HMIE | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

Summarised inspection findings

Bun-sgoil Chnoc a' Chonaisg - Whinhill Primary School

Inverclyde Council

28 April 2026

Key contextual information

Bun-sgoil Chnoc a' Chonaisg - Whinhill Primary School is a non-denominational school that serves the Whinhill area of Greenock. At the time of inspection, there are 247 children on the roll taught over twelve classes. There are ten English Medium classes and two Gàidhlig - Gaelic Medium classes. Just over half of the school roll live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones 1 and 2. This session, 39% of P6 and P7 children are registered for free school meals which is above the national average. Across the school, 14% of children have English as an additional language. School staff report that 42% of children require additional support with their learning.

The senior leadership team comprises of the headteacher, a depute headteacher, a principal teacher for Gàidhlig and two acting principal teachers.

Whinhill Primary School sgoil-àraich - nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

1.3 Leadership of change	**excellent**
This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are: ■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community ■ strategic planning for continuous improvement ■ implementing improvement and change	

- The headteacher provides outstanding and inspirational leadership to the school community, as a senior leader within the local authority and beyond. She is at the forefront of affecting systematic change and leads improvement priorities in Inverclyde, across other local authorities and nationally. The headteacher is highly respected by children, parents, staff, partners and wider community.

- The headteacher is supported very ably by the depute headteacher and principal teachers. Together they create an aspirational culture, underpinned by the school vision. Senior leaders are visible, model practice and exemplify the high standards they expect from children, families, staff and partners. Together, they create a climate of trust, where staff are supported and challenged to ensure a relentless focus on the continuous improvement of the school and in improving outcomes for all. As a result, children, parents and partners are empowered to lead and secure school-wide improvement and positive change. Senior leaders and staff drive forward and sustain improvement which has resulted in sector leading learning and teaching across the school.

© Crown Copyright

- All staff ensure their work is underpinned by the school values of respect, responsibility, confidence, honesty and kindness. All staff model the school values throughout their daily work. Children talk confidently about school values and demonstrate these through their actions and interactions with adults and each other. As a result, everyone's contribution to school life is highly valued.

- Senior leaders create conditions where staff, children, parents and partners work very effectively to improve the school. Together, they review what is working well and adjust planning to continually improve children's learning experiences and to raise attainment and achievement. Senior leaders and staff engage in regular self-evaluation of school improvement priorities using 'How good is our school? 4th edition'. They have a planned calendar of robust quality assurance activities to review all aspects of the work of the school including the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff analyse the wide range of evidence gathered from these activities rigorously. They evaluate the progress towards agreed priorities and have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Together, they create a robust strategic plan that ensures agreed priorities are taken forward at pace and improvements are sustained.

- Staff leadership is well embedded and exemplifies the very best practice. This supports the consistent and very high standard of learning and teaching across the school. All teachers have leadership roles linked to school improvement priorities. These include literacy, numeracy, wellbeing and racial literacy. They demonstrate clearly the impact of these leadership roles on improving outcomes for children and improving children's attainment. They share highly effective practice with each other and with colleagues from other schools to support continued improvement. For example, staff have developed and shared with colleagues, a digital platform with professional learning resources, guidance and policies on aspects of learning and teaching such as play and outdoor learning.

- Children benefit from skilled support staff working with teachers to deliver highly effective targeted interventions. Support staff apply professional learning skilfully to support children who require additional support with their learning. For example, they use this professional learning in digital technology to support children's engagement and independence through use of digital tools. All support staff work very well with pupil committees to help them to achieve school-wide positive change. For example, they support older children to lead peer mediation for younger children in the playground.

- Children's involvement in improvement planning exemplifies the very best practice. They express their views very well and make insightful contributions to school decision-making through discussions and committees. They use 'The Whinhill Way' as a helpful tool to think about what is working well at school and what could be even better. As a result, children are confident, highly articulate and have well-developed skills in collaboration and leadership. The Pupil Leadership Team comprised of House and Vice Captains meet regularly with senior leaders and is active in the leadership and development of the school. They use 'How good is OUR school?' very effectively to evaluate the work of the school. For example, children influence decisions about how they are taught, what they learn and how their environment supports them to learn. The Pupil Leadership Team produced a family friendly School Improvement Plan. This helps to support children's and parent's understanding of priorities and their contribution to school improvement.

© Crown Copyright

- The Pupil Leadership Team representatives joined pupil leaders across cluster schools on The Cluster Pupil Leadership Group to co-create 'The Pinkie Promise' charter. As a result of this innovative work, children's awareness and understanding of rights, inclusion and nurture in schools has increased and deepened at school and cluster level.
- Senior leaders explicitly link Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) priorities to the school improvement plan to improve outcomes for children. They use their very thorough understanding of the context of the school to target PEF spend very effectively to raise and accelerate children's attainment. Staff's continued focus on ensuring equity for all has reduced the poverty-related attainment gap steadily over the last three years.

