

22 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In August 2025, HM Inspectors published a letter on Rothesay Joint Campus and Pre-Five Unit. 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.

Senior leaders and all staff should work more closely together to effect positive improvement and change. Children and young people should have a greater influence over improvements being made to the school and nursery.

There has been strong progress in this area for improvement across the school and pre-five unit. The appointment of the headteacher in August 2025 has provided much needed stability to leadership across the campus. The headteacher inspires staff to work together and drive positive improvement and change. Staff are highly motivated and share high aspirations to effect positive improvement and change across the school and nursery.

Pre-five unit

Staff, children, and parents now play a stronger role in leading and shaping improvements in the pre-five unit. Two experienced early learning leaders have joined the team on a temporary basis and work closely with campus leaders and staff to strengthen leadership at all levels. Staff support and challenge each other well to reflect and improve their work. Staff are very enthusiastic and more confident. They are proud of the changes they have made which have resulted in them meeting children's needs better.

Senior leaders have developed and use clear quality assurance systems, including observations, environment audits, and reviews of children's engagement in learning. This is helping to improve practice in the pre-five unit. Staff use discussion and observation well to test new approaches, and children join leadership groups and influence decisions. As planned, senior leaders should support staff to measure the impact of improvements and change on children's progress in learning.

School and learning centre

Staff, children, young people, and parents now share higher aspirations and expectations for children and young people's success. Senior leaders consulted widely to identify the values which were important to the school community. Together, they created a shared vision of a safe, caring, and welcoming school where every child can thrive. They promote inspiring, creative, and connected learning that prepares learners for life.

Senior leaders use consultation feedback well to establish clear values across the school. Staff use this shared language regularly in daily practice when supporting children and young people. Children and young people understand and demonstrate the values effectively. This is leading to a calm and supportive learning environment.

The headteacher works very well with senior leaders to define clear remits for all leaders. Senior and middle leaders share an ethos of shared responsibility and collaboration. Almost all middle leaders have engaged in local authority leadership training and feel more confident in their roles. All leaders use regular leadership meetings to help drive and maintain a strong pace of improvement.

Senior leaders responded to inspection findings by creating a clear improvement plan with specific key priorities for improvement. Teachers work together successfully in groups to address the key priorities. Staff feel more involved and take greater ownership of change.

Senior leaders have developed and use more rigorous and structured quality assurance processes to help them to monitor and improve the work of the school. They observe teaching regularly and give helpful feedback to staff. Staff understand their strengths and areas for development. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to develop consistently high-quality learning and teaching.

Children and young people's role in leadership has increased significantly. They have increased opportunities to lead improvement and change and are proud of this work. As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for all learners to contribute meaningfully to school improvement and self-evaluation.

Staff should work together to continue to improve the consistency of learning and teaching across the campus. This includes improving the feedback provided to children and young people on their learning. This will help children and young people to understand clearly their next steps in learning.

There has been sufficient progress made in this area for improvement in the pre-five unit. There has been some progress made in this area for improvement in the school. All staff need to continue to improve feedback to support children and young people to understand clearly their next steps in learning.

Pre-five unit

Staff work well together with children and parents to improve spaces to meet children's needs. Senior leaders and staff use children's views, observations and parent information to help them design effective learning spaces. Children feel motivated and engaged in the calm and supportive environment.

Senior leaders give more regular and accurate feedback to staff based on improved observations of learning and teaching. Staff use this feedback successfully to improve interactions, planning and organisation of spaces. This is helping staff to develop shared and more consistent approaches to learning and teaching. Staff need more chances to share observations and challenge each other. This should help staff to continue to improve their practice.

Children feel proud of their achievements. Staff record progress well using postcards, displays and discussions. Children understand their strengths and talk about their learning confidently. Staff should continue helping children recognise and celebrate their achievements.

School and learning centre

Senior leaders refreshed recently the learning and teaching policy. They support staff well to engage fully in professional learning linked to improvement priorities. Teachers value opportunities to work together, share practice, and reflect on learning and teaching. They say this collaboration is beginning to help them to improve their teaching across primary and secondary stages. Senior leaders need to continue to monitor the impact of these improvements to ensure improvement and change are embedded.

In most classrooms, children and young people benefit from a positive learning environment with respectful relationships between staff and learners. Almost all teachers structure lessons clearly and share the purpose of learning and steps for success with children and young people. Most pupils are motivated and participate well in simple tasks, discussions, and group work. However, a majority of children and young people require improved pace, support and challenge.

A few teachers involve children and young people in creating steps for success. This is helping children and young people to be more motivated and have ownership of their learning. All teachers need to develop this practice more widely across the school. Most teachers use plenary activities increasingly to check children and young people's knowledge and understanding. This is not yet consistent or effective enough. All teachers need to develop plenary sessions further to help children and young people understand progress and next steps.

Most teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to children and young people. However, the quality of written feedback is variable. All teachers need to develop clear, structured feedback across all curriculum areas which supports all children and young people to improve their knowledge and understanding. A few teachers ask questions effectively which require children to use their thinking skills and explain their thinking. All teachers should continue to develop

high-quality questioning to support effective learning and teaching.

