



STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2025-26

AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD

MERKINCH PRIMARY & ELC

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%



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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 87.7%			Average Class Size 24			Meeting PE Target Target Met		
Pupil Numbers (inc nursery) 216 (+77 nursery)			Teacher Numbers 17			Pupil Teacher Ratio 13.1		
N3 XX%	N4 XX%	P1 100%	P2% 81%	P3 90%	P4% 100%	P5 93%	P6 100%	P7 100%
SIMD Q1 ¹ 90+%		SIMD Q2 XX%	SIMD Q2 XX%		SIMD Q3 XX%	SIMD Q5 XX%		Unknown XX%
ASN ² 50-60%		No ASN 40-50%	FSM ³ 90%%		No FSM 10%	EAL ⁴ 10-20%		No EAL 80-90%

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

Reading	Writing	Listening and talking	Numeracy
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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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Majority

Majority

Most

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.

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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.

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:	
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School Improvement Plan Priority 1 Raising attainment		
Summary of progress	Next steps	Stakeholder Views
Profiling There has been improved consistency in profiling learning across the school. All classes now have profiles that are appropriate to their stage of development. In the infant stages, <i>Spotlights</i> and profile folders are used effectively to record children's progress and achievements in a developmentally appropriate way. From P3–P7, children maintain black profile folders, ensuring a clear progression in how learning is captured. A consistent whole-school approach has been established, with agreed headings used across all sections of the profiles. This is supporting a more structured and coherent approach to profiling across the school.	• Increase parental engagement in children's learning by providing more structured opportunities to support understanding and involvement. • Strengthen children's ownership of their profiles by creating more regular opportunities for them to reflect on and contribute to their achievements and next steps. • Continue to develop consistency in the quality of entries across all classes, ensuring profiles capture clear progress over time and link explicitly to learning. • Explore the use of digital profiling to further enhance accessibility, engagement and continuity between home and school. • Monitor and evaluate the impact of profiling approaches to	SQR written with staff teaching team on 13.5.26 Parents have shared they require additional scaffolding to support their engagement with children's learning. An informal focus group agreed that a tick sheet would help gather parent's views. Feedback from parents has told us that providing feedback on HQAT at parents evening feels like a pressure.

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	ensure they are supporting improved learner outcomes and meaningful tracking of progress.	
Digital technology is increasingly embedded across the school, with all classes now having access to interactive whiteboards and digital devices. The majority of classes are making effective use of Chromebooks to support teaching and learning. A digital leader's group has been established and is actively contributing to the school's digital agenda. They have shared online safety information and practical guidance on the use of digital tools with almost all children. Most support staff have engaged in targeted professional learning, including one-to-one training in assistive technologies such as Read&Write. In addition, resources such as headphones with microphones have been introduced to support identified learners.	Continued focus on consistency of use across all classes and extending staff confidence will support further improvement. • Ensure greater consistency in the use of digital technology across all classes, with clear expectations for how and when it enhances learning. • Further develop intentional use of digital tools to support high-quality learning and teaching, ensuring technology use is clearly linked to learning intentions and success criteria. • Increase opportunities for learner autonomy, enabling children to select appropriate	

	digital tools to support their learning independently.	
In line with our professional learning approach, most staff have engaged in collegiate sessions focused on effective target setting. As a result, almost all classes now have clear literacy and numeracy targets in place, with these displayed visually within classrooms to support learner understanding and	A key next step is to deepen children's understanding of how their targets link to learning intentions and success criteria. Developing this conceptual understanding will support learners to make clearer connections in their learning and further enhance their ability to reflect on progress and next steps. • Strengthen children's understanding of how targets link to learning intentions and success criteria, supporting deeper understanding of their learning journey. • Increase opportunities for regular review and update of targets, ensuring they remain relevant, personalised and responsive to progress. • Further develop learner ownership by supporting children to co-create and set their own targets with greater independence.	

