

Standards and Quality Report

2021/22



Merkinch Primary School

HIGHLAND COUNCIL | CARSE ROAD MERKINCH INVERNESS

This report is provided to families and partners to identify our achievements this session. The next steps in our improvement journey are also outlined.

Throughout the year we continuously evaluate what we do and how it makes a difference to our learners. We want to know what is working well for our school community and what needs further improvement.

Our children and young people are actively consulted and involved in this process. We also give staff, parents/carers, and other partners the opportunity to participate in discussions and activities to shape our improvement journey.

When we develop our improvement projects, we use key questions at planned review times throughout the session to know how well we are progressing towards achieving these positive outcomes and changes.

Our School/Cluster/ASG (Delete as required)

Merkinch Primary School caters for children who live in the Merkinch and South Kessock catchment area and is the biggest feeder school for children who will attend Inverness High School. We cater for children from 3 years to 12 years old. In session 21-22 we had 96 enrolled in our ELC (Early Learning and Childcare) (Early Learning and Childcare) and 252 in our school.

Our purpose-built building opened in October 2020, it has 3 ELC rooms, 15 classrooms and a number of ASN (Additional Support Needs) spaces to meet the needs of all our learners.

We have benefitted from Schools Challenge (SAC) funding over the past 5 years, this has included SAC funding and more recently PEF (Pupil Equity Funding). In session 21-22 we also received additional recovery teacher time which had a focus on Numeracy.

Staffing at Merkinch includes 11 Early Years Practitioners, 1 Senior Early Years Practitioner, 11 FTE teachers, which includes 3 Principal Teachers, a Depute Head, and a Head Teacher. In session 21-22 we had a high number of staff on maternity leave which meant we have worked with a number of temporary staff who brought a wealth of experiences from their previous posts

Around 70% of children who attend Merkinch Primary School are identified as having additional support needs, consequently we have 3.6FTE ASN teachers, which includes a Principal Teacher and 17 Pupil Support Assistants

Attendance remains an area that we are working with families to improve and using our PEF Funding we have employed a Positive Relationships Co-ordinator to remove barriers to school attendance. We have a very low exclusion rate.

Our School Vision, Values and Aims

Our School Vision, Values and Aims

Our Vision - At Merkinch we promote an above and beyond attitude and inspire each other to do our best. We offer a warmth of welcome and create a culture of kindness. We are #MarvellousMerkinchers.

School Values

- **At Merkinch we have 3 rights**

The right to learn, the right to be safe and the right to respect.

School Aims

- **We aim to work effectively with all our school partners to ensure that we are a nurturing school which is focussed on achievement for all and where everyone is welcome.**
- **We aim to ensure that all our children fulfil their potential and continue to progress as learners.**
- **We aim to motivate and develop pupils who are successful learners, responsible citizens, confident individuals, and effective contributors**
- **Our staff aim to work collaboratively, share good practice and to remain focussed on improvement.**

Pupil Voice: what is working well in our school?

Our children and young people identified the following strengths for our school this session:

Our children and young people identified the following strengths for our school session.

Our Relationships Peoples' opinions are being listened to. Being respectful.

Walking on the left. Putting your hand up to talk. Social snack. Really kind teachers and PSAs all around the school and in the playground. The children are nice. Adults help children to say sorry to each other. When you are arguing the teachers will stop you, they tell you to walk away and think about it or you can walk away and the next day make friends. They help us interact with other people. They separate us for a wee while then tell us to come back together to say sorry for earlier. Playing football with teachers sometimes at break and lunch, it stops us bickering. The teachers let you know (if your efforts are recognised), they tell you you have been working hard. They look at your page and say you have done a good job! They come and give us a raffle ticket. They write your name on the recognition board if you do a really good job! They give you m and ms!

Our Learning and Teaching The teachers are teaching children how to learn. It gives you a good education, they help you to learn about money, time, plants and even tally marks! We learn new stuff every day, helping the teacher. Classes work well. Outdoor learning - enjoying growing plants. A teacher is doing planting with P4 to 7. The garden (class gardens) and looking after it. Gardening, a PSA planted sunflowers with us. Planting stuff inside. Learning about butterflies. Technology. I like learning times tables. Learning handwriting. Learning new sounds. The Pupil School Improvement Plan. Sometimes, we get to pick our topics. In topic we get to choose. Decision making. Most of the time adults listen. My teacher listens to my views. A teacher lets us choose everything that we want to improve the school. A teacher asks us what we need to improve the school. We (the pupil council) ask the children and tell that teacher. Our Head Teacher listens. Everybody in this school is different, nobody is perfect. We are all different, but we all are accepted, valued, and loved. Different needs, different ways (learners are able to learn in different ways). Feedback is when your teacher gives you feedback on what to work on and what you do not need

to work on. Feedback does not have to be from your teacher it could be from anyone. It is helpful because you know what to fix and not to fix.

