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

Summarised inspection findings

Drummore Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

19 May 2026

Key contextual information

Drummore Primary School is a non-denominational school set in the Mull of Galloway in the rural village of Drummore. At the time of inspection, the school had a roll of 23 children organised across two multi-composite classes. The headteacher has been in post for five years and is also headteacher for one other partnership school. She is supported by two part-time permanent principal teachers who are also both class committed.

Currently, all children who attend the school reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 4. Approximately 30.4% of children are registered for free school meals. The school reports that approximately 35% of children have an additional support need and a few children have English as an additional language.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	**very 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	

- The highly effective headteacher and staff team create a calm, purposeful and supportive learning environment where positive, caring relationships are a clear strength. Staff know children and families very well, which creates a warm, trusting culture helping all children to feel safe, respected and ready to learn. The school values and recently reviewed aims, developed in consultation with staff, children and parents, underpin learning and teaching across the school. Staff consistently promote children's rights and values very effectively through well-established class charters which are referred to across the day. As a result, almost all children behave consistently well. They demonstrate a strong understanding of their own rights and the rights of others and apply this confidently in their interactions with each other, adults and visitors. Staff reinforce and celebrate the shared values using the mascot 'Arrchi' regularly through assemblies. This further supports children to understand and live the values. The school's on-going focus on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including national accreditation for their work, strengthens the school's rights-respecting culture. This is evident in children's interactions, confidence, respect for others and engagement in learning.

- Staff create environments which promote high levels of engagement and independence, supporting children to learn confidently. Learning spaces are nurturing and inclusive and are used effectively to enhance learning. Break-out spaces, calm corners and high-quality displays which celebrate children's work, motivate and inspire children across the multi-composite classes. Children are proud of their school and value opportunities to influence their learning environment. For example, older children lead aspects of the redesign of a refreshed library

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space. As a result, children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and ownership, with all children engaging actively as confident learners within the school community.

- Children experience regular, meaningful opportunities to influence their contexts for learning across the curriculum. For example, in writing, children increasingly make decisions about purpose, audience and content, enabling them to take ownership of their learning. As a result, children routinely direct their own learning and show high levels of motivation across almost all learning experiences. Almost all children are highly engaged and take pride in the quality of their work, learning and achievements.

- Teachers have collaboratively developed a highly effective learning and teaching framework that establishes clear, shared expectations for high-quality learning across the school. Children's views were considered carefully through consultation on 'what makes a good lesson', resulting in a framework that reflects what supports them to learn well. This framework is well embedded and used consistently by staff to a high standard, leading to engaging and purposeful learning experiences. As a result, children have a clear understanding of learning expectations and demonstrate increasing confidence and ownership in their learning.

- Across the school, teachers give clear explanations and link learning to prior knowledge and real-life contexts. Teachers use effective questioning to sustain interest and promote higher-order thinking. Teachers ask open-ended questions which help children justify ideas, solve problems and apply learning in unfamiliar contexts. Teachers routinely share success criteria so children understand expectations and how to improve their work. As a result, children are actively engaged in their learning and demonstrate increasing depth of understanding. Children are beginning to co-create steps to success, and this should be developed further to strengthen ownership and engagement.

- Teachers have recently introduced a greater focus on the meta-skills that children develop through their learning. The majority of lessons and play based opportunities reference skills development, with displays across the school reinforcing this focus. As a result, children are beginning to talk more confidently about the skills they are developing through their learning. As planned, teachers should continue to embed meta-skills across the curriculum, supporting children to confidently understand these transferrable skills and how they support their learning.

- Support staff work very effectively in partnership with class teachers to enhance learning experiences within the classroom. They provide strong support for children's wellbeing and contribute well to the delivery of targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy for a few children. These focused approaches support children to engage confidently in learning, make clear progress and build essential skills for success.

- All children benefit from a progressive digital learning pathway which supports the development of digital literacy skills across the curriculum. Teachers plan effectively for digital learning and provide regular opportunities for children to use a wide range of digital tools. Older children make use of online graphic design software to create posters and other displays. Staff use software and assistive technologies well to provide tailored support for identified learners.

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- Teachers are developing effective play-based approaches for younger children. They provide a well-balanced range of child-led, adult-led and adult-initiated play experiences which support young learners to engage purposefully in their learning. Children are encouraged to identify the meta-skills they are developing through play, supporting the development of important skills for learning at the early stages. To strengthen this practice further, teachers should now make greater use of observations to assess children's progress and skills development through play, to track application of and extend learning appropriately.

