

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2025-26 **AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD**

Rum Primary School



The Highland Council

Small Isles and Mallaig ASG

May 2026

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School information

School	Rum Primary School
Local authority	The Highland Council
Headteacher	Andrew McCallum
Class teacher	Ms Ryan (long-term supply, working toward GTCS registration)
School roll 2025–26	Six pupils across P1 to P6
Early Learning and Childcare	No ELC provision during 2025–26
ASG	Small Isles and Mallaig
Date of report	June 2026

1. About our school and our year

Rum Primary is the school for the children of the Isle of Rum, within the Small Isles and Mallaig Associated School Group. During 2025–26 we had six pupils across P1 to P6, taught by the headteacher and Ms Ryan, who joined us in long-term supply at the start of the session and has been working steadily toward GTCS registration through the year. There was no Early Learning and Childcare provision.

This report looks back at the session that has just finished. It evaluates how we did against the priorities we set ourselves in last year's School Improvement Plan, what worked, what did not, and what the children gained from their year at school. It is written for families on Rum, for the wider community, and for our Highland Council school improvement partner.

On the whole, this was a positive and successful year. The children made strong progress, took part in a wide range of learning experiences both on and off the island, and continued to develop confidence, independence and resilience through the distinctive opportunities available in a small island setting. Wider achievement remained a significant strength of the school, supported by partnerships, grant funding and community involvement.

Three things in particular shaped the year.

First, the school went through a significant staffing change after Miss Panek left at the end of the previous session. Supporting Ms Ryan's induction, building a working two-teacher team and supporting her route toward GTCS registration ran through the whole year. This has gone well and gives us a more stable foundation than we had a year ago. The permanent post remains vacant.

Second, we did a great deal of careful work around digital safeguarding. After families raised concerns about the public accessibility of our online learning journey blog and the sharing of pupil images, we suspended the blog during the autumn term. I believe that was the right decision. The rest of the year has been spent in genuine consultation with families about what should come next – online learning journals, consent procedures, safeguarding expectations and the model we want to settle on. This work continues into 2026–27.

Third, the refurbishment and teacher housing project we had been planning for did not progress as expected. The delay has had real consequences – uncertainty about classroom storage and layout for next year, no clear timeline for the housing that is central to recruiting permanently to the teaching vacancy, and longer-term planning held in suspense. We have used outdoor spaces, the community hall and creative deployment of what we have. But managing around something is not the same as resolving it, and a clearer timeline from Highland Council is what we most need in the coming year.

There was no Early Learning and Childcare provision during 2025–26 because the sole nursery child from the previous session transitioned into Primary 1. This allowed the member of staff who had been supporting ELC provision to return more fully to her clerical role within the school, which has been important for the smooth running of a very small setting. The position of the ELC is also linked to the wider refurbishment question. If demand for nursery provision returns in future, the school would need to consider carefully whether the current building could meet Care Inspectorate expectations. In particular, the lack of suitable changing facilities means that reopening ELC provision would not be straightforward without improvements to the learning environment. For that reason, the future of ELC provision is connected to the refurbishment planning as well as to pupil numbers.

With six children, much of what I describe in this report is about them as individuals rather than as a cohort. I have been careful not to publish anything here that would identify any one child. Where I describe achievement, I do so in general terms. The fuller picture of each child's progress lives in their learner profile, which is shared with families directly.

2. Vision, values, and how we think about the year

Our school values – respect, resilience, curiosity, creativity – sit at the heart of everything we do. They are visible in the way the children speak to one another, in how they handle setbacks, in the questions they ask about the world around them, and in the way they approach a new idea or a new visitor. Our aim is straightforward: we want every child at Rum to leave us as a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen, and an effective contributor. The way we get there has to fit a school of six on an island, and that means deep relationships, learning rooted in this place, and experiences off the island that prepare the children for a wider world.

A small school with a big ambition: to give every child a strong, distinctive and joyful education that prepares them well for life beyond the island while keeping them deeply connected to the place they call home.

