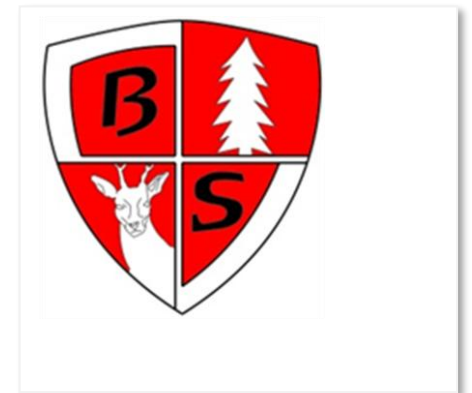




STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2025-26

AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD

BALNAIN PRIMARY SCHOOL



In this report the following words are used to describe the numbers and proportions used:

All	Almost all	Most	Majority	Less than half	Few
100%	Over 91%	75% - 90%	50% - 74%	15% - 49%	Up to 15%

School Profile

Pròifil na Sgoile

The following information can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](#). It is important to remember that statistical data alone is not a measure of how well we are doing. All schools are unique. To understand how well we are doing it is important for us to look at a range of different data sources.

Attendance
94.9%

Average Class Size
10.5

Meeting PE Target
Target Met

Pupil Numbers
22

Teacher Numbers
3

Pupil Teacher Ratio
8:1

Balnain Primary School is a small rural school, situated in the picturesque community of Glen Urquhart.

There are 22 children attending the school ranging from P1 – P7. Pupils are organised into two composite classes: P1-3 and P4-7.

The headteacher, Mrs Julie MacLeod, has overall leadership responsibility for Balnain Primary School and also has a teaching commitment of 3 days. The headteacher is supported by a Management Time teacher. The school has a full-time class teacher, and a part time PSA and Clerical Assistant also support our school, along with our Additional Support for Learning Teacher.

The main drivers for our curriculum are our community, natural environment, culture and heritage and wider experiences for our pupils. We use these to support our learning across the curriculum. All staff know the children and their families very well and are extremely committed to the school, pupils and their own professional development. Parental and community support in the school is high, and they take an active role in supporting school events and learning. We continue to work closely with our other associated primary schools – Cannich Bridge Primary and Glenurquhart Primary and with Glenurquhart High School.

As the school roll comprises a small number of children, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is to ensure the identity of individuals is not disclosed.

Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. Children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy and, across the school, a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Almost all children who face barriers to learning are making very good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Kindness Respect Teamwork Creativity

Overall children are making the following progress:

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
Very good progress	Very good progress	Very good progress	Very good progress

Our attendance data is high, and we have had no exclusions this year.

School vision, values and aims

Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

Our Vision:

To provide motivating learning experiences to develop our pupils' skills and talents which will prepare them for learning, life and work in the future. We will do this within a supportive, challenging and safe environment where everyone is valued and respected. At Balnain Primary School, we work together in a caring community to bring out the best in each other and support all our learners to achieve their best in life.

We aim to do this by:

- Providing a safe, welcoming, caring and happy environment where all children are valued as individuals and have their rights respected.
- Ensuring that our pupils are listened to and are actively involved in their learning.
- Developing positive relationships based on respect for each other with a focus on inclusion and equality.
- Providing an engaging and challenging curriculum with opportunities to develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the full, encouraging achievement and celebrating success.
- Working with community partners to offer exciting, engaging and relevant learning experiences.
- Preparing pupils for their lifelong journey of learning and help them develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in the future.
- Developing an awareness of the world of work.
- Providing a sense of local community, culture and heritage.
- Connecting our learners to the wider world, beyond our local community, to learn about global issues and encouraging them to be respectful of diversity in the world.
- Encouraging an active, healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, showing care and respect for the natural environment.
- Evaluating and reflecting on our work regularly and identifying areas for improvement.

Our school values are:

Kindness Respect Creativity Teamwork



Kindness Respect Teamwork Creativity

Review of progress for session

Ath-sgrùdadh air adhartas airson an t-seisein

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

School Priority 1: Our Curriculum – Learning, Teaching & Assessment of Writing		
School Improvement Plan Priority 1		
Summary of progress	Next steps	Stakeholder Views
Over the session, we have made good progress in raising attainment in writing, with evidence of improved consistency, confidence and quality across the school. A coherent whole-school approach to the teaching of writing has been successfully developed and is beginning to be embedded. Progression frameworks for handwriting, spelling and grammar are now implemented across both classes, providing a clear structure which supports continuity and progression in learning. Staff confidence has strengthened significantly. There is now a shared understanding of the progression of writing skills, and staff demonstrate increased confidence in both teaching a range of text types and assessing writing effectively. Staff track and monitor samples of writing termly and use writing rubrics to assess the achievement of a level. This has contributed to more consistent, high-quality learning and teaching experiences across the school. In the early years (P1–P3), we have enhanced pupils' experiences through increased opportunities for writing through play, including the introduction of Drawing Club, which has supported creativity, engagement and early writing development. As a result, younger learners are demonstrating growing enthusiasm and independence in writing tasks. In the senior class (P4–P7), pupils engaged in a purposeful writing project, creating poetry for a class calendar which was	➤ Continue to embed whole-school approach to writing. ➤ Individual target setting for pupils so that children are aware of next steps. ➤ Include latest and best pieces of writing in profiles to share with families. ➤ Further focus on use of learning intentions and success criteria for writing in both classes. This will be incorporated into SIP for 2026/2027 'Learning, Teaching and Assessment' ➤ Further focus on providing quality feedback for learners, incorporated into SIP 2026/2027 'Learning, Teaching & Assessment'. ➤ Re-establish ASG moderation of writing, share samples of writing to assess and agree levels.	You may decide to use this box instead of the section below / equally you may decide to utilise both sections OR below section only

Kindness Respect Teamwork Creativity

subsequently printed and sold within the local community. This initiative provided a meaningful real-life context for writing, enhancing pupil motivation and engagement. Across the school, there is evidence of improved use of assessment for learning, particularly through the use of learning intentions and success criteria. The majority of children are now able to talk confidently about their learning and identify next steps, demonstrating increased ownership of their progress. Pupils can use success criteria to self and peer assess their work. All staff make effective use of tracking and monitoring systems to assess progress in writing. This has supported more targeted interventions and contributed to improved attainment data. The use of Steven Graham approaches has further strengthened the teaching of writing by supporting structured exploration of different text types. Learners are now more confident in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, with increased independence evident in their work. Overall, these developments have resulted in improved attainment, increased learner confidence, and greater consistency in teaching and assessment of writing across the school.		
Impact		
These developments are having a positive impact on learners' experiences and outcomes. Learners are demonstrating improved writing quality across a range of genres, contributing to improved attainment data in writing. Staff's increased confidence and shared understanding have resulted in more consistent teaching of writing, which is evident across both classes. In P1–P3, learners show greater engagement, creativity and independence in writing, with play-based approaches, including Drawing Club, supporting early writing skills effectively. For pupils in P4-7, the opportunity to have their writing published fostered a strong sense of achievement, pride and ownership. Feedback from pupils highlighted that the authentic audience significantly increased their enthusiasm and motivation for the task.		

This project has positively contributed to raising the profile of writing across the school, supporting the development of higher-quality written outcomes and reinforcing the value of writing as a tool for communication beyond the classroom. Across the school, there is more evidence of effective assessment for learning. The majority of children can talk confidently about their learning and identify their next steps, demonstrating increased ownership. Pupils are increasingly able to use success criteria to support self- and peer-assessment, leading to improved understanding of what success looks like. Learners are now more confident in writing for a range of purposes and audiences, showing increased independence. This reflects a positive and supportive writing culture where achievement is recognised and valued. Overall, these improvements have led to raised attainment, enhanced learner confidence, and greater consistency in teaching, learning and assessment of writing across the school.	
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School Priority 2: Eco School		
School Improvement Plan Priority 2		
Summary of progress	Next steps	Stakeholder Views
The school has made very good progress in achieving the Eco Schools Award. Key structures are now in place, including an active eco committee, initial environmental review activities, and the development of an action plan focused on identified priorities. There is evidence of increased whole-school engagement in eco initiatives, including recycling, litter reduction and outdoor learning projects. Progress has been made in raising awareness of sustainability across the school community. Learners are developing an increased understanding of environmental issues such as recycling, biodiversity and reducing waste. This is supported through class learning, whole-school initiatives and participation in eco-focused activities. The pupil eco committee has played a key role in leading initiatives and raising awareness. There is growing pupil leadership, with	➤ Continue to support staff to deepen and extend outdoor learning experiences, ensuring progression across stages. ➤ Embed sustainability more consistently across curricular areas. ➤ Strengthen pupil voice and leadership in eco initiatives by exploring other awards. ➤ Develop monitoring approaches to evaluate the impact of outdoor learning on attainment, achievement and wellbeing.	