Our School and Community The new school. I like having a tray. Big lunch hall.

Huge gym hall. Music room and Dance studio. Outdoor area. Playground. Outdoor garden. Basketball area and pitches. All outside stuff like tyres. Equipment for break. Playground toys because everybody helps tidy them up, some days this makes our playground happier. Going to landmark, I feel happy and excited!

School trips, so we get to go different places with the school, it is fun!

Our 3 rights. We respect the school. Respecting teachers. The pupil council.

Our Health and Wellbeing Getting to play outside with your friends every day twice! Swimming, we go in P4, P5 and P6! Lunch is free for P5! PE, we get to play tig, rounders it is just fun! Playing football. Climbing trees! We get time to play! Teachers help us stay safe. When we get hurt adults help us. There are fences around the school and fob doors no one random can get into the school and no one can run away. A teacher takes us outside, we do challenges. We run around outside at snack and lunch time to help us be healthy. We have sports day, PE, and outdoor learning. Teachers do health and wellbeing indicators with us safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, responsible, respected and included. Yes, they are in the right place (Wellbeing indicator displays) where everyone can see from anywhere in the room, they have nice designs! We look after the books in our library. Keeping our school resources safe and being responsible with them. Assembly expectations of the Landmark trip and being responsible. We look after our plants outside. We are all going to be included in the Landmark trip. The teachers make groups and different games for us all to play. The kids are all included, if someone is alone we go up to them and say, "Do you want to play?" In PE we make sure all the groups are equal, so no one is left out on the bench. Sharing the toys in the playground. Golden Time, all the different stations, every student will let you join in. Sometimes we wait for turns. There are different after school clubs and you get to play little games. Marvellous Merkincher, Hot Chocolate Friday and M and Ms are all things you can achieve. Drawing contests. When we are doing races all the kids sitting down are cheering for us saying, "You can do it!"

Our Successes and Achievements We bake in class, we go upstairs! Clubs, we get to do arts and crafts, baking, basketball, music, singing and dance studio. Assembly. I like the positive messages in assembly! I like getting m and ms! Hot chocolate Friday!

Pupil Voice: what changes would you like to see made?

Our children and young people identified the following changes they would like to see and the difference these changes could make.

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Our Learning and Teaching Doing mixed classes. More learning about countries.

An Arabic teacher to teach Arabic. More teacher role plays like at the end of maths lessons, each day you choose someone to be the teacher and they get to say (lead the learning). Maybe we could take books outside. We need more chrome books. We need more drawing materials.

The Pupil Council analysed the data from surveys where P4,5 and 6 gave their views of their experiences of pupil voice at Merkinch Primary. From this data, the Pupil Council chose 3

target areas of pupil voice to work towards improving as a whole school, here is their Pupil School Improvement Plan...



Our School and Community Swings, monkey bars, slides, mats outside for rolling, bowls, trampoline (there is one in the gym hall cupboard). Pillows for comfort on chairs/ benches. More playground equipment. School footballs. Some more soft balls for the gym hall. A wee farm with animals we could feed them!

Better and new PE equipment (we do have lots and lots of new PE equipment).

Grab and go lunches. Bigger lunch portions. Diluting juice. Fresh juice. New toppings on pizzas. Half day on Fridays. Bring back the computer room. Computer room. Bring back school houses. A classroom for fidget toys.

A classroom for anxiety.

Our Health and Wellbeing More playtime. Longer outdoor playing.

Less school so teachers get a break. Longer staff lunches and breaks.

Our Successes and Achievements More teachers to do other clubs.

Celebrate with movies on the last day of term. Assembly could be quicker.

Our Improvement Journey Headlines Session 2021/22

These projects are linked to the vision and priorities for Scottish Education based on delivering excellence and equity. Parent/Carer information is available [here](#).