Pupil voice continued to grow this year. The children contributed ideas to interdisciplinary learning, enterprise activity, the digital safeguarding conversation and wider improvement discussions. Older children increasingly took on quiet leadership through buddy reading, peer support and collaborative work with the younger ones. In the learner conversations we had through the year, two reflections from the children have stayed with me:

"I like that everyone helps each other here. Even the older children help the younger children if they are stuck."

"Small Isles Week helped me feel more ready for going to high school because we visited the school and we got to work with lots of different people."

Those two voices – one about how the school feels day to day, and one about looking ahead – say more about the school than most of what follows in this report. The way I have written what follows tries to honour that. It is respectful of the reader's time, honest about what worked and what did not, and willing to say things plainly rather than dress them up. Self-evaluation in a school of six is not a separate exercise from teaching the school; it is the same conversation, written down. What follows is that conversation.

3. How we did against our 2025–26 priorities

Last year's School Improvement Plan set four priorities. The summary below sets out, for each, what we said we would do, what we did, and what we have learned. The honest reflections sit underneath the table.

Priority	What we said we'd do	What we actually did	What we've learned
1. Curriculum innovation and progression	Continue the four-term interdisciplinary curriculum; deepen hydroponics and outdoor learning; develop digital and STEM.	Delivered a full curriculum with island context running through it; hydroponics deepened; outdoor learning ran consistently; digital and STEM made less progress than hoped.	The four-term model is well embedded and worth protecting. Digital and STEM need a focused project rather than scattered activity – this shapes Priority 2 of the new SIP.
2. Assessment, profiling and moderation	Track pupil progress robustly; develop learner profiles; take part in regular moderation with partner schools; strengthen pupil voice.	Tracked progress every term; profiles continued to develop well; internal moderation activities took place as planned; learner conversations were less structured than wanted.	External moderation matters more in a two-teacher school than anywhere else. The moderation gap is the biggest piece of unfinished business from the year and shapes Priority 1 of the new SIP.
3. Sustainable leadership and staffing	Recruit to the permanent vacancy or secure stable cover; onboard the new teacher; support GTCS registration; distribute leadership of improvement work.	Ms Ryan joined on long-term supply and was successfully onboarded; GTCS work progressed steadily; the permanent post remains vacant; distributed leadership made a start but not enough.	Recruitment to a remote island post is genuinely hard, and contingency planning matters as much as recruitment. The new SIP names Ms Ryan as lead on specific actions rather than relying on goodwill.

Priority	What we said we'd do	What we actually did	What we've learned
4. Refurbishment and learning environment	Progress the refurbishment and teacher housing project; improve the learning environment with current resources.	The project did not progress, and timelines have shifted into the next session. Creative use of outdoor spaces, the community hall and funding from local businesses to enhance resources went some way to compensate.	Managing around something is not the same as resolving it. We need a clearer timeline from Highland Council so we can plan with it rather than around it.

The curriculum was a real strength of the year. The children experienced a rich, varied and genuinely place-based education, the four-term interdisciplinary model continued to work well, and the hydroponics project deepened. Where we made less progress than hoped was on digital and STEM – the 3D printer and drone arrived later than planned, and I underestimated how much time it would take to embed them well alongside everything else. That is honest, and it is the reason the new SIP narrows curriculum development rather than expanding it further.

On assessment and moderation, attainment was strong across the school – all children made expected or better progress against CfE benchmarks – and our internal tracking is in good shape. Where we have to be honest is on moderation. We planned external moderation activities and they didn't take place. The reasons are real – winter ferries, staffing changes, the practical difficulty of getting teachers together across the Small Isles – but the gap matters. External moderation matters more in a two-teacher school than in any other setting, because there is no one else to test our judgement against, and that is why it sits at the top of the new SIP.

On staffing and leadership, Ms Ryan's arrival and onboarding has been the most positive single development of the year. To describe her only as long-term supply understates what she actually does. The unfinished work is around workload: too much of the improvement work this year ran through the headteacher, and that pattern is not sustainable. The new SIP names Ms Ryan as lead on specific pieces of work rather than relying on informal distribution.

On refurbishment, the delay has had real consequences. We have used outdoor spaces, the community hall and creative deployment of what we have. But managing around something

is not the same as resolving it, and this is what we most need from Highland Council in the coming year: a clearer timeline.