© Crown Copyright

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	excellent

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 provide outstanding nurturing and inclusive practice that place children's wellbeing and very positive relationships at the heart of all children's experiences. All staff, children and families feel welcome and valued. All staff have high aspirations for children and families. Children fully understand and embrace their role in ensuring 'everyone is welcome at Whinhill'. Across the school, all children are very polite, confident and respectful. Their behaviour is exemplary.

- All staff provide children with a wide range of engaging learning experiences. Children are enthusiastic and active learners, keen to challenge themselves in their learning across the curriculum. Staff are highly skilled and use their deep professional knowledge of the school context to provide learning experiences that build on prior knowledge. They support children to engage and achieve across a wide range of relevant learning contexts in school and beyond.

- Staff create very high-quality, creative and supportive learning environments across all areas of the school. Staff and children together create engaging and interactive wall displays that support children's learning very well. These displays illustrate the learning and improvement work of classes and children's leadership groups and help to capture children's interest. Children are fully involved in evaluating and improving the inclusive classrooms and learning spaces. This is helping children to be engaged and have ownership of their learning environment.

- Staff and children successfully link the school values of respect, responsibility, confidence, honesty and kindness to children's rights. They clearly demonstrate these values which are well embedded in all aspects of learning and school life. Children have a deep understanding of their rights. Staff work collaboratively with children to ensure a rights-based approach is at the heart of everyone's practice. For example, staff support children to discuss the right of the month during learning activities and assemblies. They use the school rights mascot and class charters to illustrate and sustain high standards and commitment to rights. As a result, of this well-established rights-based practice, children are highly responsible, respectful and contribute very effectively to all aspects of school life and learning.

- All staff encourage children to be active participants in their learning. Children are encouraged to direct their own learning and challenge themselves in different ways. Staff plan a range of well-planned, high-quality activities and experiences in which children can choose how they learn or personalise their learning. For example, children choose personal projects when learning across the curriculum. Teachers use highly effective approaches to vary their teaching

© Crown Copyright

and plan learning activities that meet the learning needs of all children very well. They regularly evaluate their own teaching and focus on approaches that maximise the impact on children's learning. Teachers across the school use a highly effective approach to support children to understand how they can undertake learning activities. They support children to understand independent learning strategies exceptionally well in class lessons, learner conversations and through whole school focus activities. For example, they support children effectively to explain and extend their thinking to become independent learners. As a result, children understand themselves as assessment capable learners and articulate very well how they use these strategies to help them learn.

- The consistent, school-wide approach to teaching listening and talking is an outstanding strength of the school. As a result, almost all children make very strong progress in listening and talking. All children listen and contribute very respectfully to adults and peers during discussions. Children use verbal and signed communication cues with confidence to build on the ideas of peers and to agree or disagree with others' views. Children talk confidently about how this is supporting them to become successful learners and contribute effectively to learning.

- Almost all teachers use highly effective questioning at key points in learning activities to check for understanding and to extend children's thinking. Children are consistently encouraged to ask questions and verbalise and extend their thinking. As a result, all children are highly motivated and engage confidently in learning activities. Children across the school understand this approach and work very well individually and collaborate effectively with peers in pairs, groups and as a class. These well considered approaches to interactions and questioning support children very well to be curious about learning, extend their thinking and develop higher order thinking skills.

- Teachers are highly skilled in using digital technology to enhance learning and teaching. Children develop their skills progressively and use a wide range of technologies confidently and with increasing independence. For example, they use applications, coding, programmable toys and presentation software to demonstrate and illustrate their learning. Children who require additional support with their learning benefit greatly from learning to use assistive technologies. For example, children use accessible reading devices and writing tools to support their writing. This helps children to develop further their independence and to access all areas of the curriculum.

- All teachers share the purpose of lessons with children and provide clear explanations and instructions. They support children very well to make connections between their prior knowledge and new learning. Children identify and select confidently the steps that will help them to be successful. Staff support children very effectively to reflect on how they have been successful. For example, staff use personalised literacy and numeracy pathways to evaluate strengths and agree learning targets. Children evaluate their own progress and support one another to evaluate each other's learning through self and peer assessments. All teachers share all assessment information, including highly effective written feedback with children through regular transparent learning conversations. As a result of these highly effective approaches, children have a very clear understanding of their strengths and next steps and talk about what will help them to make further progress.

- Senior leaders and staff working with P1 and P2 demonstrate a deep understanding of national guidance on play. They have developed highly effective approaches to planning and

© Crown Copyright

observation and share their practice with other schools. They engage in regular robust self-evaluation of their approaches and environments. This leads to continuous improvements in children's experiences and learning. Children are involved in planning, leading and evaluating their play experiences. This encourages children to be independent and confident learners. Staff provide well-considered and highly engaging play experiences in response to children's interests. As a result, children's interest and engagement in play is sustained. Staff continue to refine and enhance their practice using research, professional learning and through consultation with children. Staff worked collaboratively to create a high-quality digital resource that supports all teachers across the school to explore and develop play-based learning. This is supporting children across all stages to plan and reflect on the skills they are developing through play-based activities and experiences.

