



STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD

2024-2025



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.

Introduction: Local and National Context

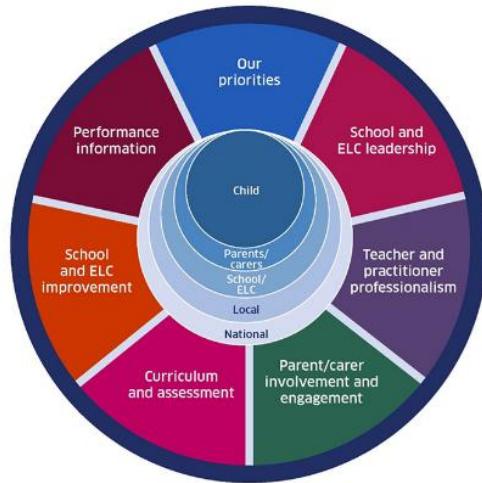
Ro-ràdh: Co-theacsà Ionadail agus Nàiseanta

This Standards and Quality Report is influenced by both Highland and national priorities. These can be summarised as follows:

Highland Priorities



National Improvement Framework Priorities



Entitlement, Excellence & Equity:

We will raise attainment and achievement for all, especially for children and young people from disadvantaged circumstances, including rural deprivation. We will focus relentlessly on improving standards and the quality of learning and teaching, to ensure that entitlement, equity and excellence are delivered across the system.

Empowerment & Leadership:

We will develop leadership skills at all levels of the system, for now and the future, building a culture of empowerment and professional capital.

Relationships:

We will maximise health and wellbeing for all children and young people, to give them the best possible start in life. We will ensure every child and young person feels part of the community they live in.

Opportunity:

We will maximise opportunities for our children and young people, and for the wider Highland community and its visitors, through the provision of high-quality services.

The key priorities outlined in the National Improvement Framework are:

- Placing the **human rights and needs of every child** and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in children and young people's **health and wellbeing**
- **Closing the attainment gap** between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and **sustained, positive school-leaver destinations** for all young people
- **Improvement in attainment**, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Self-evaluation

To support self-evaluation, quality indicators from the national evaluative framework *How Good Is Our School?*⁴ are referenced.

Links to these sources (and others referenced) can be found here:

[National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan](#)

[HGIOS? 4](#) and [HGIOLC](#)

[Health and Social Care Standards](#)

[National Gaelic Language Plan](#)

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% |

We are pleased to present our Standards and Quality Report for Session 2024-25. This report provides important information regarding our school's progress to date and our next steps in school improvement.

Self-evaluation for self-improvement is at the heart of what we do. We continue to develop our practice in making robust use of evidence as a basis for judgements regarding the impact of our work on our learners. All staff understand that self-evaluation is an integral aspect of our approach to continuous improvement through addressing the 3 key questions:

- **How well are we doing?**
- **How do we know?**
- **What are we going to do now?**

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. We inform decision making and actions through a continuous process of looking inwards, outwards and forwards.

Looking inwards - starts with those working with our children and young people

We focus on the impact on outcomes for learners. Our self-evaluation processes triangulate information, data, people's views and observation of practice to measure impact and inform planning for improvement.

Looking outwards - learning from others

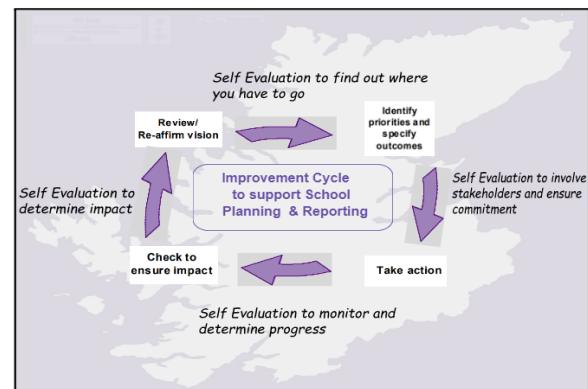
Looking to others for new ideas that challenge our practice and support continuous improvement allows us to learn from what works and what doesn't. This includes practice in other schools, learning communities and learning from educational research.

Looking forwards - creating a vision and planning for implementation

Through leadership at all levels, we anticipate challenges and explore creative solutions. This helps us to create an aspirational vision for our school which shapes our actions and provides a focus for 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 plan, we use key questions at scheduled review times throughout the session to know how well we are progressing towards achieving these positive outcomes and changes.



Together we are working hard to ensure the Highlands is the best place for children and young people to grow up safely, learn, develop and achieve.