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	• Ensure consistency in the quality of targets across all classes, with a focus on clarity, challenge and measurable outcomes. • Embed the use of target-setting conversations between staff and learners to support reflection, motivation and next steps. • Monitor and track the impact of target setting on attainment and progress, ensuring approaches lead to improved outcomes for all learners.	
Further professional learning opportunities have been provided to develop staff understanding of effective feedback. Almost all teachers attended a series of three collegiate sessions focused on improving feedback practices. Staff were given time to reflect on their approaches and explore a range of feedback strategies to support high-quality learning and teaching. Approaches to self-evaluation and moderation have significantly strengthened through staff bringing examples of feedback from their own classes. These were collaboratively reviewed and discussed, enabling staff to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of feedback on both classes and	The next step is to continue to embed and sustain these high-quality approaches to feedback across all areas of learning, with a particular focus on feedback in numeracy and mathematics, as identified within the 2026–27 School Improvement Plan, ensuring all learners benefit from consistently high standards. • Ensure greater consistency in high-quality feedback	

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individual learners. This has supported a shared, consistent understanding of high-quality feedback across the school.	approaches across all classes, with a shared understanding of what effective feedback looks like in practice. • Strengthen the link between feedback, learning intentions and success criteria, ensuring feedback clearly supports next steps in learning. • Increase opportunities for learner engagement with feedback, supporting children to respond, reflect and act on feedback to improve their work. • Further develop the use of formative and verbal feedback strategies to ensure timely, meaningful interactions during learning. • Continue to use moderation and professional dialogue to evaluate the impact of feedback and refine practice.	
The school has made good progress in developing a rights-based approach, supported through effective use of Pupil Equity Funding. A member of staff	The next step is to continue to deepen children's understanding of rights and	

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has been allocated dedicated time each week to lead and drive forward the Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) agenda. As a result, the school successfully achieved its Bronze Award at the beginning of session 2025–26. All classes have established class charters that are clearly linked to UNCRC articles and the school’s values. Staff have engaged in high-quality professional learning through in-service sessions, strengthening their understanding of children’s rights and how these are applied in practice.	their responsibilities, ensuring consistent application across all contexts, and to progress towards achieving the next stage of the Rights Respecting Schools Award.	
Class teachers have regular and planned opportunities to moderate reading and literacy learning with colleagues. A strategic approach has been introduced, with the Head Teacher identifying groups of children who are working at similar levels. This supports focused and relevant moderation activities. Teachers engage effectively in trios to moderate learners’ work, providing valuable opportunities for professional dialogue, shared reflection and collaborative evaluation of evidence. This approach is strengthening consistency and increasing confidence in teacher professional judgement across the school.	The next step is to continue to embed moderation practices across all stages and extend this approach further to ensure consistency across all curricular areas. We are heading into year two of our reading moderation cycle. • Extend moderation practices beyond literacy to include numeracy and all curricular areas, ensuring a consistent	

As a result, staff are becoming more secure in their understanding of standards in reading and literacy, leading to improved reliability in assessment and tracking of pupil progress.	approach to assessment across the curriculum. • Develop a clear, whole-school moderation calendar, identifying regular opportunities for staff to engage in planned moderation activities. • Increase opportunities for cross-stage moderation (e.g. early, first and second level) to support progression and consistency in expectations. • Embed the use of shared evidence (e.g. jotters, digital portfolios, assessments) to support robust professional dialogue and evaluation.	
As part of ongoing high-quality collegiate professional learning focused on target setting, effective feedback and learning conversations, the school has strengthened its approaches to ensuring meaningful pupil voice, particularly within the ASN context. The ASN team work collaboratively to support inclusive practices and promote children's participation in their learning. Almost all children with a Child's Plan or identified additional support needs have had opportunities to share their views through ASN teacher	The next step is to continue to extend opportunities for pupil voice across all areas of the school day, ensuring all learners are empowered to contribute meaningfully to decisions about their learning and school experience.	