- Senior leaders and staff have developed and embedded highly effective approaches to planning. Teachers plan very well across the curriculum and make effective use of school and local authority pathways. They regularly review planning in line with national guidance. They plan collaboratively over different timescales and are very responsive to children's needs. Teachers involve children in planning, taking into consideration children's interests and views. Together, they record these views on planning walls and floor books. This helps children to reflect on their learning and evaluate progress.

- Senior leaders and staff have developed highly effective approaches to assessment. All teachers make very effective use of formative assessment during lessons to check children's understanding and respond quickly to provide well-timed and effective support and challenge. Teachers share all assessment information with children and support them to understand how they have been successful and what they can do to improve. As a result, children are empowered and have ownership of their learning. Supported by senior leaders, teachers thoroughly analyse assessment information and use this very effectively to inform and plan next steps in learning. Children's attainment is raised as a result of the highly effective approaches to assessment.

- Senior leaders and teachers work together regularly, and with colleagues from other schools, to develop a strong understanding of national standards in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher ensures teachers have opportunities to moderate different aspects of the learning and teaching cycle together. As a result, teachers make reliable professional judgements on children's progress and achievement of a level.

- Senior leaders have embedded highly effective and manageable approaches to monitor and evaluate children's progress across literacy and numeracy. They are highly skilled in the analysis of this data and evidence. Teachers collate evidence to ensure there is clear information on children's attainment across all curricular areas. Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly to review the progress of classes, cohorts of children and individual children. Senior leaders, teachers and support staff identify any gaps in children's knowledge and skills. Together, they plan highly effective interventions and targeted support. As a result, children make strong progress and experience success in their learning across the curriculum.

© Crown Copyright

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers plan children's learning in literacy and numeracy effectively using local authority progression pathways. They have worked together to develop and embed school progression pathways for the other curricular areas. These pathways ensure children build on their prior learning and skills effectively. This session, senior leaders and staff are reviewing, refining and implementing a new pathway for health and wellbeing.

- Staff have established strong partnerships with the local church and school chaplain. This enhances the delivery of religious and moral education and religious observance. Staff support children to celebrate religious and cultural events throughout the year and they come together with a neighbouring denominational school for joint church services. Staff ensure religious practice is respected and children have quiet, private spaces to pray.

- Across the school, teachers have a strong focus on helping children to develop skills for learning, life and work. Children talk confidently about the skills they are using when learning across the curriculum. These are taught in a progressive way across learning experiences and through lessons. Working together as a class, children record in floor books, the transferable skills they are practising. Older children also evidence the development of their skills in a personal journal.

- Children benefit from well-planned and progressive outdoor learning experiences. These support them to build on their skills and knowledge across the curriculum as they move through the school. The 'outdoor experts' pupil group, supported by staff, have developed the school grounds very successfully into a creative and engaging learning environment. Children make regular use of the wide range of resources and areas. These encourage play and interactions at break and lunch times. For example, children enjoy playing with a mud kitchen, using den building equipment and engaging in loose parts play.

- There are highly effective pathways and approaches in place that support children to develop knowledge and skills in languages. All children receive their entitlement to 1 + 2 languages. All children currently learn French and from P5 to P7 children are also taught Gaelic (Learners). Staff also celebrate the diversity and richness of languages spoken by all children. Children teach each other words and phrases in their homes, for example, in Farsi, Dari and Ukrainian.

- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Working together, staff and children have gained a gold national sports award for their continued focus on healthy and active lifestyles.

© Crown Copyright

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders have established very strong and highly productive partnerships with parents which impact meaningfully on learners. The Parent Council is active in supporting the work of the school. This includes parents of children who attend the Gàidhlig Medium Education provision.

- Senior leaders consult regularly using a digital format to gather the views of parents. Parents feel their views then shape the work of the school. Staff provide very well-planned approaches to supporting parents and children during inductions. This includes workshops, digital resources and information packs. Children settle quickly and parents feel their children are very well supported at times of transition.

- Staff communicate very effectively with parents. Parents attend regular school events, for example, Eid celebrations, assemblies, 'stay and play', celebrations of learning and performances. Teachers provide termly class newsletters and communicate very well using social media, electronic and face-to-face communication. As a result, parents feel they are well-informed and able to support their children's learning at home.

- Senior leaders and staff have developed highly effective approaches to engaging with parents of children who attend the Gàidhlig Medium Education provision. They have established a Comman nam Pàrant group to promote activities related to Gàidhlig language and culture. Staff support parents to access materials to promote the use of Gàidhlig at home and provide 'Ionnsaich agus Cluich' (Learn and Play) sessions for parents to join their children in school and to take part in the learning process. These approaches provide valuable opportunities for parents to celebrate their children's progress in Gàidhlig.

© Crown Copyright

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

© Crown Copyright

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	excellent

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Children experience outstanding approaches to support and improve their wellbeing, inclusion and equality. Senior leaders and staff share their highly effective practice with colleagues locally and nationally. Commendably, children attend events and share their views on how to improve wellbeing, inclusion and equality with senior leaders both in their own school and across associated schools. This helps to share and build capacity in schools across the local authority. In addition, children welcome many visitors regularly to learn from the work of the school.

