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

Summarised inspection findings

Northmuir Primary School

Angus Council

17 November 2026

Key contextual information

Northmuir Primary School and nursery class is a non-denominational school located in the town of Kirriemuir, Angus. The headteacher has been in post for ten years. She is supported by a depute headteacher and a principal teacher. The headteacher has the strategic responsibility for the nursery, supported by a lead senior early years' practitioner and two senior early years' practitioners.

There are 12 primary classes across the school, with a roll of 295 children. The nursery is situated in a separate building within the grounds, with 52 children from age 2 until they start primary school. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 6, with a minority living in deciles 2, 8 and 9. In September 2025, 16% of the school roll was recorded as having an additional support need. A few children are in receipt of free school meals.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	**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	

- Across the school, children are happy, confident and engage well in their learning. Senior leaders and staff have successfully developed a nurturing and inclusive culture for learning across the school, which is underpinned by positive relationships. This supports children well and ensures they are ready to learn.

- Staff and children created class charters which reflect children's rights. These charters are helping children to understand their role in creating a positive learning environment. Almost all children behave very well. Interactions between staff and children and children with their peers are respectful and supportive. As a result, all classrooms are calm and settled.

- In most lessons, teachers use a range of effective learning and teaching approaches which motivate and engage children. Almost all children collaborate effectively and participate confidently in whole-class, small-group, and paired learning activities. Teachers and pupil support assistants work effectively together to plan and implement interventions for children who require support with their learning. However, in a minority of lessons, children spend too long listening to their teacher. This results in children being passive in their learning. Teachers need to ensure that learning activities are consistently well matched to children's needs and abilities and move at a sufficient pace.

- Senior leaders and staff have agreed the features of high-quality learning and teaching to be included in lessons. In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. Teachers build on and discuss prior learning, helping children to understand the context and

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relevance of new learning. In almost all lessons, teachers explain clearly the lessons' purpose and the steps children need to take to succeed. Senior leaders should support staff to extend this further by enabling children to co-construct steps for success. This will help children to better understand how to be successful and strengthen ownership of their learning.

- In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. In a minority of lessons, teachers use higher-order questioning well to deepen children's thinking skills, and to encourage children to justify and explain their ideas. This practice should be shared with colleagues across the school to extend children's thinking and provide appropriate challenge in learning more consistently.

- Across the school, children experience learning in a wide range of meaningful contexts for learning. Outdoor learning is important in the school's approach to learning and teaching. Teachers make creative use of the extensive school grounds. Staff and partners deliver and support engaging outdoor learning experiences. Children find outdoor learning highly motivating and they develop a range of transferable skills for life and learning. They are knowledgeable about environmental issues and learning for sustainability. When working on learning across different subjects, most teachers work together with children to understand what they already know and what they would like to learn. This supports children to have choice in a few areas of learning.

- Teachers provide effective and supportive verbal feedback to children during almost all lessons. A majority of teachers use formative assessment effectively during lessons to adapt planned learning. A majority of teachers also provide focused, written feedback in jotters that helps children understand their progress and next steps in learning. In a few classes, written feedback extends learning through targeted extension challenges or activities. Senior leaders should continue to identify and share positive practice relating to high-quality written feedback across the school. Teachers should ensure they provide all children with regular opportunities to reflect on and respond to feedback, particularly where they have identified next steps or areas for improvement.

- In the upper stages, most children engage confidently in self- and peer-assessment across aspects of their learning, including writing and numeracy. They use the Practise, Effort, Time and Input (PETI) process with increasing effectiveness to evaluate the quality of their own work. As a result, children are developing greater ownership of their learning and a clearer understanding of their progress.

- Teachers are meeting national expectations in line with the 1+2 Languages policy. Children learn French progressively from P1 to P7. Children in P5 to P7 also experience a range of additional modern languages including Scots and Japanese.

- Senior leaders have developed a clear and useful assessment policy and annual calendar. The policy provides teachers with a shared understanding of the principles and purposes of assessment. The calendar outlines key assessment activities and timescales for completion throughout each term. As a result, teachers are planning more effectively for assessment that supports them to evaluate and inform children's progress at appropriate points throughout the year.

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- Teachers are developing a shared understanding of national standards through planned moderation activity within and outwith the school. Moderation in literacy and numeracy with cluster and secondary colleagues is strengthening teachers' confidence and professional judgement. They should also develop a shared understanding of learners' progress within Curriculum for Excellence levels, rather than focusing solely on achievement of a level. This will support greater consistency in expectations, increase appropriate challenge across the curriculum and help all children make the best possible progress in their learning.

- All teachers plan, both long and short term, using a range of frameworks effectively to provide progression in learning through all areas of the curriculum. As a result, children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff working with children at similar stages plan together in trios. This approach is developing confidence in, and consistency of planning experiences across the classes.

