

Summarised inspection findings

Ferintosh Primary School

The Highland Council

15 September 2026

Key contextual information

Ferintosh Primary School is a non-denominational rural school, situated in Ferintosh on the Black Isle peninsula in the Highlands. The school has a shared headship with another primary school.

At the time of the inspection, the school roll consisted of 12 children who are taught in one multi-stage class. A minority of children have additional support needs. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 8. A minority of children are registered for free school meals. There are currently no children in the school who have English as an additional language.

Staffing comprises of a headteacher, a 0.8 full time equivalent (FTE) teacher, a 0.2 FTE teacher, a pupil support assistant and a general auxiliary. Between January and March 2026, the school was led on a temporary basis by a headteacher from within the local associated schools’ group. A new acting headteacher was appointed at the end of April 2026. The acting headteacher had been in post for six weeks at the time of the inspection.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
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 are well-mannered and welcoming to staff and visitors. They benefit from the care and support they receive in school. Staff know children and their families very well. Children feel included, secure and safe in their learning environment. - The school values are ‘respectful, achieving, inclusive, safe and encouraging’. Staff promote the school values on attractive displays and they are reflected in the class and playground charter. Staff should now support children to link the values explicitly to their own lives in school and at home. They should make increased reference to the values during lessons to make them more meaningful for the children. - Overall, there is not a consistently high quality of teaching, learning and assessment across lessons. Teachers created a ‘learning and teaching standard’ which focuses on the key elements of effective lessons. Teachers do not yet apply this consistently in all lessons. Staff should work together to ensure that there is a shared understanding of effective learning and teaching and embed the ‘learning and teaching standard’ across the curriculum. This would support improvements in the overall quality of learning and teaching.	

- In most lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and not well-matched consistently to children's needs. As a result, a minority of children find it difficult to engage fully in their learning and make appropriate progress. This also leads to low level disruptive behaviour which impacts negatively on the concentration and engagement of other children. Children rely heavily on adult supervision to remain on task. Older children work collaboratively with younger children, but at times, this impacts negatively on their own progress in learning. Staff need to improve the pace of lessons, have higher expectations about behaviour and ensure that learning activities meet the needs of all children.
- Teachers share the purpose of learning with children, and in the majority of lessons, they also explain how children can be successful. Teachers should now ensure that they match the intended learning and success criteria more accurately to children's learning needs. Children would benefit from being more involved in identifying how they can be successful. They also require increased opportunities to revisit this during lessons to check their progress and support their understanding.
- Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear in almost all lessons. They use questioning to check for understanding and to promote discussion between pupils. They now need to develop further the range of questioning being used in order to extend and deepen children's understanding.
- Teachers use a few formative assessment strategies well to make judgements about children's understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use this information to adapt their teaching and children's learning activities in response. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding and use of formative assessment strategies to ensure that learning activities are well-matched to the needs of all children and the pace of learning is appropriate for all.
- Teachers give positive verbal feedback and praise to children. They provide written feedback to children in a few curricular areas, which helps to support children's progress. They now need to extend this practice to ensure that children are well informed about their next steps in learning across the curriculum. Children self-assess their work in a few areas. They now need to link this consistently and meaningfully to the success criteria to help them evaluate accurately their progress. Teachers set termly targets for children on how to improve their writing. However, children are unable to identify clearly what their individual targets are. They should now have a greater involvement in the creation and review of their own targets, to support their progression.
- Support staff work alongside teachers to provide support for children who require additional assistance with aspects of their learning and wellbeing. This support is valued highly by teachers and children. Support staff now require more opportunities to share practice and engage in professional learning. This would support the staff team to meet better the needs of all children.
- The classroom is bright and welcoming. Children have ownership of their learning environment and access a range of learning resources independently. The extensive outdoor space is used to provide learning outdoors, such as the delivery of physical education (PE) and the development of a school garden. Teachers now need to use the school grounds and additional indoor space more effectively to provide children with stimulating and creative contexts for

learning. This should help to support children's engagement in learning and help them to make better progress.

- All children have access to individual digital devices and engage in technology activities. Children use digital devices to support their writing or to complete follow-up activities. Teachers should now ensure that children have well-planned opportunities to develop further their digital skills and apply these in a range of learning contexts.
- Teachers are at the very early stages of using play to support children's learning. They should continue to engage in professional learning provided by the local authority and use national practice guidance to support their approaches to helping children learn through play.
- There is an important need for staff to improve planning formats to make plans more accessible, relevant and purposeful. Teachers use a range of planning documents from different sources to plan children's learning. Current processes do not take into account fully children's prior learning, assessment information, progression or different contexts for learning. Learning is often repetitive and there are gaps in children's knowledge.
- Teachers have created an annual assessment calendar which is beginning to provide a more consistent approach to the gathering of assessment information. They complete a range of summative assessments across the year in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers are beginning to use this information to track the progress of individual children. They engage in school and cluster moderation activity to help develop a shared understanding of standards in writing. Further work is required to ensure that teachers' judgements on children's progress and attainment within literacy and numeracy are consistently accurate.
- The headteacher holds tracking meetings with teachers termly to monitor and discuss individual children's progress, next steps in their learning and current attainment. Teachers review potential barriers to learning and identify interventions to address these. They should monitor more closely the impact of interventions to ensure that all children make expected progress.
- Staff record information about children's attainment and progress in several formats, including an online tracker. There are examples of anomalies and the systems used do not provide sufficient data to track accurately individual children's progress over time. Moving forward, the headteacher should develop a simplified process to provide a clear, strategic overview of the progress of all children over time, including those who require additional support.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The number of children at each stage varies and is small. Overall statements have been made about attainment and progress to ensure individual children are not identified.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Children who require additional support with aspects of their learning make satisfactory progress towards their targets. Children require more appropriate levels of challenge and support to make the best possible progress in their learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- The majority of children make satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and Talking

- Across the school, the majority of children listen well to adults and respond appropriately to simple questions and explanations. They share their ideas and feelings with a range of peers and adults. Younger children need encouragement to listen well to others and to take turns in a variety of contexts. Older children listen and respond well in group discussions. They recognise the skills required to demonstrate good listening. They need to improve their skills in presentations and engage in debate and extend their talking skills in a wider range of contexts.