Most teachers use digital technology well to support learning across the school. Primary staff should increase the use of digital tools to support more creative learning experiences.

In the learning centre, staff have engaged in professional learning and collaboration with mainstream colleagues to improve learning and teaching. They adapt programmes to meet individual needs and support engagement. Senior leaders should continue to strengthen partnerships with colleagues in similar settings to enhance support for children and young people further.

Staff should review and improve their approaches to providing support to children and young people to improve their sense of wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They should ensure they develop their approaches to evaluating and measuring the impact of support on children and young people.

There has been sufficient progress in this area for improvement across the school.

Children, young people, and staff share a clear understanding of the school vision to belong, learn, and thrive. This supports positive relationships and wellbeing. Children and young people speak positively about how staff promote values such as kindness, respect, resilience, creativity, and ownership. Children and young people understand their responsibilities fully and demonstrate the values well in daily interactions.

Across the school, children and young people understand the language of wellbeing. Primary teachers use the language of wellbeing consistently effectively to identify and meet children's needs. Secondary staff are developing well their use of wellbeing indicators to support young people. This is beginning to help all staff to create a shared approach to children and young people's wellbeing. Teachers from P3 to S6 in the school and S1 to S6 in the learning centre use helpful surveys effectively to help children and young people reflect on their wellbeing. Senior leaders use data gathered effectively to plan targeted support for those who require help with their wellbeing. In the learning centre, teachers track children and young people's wellbeing successfully against individual targets. However, they must ensure targets for children and young people's wellbeing are more specific.

Children and young people say they feel safer, more included, and more connected to the school. They understand increasingly how wellbeing supports their success. Staff deliver effective targeted support for children and young people's wellbeing, such as learning in 'The Bothy,' 'The Hub,' and 'The Anchor.' This is helping to improve children and young people's wellbeing, attendance, and engagement. Increasingly, children, young people, and parents are involved in planning individual support for children and young people. Staff collaborate very well with partners to deliver effective support.

Guidance staff now deliver personal and social education (PSE) in the secondary. This is helping them to build stronger relationships with young people. They need to develop the PSE courses further to reflect equality, diversity, and young people's views more effectively.

A few children and young people are learning to challenge discrimination. However, more learning is needed about equality and diversity across the school. Senior leaders need to work with staff to develop whole-school approaches to supporting children and young people to learn about equality and diversity.

Learning centre staff support successful transitions into mainstream classes. They collaborate well with mainstream teachers to help them to improve their understanding of individual needs. Teachers provide children and young people in the learning centre access to subject specialist teachers. This is helping them to broaden the curriculum for children and young people who attend the learning centre and strengthen children and young people's communication and social skills.

Senior leaders should support staff to raise the attainment of children and young people. The school community should strive to be more aspirational for all children and young people to ensure they achieve to their full potential.

Across the school there has been insufficient progress made in this area for improvement. All teachers need to work together to develop a clear strategy to raise attainment at all levels. Senior leaders and staff work well together to build a more aspirational culture across the school. Children and young people say staff encourage them to achieve their best.

Teachers are improving their use of data to plan children and young people's learning and identify those who require additional support. All staff now have a greater focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. Staff understand the challenges faced by children and young people, including financial hardship. They provide sensitive support and targeted interventions to address gaps in learning. Teachers now track progress more consistently. Staff are beginning to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.

At the primary stages, teachers meet leaders regularly to track progress in literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing. They identify gaps and provide targeted support. They now need to track progress across all curriculum areas. Teachers recognise previous attainment data in the primary was not reliable. Teachers now take part in a wide range of moderation activities to improve their professional judgements about children's progress and attainment. Teachers need to continue to raise attainment for all children at the primary stages in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy.

In S1 to S3, teachers have improved tracking across all curriculum areas. Teachers collaborate more and engage in moderation, improving confidence and accuracy in professional judgements. There is now a clear assessment calendar in place which helps teachers to ensure a more consistent approach to assessing young people's progress. Teachers use information gathered about young people's progress well to identify gaps in learning and provide interventions to improve outcomes. Literacy attainment remains below local and national levels, while numeracy shows signs of improvement. Teachers need to continue to raise attainment for all young people in S1 to S3.

In the senior phase, teachers should continue to work more closely with children, young people, parents and partners to ensure they provide appropriate courses and maximise qualifications.

More work is needed to increase higher-level passes. Staff should continue to review the senior phase curriculum pathways. They need to continue to broaden their curriculum offer to meet the needs of and maximise opportunities for all young people and raise attainment.

In the learning centre, staff track progress against national milestones and Benchmarks for children and young people in the BGE. Young people in the senior phase achieve better outcomes through wider course options. Staff should continue to improve tracking, moderation, and partnerships to raise attainment further.

What happens next?

The school has made positive progress since the original inspection. We will ask for a report on progress for the area for improvement related to raising attainment within 12 months of the inspection. This report will inform any decision made by HM Inspectors regarding further engagement. This may include another inspection visit. When such a decision is made, we will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action, agreed with Argyll and Bute Council that we intend to take.

Katharine Crombie
HM Inspector

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