With positive experiences, our children and young people will always see the Highlands as home.

Le eòlasan deimhinneach, bidh ar cloinn is ar n-òigridh daonnan a' faicinn na Gàidhealtachd mar dhachaigh.

*Jillian Kean
Head Teacher
Merkinch Primary School*

School Profile

Pròfil 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 87.49% | Average Class Size 26 | Meeting PE Target Target Met |
| Pupil Numbers (inc nursery) 234(+86 nursery) | Teacher Numbers 15 | Pupil Teacher Ratio 15.2 |
| <hr/> | | |
| N3 5% | N4 21% | P1 10% |
| P2 12% | P3 13% | P4 7% |
| P5 11% | P6 9% | P7 12% |
| SIMD Q1¹ 90% | SIMD Q2 0-10% | SIMD Q2 00% |
| SIMD Q3 00% | SIMD Q5 00% | Unknown 00% |
| ASN² 70% | No ASN 30% | FSM³ 90% |
| No FSM 0-10% | EAL⁴ 0-10% | No EAL 90% |

¹ SIMD – The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation.

² ASN – Additional Support Needs

³ FSM – Free school meal entitlement

⁴ EAL – English as an additional language

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2024/25 Proportions of pupils achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels (P1, P4, P7 combined):

| Reading | Writing | Listening and talking | Numeracy |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Majority | Less than half | Majority | Majority |

The small number of exclusions that occur in schools may lead to individual pupils being identified, therefore this data is not contained in this report. If you have any questions about exclusions, you should contact us directly.

School vision, values and aims

Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

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.

- We are also accepted, valued and loved.

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.

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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:

Raising Attainment

Purpose:

- The Making Sense Report 2020 recommends the use of a wave approach to supporting young people experiencing difficulties with literacy development where interventions are informed by individual assessment results and often delivered within the regular classroom. Young people with dyslexia benefit from early identification, appropriate intervention, and targeted, effective support at the right time. Assessment for dyslexia should be a process rather than an end product. This is the model of support used in Literacy for All.
- In line with the national picture P 4 writing attainment dips. n P4 consequently we have engaged with the national improving writing programme
- We have been developing our tracking systems and use of data to inform next steps in learning. HC now require us to use P&A system on SEEMIS and use SEEMIS to report on children's learning. We will take time to swap tracking system and continue to develop our school-based systems.
- Continue to develop our HQAT approach.
- Highland council developing updated LTA policy.
- **As an ASG we have identified through self-evaluation the need to develop and align our approaches to profiling and profiles. Building on our strong moderation approaches supported by our QUAMSOs we will develop, moderate, and align our profiles.**

Progress:

Literacy For All approaches

- A whole school approach to tracking and recording literacy difficulties from Primary One to Primary Seven.
- Recording the impact of any intervention that has been carried out.
- Identify the underlying issues that are preventing a learner from mastering aspects of literacy.
- Make an identification of dyslexia where appropriate.
- Supporting parents of learners with persistent literacy difficulties.
- School guidelines on approach to persistent literacy difficulties.

Impact:

- ✓ Evidence gathering tracking spreadsheet in place in all Primary 3-Primary 7 classes.
- ✓ In P7 we have 10 children who have an identification of dyslexia now which is 28.5% of our p7 cohort. This is above national average. About 10% of people in Scotland have dyslexia. Schools do report anything from 0 – 30%.
- ✓ Almost all of children who require a literacy intervention have a record of the intervention and the impact.
- ✓ An evidence gathering tracker supports teachers in identifying underlying issues in all areas of Literacy. We are good at identifying the underlying issues preventing a learner from mastering aspects of Literacy for most children. Staff are becoming more confident in using

P&A/ SEEMIS

- Ensure all teaching staff can confidently use the P&A system on SEEMIS
- Develop School Assessment Folder
- Link with ASG Profile and Profiling plan.

✓ assessment outcomes well to help inform any subsequent planning.

✓ Our school follows Highland Council guidelines for Literacy for All. Almost all teaching staff have attended the authority training.

✓ Staff are being supported in using the new P&A tracking system and are becoming more confident at inputting data. This is being used alongside the whole school tracker which staff have been confidently using to track and measure attainment.

✓ By June 2025, every child will have an assessment folder.

Profiling

- Develop an ASG approach to profiling and profiles.
- 100% of primary school aged children in our ASG having ownership of their profiles (differentiated approaches to meet the needs of learners.)
- Parents across ASG will be offered support in engaging in their children's learning.