- Children's behaviour is supported very well by highly skilled staff who have a deep professional understanding of trauma informed practice and nurturing approaches. Their nurturing approach is reducing anxiety in children. A few children who display dysregulated behaviours on occasion are supported by staff in a swift and calm manner. Children use calm areas and a range of consistent strategies to recognise their own emotions. Children and staff use restorative approaches very effectively to support positive relationships and behaviour. As a result, children feel safe and supported by staff. No children have been excluded from school.

- Children receive bespoke and highly effective support and interventions to meet their wellbeing needs based on data gathered from a variety of wellbeing assessment tools. Senior leaders and staff measure the impact of the range of highly effective interventions to improve wellbeing. They can clearly evidence how these are significantly improving children's wellbeing, attainment and engagement in learning. For example, a few children participated in an outdoor and teambuilding group which significantly improved their resilience and social skills. As a result of this very strong work, staff evidence improved wellbeing outcomes for children. Children talk articulately about their wellbeing to trusted staff and they feel safe and very happy in school.

- All staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and statutory duties relating to child protection, wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They undertake regular training to ensure they are very well informed about safeguarding and child protection issues. Staff very effectively identify and record children's needs in pupil profiles and wellbeing assessment plans. These plans document classroom interventions, individualised targets and provide exceptionally clear detail on the progress that children are expected to make. Children and families are fully involved throughout this process and contribute to identifying targets and evaluating progress made. All staff engage extremely well with a wide range of partners to improve outcomes for children. Staff deliver exceptionally well-considered approaches and

© Crown Copyright

interventions to meet the needs of children who require additional support with their learning. This well-coordinated approach is having a very positive impact on the progress of all children, including those who require additional support with their learning.

- 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

- Children are exceptionally well-included in class and learning experiences. They receive consistent support and highly effective approaches from all staff across the school. Staff have a deep professional understanding of how to address all barriers to learning. They have created an online learning resource which exemplifies very best practice. This comprehensive resource has detailed flow charts, with links to online recordings of highly effective practice and information to support children's needs. This is helping to ensure a high degree of consistency in how staff across the school meet children's learning needs. Families appreciate and benefit from the resources and support available on the online wellbeing platform. The parents of children who require additional support welcome the recently established parent group which has deepened relationships between home and school and supports parents to help their children.

- Children who are learning English as an additional language receive highly effective support from staff. Staff have developed a very effective processes to identify and track the acquisition of English. As a result, children make very strong progress in gaining fluency in English. Children's emotional wellbeing and inclusion is very well supported alongside their acquisition of English. As a result, all children are confident, happy and are fully included in the life and work of the school. Children and families feel safe and are fully included in all aspects of school life. For example, families appreciate welcome packs of school resources, offered to all new families.

- Children are influencing change in their local area by how they celebrate differences and show an interest and respect for other religions and cultures within their school. For example, older children collaborate with children from a neighbouring denominational school to develop understanding of prejudice around sectarianism. Staff and children lead assemblies on a range of topics linked to equality and diversity. Children present at assemblies and share their experiences and challenges faced in their lives and how they overcome these. As a result, children develop a deep understanding of how they can support inclusion and equality. They are enthusiastic about learning and using common words in a range of languages to help communicate with children new to Scotland and with peers in Gàidhlig Medium Education. Children are proactive and confident in challenging discrimination, prejudice and intolerance in school and in their community. They wholeheartedly embrace difference.

© Crown Copyright

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	excellent

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

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school is outstanding. Staff add significant value to children's attainment as they progress through the school. The strong emphasis on equity ensures all children, including those who require additional support in their learning and those who have English as an additional language, attain exceptionally well and make outstanding progress in learning. Attainment across the school is continually improving and has been sustained at a high level over a number of years. There is a strong sense from all in the school that all children, regardless of circumstances will be supported to maximise their attainment.

- Across the school, children enjoy choosing books for enjoyment from the school library and classroom reading areas. Children work closely with the library service to ensure these are stocked with a wide range of high-quality books. This is supporting children to engage in regular reading for enjoyment and contributing to improved attainment in reading.

- All children who require additional support or who have English as an additional language are making excellent and accelerated progress towards their individual targets in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Almost all children are making excellent progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. Attainment in listening and talking is outstanding.