4. Learning across the year

Learning and teaching remained a strength of the school. The children benefited from small-group and individual teaching, warm and well-known relationships with both staff, and a curriculum that drew on the island in genuine ways rather than as decoration. What worked particularly well this year was the way the two teachers settled into a complementary rhythm – with one headteacher and one new colleague, this could have been a slower process than it was, and the fact that it was not is the result of Ms Ryan's adaptability and the relationships she built quickly with the children. What was harder than I expected was finding the time for the deeper professional conversations between us. Day-to-day teaching in a multi-stage class fills the working day, and the planning, observation and reflection time we would both like more of has been the first thing to give. I have learned that this is something to plan for, not assume.

In literacy, the children made strong progress. Reading was supported through shared reading, independent reading, buddy reading with older children supporting younger ones, topic texts, and steady comprehension work. Writing developed through non-chronological reports, imaginative writing, paragraph work, phonics and spelling, Talk for Writing approaches, and topic-based writing linked to animals, the island, myths and local studies. What worked particularly well was the integration of writing with topic work – the children write better when they are writing about something real, and the topic anchors gave them that. Buddy reading continued to be a quietly powerful feature of the school: older children's reading consolidates when they read with younger ones, and younger children's confidence grows. Listening and talking were woven through the day, and the children are increasingly confident at explaining their thinking and using subject vocabulary.

In numeracy and mathematics the children also made strong progress. We combined direct teaching, practical activity, digital support, problem-solving and real-life contexts – number work, multiplication and division, place value, measures, data, money, mapping and scale all featured across the year. Linking science work to numeracy contexts worked particularly well: growth rates, measurement, recording, comparison – none of this is textbook material, and the children's engagement with the maths was different because the maths was about something they cared about.

One child put it more plainly than I could:

"I liked measuring out ingredients when we were cooking because it felt like real maths."

What was harder was striking the right balance between practical contexts and the systematic teaching of procedures. Practical contexts give meaning; systematic teaching gives fluency. With a multi-stage class, we sometimes leaned too far toward one and not enough toward the other, and I am conscious of that going into next year. The 3D printer and drone arriving late in the session means they will give us further numeracy and mathematics contexts in 2026–27, particularly around mapping and design.

Internal tracking information indicates that all pupils made expected or better progress in literacy and numeracy over the session. Teacher professional judgement, supported by standardised assessment information where appropriate, showed a strong level of agreement and no child was identified as causing concern in relation to attainment or progress.

Health and wellbeing was a strong area of the year. The children attended consistently and were highly engaged. Relationships across the school are warm and respectful, and each child is known well by both staff. Two experiences stood out. The swimming trip gave the children water confidence and life skills that matter particularly for children growing up on an island, and it built independence and readiness for off-island life. Small Isles Week on Muck was the other – shared learning, sport, outdoor activity and residential routines with children from the other island schools meant a great deal, particularly for the older children as part of looking ahead to secondary. On attendance: with a roll of six, percentage figures do not mean anything and would risk identifying individuals. We track attendance carefully day by day and know how each child is. Across the year, attendance was strong and there were no concerns.

5. What the children gained beyond the classroom, and what made it possible

Wider achievement was a strength throughout the year. The hydroponics and sustainability project continued. The children took part in swimming, residential learning, Small Isles Week on Muck, visitor sessions, partnership learning, outdoor and environmental learning, enterprise, creative work, digital learning and STEM activities. They contributed to the school's improvement throughout the year. These experiences are not extras: in an island school they are part of how children build confidence, independence, social skills and readiness for the world beyond Rum.

These experiences had a clear impact on confidence, independence, communication skills and readiness for transition. Children increasingly demonstrated resilience when working with unfamiliar adults and peers and showed growing confidence when learning beyond the island environment.

