

Summarised inspection findings

Alvie Primary School

The Highland Council

5 May 2026

Key contextual information

Alvie Primary School is a small, rural school situated in the village of Kincraig in Badenoch. At the time of the inspection, the school roll of 49 children was being taught across three classes: P1-3, P4-5, P6-7.

The headteacher has been in post since November 2025 and has a 0.7 full time equivalent teaching commitment. There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing across the school in recent years. Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 7 and 8. Approximately 40% of children require additional support with their learning.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are: - learning and engagement - quality of teaching - effective use of assessment - planning, tracking and monitoring	

- The headteacher and staff work together effectively to create a welcoming, friendly and nurturing ethos for all children and families. Children talk positively about the recently revised school values of ‘supportive, creative, kind’. These are discussed meaningfully in classes and school assemblies. Children are awarded house points for demonstrating the school values and showing effort in their learning. This is helping children understand when these values are present in their daily lives.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has introduced effective, whole school strategies to help children interact positively with peers. This is helping children to develop respectful relationships. Children talk proudly about the positive impact this has on their playground and classroom experiences. Staff across the school have warm, supportive and nurturing relationships with children. Staff are proactive in providing appropriate supports for a few children who can have difficulty when managing their emotions or regulating their behaviour. For example, a few children access designated quiet spaces during lunch time if they find the playground overly stimulating. As a result, most children display positive behaviours in all areas of the school.
- Teachers have created inviting and attractive classrooms. Further learning spaces have been developed around the school, including the newly developed library and ‘The Hub’. These areas are used well as nurturing spaces and areas for small group work. The headteacher has worked effectively with children to improve the outdoor play areas. As a result, children now play in a variety of interesting outdoor spaces. All children benefit from a six-week block of outdoor learning using the school grounds. Children would like more opportunities for outdoor

learning. Staff should now work together to utilise the school grounds to continue to develop outdoor learning skills progressively.

- In the majority of lessons, children engage well in tasks and activities, working individually, in pairs and in groups. In a few lessons where children are not as actively engaged, children can display low level disruptive behaviours. Going forward, teachers should ensure that learning is well matched to the needs of all learners with appropriate challenge and support. They should also maximise learning time to help children make the best possible progress with their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations which help children be clear about the purpose of learning. They discuss with children their steps for success appropriately. In most lessons, teachers make effective use of questioning to check for understanding. Going forward teachers should extend use of questioning to deepen and extend children's thinking.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers use formative assessment strategies well to check children's understanding. Where this is most effective, they adapt their teaching in response. Staff give children helpful verbal praise and encouragement. Overall, teachers' feedback is not yet supporting children to have a strong understanding of their next steps in learning. Teachers should now strengthen the quality of verbal and written feedback they provide. This should ensure all children can understand and articulate their strengths, what they need to improve and develop individual targets.
- Staff use digital technology, such as interactive whiteboards, well to support their teaching. Children access digital devices regularly to support and enhance learning independently. For example, they use programmes and applications to consolidate their learning in literacy and numeracy. Older children are becoming increasingly confident in using digital technology to organise and present their learning. Staff should now ensure children develop digital skills progressively across all stages.
- Teachers and pupil support workers (PSAs) work together effectively to support children's learning and wellbeing. PSAs provide helpful assistance to individual children and groups of learners. This support helps children practise core skills in numeracy and literacy. PSA's are sensitive and encouraging in their interactions. A few children benefit from adaptive resources to help them read and concentrate. This supports children to engage positively with their learning experiences and lessons.
- Teachers are at the early stages of supporting younger children's learning through purposeful play. Teachers are keen to develop their own professional learning in this area for the benefit of children. Staff have developed inviting, well-resourced areas to help children develop creativity, curiosity and problem solving. Teachers consult with children to ensure they have a say in how play areas are resourced and used. For example, children's suggestions were used when setting up a doctor's surgery as part of a human body topic. Teachers should continue to engage with national guidance to ensure children experience developmentally appropriate learning activities which enhance their engagement and progress in learning.

- Staff have recently reviewed and updated an assessment calendar. This sets out the range of literacy and numeracy assessments that should take place across the school year. Staff work well collegiately to discuss and plan assessments that show what children know, understand and can do. Going forward, the headteacher and staff should ensure information from assessments about children's progress is used to identify and address gaps in learning. The headteacher and teachers should continue to interrogate assessment information with reference to the national Benchmarks. This will ensure a robust evidence base of children's attainment. This should support teachers' professional judgements further about children's progress across the curriculum.
- All teachers use progression pathways to inform planning for literacy and numeracy. This includes how they will assess children's progress in learning. They plan children's learning across different timescales, taking account of differing levels within their multi-stage classes. Teachers should now review approaches to planning to ensure learning is well-matched to all children's needs and progress. Children would benefit from revisiting key concepts in literacy and numeracy on a more regular basis. Teachers should now begin planning progressively for all curricular areas to ensure increased progression of experiences for children.
- The headteacher meets with teachers to discuss children's progress and attainment. They review a variety of information which helps them to identify those children who are on track with their learning and those who would benefit from interventions and support. The headteacher should now record supports that will be put in place for children and the staff members responsible for these. This should support tracking of support and interventions to ensure they are purposeful and leading to improvements in children's attainment and progress.