Listening and talking

- Children demonstrate outstanding listening and talking skills across the school. From the early level onwards, all children show exceptional ability to debate, put forward points of view and challenge views in an articulate and respectful way. Across the school, children use verbal and non-verbal cues to indicate how they wish to contribute to discussion. They build on each other's ideas exceptionally well and confidently acknowledge different opinions. They express their own opinions, justifying them with good reasons. At all levels, children apply these skills in real life, meaningful contexts such as the Inverclyde Music Festival, presenting to other schools and to headteacher groups. As a result of children's full involvement in school improvement and in decision making their skills of negotiation, listening to others' opinions and providing reasoned arguments are at a high level and are sector leading. Across the school these

© Crown Copyright

exceptionally strong skills in listening and talking result in confident articulate children who have a strong sense that their opinion is valued.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children use knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read simple words accurately. They share their likes and dislikes about books with confidence. At first level, almost all children read fluently and with expression. They explain their choice of favourite author and book. At second level, all children discuss the structure, characters and setting in their text exceptionally well. They identify the writer's style and their use of language to engage the reader with confidence. Across the school, children have a love of reading and read an exceptionally wide range of texts and authors. In particular children read a range of texts promoting diversity and inclusion.

Writing

- At early level, most children form lowercase and a growing number of upper-case letters correctly. Increasingly, they write short sentences using a capital letter and full stop. At first level, most children write independently, punctuating sentences accurately. They write in a variety of genres and use appropriate vocabulary in their writing to engage the reader. At second level, most children make appropriate choices about layout and presentation of different genre. They write successfully and use language, structure and style well to suit the purpose and engage the audience. Across the school children are enthusiastic about writing and are keen to write. Standards of presentation in writing are very high across the school. Children apply their writing skills very well in real life meaningful contexts. Children who have barriers to learning write very well using assisted technology.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Almost all children are making significant progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. All children have an enthusiasm for mathematics and numeracy and see it as fun.

Number, money and measure

- Children across the school demonstrate a strong understanding of mental mathematics strategies. At all levels, children understand, use and can apply money appropriate to their level. At early level, children recall number sequences forward and backwards to 30 and beyond. They add and subtract mentally within 20 and count forwards and back with confidence. They are secure in solving missing number problems. At first level, children demonstrate quick and accurate recall when using times tables to five and beyond. They use and apply this knowledge very well to solve multiplication and division problems. They show a strong understanding of fractions. They calculate simple fractions of whole numbers and equivalent fractions accurately. At second level, children are confident in using decimal fractions and percentages well to solve problems.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school children have a very strong knowledge of shape, angle and symmetry appropriate to their age and stage. At early and first levels, all children recognise and describe common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. At first level, children accurately identify lines of symmetry within shapes and use the correct mathematical language

© Crown Copyright

to talk about properties of 3D objects. They identify right angles in the environment very well. At second level, children identify and classify a range of angles accurately.

Information handling

- Children across the school demonstrate strong knowledge of information handling. All children at early level, gather and display information visually using simple diagrams. They are developing their skills in interpreting this data well. At first level, children understand simple bar graphs and charts and interpret key information successfully. At second level, children can create and understand a range of graphs. They are well placed to deepen their understanding of how graphs are used for different purposes through using a wider range of graphs over increasingly complex contexts. They are very secure in using probability and chance.

Attainment over time

- Children's attainment is outstanding and these high standards have been maintained over a number of years. The headteacher can demonstrate very effectively how staff are adding significant value to attainment as children progress through the school. The attainment gap between SIMD 1 and 2 and SIMD 3 to 10 has steadily decreased over the last three years. Senior leaders have exceptionally well established, thorough processes to monitor and analyse children's attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy. Together with teaching and support staff, they skilfully plan and deliver a wide range of highly effective universal and targeted interventions. Senior leaders set ambitious stretch aims as part of the attainment strategy which is supported by PEF. As a result, children in identified cohorts, such as children who live in SIMD 1 and 2 and children who are entitled to free school meals, are making outstanding progress in literacy and numeracy.

- Senior leaders also track robustly the progress of the significant cohort of children who have English as an additional language or as a new language. As a result, these children make accelerated progress as they journey through the school and by P7 almost all attain and achieve very well. Children's attainment is consistently above local and national comparators. This is particularly noticeable in listening and talking and numeracy across the school and reading and writing in P1. All staff use highly effective strategies and deep understanding of data very well to accelerate children's progress in learning and overall attainment.

- Over the last three years, the school's attendance average has continuously improved. In June 2025, the school's average was 94.3% which was above the national average. The attendance gap between SIMD 1 and 2 and SIMD 3 to 10 has decreased significantly. Senior leaders monitor and analyse information about children's attendance rigorously. Currently, a minority of children have attendance below 90%. Reasons for absence include term-time holidays, illness and family circumstances. Senior leaders and staff work very effectively to support children who show a pattern of absence. Staff work collaboratively with families to identify the 'pull to school' or barriers to attendance and this encourages children to want to come to school. Staff plan and provide personalised and universal interventions that impact positively on children's attendance. Currently, there are no children on part-time timetables.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's experiences and achievements are of a very high quality and an outstanding strength of the school's work. All children benefit from an extensive and exceptionally wide range of experiences relating to culture, sport and citizenship. As a result, almost all children are confident and have strong self-esteem. Children look forward to and talk enthusiastically

© Crown Copyright

about their participation in the Inverclyde Music Festival. They showcase their creative skills through performance in music, poetry and verse recitation. Children are proud of their achievements in both Gàidhlig and English. Senior leaders track children's participation and achievements in and out of school. They use information from this tracking very effectively to plan interventions for children who are not participating and increase their engagement. For example, children lead lunchtime clubs. As a result, all children participate in an impressive range of purposeful and challenging experiences. This supports children to develop their confidence, teamwork and communication skills very well.