- All staff plan a wide range of regular, meaningful outdoor learning experiences for all children. The structured and progressive outdoor learning programme links effectively to sustainable development goals and children's rights. Children engage very well in relevant and motivating contexts and themes for example animals, plants and community projects. Staff and community partners enhance learning further through initiatives including the local art trail, which builds on children's interests and offers purposeful opportunities for personalisation and choice. As a result, children demonstrate resilience, confidence and strong communication skills.

- All teachers consistently use standardised assessments and well-embedded formative assessment strategies to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They use this information skilfully to identify next steps and differentiate learning effectively for all children in multi-composite classes. This ensures that almost all children are supported and challenged appropriately for their stage in learning in literacy and numeracy. As planned teachers should now extend these approaches across other curricular areas.

- As children progress through the school, they are becoming increasingly confident to self and peer assess their own and other's work. The headteacher and teachers have developed systematic and helpful approaches that support children to assess their progress using helpful pupil progression pathways. All teachers provide children with regular verbal and responsive feedback on how to improve their learning across most lessons.

- Teacher's plan learning effectively over a range of different timescales to meet the needs of all children in multi-composite classes. They use local authority and school developed curricular progression pathways effectively. This provides a strong framework for tracking children's progress against national Benchmarks. Staff regularly engage in moderation of national standards with stage partners from partnership and cluster schools. This has enhanced the accuracy of assessments and has empowered staff to make more robust and reliable judgements across literacy and numeracy towards achievement of a level.

- The headteacher meets termly with teachers to rigorously track the progress of all children and to agree targeted interventions to improve outcomes for individuals. The headteacher has developed a highly detailed tracking system to support children who benefit from PEF. Staff meet regularly to analyse assessment information, monitor progress and evaluate the impact of interventions. This information is used very effectively to put timely and well-matched supports in place, ensuring almost all children make the best possible progress.

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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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3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	very good

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 information is provided in overall statements due to the small numbers of children at each stage. Almost all children are on track to achieve national expectations in literacy and numeracy in June 2026. A few children are achieving beyond expected levels. All children requiring additional support are making very good progress towards their individual targets in learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, almost all children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English across the school.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are articulate and confident in discussions and enjoy sharing their learning. Younger children listen well and demonstrate understanding through detailed responses. As they progress, children develop increasingly effective discussion skills, contributing appropriately, listening respectfully and building on the views of others. While most children participate confidently, a few children require continued support to manage turn-taking to ensure all voices are heard.

Reading

- Most younger children are developing reading skills very well, using phonics to read familiar words and decode unfamiliar text. As they progress, almost all children identify key ideas and respond well to literal and inferential questions. Most older children interrogate texts confidently and select information from a range of sources. Across the school, children read regularly for enjoyment, though a few are less confident at reading aloud.

Writing

- Younger children form most lower-case letters legibly and are beginning to use capital letters and full stops accurately. As they progress, children develop increasing fluency in writing. Older children extend sentences using connecting words, apply a wide range of vocabulary and punctuate most work accurately, writing confidently for a range of purposes. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular writing across a wider range of genres, and a few require further support with handwriting and presentation.

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Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children recognise and order numbers to 50 accurately, add and subtract confidently within 10 and tell the time using o'clock and half past. They use money confidently and give change for amounts up to £10. Almost all older children add and subtract numbers to 1000 and beyond. They apply this knowledge to handling money with accuracy, selecting effective strategies and applying skills confidently in real-life contexts. Across the school, children would deepen their learning through increased opportunities to apply fractions, decimals and percentages in meaningful, real-life situations.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all younger children demonstrate a secure understanding of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They accurately identify key features using appropriate mathematical language. They use positional language confidently within practical learning activities. Almost all older children describe, classify and compare shapes and angles confidently, using a well-developed range of mathematical vocabulary. They demonstrate a sound understanding of direction and the main compass points.