Improvement Project 1:

Primary focus: School and ELC improvement

Year of Project: 3

Purpose: to create a consistent approach to positive relationships and the Merkinch Way

Progress and impact:

Progress

- *School and ELC improvement was linked to Highland Council Health and Wellbeing priority for all.
- *Our school age children are aware of our 3 rights: Safe, Respect & Learn and link these to positive behaviour choices.
- *Merkinch Way Staff training: August, September & February in-set input.
- *All staff have received child protection training. ASN teachers and SLT (Senior Leadership Team) have completed enhanced CP training, which is repeated every two years.
- *Head teacher has attended designated child protection coordinator training monthly.
- *We have updated our child protection handbook and regularly review our safeguarding document on a termly basis.
- *Pupils support assistants have all completed the Highland Council PSA Core Training: Neurodiversity Training
- *Pupil support assistants have completed online first aid training.
- *Speech and Language team were involved in scaffolding our restorative conversations approach and in supporting our pupil support assistants with how to engage pupils in this approach.

Evaluation

- As a result of these inputs, we now have a consistent approach in every class. This is categorised by the following:
- * Recognition boards in every class that recognise pupils who are demonstrating our focus weekly target.
 - * Marvellous Merkincher certificates - celebrated at weekly assemblies.
 - * Weekly hot chocolate celebration for the recognition of pupils who have consistently gone above and beyond.
 - * All staff members have restorative conversation prompts on their lanyards.
 - * Visible consistencies throughout the school e.g., walking on the side of our school badge, hands up when listening, first attention to good conduct,
 - * Introduction of 3 school values: Accepted, Valued & Loved – focus input at weekly assemblies.

Engaging young people, parents & staff

- *Pupil engagement: pupil council members elected to represent classes, P7 behaviour stars to monitor good consistency and routine and p7 pupil leaders who fulfil leadership roles e.g. leading weekly assemblies.
- *Increased opportunities for wider achievement through after school clubs have resulted in an increase in pupil engagement in after school clubs.
- *Non-teaching staff use M&M tokens to celebrate the pupils' success of demonstrating the Merkinch Way.
- *Strategies to engage parents: Recognising barriers to parents - we now include video formats of letters and information and make these available online via our school Facebook page.
- *Through our school newsletter we share events and success in the school, including when classes have reached 100 M&Ms (demonstrating the Merkinch Way).
- *Pupil Equity Funded Positive Relationships Coordinator aims to remove barriers to school attendance by providing regular food supplies, support with providing school uniform, early intervention with household supports.

We have made good progress across the year.

Next steps:

For ELC children to have an awareness of our 3 rights: Safe, Respect & Learn.
Linking our school rights to the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) rights.
From this, we have identified a priority of Equality & Diversity for our next S.I.P.
All ASN and Early staff team to receive regular autism training from Education Psychologist.
All pupils support assistants to receive moving & handling training and where appropriate intimate care training.

Improvement Project 2:

Primary focus: Curriculum and assessment

Year of Project: 1

Purpose: Work with numeracy development officer to develop whole staff approach to building staff capacity in teaching numeracy

Progress and impact:

Progress

*Attainment in 2022 has increased at Primary 1 and Primary 4 and maintained its level at Primary 7

2019	2021	2022
P1 31%	P1 8%	P1 22%
P4 13%	P4 0%	P4 46%
P7 47%	P7 49%	P7 47%

*With additional support from SAC PSA this led to attainment improvement in Primary 2 class

*Use of numeracy tracking documents has led to a replication of similar tracking documents to identify attainment gaps across the curriculum

Evaluation

As a result of this input, we now have more focussed discussions around planning and attainment. This has also led to staff having increased confidence in their attainment predictions.

Engaging young people, parents & staff

*Regular collegiate sessions delivered by numeracy development officer – this was targeted at Early, First & Second level staff groupings.

*Numeracy PSA support with a particular focus on Primary 3.

Primary 3 Numeracy data

35 children Assessed August 2021 and February 2022

Add/subtract			Numeral Identification			Numbers forward			Numbers backward			Grouping/ place-value			Basic Facts		
	Au g	Fe b		Au g	Fe b		Au g	Fe b		Au g	Fe b		Au g	Fe b		Au g	Fe b
E*	3%	3%	E*	6%		E*	9%	3%	E*	9%	6%	E*	3%		E*	14%	8%
E*	3%	3%	E*	6%	11%	E*	3%	6%	E**	20%	9%	E**	22%	14%	E**	37%	6%
E**	51%	26%	E**	3%	3%	E**	15%	11%	E**	10%	9%	E**	26%	11%	E**	23%	17%
F*	34%	29%	F*	40%	17%	F*	49%	25%	F*	40%	23%	F*	6%	3%	F*	26%	63%
F**	9%	31%	F**	29%	9%	F**	9%	14%	F**	6%	14%	F**	40%	57%	F**		6%
F**		8%	F**	6%	14%	F**	3%	14%	F**	3%	11%	F**	3%	15%	F**		
S*			S*		3%	S*		7%	S*		6%	S*			S*		
S**			S**	6%	26%	S**	6%	14%	S**	6%	11%	S**			S**		
S**			S**	6%	17%	S**	6%	6%	S**	6%	11%	S**			S**		

*P2 and P2/3 teachers found the approach helpful.

