across the school are capable of achieving more.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children listen and respond well to others appropriately and follow instructions very well. Almost all children share their ideas enthusiastically and with confidence within small group and whole class discussions. At first level, almost all children communicate effectively, take turns, and contribute at appropriate times when engaging with others for a range of purposes. At second level, almost all children build on the contributions of others well. Across the school, children are respectful in their interactions with adults and peers. They have developed well the skills of disagreeing respectfully to the views of others.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children recognise, say, and write individual and blended sounds. They use pictorial clues to retell familiar stories and predict what might happen next. They are enthusiastic about reading and storytelling. At first level, almost all children read aloud with expression and fluency. They share confidently their favourite author and reasons for their preference. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, almost all children show great passion for reading and explain their preference for texts. They discuss the main ideas within a text with detail and answer a range of higher order questions.

Writing

- At early level, most children write simple sentences using capital letters, full stops, and spaces between words. They have good pencil control and form most letters legibly. At first level, almost all children use relevant and interesting vocabulary to entertain the reader. They regularly write a range of genre and assess their progress against the writing framework to help them improve. At second level, most children should be encouraged to use paragraphs more consistently in their writing. Almost all children at second level use a range of punctuation and conjunctions effectively in their writing. Across the school, children identify clearly what they need to do to improve their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children across the school are capable of achieving more.

Number, money and measure

- Most children at early level successfully add numbers within 10. They are developing their skills in solving simple missing number problems. Almost all children at first level accurately round numbers to 100. They demonstrate a positive understanding of equivalent fractions and calculate simple fractions of whole numbers correctly. They are developing their mental agility skills to calculate change confidently within two-step-money problems. Most children at second level understand the relationship between common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and use them with confidence. They should continue to apply their numeracy and mathematics skills across an increasing range of problem-solving contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level recognise and sort a range of two-dimensional shapes. They understand the language of position, including in front and behind. Almost all children at first level, name and classify a range of three-dimensional objects. Almost all children at second level use mathematical language accurately to classify a range of angles including acute and obtuse angles. They should now be supported to develop their understanding of complimentary and supplementary angles.

Information handling

- Almost all children at early level record simple data sets using bar graphs. They are developing skills in interpreting data. Almost all children at first level, understand and interpret simple bar graphs, tally charts, and extract key information successfully. At second level, most children analyse and draw conclusions from a variety of sources, including pie charts and line graphs. Children at first and second levels should continue to develop further their information handling skills through using digital technology to support their learning.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders and teachers gather a range of attainment data for individual children over time. They use this information effectively to analyse the attainment of individual children. Senior leaders should now analyse attainment information for cohorts and groups of children. This should support them to identify trends in attainment over time better. This should also support them to ensure that all interventions are targeted appropriately to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Over time, children's attendance is consistently above the national average. Currently, children's attendance across the school is 95.6%. Across all stages, 7% of children have an absence of 10% or more. The headteacher monitors closely the absence and lateness of individual children. She is proactive in understanding the reasons behind children's individual absences. Absences are mainly due to difficult family circumstances, illness or term-time holidays. The headteacher works effectively with partners to support families to improve attendance rates for individual children. Staff incentivise attendance at the end of the session by planning exciting and interesting events. As a result, families are now less likely to plan unauthorised holidays during the last week of the session.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff recognise, celebrate and share children's achievements, both in and out of school, with the school community. Children's achievements are celebrated in class, at assemblies, and on displays around the school, for example, the Golden Wall. These approaches are helping to build children's confidence and self-esteem.

- Staff work very effectively with partners to offer all children across the school a range of opportunities to take part in clubs and activities within the school day and after school. These include creative writing, singing, country dancing, rugby, football, netball, 'Forces and Me' and knitting. Staff track children's participation in clubs and activities out of school regularly to ensure they identify gaps in children's opportunities for achievement. Staff should now ensure that children understand which skills they are developing through their participation in these activities and incorporate this into their tracking overview. This should support children to make links between their achievements, learning and progress.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and their families well. They understand fully the socio-economic context of the school. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional staffing and resources to raise attainment and improve outcomes for children. For example, additional staffing is used to support children's emotional wellbeing. Online resources support children to develop their reading skills and enjoyment of reading. Senior leaders should now develop clearer systems to measure and evidence better the impact of PEF interventions. They should target PEF funds more closely to children who experience barriers to their learning as a result of socio-economic circumstances. In doing so, senior leaders should involve parents and children more fully in determining the focus of PEF to address and increase the pace of closing poverty related attainment gaps.
- Senior leaders work closely with the Parent Council and Rhu Primary School Association to identify areas to reduce the cost of the school day. For example, parents regularly fundraise to fund class trips which ensures equitable access to excursions for all children. The headteacher allocated PEF funds towards a hardship fund to support children to attend residential trips, and to purchase school resources such as water bottles and clothing. Staff engage effectively with the local church where parents can access pre-loved uniform. This supports staff well to ensure that no child misses out due to financial barriers.

Other relevant evidence

- Children across the school learn French in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 modern language guidance. Children in P4–P7 also learn Gaelic as part of the school's approach.
- Teachers plan Religious and Moral Education discretely and through learning across a few areas of the curriculum. Children learn about Christianity and world faiths. This is supporting them well to develop their understanding of religious diversity across the world.
- All children have access to two hours of high-quality physical education every week. As a result, almost all children recognise the school provides them opportunities to exercise and teaches them to be healthy.
- 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 education and the catering service. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the 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.