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, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.
- Following the inspection The Highland Council, working with the school have taken forward areas for improvement in safeguarding which required urgent action. HM Inspectors have reviewed information relating to these areas for improvement. HM Inspectors are satisfied with the response taken by The Highland Council and do not require any further information.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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 and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is because of the small numbers of children at each stage.
- Overall, the majority of children achieve or are on track to achieve national standards in listening and talking, reading and numeracy. A minority of children are on track to achieve national standards in writing. A minority of children are capable of making greater progress. Children who require additional support in their learning are not yet making satisfactory progress towards individual targets. As correctly identified by senior leaders in this year's school improvement plan, there is a need for prompt and structured action to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, a majority of children are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking. A minority of children are making sufficient progress in reading and writing.

Listening and talking

- Younger children listen well to staff and to peers, responding to others appropriately. At the middle stages, a few children require more support to listen to each other and adults respectfully. Older children contribute a number of relevant ideas, information and opinions in discussions with others. They would benefit from more practise planning and delivering organised presentations to develop confidence speaking to a wider range of audiences. Overall, children need more regular opportunities to develop listening and talking skills through planned, progressive and structured learning and teaching.

Reading

- Children choose books to read for pleasure and explain preferences for different types of books and authors. Younger children are developing their knowledge of sounds and letters. They blend sounds to make simple words. Children at the middle stages answer simple questions about a text and make predictions about what will happen next in a story. Older children are less confident identifying the main ideas in a text and responding to a range of questions, including inferential and evaluative questions, to demonstrate understanding of texts. Overall, staff should review approaches to the teaching of reading to ensure children are making appropriate progress in reading for their stage and abilities. Going forward it will

be important that children are accessing texts that appropriately supports progress and development.

Writing

- A minority of children are making sufficient progress in writing and the development of writing skills. Staff have recently introduced new approaches to writing. This is at an early stage, and the impact is not yet evident.
- Younger children write words and a short sentence using capital letters and full stops. They would benefit from more practise writing independently, including through play. Children at the middle stages write descriptions linked to pictures. They are less confident discussing ways to make their writing interesting, for example by using adjectives. Older children write recounts and information texts and have some opportunities for imaginative writing. Overall, children require to write more regularly for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting appropriate genre, form, structure and style. Children at the middle and upper stages would benefit from having clear writing targets. This would help to raise attainment in writing.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children are capable of making greater progress. Overall children would benefit from more regular opportunities to revisit taught mathematical concepts. This will help to consolidate their learning.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children count forwards and backwards between 0 and 20 and identify a range of coins. Children at the middle stages round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They are developing their knowledge of multiplication through times tables. They tell the time by the quarter hour. Older children identify correctly place value and round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They require to develop further their skills in subtraction, multiplication and division. They are less confident calculating the area or perimeter of a simple shape.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children correctly identify two-dimensional shapes. Children in the middle stages identify right angles and compass points. Older children are developing confidence in describing the properties of three-dimensional objects. They order a range of angles accurately.

Information handling

- Overall, children would benefit from practise collecting, organising and displaying data in a variety of ways including through the use of digital technologies as appropriate for their age and stage.

Attainment over time

- In recent years, children's progress has been impacted by periods of change in staffing and leadership. The headteacher now needs to work with staff to develop a clear understanding of individual children's attainment over time. It will be important for the headteacher to work closely with staff to ensure assessment and other information is used well to support all children make the best possible progress in literacy and numeracy.

- Overall attendance levels are in line with national averages. Approximately one quarter of children have attendance below 90%. The headteacher should take action to promote the importance of good attendance and to address concerns with attendance with families. Children with low attendance levels should have appropriate planning in place to support them to attend more regularly. A few children have flexi-schooling arrangements which have been agreed with the local authority. These arrangements should continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure the approach remains appropriate.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements within and outside school are recognised in weekly assemblies and celebrated in the school newsletter. Children enjoy earning house points and receiving certificates, for example for demonstrating school values. Children develop important skills from accessing music tuition and participating in sporting events, such as cross-country running competitions. Older children benefit from having leadership roles as house captains and leaders of a range of clubs and groups, such as the 'media crew' who create a newsletter for parents. Children enjoy the sense of responsibility which comes from these leadership roles, which are helping them to develop skills such as teamwork. As a next step, children should be supported to identify the range of skills and attributes they are developing through these roles and activities.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff know children and families well and have an understanding of challenges they may face, including socio-economic circumstances. In recent years Pupil Equity Funding has been used to support literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing interventions. Evaluations show the positive impact of some of these approaches in improving children's engagement with learning and confidence. Going forward, the headteacher should ensure interventions are reviewed regularly to help accelerate the progress of children who experience barriers in their learning.

Other relevant evidence

- Children across the school learn French. Children are not yet receiving their full entitlement to a 1+2 approach to modern languages.
- Children receive their entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education per week.
- The Parent Council were consulted in relation to the development of the school improvement plan.
- Parents have indicated that they would like more information about the progress their child is making and more opportunities to share in their child's learning at school.

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.