25 August 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2025, HM Inspectors published a letter on Salen Primary School - Bun Sgoil An t-Sailein. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Argyll and Bute Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Develop clear processes to support the identification, delivery, and review of improvement priorities in the school and pre-five unit.

There has been limited progress in this area. The headteacher and staff require more time and further support from the local authority to develop clear processes to support the identification, delivery, and review of improvement priorities in the school.

Staff in the Gàidhlig Medium sgoil-àraich and the English Medium Early Learning and Childcare setting are beginning to use national guidance to improve children's experiences. They should continue to use Gàidhlig specific guidance and resources to support their self-evaluation activities.

Staff in the school have worked effectively with children to review and streamline the school's vision and values. They consulted well with parents to ensure that these are relevant and reflect better the school's unique Gàidhlig context. Staff now need to work together to ensure that the vision and values underpin, and are reflected in, all aspects of school life. The headteacher should now work with staff and the wider school community to develop further the school's aims to ensure that they fully embody the aspirations of the whole school community.

Staff have made a positive start to using the Advice on Gaelic Education to support self-evaluation activity. Middle leaders, who are fluent speakers of Gàidhlig have started to build networks with whom to share effective practice.

The headteacher has developed further processes to gather the views of staff, parents, and children regarding the work of the school. However, these processes do not always gather information to effectively inform self-evaluation of the work of the school. Moving forward, the headteacher needs to consider more strategically the information that she needs to

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gather. She needs to analyse this information more carefully to determine strengths and areas that require improvement.

The headteacher, supported by the local authority, have continued to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching across the school. The headteacher should now analyse the information gathered more carefully to ensure the quality of children's learning experiences improves.

All staff continue to work very well as a team. They have a strong understanding of the school's context and the challenges facing children and families. They continue to use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing. The headteacher has yet to consult more widely to identify how PEF should be spent. The headteacher must now target PEF more closely to children who experience barriers to their learning that are as a result of their socio-economic circumstances.

Improve approaches to planning children's learning experiences in the school and pre-five unit. Staff should include children more fully in planning learning.

There has not yet been sufficient progress in this area for improvement. Whilst there has been positive progress within both ELC settings, the headteacher and staff require more time, and further support from the local authority, to improve approaches to planning children's learning experiences in the school. Children need to be included more fully in planning learning.

Staff in the ELC have improved how they capture children's progress and engagement in learning experiences. For Gàidhlig Medium Education, staff plan effectively the Gàidhlig language that children will be learning. They should now identify clearly the significant learning that they will assess.

In the ELC, staff are beginning to plan learning progressively in literacy and Gaidhlig/English, numeracy and mathematics, and health and wellbeing. They should now extend this approach to all curriculum areas to ensure children experience learning that is appropriately challenging.

In the school, teachers should ensure children experience progressive learning across the whole of CfE, including Gaelic (Learners). The headteacher needs to monitor planning with teachers more robustly. She needs to support teachers better to adapt learning activities and tasks to meet the needs of all children. She needs to agree with teachers, clear actions they need to take to support children to overcome barriers to learning.

Teachers continue to set work at the correct level of difficulty for the majority of children. They now need to plan more consistently learning that provides appropriate support and challenge to meet better all children's needs. Staff need to support children to understand better their individual progress.

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Improve the standards of learning, teaching, and assessment across the school. Ensure that all learning activities across the school are matched effectively to children's needs. Children need to be better supported and challenged in their learning.

There has not yet been sufficient progress in this area for improvement.

Almost all children continue to engage well in their learning. However, in the majority of lessons, the pace of learning is still too slow. This can lead to children becoming disengaged.

The headteacher and teachers have started to develop useful guidance to support high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment since the original inspection. They have engaged collaboratively in professional learning relating to the key features of effective learning and teaching. This has had little impact of the quality of learning and teaching across the school. With the further support of the local authority, the headteacher now needs to work at pace to improve teachers' understanding of high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment. She needs to ensure a clear, consistent narrative that assists staff to understand the standards expected of them.

In most lessons, teachers provide feedback to children about their work. In a minority of lessons, they provide written feedback to children. This feedback is not always of a consistent standard to help children know what they have done well or how to improve. Teachers need to develop further their use of high-quality feedback which helps children to make better progress in learning.

Teachers are continuing to develop approaches to questioning, digital learning, outdoor learning and learning through play. There remains, however, considerable potential to develop children's experiences and skills in these areas. The headteacher should ensure teachers plan more consistent, high-quality experiences for children to build on their existing skills and learning.

Teachers' professional judgements of children's attainment are not yet accurate and robust. Teachers remain at the initial stages of gathering and analysing assessment information effectively. They should use national Benchmarks more effectively to measure children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. In doing so, teachers need to develop a better understanding of national standards.

There has been a promising start to addressing this area for improvement. Whilst overall reported attainment has raised across the school, teachers still need to develop better their understanding of national standards.

Across the school, the majority of children continue to make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. Most children requiring additional support with their learning continue to make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

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Overall, younger children's attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved since the last inspection. Older children's attainment in listening and talking, reading and numeracy has improved. In writing, older children's attainment has declined. A minority of children continue to require greater challenge in their learning. The headteacher, supported by the local authority, needs to work with teachers to ensure teachers have a clear and robust understanding of what attainment of a level looks like.

Whilst children's use of Gàidhlig in class has improved, the headteacher and staff are still to check children's attainment in Gaelic (Learners) to raise the status of children's learning of an official language of Scotland. The headteacher and staff need to support children to understand their progress and next steps in learning Gaelic.

With the support of the local authority, the headteacher has developed a useful system to track and monitor children's attainment over time. She now needs to analyse this information more carefully with staff. She needs to understand better trends in attainment and how school improvement initiatives and interventions impact on children's outcomes.

What happens next?

The school has made insufficient progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Argyll and Bute Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Argyll and Bute Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Denise Penman
HM Inspector

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

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