learners taking responsibility for promoting sustainable practices within the school and local community. There has been a clear increase in the frequency and quality of outdoor learning experiences. Learners are engaging regularly with the school grounds and local environment, leading to improved engagement, motivation and wellbeing. Evidence from observations and learner voice indicates that pupils value these opportunities and can articulate how outdoor learning supports their understanding and enjoyment of learning. Professional dialogue and collegiate working have supported staff to share ideas and develop a broader range of outdoor learning approaches. As a result, there is increased consistency in provision across the school, although further work is required to ensure depth and progression in experiences at all stages.		
Impact		
The environmental review highlighted that we already do many eco activities across the life and ethos of the school. There is clear evidence of increased whole-school engagement in eco initiatives. Staff and learners are demonstrating a stronger commitment to practices such as recycling, litter reduction, reducing food waste and outdoor learning. As a result, sustainability is becoming more embedded in the life and ethos of the school. The eco committee has had a significant positive impact on pupil leadership, providing meaningful opportunities for learners to take responsibility, lead initiatives and influence change within the school community. This has contributed to growing confidence, leadership skills and a sense of ownership among pupils. Learners are developing a more informed understanding of environmental issues, including biodiversity, waste reduction and responsible resource use. Pupil voice indicates that children are increasingly able to articulate their knowledge and understanding of sustainability and its relevance to their daily lives. Overall, these developments are contributing positively to learning, teaching and pupil outcomes, with sustainability and outdoor learning increasingly embedded as growing strengths within the school.		

Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

We have effective systems in place to monitor attainment and to target interventions appropriately. Additional PSA hours funded through the Pupil Equity Fund were allocated to support identified learners in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Literacy Impact

Individual pupils received targeted literacy interventions, including phonics, Hop On reading, and spelling support.

- Pupils demonstrated increased reading ages and spelling ages from August to March.
- SOFA literacy bandings improved between November and May.
- Learners showed greater confidence when engaging with literacy tasks.
- Written work in jotters shows clear improvement in the spelling of common words.

These improvements indicate that targeted support is helping to reduce attainment gaps and enabling pupils to make strong progress in literacy.

Numeracy Impact

Identified pupils also received targeted numeracy support, including Plus 1, Basic Facts, and revision of multiplication and division.

- In national assessments, these pupils achieved an average band, demonstrating that their numeracy skills are now within the expected range for their stage.
- Pupils show increased confidence when completing numeracy tasks and are now able to apply strategies more independently.

Overall, the targeted use of Pupil Equity Funding has had a positive and measurable impact on attainment, confidence, and learner engagement across literacy and numeracy.

Wider achievements

Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

Across the session, pupils benefited from a rich and varied programme of wider achievement opportunities. These experiences supported the development of the four capacities and strengthened pupils' confidence, skills and engagement in learning.

Health and Wellbeing

- All pupils from P1–P7 received **swimming lessons**, developing water confidence and core physical skills.
- P1–4 pupils participated in the **Baillie Cup athletics** event.
- All pupils in P1–5 enjoyed **shinty taster sessions**, introducing them to a traditional Highland sport.
- P4–7 pupils participated in the **Great Glen Cross Country Competition**, with winners recognised for their performance.
- All P4–7 pupils entered the **Winter Olympics Floor Curling Festival**, with eight pupils achieving medals.
- All P4–7 pupils took part in the **INVOC Orienteering League**, developing teamwork, navigation and resilience, with winners awarded for their performance.
- All pupils in P4-7 experienced an **Adventurous Outdoor Activity Day at Fairburn**, building confidence and outdoor learning skills.

Kindness Respect Teamwork Creativity

- P7 pupils trained as **Junior Leaders**, developing leadership skills, supporting play and promoting positive relationships across the school.
- P6-7 pupils entered the **Inter-School Sports** athletics event, with winners recognised for their performance.

Creativity and Expressive Arts

- Pupils in P2-P7 had their artwork on display in the **National Galleries** in Edinburgh, showcasing their creative skills, linking local nature and Gaelic.
- All pupils participated in a **Storyteller Workshop**, enhancing creativity and language skills.
- All pupils took part in **Cooking Club** with our PSA, developing practical life skills and healthy eating awareness.
- P4–7 pupils created a **calendar of original nature poems and artwork**, which was printed and sold within the community.
- P4–7 pupils engaged in a **Cyanotype workshop**, producing high-quality creative designs.
- The school invested in Cyanotype resources, enabling pupils to create items for sale at the **Christmas Craft Fair**.
- Both classes received workshops from a **local artist**, enriching their expressive arts experiences.

