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

Summarised inspection findings

Colliston Primary School

Angus Council

17 November 2026

Key contextual information

Colliston Primary School is a non-denominational school located in the village of Colliston in Angus. The headteacher reports that the majority of children come from outwith the catchment area. There are 30 children across two multi-stage mainstream classes. The headteacher became acting headteacher in January 2026 and was appointed to the permanent post in August 2026.

The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas 7 and 8. The headteacher reports that approximately 41% of children require additional support with their learning. The number of children registered for free school meals in P6 and P7 is below the national average.

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

- Children, parents and staff worked together recently to refresh the school vision, values and aims. The agreed vision, values and aims provide a well-understood, shared framework for relationships and expectations across the school. Children know the values well and increasingly demonstrate them in all aspects of school life. Staff have positive and supportive relationships with children. They know children and their families well, which contributes to a positive and encouraging ethos for learning.

- Staff refer regularly to the school values, praise positive behaviour and encourage children to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings. This helps children to regulate their emotions calmly and effectively. Most children behave respectfully and demonstrate positive learning behaviours, contributing well to a calm and purposeful learning environment. Across the school, children are articulate and confident in discussing their rights. This understanding helps them build positive relationships, show respect for others and contribute to a caring and inclusive school environment.

- Staff work well together to ensure that resources are accessible for all children. They teach and reinforce clear and predictable routines, which are understood by almost all children. Teachers have created classrooms which are well organised, with activities arranged for children to complete independently, in pairs and in groups. Children use low-distraction spaces and other physical adaptations confidently, enabling them to settle quickly to learning.

- Children are comfortable to contribute in class, enjoy helping each other and are enthusiastic about their learning. Teachers encourage and motivate children to do their best through regular and supportive interactions in class.

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- Children enjoy when they get the opportunity to discuss their next steps in learning with their teacher or other staff. As planned, teachers should continue to strengthen children's understanding of the progress they are making in their learning. This should include the skills they are developing. Teachers should support children to identify their own individual learning targets.

- The headteacher's clear vision for improving learning, teaching and assessment is well understood and shared by all staff. All teachers have worked together to develop an effective learning, teaching and assessment policy, complimented by guidance on what makes a good lesson. All teachers use these tools well, and reflect on their practice to improve. For example, all lessons have a clear structure and teachers share the purpose of learning with all children. Teachers use effective questioning to check understanding and as planned, should now develop this to extend children's thinking and encourage them to explain their reasoning.

- In all classes, teachers provide children with clear instructions and explanations, linking well to prior learning. They check children's progress regularly during lessons, reminding them about 'stuck strategies' and providing effective verbal feedback. This encourages children to be independent and supports them to make progress in their learning. The quality of written feedback is variable. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is slower than it should be and tasks are not sufficiently challenging. Teachers should ensure that all learning provides appropriate pace and challenge for all children.

- The majority of children would like more opportunities to influence what and how they learn. A few children develop their confidence and leadership skills well through leadership roles such as 'Young Leaders of Learning'. Staff should now involve children more meaningfully in leading their own learning and in contributing to improving approaches to learning and teaching across the school.

- Staff use universal supports, such as visuals, routines, accessible instructions and regulation resources, well to support children who need extra help with their learning. Children who require additional support benefit from tailored approaches, including individual plans, that staff implement consistently. This helps children to feel secure, engaged and well supported throughout the day. Children benefit from a range of well-considered interventions and targeted support to improve their progress in literacy and numeracy. These interventions help children overcome barriers to learning, resulting in improved attainment and increased confidence in literacy and numeracy.

- Children make effective use of technologies to enhance and support their learning. They develop their digital skills well through activities such as coding and numeracy games. A few children enjoy undertaking the role of digital leader. This helps them to develop problem-solving, creativity, collaboration and digital skills.

- The headteacher has developed an assessment calendar which provides a clear framework for when and how key assessment information is gathered consistently across the school. Teachers use formative, summative and diagnostic assessment well to identify prior learning, monitor progress and inform next steps.

- Teacher judgements are informed by classwork, observations, standardised data and professional dialogue. Teachers undertake moderation activities in school and through cluster and small-schools networks. This has increased consistency in assessment approaches and

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improved the accuracy of teachers' judgements in numeracy. They should now extend moderation to improve teacher judgement in other curricular areas.

- Teachers work together to plan structured learning in the short, medium and long term. This includes planning learning which links different subject areas and planning for learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers use progression frameworks and local authority rubrics to support consistency in their planning. This ensures children's learning is progressive. Teachers make effective use of learning pathways to ensure that French is taught progressively from P1 to P7. Staff should work towards ensuring that children receive their full entitlement to language learning.

- The headteacher has developed an appropriate system to track children's progress in learning. The headteacher and staff participate in attainment tracking meetings three times a year to discuss children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A range of appropriate and relevant information about children's learning informs these discussions. This includes children's prior and current levels of attainment, as well as the outcome from diagnostic and periodic assessment. These meetings help staff monitor the progress of all children, track the attainment and achievement of identified groups of learners, and evaluate the impact of interventions. Staff should now consider how to track and monitor children's progress across all curricular areas.

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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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good

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 benefit from the nurturing and inclusive ethos embedded across the school. All staff have very positive relationships and interactions with children, fostering a supportive and caring culture. As a result, most children feel safe at school and almost all state that they have someone they can talk to if they are worried or upset. Children take pride in their school and most demonstrate respect for peers, staff, and visitors. Staff intervene effectively on the few occasions where children do not respect their peers. All staff know children very well as individuals. Staff are able to sensitively support all children to have their wellbeing needs met effectively. Children feel valued and a strong sense of belonging to their school.

- Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, staff have focused successfully on supporting and promoting children's emotional wellbeing and mental health. Children engage in emotional check-ins on a daily basis in class. This helps them to develop further their ability to speak about emotions and wellbeing with clarity and confidence. It also helps teachers to identify when children may require support with aspects of their wellbeing and enables them to intervene, as appropriate. Children feel comfortable sharing personal or sensitive concerns with trusted adults. Most parents report that the school supports their child's emotional wellbeing effectively. As a result, most children show resilience when faced with difficulties, and participate confidently in learning.

- All teachers engage enthusiastically with professional learning to help them make classrooms more inclusive for children. They have reviewed the layout of their classrooms to promote inclusion. Children benefit from dedicated resources and spaces, such as calm corners and fidget devices, to support them to regulate their emotions. This approach helps children who may struggle in classroom settings to settle effectively or increase their time in class.

- All staff use wellbeing indicators effectively to evaluate children's wellbeing. On a termly basis, children assess their own wellbeing, and this is analysed well by the headteacher. Staff understand children's wellbeing needs well. They use this understanding to provide targeted interventions and adapt learning experiences appropriately for children who require additional support. For example, older children are developing a greater awareness of their strengths and achievements through planned opportunities to recognise and celebrate their successes. This approach ensures that children feel well supported and grow in confidence.

- Staff provide regular opportunities for children to participate in physical activity and promote healthy lifestyles well. Teachers deliver planned, progressive physical education (PE). They also provide all children with weekly PE sessions at the high school with children from two other

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small schools. Children value the friendships and teamwork skills they develop as a result of these sessions. Partners extend participation through occasional lunchtime clubs or sport taster sessions, such as, karate and dance. Children engage enthusiastically, improve their physical health and demonstrate increasing confidence and resilience.

- Teachers deliver a well-structured and progressive health and wellbeing curriculum. While strengths are evident across most aspects of health and wellbeing, staff now need to strengthen progression in children's learning about diversity and inclusion. Staff use a wide range of resources and approaches to enhance the delivery of health and wellbeing. Children learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy through age-appropriate exploration of sensitive issues, including internet safety and relationships and sexual health. Almost all children understand the importance of being physically active and making healthy lifestyle choices.

- Children are developing their understanding of equality, diversity and rights through learning at assemblies, learning which links across different subject areas and rights-based approaches. Most children feel that staff support them to respect and value others. They contribute positively to the school's inclusive ethos and work together to ensure all members of the school community feel welcomed and included. A next step is for the headteacher to develop a clearer overview of the planning and delivery of children's learning about diversity across the curriculum, including through the wider life of the school. Staff need to ensure children learn progressively and comprehensively about all protected characteristics. Children need a greater range of opportunities to know how to recognise and challenge appropriately all forms of discrimination.

- Children benefit from restorative approaches which are central to the recently implemented promoting positive relationships and behaviour policy. Staff make effective use of restorative conversations, 'quiet time' and 'good neighbour' approaches to help children reflect, regulate and repair relationships. Children speak positively about the support they receive through these methods. The headteacher should continue to develop understanding within the school community of inclusive and restorative approaches. This should include the reasons for some behaviours and strategies staff use. This should help staff, parents and children recognise how support is tailored to meet individual needs while maintaining positive relationships across the school.

- The headteacher and teachers have recently established pupil leadership groups which provide all children with opportunities to contribute to school improvement. Children are at the early stages of planning the work of these groups and speak confidently about how their ideas should support positive change within the school. Through their participation, they are developing important leadership, communication and teamwork skills while increasing their confidence. They are developing an understanding of how they can contribute to an inclusive school community. Children are keen to take on additional responsibilities, such as playground leaders to support younger children. Staff should now build on this positive start by increasing opportunities for children to lead aspects of school life and develop their role as responsible citizens within the school and wider community.

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- Staff have a clear understanding of their statutory duties relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion and implement these consistently in practice. Their approaches are informed by current legislation and national guidance. All staff undertake annual child protection training and participate in ongoing professional learning to enhance their ability to meet children's needs.

- Staff follow a clear and effective staged intervention process. They work well with other agencies and a range of children's health professionals. Staff and partners rightly prioritise early-intervention approaches. As a result, children are well supported through both preventative and responsive interventions which address a range of physical, emotional and social needs. Children benefit from well-considered strategies and interventions that meet their needs. These interventions improve children's wellbeing, resilience and attendance. Child's plans, written and agreed by staff, parents and children, include clear, timeous, measurable targets. These plans are reviewed regularly in line with local authority guidance. Almost all children who require additional support make good progress in achieving their personal targets.

- Across the school, children benefit from well-planned, effective transition arrangements. Staff provide effective pastoral support as children move between classes and at P1 and P7 stages. Staff share information with relevant staff about children's learning, attainment, wellbeing and additional support needs with appropriate colleagues. This helps to maintain continuity in learning and ensures that important strategies, supports and next steps move with the child. Staff identify children who would benefit from enhanced transitions. They provide support through a wide range of approaches, such as additional visits, visuals, familiar adults, more detailed handover and partner involvement. This helps children settle quickly, engage positively in learning and experience smooth transitions.

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Other relevant evidence

- Overall attendance for academic session 2025/26 was 94.04%. This is above the national average and has increased by 0.44% over a three-year period.
- The rate of persistent absence (attendance below 90%) in session 2025-26 was 15.63%. This has decreased by 8.57% in the same three years.
- Attendance levels are consistently in line with the local authority average. The headteacher uses effective systems to implement local authority policies and procedures to monitor children's attendance and late-coming. The headteacher takes appropriate and timely action to support children and families to improve attendance, working with partner agencies when appropriate. There are no children on part-time timetables and there have been no exclusions in the last two years.

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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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.

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