What made much of this possible was funding, and I want to be explicit about that. The donations from local businesses supported curriculum development, resources, enrichment, residential opportunities and broader achievement across the year – it is not an exaggeration to say that a number of the experiences the children had this year would not have been possible without it. The hydroponics project continued to support STEM, sustainability, healthy eating and enterprise, with the children growing, measuring, eating and talking about food in genuinely connected ways. The project has drawn external interest, including from Education Scotland – I am pleased the work has been noticed, while being clear that this is a supplier's coverage rather than independent endorsement, and that the value of the project rests on what the children gain from it. Tesco Outdoor Enrichment funding was used to purchase floor curling stones, which supports inclusive PE in school and gives the wider community access to a shared sporting activity through the hall – modest funding, well targeted, can shift the feel of a small school considerably, and this did. Funding also supported the residential trips and swimming, with clear impact on confidence, independence, water safety and readiness for transition.

Sustainability has become an increasingly important thread running through the curriculum. Through food growing, hydroponics, environmental projects and partnerships, children developed a stronger understanding of stewardship, biodiversity and sustainable living within an island community.

The relationship between funding and wider achievement is one I take seriously. In a school of our size, a single well-placed grant can shape a child's year. Holding onto those relationships matters as much as recruiting them in the first place.

The combination of environmental learning, island partnerships, sustainability projects and off-island experiences continues to provide a distinctive curriculum that reflects the unique context of Rum while preparing children effectively for life beyond the island.

6. Working with others – partnerships, families and digital safeguarding

Partnership working continued to be central to the life of the school. We worked with families, the other Small Isles schools, Mallaig ASG colleagues, NatureScot, RSPB, National

Trust for Scotland links, Active Schools, visiting specialists, community organisations, local businesses and funders. Not all partnerships shape the year equally, and this year three made a particular difference. Our partnership with the other Small Isles schools – Eigg and Muck – gave the children peer relationships, shared learning days and Small Isles Week on Muck, which was probably the most significant single experience of the year for the children. Our relationship with MOWI made a direct curriculum difference. And our environmental partnerships, particularly with NatureScot on the island, gave the children a depth of place-based learning that no school could provide from textbooks alone. Other partnerships matter in different ways – Active Schools for inclusive sport, Tesco for the floor curling equipment that has gone on to serve the wider community, visiting specialists for breadth – and I am grateful for each of them. What I want to do better in 2026–27 is to make the ASG partnerships more systematic, particularly around moderation and transition, and that is reflected in the new SIP.

Digital learning developed across the year, but digital safeguarding became a significant area for reflection and the most difficult conversation of the session. Up to autumn 2025 we used a public online learning journey blog to celebrate children's learning. Families raised concerns about privacy and the public accessibility of children's images. We took those concerns seriously and suspended the blog, and I believe that was the right decision. Since then we have been in genuine consultation with families about what should come next – the options have included a secure family-only learning platform, a carefully scoped public website with limited pupil content, revised consent systems, stricter image-sharing procedures, and clearer separation between statutory website information and learning journals. Closing this work out – agreeing a clear approach with families, updating our procedures, and putting a settled model in place – is a commitment in the new SIP with a November 2026 deadline. The children, and the families, deserve resolution rather than further deferral.

7. Inclusion, wellbeing and leadership

No children had identified additional support needs during the year. Inclusion was central to practice throughout – close knowledge of each child, personalised learning, flexible grouping, universal support, strong family relationships, wellbeing check-ins, and inclusive access to every trip and experience. With two staff and no routine peer observation, I am conscious that a small team can miss things a larger staff would catch. The way we try to guard against that is through three things working together. Both teachers know every child closely, and we talk about how each child is each week as a matter of course. The visitors and partners who come into the school across the year – Active Schools, environmental partners,

visiting specialists – bring outside eyes on the children, and I listen to what they observe. Moderation visits next year will give a further opportunity for fresh perspectives. Equity in our context goes beyond socioeconomic need – it includes access to off-island experiences, to specialist provision, to swimming and residential learning, to digital tools, and to confident transition. We worked hard through the year to make sure that no child was disadvantaged by living on an island.

