

22 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2025, HM Inspectors published a letter on Balmalloch Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and North Lanarkshire 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.

Senior leaders and staff should improve how they identify, plan for and implement their key improvement priorities. A more focussed approach would help them to accelerate the pace of change and improve outcomes for children.

Overall, senior leaders are making significant progress in this area, which is beginning to have a positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

Senior leaders are now working more effectively with the school community and the local authority to bring about positive changes. In particular, there have been significant improvements to learning and teaching and in children's motivation. There are more positive relationships across the school, and important aspects of both attendance and behaviour have improved.

A few parents would like the pace of change to increase more rapidly. Senior leaders acknowledge that they need to continue to keep up a swift pace of change.

Senior leaders and staff are prioritising the most important areas for improvement. They have made appropriate progress towards raising attainment at Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) second level, and in checking the quality of learning and teaching across the school. Staff have more open and regular discussions about children's progress with their senior leaders. Senior leaders now have a better understanding of children's progress and understand better where to give children extra help and support. For example, when a child's learning is off track, teachers quickly discuss this with senior leaders and appropriate support is put in place. Senior leaders still need to ensure that all parents are aware of the progress that their child is making at school.

Senior leaders and staff are following the action plan that they set out after the last inspection. This is helping them to create a more manageable approach to improvement. There are now more defined roles for senior leaders and staff, with their areas of

responsibility outlined clearly. There are also increased opportunities for teacher leadership, which is leading to a better pace for tackling areas for improvement within the school.

Staff are working more closely with parents and have created better opportunities for them to be involved through focus groups and working parties. For example, parents are helping to improve how the school reports on children's progress. Senior leaders now need to put these plans into action and review how well they are working. They also need to strengthen communication with a few parents by providing clearer information about what children are learning and responding more effectively to concerns.

Children are involved increasingly in making decisions about their learning through pupil voice groups and activities. This is helping the school to understand what it is doing well and what it needs to improve. Senior leaders should continue to work closely with parents and the local authority to keep improving outcomes for children.

Senior leaders and staff should focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school.

Staff and senior leaders are working to improve how well children achieve in literacy and numeracy across the school, and their work is beginning to make a positive difference.

Most children in the early and second levels are reaching the expected national levels in reading and numeracy, and almost all are doing well in listening and talking. At first level, most children are doing well in listening and talking, and a majority are achieving expected levels in reading and numeracy. Across the school, the majority of children are achieving expected levels in writing. A few children are performing above expectations in areas of literacy and numeracy.

Most children are making positive progress in reading, numeracy, and listening and talking. Progress in writing is also positive, although not as strong. A minority of children would benefit from more challenge in their learning. Teachers should continue to focus on raising attainment, particularly in writing, and address the drop in attainment in literacy and numeracy as children move through first level.

Senior leaders have introduced improved systems to track children's progress and attainment. They have started to use this information well to support teachers and to identify trends. These systems are beginning to help staff respond more quickly to children's needs, and this work should continue so teachers can play a greater role in tracking progress over time.

Attendance is at 93.4% and is above the national average. Staff monitor carefully children's attendance and work closely with families to support improvement where needed. This is already helping to increase attendance for many children.

Teachers are using new planning tools to support children's learning in literacy and numeracy. These are helping teachers better understand how children progress and plan

next steps. Staff confidence is improving, although these approaches are not yet used consistently across the school. The school still has work to do to help ensure children's learning builds smoothly from year to year.

Teachers use verbal feedback very well in lessons to support learning. They are beginning to use a consistent approach to written feedback, which children understand and use to improve their work, especially in writing. Continuing to develop this will help children make even better progress.

Staff are working together well to make sure they have a shared understanding of children's progress and achievement. This includes working with other professionals within and beyond the school. Further work with other schools will strengthen this and help ensure that assessments of children's progress are accurate and consistent.

Staff should improve approaches to planning and assessment to better meet the needs of all learners, including those who require extra support or challenge in learning.

There has been appropriate progress in this area of development.

Senior leaders and staff are improving how they plan learning and assess children's progress so that all children's needs are met better, including those who need extra support or more challenge.

The school has made positive changes to create a more inclusive and nurturing environment. Children benefit from supportive spaces such as calm corners and "the hub", which help them manage their emotions and return to learning. Relationships across the school are very positive, and almost all children behave well.

Teachers now use a wider range of assessments to check children's progress, and these are becoming a more regular part of planning. This is helping teachers better understand how children are progressing and what they need to learn next. Senior leaders should now make sure assessment approaches are consistent and share children's next steps more clearly with parents.

Staff work together well to support children who need additional help. Plans for children who need this help are now of a higher standard, with clearer targets. Parents are regularly involved in reviewing most of these plans, which helps ensure children receive the right support.

Staff are using assessment information more effectively to provide targeted support in areas such as reading, writing and numeracy. These supports are helping most children involved to make faster progress, particularly in numeracy.

A minority of children across the school could achieve more if their learning provided greater challenge. Teachers are beginning to use progression pathways to support learning. These now need to be used more effectively to move children on more quickly when they are ready.



Senior leaders and staff should Increase opportunities for children to lead learning and participate in a variety of motivating learning experiences to increase engagement, independence and motivation.

The school is making strong progress in this area. Senior leaders and staff are creating more opportunities for children to take an active role in their learning. As a result, almost all children are more engaged in lessons, and most feel motivated and enthusiastic about their learning.

In P1 and P2, staff have developed their use of play-based learning. Children now have more opportunities to lead their own learning, helping them build independence, confidence, and problem-solving skills. Most children at these stages enjoy learning and are more motivated to take part. This has also led to improved behaviours and positive relationships.

At first and second levels, teachers are encouraging children to take more responsibility for their learning. In most lessons, teachers are using approaches that give children more choice in how they organise and complete their work. Children enjoy this increased independence and are becoming more creative and curious learners.

The school is also widening the range of learning experiences, including more outdoor learning. Senior leaders and staff should continue to review how well this is supporting progress.

The quality of learning and teaching is becoming more consistent across the school. However, in a few lessons, learning is still too focused on the whole class and does not offer enough challenge for individual learners. Improving consistency across the school continues to be an area for improvement.

More children are enjoying lessons and show better participation. This is leading to better emotional regulation, stronger relationships, and greater confidence and pride in the school.

All children have opportunities to develop leadership skills through school groups and activities. These experiences help build confidence, responsibility, and a strong sense of community. Staff should continue to ensure that children, particularly older learners, have an appropriate balance of play and responsibility.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. 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. North Lanarkshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Tracie McEwan
HM Inspector

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