- Children are very proud of how they lead achievements and work together with staff, parents and partners to gain and sustain national accreditation awards at the top level. This includes for example, work relating to sports, ecology and children's rights. Children clearly articulate the skills for learning, life and work they are using and developing through their achievements. Staff value and celebrate children's successes and qualities in meaningful and creative ways, such as school displays, Award Assemblies and in the 'Golden Folder'.

Equity for all learners

- Equity of success and achievement for all children exemplifies very best practice. Senior leaders and staff demonstrate a deep professional understanding of the school and community context. Senior leaders have developed very strong approaches to using PEF to reduce gaps in children's learning and raise attainment. Children supported by PEF interventions have made accelerated progress in literacy and numeracy. Children's wellbeing is being improved significantly by very effective targeted interventions. For example, a few children benefit from the school's very strong nurture provision and very effective counselling service. Children and families benefit from the sensitive and compassionate approaches used by staff to mitigate the effects of adverse personal circumstances. As a result of these exceptionally well-considered measures, senior leaders can demonstrate significant improvements in outcomes for children related to attainment, attendance and wellbeing.

© Crown Copyright

Quality of provision of Gàidhlig Medium Education

Context

Bun-sgoil Chnoc a' Chonaisg is the designated school for Gàidhlig Medium Education in Inverclyde Council. The bun-sgoil has a Gàidhlig Medium catchment area covering the whole of the council. A few children also travel to the bun-sgoil from Renfrewshire Council. Recently, fewer children attend the bun-sgoil from other councils, as they have opened their own Gàidhlig Medium provisions. The headteacher and a depute headteacher have strategic lead responsibilities for Gàidhlig in the bun-sgoil. They are supported by a Gàidhlig-specific principal teacher in leading Gàidhlig Medium Education. At the time of the inspection, 35 children attend Gàidhlig Medium Education. Currently, there is a full-time vacancy for a teacher, which the school is finding challenging to fill. Short-term cover for absence is difficult to secure.

Leadership of change

- The headteacher and staff embrace Gàidhlig Medium Education in a highly effective and inclusive manner. The headteacher and staff team champion Gàidhlig within the school and local authority. They have high aspirations for all children to do their best, develop fluency and enjoy the associated culture. Children and staff show a very strong commitment to Bun-sgoil Chnoc a' Chonaisg's vision, values and aims. They model the values of respect and confidence particularly well in their attitudes to Gàidhlig. The visibility of Gàidhlig text is very high across the school to demonstrate equal respect to Gàidhlig and English.

- Senior leaders have similar highly effective strategic approaches for Gàidhlig and English, while recognising the importance of immersion. The headteacher and principal teacher have authority-level impact on Gàidhlig through their membership of an advisory group. This focuses on meeting outcomes for local and national Gàidhlig Language Plans. Through membership of this group, they give staff, parents and children a strong voice in influencing change and strategic direction, while also working with Bòrd Na Gàidhlig. As a group, they have made secondary provision available locally. The advisory group should continue supporting the bun-sgoil in filling a current teaching vacancy, for which the headteacher has strong deployment plans. This would enable senior leaders to increase the total pupil roll within current capacity.

- Senior leaders set effective short-term targets for Gàidhlig Medium in the school improvement plan. This has resulted in improvements closely linked to outcomes in the National Improvement Framework. This includes increasing attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig. All staff and children are empowered to lead change and impact on improving outcomes. Staff also lead on developing curricular areas and subjects.

- Staff have very productive connections with other teachers and communities to identify and share teaching and assessment practice. They use national guidance and Gàidhlig-specific professional learning effectively to ensure high-quality practice. Teachers from other local authorities visit to observe the high-quality learning in Gàidhlig Medium Education. Staff engage in professional dialogue with these teachers to support and improve understanding of best practice. Staff also receive professional advice as part of a thorough professional review and development. Staff continuously review and improve learning and teaching approaches as a result of the professional learning they receive.

© Crown Copyright

- Older children have important roles in taking forward actions to improve the school. They serve on committees having impact in such areas as promoting children's rights. Children's efforts, along with staff's, result in external national recognition. Children positively impact the number of speakers of Gàidhlig by offering their friends in English Medium a lunch time club to learn Gàidhlig. Going forward, staff are well placed to review how they use pupil committees to support further immersion in Gàidhlig and extend children's specialist vocabulary.

Learning Pathways

- Staff contribute very supportively to transitions into, within and from the bun-sgoil. Parents are invited to the school to see Gàidhlig Medium Education in action, as well as receiving very informative promotional materials explaining the benefits of continuing with 3-18 Gàidhlig Medium Education.