Information handling

- Almost all younger children gather data accurately using tally marks and display information appropriately in simple charts. As they progress, children demonstrate a growing understanding of how data can be organised and interpreted to answer straightforward questions. Almost all older children gather, analyse and present data confidently, selecting appropriate methods such as bar charts, line graphs and pie charts, and explain their findings clearly. Across the school, children should continue to develop their information-handling skills through the effective use of digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Due to the small number of children in each cohort and a degree of roll fluctuation at some stages, overall patterns in attainment over time can appear variable. The headteacher has established robust and effective processes for recording, tracking and monitoring individual children's attainment across the school. Staff use this information very effectively to identify individuals and groups who require additional support or targeted interventions, including those experiencing barriers to learning. As a result of timely and well-matched interventions, almost all children are making strong and sustained progress in their learning.

- Average attendance is 95.6%, which is above local and national benchmarks, with most absences related to term-time family holidays. The school follows clear, well-embedded attendance processes, led effectively by the headteacher through daily monitoring and regular tracking. Attendance information is used well to provide timely support for children and families, supported by strong partnership working and an inclusive, nurture-based approach from class teachers. Positive relationships with families are a clear strength. As a result, attendance continues to improve. There are no children on part-time timetables and there have been no exclusions over the past five years.

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Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their achievements across a wide range of sporting, cultural and wider achievement opportunities. The 'See Us Shine' framework supports the recognition of achievements in and out of school, with almost all parents engaging positively to support this initiative. Achievements are celebrated regularly through assemblies, displays, social media and newsletters, promoting school values and positive learning behaviours. Staff track participation effectively and support children to reflect on the skills they are developing. As a result, all children broaden their experiences and take part in a wide variety of opportunities they may not ordinarily experience. These include activities such as African drumming and active involvement in decision making with the local community council.

- Staff have developed highly effective partnerships which provide rich, meaningful experiences beyond the classroom. These include the development of a school orchard, which strengthens children's understanding of sustainability, food production and perseverance over time. Children contribute to positive change within their rural community through active involvement with the community council. For example, their work creating the 'Low Road Community Art Trail' is encouraging tourism.

- All children gain national recognition for achievements in areas such as anti-bullying, digital skills and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). As a result of these experiences all children build life skills, confidence, and creativity, fostering a strong sense of responsibility and belonging. To build on this very strong practice, senior leaders and staff should continue to strengthen children's ability to articulate clearly the skills they are developing and how these contribute to their wider achievements.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of the school's context and any barriers to learning children may face. They make effective use of robust tracking data, professional judgements and the views of parents and partners to target support very well. PEF is used appropriately to provide carefully planned, time-limited interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Alongside universal approaches these reduce barriers to participation and achievement effectively. These interventions are monitored rigorously using a highly effective system developed by the headteacher. Evidence demonstrates clear positive impact on children's progress and wellbeing, with gaps in learning reducing over time. As a result, children who experience poverty-related barriers are supported well to achieve success and access the same opportunities as their peers. To strengthen this further, the headteacher should consider how children can be involved in decisions about the use of PEF.

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Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children experience their full entitlement to a 1+2 approach to modern languages. Children learn French from P1 to P7. Younger children have opportunities to learn simple words and phrases in Spanish linked to contexts for interdisciplinary learning. Older children have opportunities to learn Spanish in planned blocks of time.
- Children are receiving their entitlement to religious and moral education in line with national expectations. The local minister visits the school regularly and supports assemblies and wider community work.
- The community council work in partnership with the school. Currently children are developing a community art project, 'The Low Road Art Trail', to create treasure boxes and stone art.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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Practice worth sharing more widely

Learner Feedback

Staff provide children with constructive, timely and purposeful feedback on their learning. This feedback, underpinned by the school's child-friendly progression pathways, is well embedded across writing and is increasingly used in reading and aspects of mathematics. These child-friendly pathways support children to provide accurate self and peer assessment feedback. The child-friendly 'learning phase' self-assessment frameworks are presented as laminated overlays that fit directly over pupils' work. This enables both teachers and learners to annotate and assess learning accurately against clear success criteria while actively engaged in the task.

Pupils confidently use self, peer and teacher feedback to identify appropriate next steps in learning. Responsive approaches, such as 'pit stop' plenaries, support timely intervention and ensure clarity around next steps. This approach is fully embedded in writing and is now extending into reading and mathematics, enabling learners to articulate their strengths and areas for development with increasing confidence.

Teachers regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of these approaches to ensure they continue to meet learners' needs and result in sustained positive impact. The learning phase overlays also support challenge and depth, as pupils can see both their current working level and the next stage within the progression pathway. This encourages learners who are secure in their learning to extend their understanding by engaging with elements of the next phase, promoting greater ownership and ambition in learning.

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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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