

22 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In May 2026, a team of HM Inspectors of Education visited Hillside School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers, children, young people, and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Staff are effective in helping children and young people to engage successfully in their learning. Staff are providing children and young people with predictable routines so that they can settle quickly into their learning. This is improving children and young people's motivation to participate in their learning activities.
- Children and young people benefit from staff's effective use of a range of learning and sensory spaces across the school. Children and young people are building important skills in communication and cooperating and socialising with others.
- Young people in the senior phase are building on their successes through gaining a portfolio of qualifications.
- Young people move onto training, further education or work once they complete school education. They are developing well life skills that helps them become more independent and prepare for adult life.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from East Ayrshire Council.

- Senior leaders should work with staff to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching and learning across the school. They should ensure activities are at the right level of challenge for children and young people. In doing so, senior leaders should help staff access professional learning to develop further their expertise in meeting the needs of children and young people with significant additional support needs.
- Senior leaders and staff need to track and monitor children and young people's progress better. This will help them evidence the progress children and young people make across their curriculum.
- Senior leaders need to review and improve the length of the school week for all children and young people. They should ensure that the use of part-time timetables is for the shortest period possible and that children and young people return to full-time education. This will help all children and young people improve their attainment and achievements.
- Senior leaders and the local authority have worked together to address areas for improvement in safeguarding which required urgent action.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using two quality indicators from [How good is our school \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are HMIE's evaluations for Hillside School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school (4th edition) Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the HMIE website at: [Hillside School | Inspection Report | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland](#)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. East Ayrshire Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

David McKellar
HM Inspector

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