✓ In our school Primary 1 – Primary 7 every child will have the beginnings of a profile.

✓ We have a good approach to ASG profiling due to clear guidance from the Local Authority as to what a profile should include. However, there is currently no set format for ASG profiling, including digital or paper. All children have a profile.

✓ Parental engagement sessions across the academic year have included opportunity to participate in the profile and give feedback on the learning.

✓ ASG staff reported

- ~Across all levels there is a consistent approach to the content of our learners' profiles.
- ~At early level less than half of our ASG children have ownership of their profile.
- ~At first level the majority of learners have ownership of their profile.
- ~At second level, all children have a pupil profile which is individual to the learner.
- ~Almost all parents across the ASG have been offered the opportunity to engage with their children's profile.

ELC

- Through weekly planning meetings, develop EYPs knowledge and understanding of Early level benchmarks for literacy to inform observations to feed into learner profiles. This will support information transition and

✓ ELC staff report that benchmarks and E's and O's are being used weekly to inform planning. Staff are displaying increased confidence in linking learning to the curriculum and a few staff are recording

support closing the attainment gap as specific barriers to learning, might be identified earlier. More detailed overview of progress over time.

- Apply new format to planning; explicit links to CfE skills being developed. Environment and resources set up to support learning most effectively. Floor books to evidence this.
- Continue to work with SaLT, developing approaches to planning learning and teaching for non-speaking children
- Work with parents to ensure children's achievements from beyond the setting are captured in profiles

observations of children's learning using the planned E's and O's.

- ✓ Planning process is more streamlined and structured, making shared responsibilities increasing quality learning opportunities for the children.
- ✓ Triangles room planning is structured in line with the enhanced provision offered ~ playsteps and milestones.
- ✓ EYESO feedback to staff team ~ floor books are regularly and effectively monitored by staff, this identifies clear curriculum links ensuring learning meets the developmental needs of our learners
- ✓ Feedback from SALT has reported increased staff capacity in supporting learning for non-verbal children.
- ✓ We continue to try to understand the best way to gather parental feedback / engagement.

Next steps:

1. Highland Council ~ raising attainment strategy in place
2. ELC ~ Continue to support / build capacity in using CFE outcomes to report on observations.
3. Continue to look at nursery environment, embedding literacy and developing numeracy.
4. Continue ASG approach to profiling

School Priority:

Support Staff / EYP Improvement Plan

Purpose:

Creating a plan to support their knowledge and skills regarding building and maintaining positive relationships in the specific context of Merkinch Primary School; majority of children classed as living in an area of high deprivation, high percentage of ASN resulting in high percentage of children demonstrating dysregulated behaviours regularly, on a daily basis often hitting out. In turn resulting in a high number of staff and child incidents.

As a team they have engaged with parts of theory and training over the years, in order for them to have the optimum impact, the training needs to be more targeted and more regular allowing for professional dialogue regular practise of skills and building staff confidence.

Partners who have committed to the plan so far include; Speech and Language, Educational Psychologist, Early Years Education Support Officer.

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Progress:

- EYPs and PSAs will have a clear understanding of child development, specifically birth to 5. They will use this knowledge to support them to build relationships with the children, understanding the value of each individual child and their wellbeing requirements which underpins their ability to achieve success
- EYPs and PSAs will be proactive in identifying and reducing potential barriers to effective learning of our children. They will work with ASNT and other professionals to implement effective strategies to improve progress for children facing challenges; deprivation, ASN, LAC
- EYPs and PSAs will monitor and regularly feedback to teachers/ASNT about the impact of strategies used to ensure equity and use our evidence to make decisions about future interventions
- EYPs and PSAs will feel more empowered and confident to support children when they are feeling dysregulated and are displaying distressed behaviours

Impact:

- ✓ Majority of EYP staff are more aware of 0-5 development and how behaviours can present in our learners who are developmentally reaching the 0-5 milestones.
- ✓ The majority of our early years team display a good understanding of the value of each individual child and their well-being requirements.
- ✓ Staff record interventions to reduce potential barriers to effective learning on the Merkinch PSA impact documents. Form 1 documents are regularly reviewed with ASN team.
- ✓ Almost all support staff understand the context of Merkinch PS
- ✓ As a result of our tailored training package in session 24-25, support staff are beginning to feel more empowered and confident to support children when they are feeling dysregulated and are displaying distressed behaviours and we will now build on this to develop further confidence in alternative strategies and provide further early intervention.

Next steps:

Work with Morven McDiarmid to further promote and embed positive relationships and interaction for children who are developmentally reaching the 0-5 milestones.