Reading

- Children have opportunities to select texts to read for enjoyment and are currently developing a lending library within the school. Younger children recognise and say sounds and blends confidently and use their knowledge of phonics to read simple words. They need further practice in blending sounds in order to read familiar texts. Older children read with expression and fluency and provide an explanation on their preferences for texts and authors. They name techniques used in texts to engage readers but are less confident to provide examples of these. They need to answer evaluative and inferential questions about texts more effectively.

Writing

- Children create a variety of texts for different purposes. The majority of younger children form lower case letters correctly and create a sentence, using appropriate spacing. They need support to develop their writing skills through play, imaginative and real-life contexts. Older children understand different genres of writing and appropriate contexts for their use. They plan and organise their ideas for writing. They should continue to apply their knowledge of

spelling and grammar rules to their extended writing. Older children identify literacy techniques that can be used to enhance their writing. They need to produce extended writing across a wide range of genres.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- The majority of children make satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.
- Teachers need to support children to revisit and consolidate prior learning more regularly. There are important gaps in children's mathematical knowledge. Teachers should provide children with more skill-specific written feedback on their numeracy and mathematics work. This should help children to recognise their progress and identify more clearly their next steps in learning. Children would benefit from completing numeracy and mathematics written tasks more frequently. They need support to improve the overall standard of presentation of numeracy and mathematics work.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children count forward and backwards within 20. They complete simple addition and subtraction calculations. They are less confident telling the time and estimating capacity. Older children multiply single digit numbers but need support to use multiplication facts to carry out division calculations quickly and with accuracy. They understand twenty-four hour notation and solve problems involving money but are less confident identifying appropriate units of measurement.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children, with support, name a few basic two-dimensional shapes. They require significantly more experience of working with three dimensional (3D) objects. Older children recognise a few common 3D objects but need to extend this to include a more appropriate range. They understand the concept of coordinates and use grid references.

Information handling

- Younger children interpret simple charts to answer questions. They require support to identify different ways of presenting information. Older children extract information from pie charts and use this to solve problems. Children require more opportunities to explore how information is used in learning, life and work.

Attainment over time

- Due to the small number of children at each stage, and fluctuations in the pupil roll, overall attainment figures do not represent fully the school's attainment over time. In addition, teachers' professional judgements on children's attainment are not consistently accurate.
- The school's attendance rate in 2024/25 was 97%. This is above the national average. Currently, the average overall and individual attendance rates remain high. The acting headteacher follows the local authority's attendance policy if children are absent from school without prior notification. There have been no exclusions in recent years. A few children have flexible timetables to help address their individual needs. There is an appropriate rationale for these arrangements and the acting headteacher keeps the timetables under review in consultation with parents.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children achieve through their participation in a range of collaborative activities. These include raising funds through enterprise projects, developing the school grounds and taking part in cluster events. Children are beginning to recognise a few of the skills they are developing through their participation in these activities, such as communication, planning and citizenship. Staff should support children to deepen their understanding of the range and nature of the skills they are developing.
- Children influence and lead a few aspects of the work of the school on an informal basis. Moving forward, staff should support all children to have regular, focused and well-structured opportunities to achieve through clearly defined leadership roles. This would provide children with a meaningful context in which to develop and extend their skills for learning, life and work.
- Staff and children celebrate achievements through assemblies and a display board. Children are proud of their personal achievements and their shared accreditation for whole school successes in areas such as promoting reading, digital learning and children's rights. Staff track children's participation in activities in and out of school. They have identified correctly that they should now track the skills children develop as a result of their participation.

Equity for all learners

- Staff access grants and fundraise to help subsidise the cost of school trips and activities. All children have free access to a snack and the school provides a uniform recycling service. Staff ensure that children do not miss out as a result of their socio-economic circumstances.
- Staff use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide a range of literacy, numeracy and wellbeing resources and interventions for a minority of children. The PEF plan identifies clear targets for each child. Children have not made expected progress towards achieving these targets. Moving forward, staff should ensure that there are baseline measures and regular evaluations of progress throughout the year. This should help to ensure that PEF is used more effectively to support accelerated attainment.

Other relevant evidence

- The Parent Council are aware of the purpose of PEF and are updated on how funds have been allocated. The headteacher should ensure that there is wider consultation with parents about how PEF can be best used to close poverty-related attainment gaps and help children make accelerated progress in their learning.
- Children receive their entitlement to religious observance.
- Children learn French from P1 to P7. Staff should now ensure that older children learn a second language as part of their 1+2 entitlement.
- Children are timetabled for two hours of physical education each week. Staff need to offer suitably differentiated activities in order to provide sufficiently high-quality learning experiences for all children.

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.