Leadership of change across the year was good. I provided clear strategic leadership through a complex year that included staffing change, the digital safeguarding question, refurbishment delays, the absence of ELC provision, curriculum development, funding opportunities and off-island residential provision. The honest naming of what did not work – moderation and workload – is itself part of leadership. I would rather say that plainly than write a report that reads as though everything went well. Improvement starts from honesty, not from polish. Ms Ryan's developing role is the other significant leadership story of the year. Her successful onboarding, the trust she has built with children and families, and her steady progress toward GTCS registration give us a foundation we did not have a year ago. The next step is for her to take on named leadership roles in the new SIP – not as a development exercise but because the school genuinely needs her contribution to specific pieces of work.

8. Looking at ourselves, and looking ahead

The gradings below are my own professional judgement, based on the year's evidence. I have tried to evaluate the school's work realistically and cautiously, moderating gradings against the evidence we actually have and avoiding overstating strengths where further external validation is still required. In a two-teacher school internal self-evaluation can become an echo chamber, and I will ask our school improvement manager for a date in autumn 2026 to talk through these gradings, with the moderation work in the new SIP providing a further source of external challenge.

One thing worth flagging: in the first draft of this report, I graded both wellbeing and attainment at Very Good. On reflection I have moderated the attainment grading to Good. The children's attainment is strong, but Very Good is a stronger claim than I can yet support with external moderation evidence – and given that moderation was the single biggest piece of unfinished business from the year, it would be inconsistent to claim a grading that rests on the very thing we did not do enough of. I have left the wellbeing grading at Very Good because that one I can defend on the evidence I have – relationships, attendance, inclusion, and the confidence the children show in school and in their off-island experiences.

QI	Quality indicator	Our evaluation
1.1	Self-evaluation for self-improvement	Good (4)
1.3	Leadership of change	Good (4)
2.2	Curriculum	Good (4)
2.3	Learning, teaching and assessment	Good (4)
2.6	Transitions	Good (4)
2.7	Partnerships	Good (4)
3.1	Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very good (5)
3.2	Raising attainment and achievement	Good (4)

Session 2025–26 was a successful year for Rum Primary. The children made strong progress, the curriculum was rich and rooted in this place, relationships were warm, and we gave the children a fuller range of experiences than a school of six could manage on its own. The Island projects, Small Isles Week on Muck, swimming and residential stand out as highlights. It was also a year in which we had to be honest about what did not work. Moderation was not strong enough. I carried too much of the improvement work. The refurbishment delay left us managing around something that should have been resolved. Digital safeguarding required a serious conversation with families that we are still in the middle of. Those gaps matter, and they have directly shaped the 2026–27 improvement plan. That is what self-evaluation is for.

The new SIP focuses on three priorities, each of which comes directly out of what I have written above. Priority 1 – moderation, teacher judgement and progression – responds to the single biggest gap in the year, with a named contact, a schedule, and a virtual contingency. Priority 2 – curriculum, digital learning and enterprise – responds to the curriculum stretch, narrowing development to one STEM project, one whole-school enterprise activity, and a deliberate thread of digital literacy. Three things properly rather than six things lightly. Priority 3 – transition, sustainability and digital safeguarding – holds together the two P7 pupils' transition to Mallaig High School, Ms Ryan's GTCS journey with named leadership roles, closure of the digital safeguarding consultation by November 2026, and the continuing conversation with Highland Council on refurbishment, housing and staffing. These priorities are in this order because moderation is the most pressing, curriculum narrowing protects us

from over-stretch, and the third priority holds the longer-running questions about how the school sustains itself. That is the logic.

Rum Primary School continues to give the children of the Isle of Rum a highly personal, creative and ambitious education. The school's size brings real challenges, but it also allows deep knowledge of each child, strong relationships, and a curriculum that is genuinely shaped by this place rather than borrowed from somewhere else. This report has tried to tell the truth about the year – what went well, what did not, and what we are taking forward. Most of what happens in a small island school happens in conversations, in walks along the shore, in moments of curiosity and small discoveries, and in the steady accumulation of children's confidence. Not all of that can be captured in a document. What this report does capture is enough, I hope, to show that the school is doing serious work, and that it knows itself well enough to keep getting better.

Rum Primary remains a small school with a big ambition: to give every child a strong, distinctive and joyful education that prepares them well for life beyond the island while keeping them deeply connected to the place they call home.