This will support the work of our Merkinch Way.

Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

Overall Focus

- **Priority Areas:** Literacy, Health & Wellbeing
- **Main Goals:** Improve attainment, engagement, and participation for pupils in SIMD 1 & 2 and those entitled to PEF.

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Key Interventions & Impact

1. Attendance & Family Support

- Positive Relationships Coordinator role ended Nov 2024, but attendance tracking continued.
- **Impact:** Pupils with attendance below 80% reduced from 45 (Jan 2025) to 31 (May 2025).
- 14 pupils improved above 80% threshold; ongoing monthly reviews show positive trends.

2. Early Level Literacy (Greg Bottrill Approach – P1/P2)

- Whole-class intervention using Drawing Club & Message Centre.
- **Impact:**
 - 27% of P1 cohort achieved Early Level literacy (target was 10%).
 - 34% progressed two stages in writing; 45% improved pre-handwriting skills.
 - Increased engagement, especially among boys; teachers report higher creativity and confidence.

3. Targeted Literacy Support (P2–P4)

- Small group interventions aiming for 100% on-track literacy.
- **Impact:** Progress tracked via pupil progress lists; evidence of improvement in targeted groups.

4. Communication & Inclusion (Room 5 – ASN)

- Makaton training, sensory story packs, Big Mack buttons.
- **Impact:**
 - Improved staff confidence in Makaton.
 - Pupils show increased independence and engagement in communication and sensory activities.

5. Digital Literacy Support (Lexia – P4–P7)

- 67 licences allocated; pupils use program 3x weekly.
- **Impact:** Early data shows progress in closing literacy gaps; teachers using analytics to target support.

Financial Summary

- **PEF Allocation:** £142,000
- **Total Spend:** £142,089 (balanced to £0 as required).
- Investment mainly in staffing (intervention teachers), training (Greg Bottrill), and resources (Lexia, ASN tools).

Overall Impact:

- Significant gains in early literacy (exceeding targets).
- Improved attendance and family engagement despite staff changes.
- Enhanced inclusion for ASN pupils through communication tools.
- Digital interventions supporting sustained literacy progress in upper stages.

Wider achievements

Coileanaidhean nas fharsainge

Wider achievements offered to almost all children.

% children attending

| P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 7% | 30% | 33% | 75% | 64% | 50% | 49% |

A selection of activities on offer in session 2024-25:

- ✓ Fun games (p1 & 2)
- ✓ Treasure Hunters (p2 &3)
- ✓ ICT (P4-7)
- ✓ Shinty
- ✓ Ukulele
- ✓ Basketball
- ✓ Bike Polo
- ✓ NFL
- ✓ Basketball
- ✓ Boxing
- ✓ Violin
- ✓ Brass
- ✓ Keyboard/Music with Jamie
- ✓ Badminton

Comments from learners, families, stakeholders, and staff

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

In Merkinch we use M&M tokens for many reasons. Over the last few years, we have used them as voting tokens and our parents are very used to this way of gathering their voice.

In session 2024-25 we have worked to increase parent voice and engagement.

October 2024 ~ We revisited our VVA and asked what families saw as our strength. We worked to develop the other areas over the session.

- ⇒ An above and beyond attitude ~20
- ⇒ Inspire each other to do our best ~36
- ⇒ Warmth of welcome ~26
- ⇒ Culture of Kindness ~19

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In March 2025, we asked

1. Achievement assemblies ~ 61% of respondents told us they prefer assemblies in the afternoon.
2. Sharing learning events ~ 61% of respondents told us that they would prefer to attend in the afternoon
3. Communication ~ 72% of respondents told us that they prefer Facebook / email or text over a newsletter.

In focus groups most children could tell us how learning intentions and success criteria supported their learning. The majority of our children could tell us about target setting. In our upper school classes children in recent focus could share their learning targets and provide examples of how they knew they had achieved them.

Children across the school are excited to share examples of parent voice in their learning.

In almost all classes our children and teachers make good use of our consistent approaches in The Merkinch way.

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 | Satisfactory | Good |
| QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion | Satisfactory | Good |
| QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children's progress | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

Consistent staffing will support us in our journey of continuous improvement.

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Key priorities for improvement planning

Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

- ✓ Highland Raising Attainment strategy
- ✓ Achieve Bronze and Silver RRS
- ✓ Achieve Bronze Reading Schools
- ✓ Develop Leadership
- ✓ Continue to build capacity in ELC and PSA staff

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 or by contacting the school office.