- Children learn through total immersion in the medium of Gàidhlig in P1-3, and immersion in P4-7. This impacts very positively on children's fluency as they extend their specialist language, idiom and vocabulary. Children's language accuracy is supported very well by a grammar framework. Teachers have a clear focus on teaching specialist vocabulary across the curriculum. Teachers make very effective use of progressive pathways across all curricular areas and subjects that take account of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Teachers plan learning very well to offer breadth, relevance and appropriate progression for children as they move through the bun-sgoil. They use local and national events for Gàidhlig to help children build a sense of community and networking for Gàidhlig.

- Young people benefit significantly from learning in both traditional and contemporary contexts related to Gàidhlig. A strong focus on Seachdain na Gàidhlig (World Gaelic Week) provides meaningful and relevant contemporary contexts, enabling all children across the bun-sgoil to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Gàidhlig. Historical contexts, such as exploring the role of St Columba in the spread of Christianity, effectively situates Gàidhlig within Scotland's rich heritage and enhances children's awareness of culture and diversity. Children's learning is firmly rooted in Gàidhlig culture and music, experienced both within and beyond the bun-sgoil. As a result, children demonstrate increased engagement, a growing sense of cultural identity, and a deeper appreciation of the relevance of Gàidhlig in both the past and present.

- Teachers make very strong progress with embedding the learning of additional languages. They celebrate the wide range of languages spoken by families exceptionally well. The older children in English Medium learn Gàidhlig with the digital platform, e-Sgoil. Children in Gàidhlig Medium learn French. Teachers should monitor the impact of learning an additional language during the total immersion phase when children require intensive total immersion. The bun-sgoil library has a range of books written in Gàidhlig.

- Teachers are creative in their use of digital technology. They create and translate a range of digital resources to support them to deliver learning pathways. Going forward, teachers should continue to use accessible translation services to support them to always have resources in Gàidhlig. This should help reduce children's use of digital programs in English during immersion.

© Crown Copyright

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Children experience an outstanding inclusive and nurturing learning environment that supports both their wellbeing and immersion in Gàidhlig. Children understand the bun-sgoil values, their rights and those of others. They are very confident and happy in their immersion learning. Children's behaviour is consistently very positive. Staff and children demonstrate pride in their language, culture and identity as a community speaking Gàidhlig.

- Approaches to teaching are very strong. Teachers structure their immersion teaching around clear aims and details of how children will be successful. These take very clear account of different groups of children within the multi-stage classes to meet appropriately all learners' needs. Children who require further support in their learning are supported very well in class and through targeted interventions. Senior leaders should aim for this support to be consistently through the medium of Gàidhlig. Children concentrate for extended periods on individual, motivating tasks and while working in small groups. For almost all of the time they talk Gàidhlig when learning independently of the teacher.

- Across the bun-sgoil, teachers make effective use of local authority pathways, and national guidance to plan children's learning very well across the curriculum. They take children's views and prior learning into account for projects, making links across different subjects. Teachers use an appropriate range of planned assessment approaches to monitor progress in learning through Gàidhlig. They use assessments effectively to identify barriers in reading and put appropriate support in place. Children self- and peer-evaluate regularly in lessons. Teachers' feedback to learners supports children to focus on developing further fluency through accuracy in grammar. Teachers have exemplary approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress, achievements and attainment. They set appropriate targets to assist children to achieve highly.

- Senior leaders and teachers work very well together to develop a strong understanding of expected standards across literacy and Gàidhlig and numeracy. The headteacher ensures teachers have opportunities to moderate different aspects of the learning and teaching cycle together, as well as in an inter-authority network. As a result, teachers make thorough and reliable professional judgements on children's progress and achievement of a level.

Wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Children and staff enjoy excellent and caring relationships. Approaches to wellbeing, equality and inclusion used in English Medium apply or have been adapted very well for Gàidhlig Medium Education. For example, 'Còmhraidhean Rèiteachaidh' – approaches to resolving difficulties - have been adapted which supports children to understand relationships and supports them to be responsible. Staff assist learners very well to understand their own wellbeing.

- The staff team are making important progress in their use of the 'Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education', 2017. The headteacher and staff team promote Gàidhlig very positively. The principal teacher supports the equality and promotion of Gàidhlig very well nationally by presenting and sharing practice for Gaelic organisations.

© Crown Copyright

Raising attainment and achievement

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Families choose whether to start Gàidhlig Medium Education in the sgoil-àraich – nursery - or P1. Children do not come from homes where Gàidhlig is spoken. As children move through CfE levels, high-quality total immersion supports them very well to make strong progress. The school adds value to children's learning of a new language, as well as the effective use of Gàidhlig as the language with which to learn in bun-sgoil. Children who are newest to total immersion are showing a good understanding of spoken Gàidhlig. They use Gàidhlig in routines and some spontaneous situations. Overall, by the end of second level all children's progress and attainment is strong in literacy and Gàidhlig, literacy and English and numeracy. This includes children who require support with their learning.

Attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig, and as appropriate, English

- Teachers' thorough overview of attainment shows that children's attainment is very strong. All children are attaining at expected levels for their stage. Across the bun-sgoil, children listen and talk well. They respect others in taking turns in talking in whole-class and small group situations. By P7, they talk in Gàidhlig and English fluently in a range of contexts. Children interject timely in conversations to add detail or ask a question to maintain the flow of a conversation. In Gàidhlig, children have an increasing range of specialist vocabulary. At times, children use a few English words to get their views across. Children are clear on how they independently access translation of new words. Children should continue to develop vocabulary and grammar to enhance fluency.

- At appropriate stages to take account of immersion, children develop well their knowledge of phonics in Gàidhlig and English. The older children read very well in English and talk in detail of the techniques used by their favourite authors. They use specialist language well in Gàidhlig. They know why it is important to read in two languages, as appropriate to immersion. The older children should continue reading aloud in Gàidhlig with more use of tone and expression.

- Younger children draw pictures with increasing detail that express their ideas and experiences. They are increasingly writing a sequence of sentences with a range of verbs and correct punctuation. Older children are writing fluently in Gàidhlig and English. They are increasing the range of genres in which they write, with accurate spelling and grammar. Across stages, children are developing skills in reviewing and editing their own work.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across stages, children make very strong progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children work appropriately to national expectations. They have a firm and confident grasp of specialist mathematical language. A minority of children at early level and the majority at second level perform above expected levels for their age and stage.

- Younger children are building their knowledge in counting. They add and subtract within 20 confidently. By P7, children select from and use a systematic range of strategies to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. They share their thinking and discuss solutions. They are building their confidence in making well-timed responses in using these strategies in written problems. Older children demonstrate an increasing

© Crown Copyright

understanding of links between fractions and percentages, and an improving understanding of decimals. They are confident in telling the time on digital and analogue clocks. They use these skills well in calculations.

- Younger children use positional language well in activities. They describe directions, including with the use of compass points. At first level, almost all children identify accurately lines of symmetry within simple shapes. Younger children have a sound understanding of compass points when providing or following directions. Older children name and understand the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Across the bun-sgoil, children are familiar with collecting information. They are less familiar in the ways that this information can be presented.

- Across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, information about children's attainment is analysed thoroughly. Children's attainment is strong. The headteacher has established thorough processes to monitor and analyse children's attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff use facts and data and identify the underpinning story and actions for improvement. There are some changes in patterns of attainment when the bun-sgoil has experienced staffing challenges. At these times, teachers protect the total immersion stage, while ensuring that all children learn Gàidhlig regularly. Senior leaders, teaching and support staff use data skilfully to plan and deliver highly effective, well-planned universal and targeted interventions.

- Children develop a high standard of skills and knowledge from taking part in a rich programme of achievements for language and culture. These develop children's confidence, fluency and sense of being important members of a Gàidhlig community. Children accessing Gàidhlig Medium Education celebrate success through Sgoilear Gàidhlig na Seachdain, Matamataigear Mìorbhaileach na Seachdain and Sgrìobhadair na Seachdain. These bespoke awards celebrate their skills and use of Gaelic. Children are very proud of their individual achievements and have exceptionally high levels of engagement and motivation.

- The school's very well-designed approaches to equity and inclusion are ensuring all children attain well, achieve and develop fluency in Gàidhlig. Teachers work very effectively with partners within the Gàidhlig community to support children and their families to increase family learning. Partners provide valuable support for children to use, apply and extend their Gàidhlig in situations beyond the bun-sgoil. Children also enjoy the culture associated with the language. The staff team host a number of events for families to create networks. Parents can access Gàidhlig learning for adults led by Community Learning and Development. Parents greatly appreciate a digital platform with very valuable resources to support families with learning at home.

© Crown Copyright

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The highly effective collaborative leadership at all levels. All staff, children, parents and partners are empowered to take a very active and meaningful role in leading improvement and change. Improvement is driven forward and sustained. This results in very high-quality learning and teaching across the school.

- Staff's coherent, inclusive and well-embedded approach to language learning actively promotes multilingualism, cultural identity and equity. This results in consistently strong outcomes for all learners. Through Gàidhlig Medium Education, children learn in full immersion, enabling them to develop high levels of fluency and confidence in Gàidhlig. Children use and apply Gàidhlig across a rich, varied and motivating range of experiences, both within the bun-sgoil and in wider community contexts. This strengthens their understanding of the language as relevant and living.

- Staff ensure that children who are new to English are very well supported, carefully monitored and fully included in all aspects of school life. Strong collaboration between class teachers, support staff and specialist English as an Additional Language staff results in highly responsive and targeted support. Consequently, almost all children develop confidence, fluency and strong attainment in English, while their home languages are actively valued and maintained.

- Staff exemplify high-quality cultural learning, with Gàidhlig language, music and culture embedded meaningfully across the curriculum. Events such as Seachdain na Gàidhlig, alongside wider achievement opportunities including Inverclyde Music Festival work, provide motivating and authentic contexts for learning. These experiences promote creativity, confidence and a strong sense of cultural identity, while significantly enhancing children's engagement and enjoyment in learning.

© Crown Copyright

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

© Crown Copyright