Over the year, we have made good progress in improving numeracy attainment at Primary 1 and Primary 4 and maintaining at Primary 7.

Next steps:

Consistent approach to high quality teaching and assessment as part of the moderation cycle.
 Building up banks of evidence of what achievement at Early, First and Second level look like.
 Continuing to have robust planning and tracking attainment meetings each term.
 Increase parental engagement with a curricular focus.
 Revisit our Curriculum Rationale.

Improvement Project 3:

Primary focus: School and ELC improvement

Year of Project: 2

Purpose: Using the guidance from raising the ambition we will develop and improve our interactions, experiences, and spaces to ensure we are offering a high quality learning environment, which best meets individual children's needs and stages of development.

Progress and impact:

<p>3.P1 CfE Level - Highland dashboard filters at bottom)</p>	<p>2019-20 P1 cohort; Only 21% were on track to achieve Early level for literacy by June 2020</p> <p>2019-20 P2 cohort; 37% predicted to have not yet achieved Early Level literacy by June 2020.</p> <p>We have been tracking developmental overviews to have a clearer picture of the progress being made by our learners, which will in turn lead to more targeted teaching and learning.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>2020-2021 P1 Cohort 40 children</td> <td>Achieved 4 Old DOV</td> <td>Half way through 4yr Old DOV</td> <td>Half way through 3yr Old</td> <td>Half way through 2yr Old</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August 2020</td> <td>2.5%</td> <td>48.8%</td> <td>46.3%</td> <td>2.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2021</td> <td>40%</td> <td>27.5%</td> <td>30%</td> <td>2.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 2022 Predicted</td> <td>73.7%</td> <td>23.7%</td> <td>2.63%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </table>					2020-2021 P1 Cohort 40 children	Achieved 4 Old DOV	Half way through 4yr Old DOV	Half way through 3yr Old	Half way through 2yr Old	August 2020	2.5%	48.8%	46.3%	2.5%	May 2021	40%	27.5%	30%	2.5%	May 2022 Predicted	73.7%	23.7%	2.63%	0%
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P2 35 Children	2.9%	41.7%	97.1%	58.3%
P3 42 Children	21.4%	44.2%	78.6%	55.8%
	Achieved all 12 Phonological Awareness		Not Yet Achieved Phonological Awareness	
	August 2021	April 2022	August 2021	April 2022
P1 26 Children	0%	12%	100%	88%
P2 38 Children	5.26%	16%	94.7%	84%
P3 36 Children	69.4%	72%	27.7%	28%

Progress *

*Early years (P1 & P1/2) teachers completed audits of the class environment using the highland council environment audit: Quality Learning Environments in Early Learning and Childcare. Audits were carried out in August September & November of 2021.

*From audits feedback on "top tips for area" and "please avoid" were added to lanyards and shared with PSAs to help all adults in the early years classrooms share best practice.

*With guidance and follow up from education psychologist, early years class teachers completed Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) environment audit

*ELC staff completed individual and group ASC audits and shared discussion on practice and quality improvement, in line with ASC environment observations by Senior Early Years Practitioner.

*Spaces and experiences were split across the P1 and P1/2 classrooms to allow maximisation of the environment and provide a variety of enriching experiences for all learners.

*Early Years PT carried out leadership observations in P1 and P1/2 classrooms which focussed on the environment. Constructive feedback was shared on where the children were engaging most and there was continued critical evaluation of the learning experience in these settings.

*P1 and P1/2 teachers reflected on Realising the Ambition 6.4 Literacy, Numeracy and Mathematical thinking – specifically under the headings "when I am a young child". Teachers traffic lighted to show current progress and If green providing notes of evidence as to why.

*P1 and P1/2 teachers attended "Play is the Way" CPD training led by Dierdre Grogan (University of Strathclyde).

*P1 and P1/2 teachers attended all "Play Networks" and "Emerging Literacy" training sessions offered by Highland Council. (Sessions alternated once a month from August 2021).

*All staff (class teachers and PSAs) attended Highland Words Up training (6 x 45min sessions).

*Sharon Smith (Speech & Language Team) observed class practice in P1/2 on 4 occasions, as well as observing practice in the nurture room environment. Fiona Henderson (Speech & Language Team) observed P1 on 4 occasions (Observations took place in Feb, March, April & May of 2022).