Community Engagement and Citizenship

- Pupils collaborated with the local **Men's Shed** to create wooden trees for decoration and sale at the school fair.
- Pupils participated in **Cards Club**, engaging with members of the local community and strengthening intergenerational links.
- The Parent Council, pupils and staff worked together to secure **new playground trim-trail equipment**, enhancing outdoor play opportunities.
- All pupils entered a **Menu Competition**, with one pupil winning the Main Course category and attending the Gala Awards Lunch.
- Pupils organised a bake sale, raising **£120 for Comic Relief**.
- The school raised **£250 for MFR Cash for Kids** and **£250 for Save the Children**, demonstrating strong commitment to social responsibility.
- The whole school community came together for a **Burns Afternoon celebration**, with all children represented and families in attendance.
- Pupils have engaged with plans for the **village playpark upgrade**, sharing their thoughts and ideas for improvements.

Sustainability and Global Citizenship

- The school successfully achieved the **Eco Flag**, recognising pupils' commitment to sustainability and environmental learning.
- P1-3 participated in the **Food, Farming and Countryside Living** event, developing their understanding of local farming and food production.

STEM Enrichment

- Both classes participated in interactive science sessions delivered by **Generation Science** and the **Glasgow Science Centre**, enhancing curiosity and engagement in STEM learning.

Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

Beachdan bho luchd-ionnsachaidh, teaghlaichean, luchd-ùidhe is luchd-obrach

I so enjoyed looking at the school blog on your website – Balnain is the place to be for wonderful experiences! What a joy for these young people to be in such a rich environment. Well done to one and all but particularly to the staff for facilitating creative learning.

We are so lucky to have so many school trips! It's great to get out and learn outside the classroom. They're always really interesting too!

Dear pupils and teachers of P4,5,6 and 7,

We have just enjoyed the first month of your wonderful calendar and want to congratulate you all and thank you for such a beautiful series of pictures and poems to look at all year. We hope you enjoyed making as much as we enjoy reading and looking at it. Congratulations again, and thank you all!

Dear pupils and staff,

Thanks so much for sending me a copy of the 2026 calendar. It was a lovely surprise. The calendar is a wonderful collection of art and words and must have been quite absorbing for all of you to produce. I imagine the pupils will long remember this project. Indeed! MacFarlane & Morris would be hugely impressed!

Interesting and informative Open Afternoon. Love hearing about my son's work. He seems to be really enjoying his learning. Proud Dad!

Based on how much my child loves school is testament to the amazing teachers and school Balnain is, thank you!

Always so lovely coming in and seeing everything you do as a school. The profiles are great and we love seeing what you have been doing. Really pleased with the individual support that my child is receiving, it will be so useful to her, thank you.

The children at Balnain are so great to work with! They work so well together, they listen really well, encourage each other and are so focused on their learning. This means we can do so much more with them and really challenge them! Their artwork is of a really high standard! Just an absolute pleasure to work with. Thanks for having me in to work with them.

My child benefitted massively from the nursery transition days. P1 and 'Balnain School' in general became something that was so gently and gradually introduced that it never seemed to be anything he was ever worried about. The card that arrived during the summer holidays was so lovely and made him so excited! The pupil handbook was so helpful too! Thank you!

Capacity for continuous improvement

Comas airson leasachadh leantainneach

Using indicators from 'How Good is our School 4' together with learner, parent, carer, partner and community feedback we believe we have made the following progress this session:

	ELC	PRIMARY
QI 1.3 Leadership of change	Choose an item.	Good
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Choose an item.	Good
QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Choose an item.	Good
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children's progress	Choose an item.	Good
Other QIs reviewed	Add comment	

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Key priorities for improvement planning

Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

*Learning, Teaching and Assessment – We will review and strengthen our whole-school approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure consistently high-quality practice. This will include refining our shared pedagogy, improving the use of assessment to inform next steps, and enhancing moderation processes to secure robust and reliable professional judgements.

*Curriculum Improvement Cycle Engagement – As an ASG, we will engage fully with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle in preparation for upcoming changes to the curriculum. This will include reviewing our current curriculum rationale, evaluating progression pathways across all levels, and strengthening staff understanding of emerging national expectations. Through this work, we aim to ensure our curriculum remains coherent, relevant and responsive to learners' needs.

Planning ahead

A' planadh air adhart

Full details of the school's 2025/26 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website <https://sites.google.com/glenurquharthigh.org.uk/balnainprimary/home> or by contacting the school office.