- Staff use a recently revised whole-school tracking system increasingly effectively to record children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This includes evaluating and recording the impact of specific supports and interventions. Senior leaders meet with teachers each term to discuss children's attainment. In addition, staff use these discussions well to identify trends in attainment, or children who require additional support in their learning. Increasingly, this includes children who would benefit from additional challenge. Senior leaders and teachers should now, as planned, build on current processes to develop approaches to tracking children's attainment across all areas of the curriculum. This will support a more holistic overview of children's progress and achievement across the curriculum.

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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	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

- The overall quality of attainment is good. At early level, most children achieve expected levels in numeracy and almost all achieve expected levels in literacy. At first level almost all children achieve expected levels in literacy and numeracy. At second level most children achieve expected levels in literacy and numeracy. Across the school, there are a few children who are exceeding expectations in reading, writing and numeracy.

- At all other stages, attainment across literacy and numeracy declines as children progress through the school, although this decline recovers for the key stages of P4 and P7. Senior leaders should ensure that staff are supported to have a clear understanding of progress within levels.

- Almost all children who require additional support are making good progress relative to individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, most children make good progress in literacy and English. A few children make very good progress in reading.

- Across the school, almost all children talk confidently to their peers, adults and visitors. They answer confidently in class and groups situations, building on responses. As children progress, they should be challenged to engage in listening and talking activities that require them to evaluate and justify their ideas. Senior leaders should support staff to identify children who could be exceeding within listening and talking. Children across the school speak confidently about reading for enjoyment and describe the impact of their recent national award on their range of books and authors they now enjoy. This is supporting improved attainment in reading. As children progress, they should be supported and challenged to use evaluative and inferential questions to analyse texts in greater depth. In writing a majority of children are less confident in writing for a variety of purposes. Senior leaders have correctly identified a need for a focus on writing across genres and this is forming part of the school improvement plan this session.

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Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children make very good progress in numeracy.

- Children across the school benefit from regular opportunities to review and revisit topics in numeracy and mathematics. This helps them to consolidate and deepen their understanding of key processes. At early level, children use a range of concrete resources confidently to support their numeracy understanding. At first and second levels, most children are confident in using a variety of appropriate number operation strategies to solve problems with increasing accuracy. Children should be given more opportunities to solve number problems based in real-world contexts. Across the school, children should continue to develop their understanding and accurate use of mathematical vocabulary.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders and staff gather and analyse attainment information about literacy and numeracy over time to track children's progress. They do not yet gather information on other curricular areas. Senior leaders and teachers identify gaps in children's learning and progress and provide targeted interventions and support. For example, specific literacy interventions have led to an increase in attainment in reading for identified children. Senior leaders have identified that a similar approach could be used to increase attainment in numeracy. While attainment is strong at key stages, including P1, P4 and P7, senior leaders should ensure that high levels of attainment are sustained consistently across all stages. This will help ensure that all children make appropriate progress over time and achieve their full potential throughout their learning journey.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children across the school participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They feel their voice is heard and acted on as they suggest clubs across the school. Senior leaders and staff track children's participation in achievement activities carefully to ensure that no child misses out on opportunities. Senior leaders work closely with partners to offer opportunities which can then be extended out in the local community. As a result, almost all children in P4 to P7 attend at least one wider achievement opportunity.

- Around a quarter of children from P1 to P7 currently participate in leadership groups. They take on roles such as reading champions, healthiest school and pupil council. Consequently, children develop a positive understanding of how to be responsible citizens and effective contributors. Senior leaders should continue to monitor participation carefully over time to ensure that a wider range of children have opportunities to take on leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to the life and work of the school. This would help them to develop further their citizenship skills and effectively contribute to the whole school. Older children develop their leadership skills further by organising and leading clubs for younger children. Children are encouraged to reflect on the skills they develop including communication, teamwork and problem-solving. As a next step, staff should track explicitly the skills children develop and help them build on these progressively as they move through the school.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) well to provide additional staff to deliver useful interventions for individuals and groups of children. This helps to enhance children's learning in literacy. As result, identified gaps in children's attainment in literacy are

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closing.There is clear evidence children, including those impacted by poverty, are making positive progress in their learning of literacy. Staff should now ensure they evaluate fully the impact of all other funded interventions on the poverty-related attainment gap. This will support them to demonstrate more effectively how well additional supports and interventions are reducing the poverty-related attainment gap and accelerating progress.

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Other relevant evidence

Attendance

- Overall attendance for 2025-26 was 94%. This is in line with the national average and has been consistent over a three-year period.

- The rate of persistent attendance in 2024-2025 (attendance below 90%) was 14%. This has been consistent over recent years. The headteacher monitors attendance and late coming closely. She acts promptly when children's attendance dips, working closely with parents to understand the reasons for these dips. Staff use their strong knowledge of the families to discuss sensitively any issues. A few children have very low attendance and senior leaders work in close partnership with families and other agencies to provide tailored support. This is having a positive impact on improving attendance for a few children.

- There are no children on a part-time timetable.

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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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