Speech and Language Team (*SLT) observed practice, focusing on words up strategies with a particular focus which linked to the previous training session e.g. pause and wait, tiered vocab. *SLT observed all staff in the room and shared feedback verbally or by email to class teachers, who in turn shared this with all the adults working in the rooms.

Evaluation

As a result of these inputs we now have increased consistency in the spaces, interactions, and experiences within the early years.

*Staff were supported to recognise a realistic vision of what could and could not be offered and how this linked clearly to developmental progression.

*Learners have made significant progress in terms of 3- and 4-year-old developmental overviews.

*Play is consistent because staff have built up to be a continuous provision – children are aware of the resources and where to find the things that they need, knowing they can use this for their own creative play. E.g., taking buttons and marbles to the home corner to be pretend food.

*Initially lanyards were used and this positively impacted adult – learner interactions in spaces.

*Class teachers are now confident in how to use all the areas and how to interact with learners when in these areas.

*ASC audit increased awareness of how to interact with children and the importance of quiet, cosy spaces to support the learning.

*Ed Psych provided cards about how to engage verbally with individual learners – these have been very effective.

*Observations allowed changes to be made e.g., in September - free flow between the two classrooms and outdoor spaces.

*Observations also resulted in changes to daily routines e.g., a calmer end to the day. Heightened behaviour in the afternoon was becoming a barrier to learning through play. Quiet board games have been used to counteract and remove this barrier - and children have also now developed skills in turn taking and resilience in terms of winning and losing.

*As a result of reflecting on Realising the Ambition, literacy, numeracy, and maths are now more visible through play in P1 and P1/2.

*Learners now recognise these core areas of the curriculum within play and seek out that learning independently.

*Specific training opportunities have increased confidence in professional practice.

*Training opportunities with other professionals allowed for professional dialogue relating to specific learners and created safe spaces for staff to ask questions and gain insight and support.

*Training opportunities created an awareness of what is going on in other school settings and opportunities for class teachers, to network with other practitioners.

*Speech & Language Team observations and training provided a holistic basis of professional development for all staff. This has grounded all other practice and improved practitioner confidence for both teachers and PSAs.

Engaging young people, parents & staff

*Increased pupil voice: In setting up role play – learners now decide what the role play will be, help adults to make the lists of what is needed, create all the props required and set up the space. Class teachers no longer set up any of these themed spaces without their learners input or without their learners present.

*Pupils are vocal about what they would like to make in the tuff tray each morning.

*There are specific areas with no adult direction - where pupils lead all the learning in that space, supported by responsive adults who help to extend and enrich the learning through interactions.

*Classes have engaged with parents through google classroom – sharing photos and information

*Through the school Facebook page class teachers have shared video letters e.g., transition to P1

*Parents have been invited back into the school setting to attend the Above & Beyond assemblies to celebrate the learning in term 4.

*Senior Leadership Team led guided tours round the new school building – there was notable interest and uptake from parents of children in the early years in particular.

**Early Years PT hosted parent information session during school day – definite increase in engagement compared to online session the year before (due to covid)*

**Nurture PSAs have also been involved in all the Speech & Language training – this has supported all the adults in promoting the same consistent message.*

Over the year, we have made good progress.

Next steps:

- More consistent use of lanyards by adults in the room – particularly PSAs
- Profiling and recording of the learning and sharing this with parents
- Engage with parents more through google classroom or explore other alternatives e.g., private Facebook page
- Inviting parents into the setting more and sharing learning e.g., through floor books etc
- Sharing what is happening in the early years more widely across the staff during collegiate sessions and encouraging collegiate visits and/or staff peer observations
- Organising “stay & play” sessions for older classes to visit the years setting (as developmentally appropriate to older pupils or in a supportive role towards the younger learners)
- Class Teachers to lead learning in block play and equip other adults in the setting to support learners in the development of numeracy through using this resource.
- Organising “stay & play” sessions for parents to join their children in play and learn how to better support them in learning through play at home.

Evaluation of Progress

We believe we have made the following progress this session:

Quality Indicator	School self-evaluation
1.3 Leadership of Change	Satisfactory
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality, and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory

Our children and young people believe we have made the following progress this session:

Theme 1 Our relationships	Good
Theme 2 Our learning and teaching	Excellent

Theme 3 Excellent
Our school and community

Theme 4 Excellent
Our health and wellbeing

Theme 5 Good
Our successes and achievements

Our overall evaluation of our school' capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

The need for consistent staffing is paramount at Merkinch Primary to ensure we can continue on our improvement path.

Planning Ahead

Full details of the school's 2022/23 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed by contacting the school office.