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conversations or the use of Talking Mats. Two out of three ASN teachers are trained in the use of Talking Mats, with the remaining member of staff scheduled to complete this training, ensuring consistency in high-quality approaches. Children's views are gathered through written or verbal communication and are shared appropriately at planning and review meetings, with children providing consent for how their voice is represented, including the use of photographs. Children are also invited to attend these meetings and demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of sharing their views, reflecting growing confidence and ownership of their learning.		
Impact		
Profiling This increased consistency is supporting continuity in how learning is recorded and tracked over time, enabling a clearer picture of learners' progress and achievements across stages. Children are benefiting from more structured opportunities to recognise and celebrate their achievements. There is early evidence of parental engagement through attendance at learning visits; however, this is currently limited to a minority of parents. Strengthening parental involvement remains an important next step to maximise the impact of profiling.		
Digital		

The increased use of digital technology is enhancing learner engagement and supporting both independent and collaborative learning across most classes. There is a developing culture of responsible and safe technology use, with children demonstrating increased awareness of online safety. Staff confidence in using assistive technologies has improved, enabling more effective support for learners, particularly those with literacy barriers. As a result, identified pupils are better able to access the curriculum, and barriers to learning are being reduced, supporting greater inclusion. Overall, these developments are contributing to more inclusive and effective learning environments. Continued focus on consistency of use and further building staff confidence will strengthen impact across all classes.	
Target setting The majority of children are aware of their targets and can identify areas for improvement in their learning. This reflects increasing consistency in practice across the school and a growing sense of learner ownership, with children becoming more involved in understanding and improving their progress.	
Effective feedback There is now a shared, consistent understanding of high-quality feedback across the school. As a result, the majority of staff are confidently using a range of effective feedback techniques within their classrooms. This is leading to improved support for pupils' progress and greater consistency in learning and teaching. Feedback is becoming more purposeful and impactful, helping learners to better understand next steps and improve their work.	

Rights respecting Schools Almost all staff confidently reference the UNCRC, children's rights and school values to promote positive relationships and behaviour, leading to a more consistent, inclusive ethos across the school. Children's understanding of rights is reinforced through assemblies and a strong whole-school focus on wellbeing. As a result, most children can articulate their rights, make meaningful links to their class charters and school values, and understand how these contribute to a positive, respectful and inclusive school community.	
Moderation This structured approach to moderation is increasing staff confidence in teacher professional judgement. Staff are becoming more secure in their understanding of standards in reading and literacy. As a result, there is improved reliability in assessment and greater consistency in tracking pupil progress across the school. This is supporting more accurate identification of learners' needs and clearer next steps in learning.	

School Priority 2: Add title		
School Improvement Plan Priority 2		
Summary of progress	Next steps	Stakeholder Views
	Engagement with SaLT at ASG level ~ universal Words up approach	Merkinch SQR 25-26 priority 2 stakeholder voice.docx Cala Voice

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• There is emerging consistency in approaches to communication, interaction and behaviour support, contributing to a calmer and more purposeful learning environment. • Staff confidence is growing, particularly in relation to planning for learning and using universal strategies, though continued support and reinforcement are required. • The foundation for a data-informed, reflective and collaborative culture has been explored, with clear next steps identified to deepen practice in Year 2.		"Working with the enhanced provision and providing children with access to a wide range of play based learning opportunities has enabled them to explore, investigate, and develop new skills in a meaningful way. Through sensory experiences, open ended resources, and interactions with children from different classes and age groups, they can learn through play, build confidence, develop communication skills, and foster positive relationships. The outdoor environment further supports curiosity, independence, and creativity, allowing children to engage fully in their learning." <i>Shanice mcminn</i> Shanice Mcminn Family Play Practitioner
Impact		
• Children are experiencing more consistent, nurturing interactions, supporting improved engagement, communication and early regulation skills. • There is emerging evidence of improved progress in early literacy, particularly in language and communication.		

A clearer understanding of children's developmental stages is leading to more appropriate and responsive learning experiences, although further work is needed to accelerate progress for identified groups.	
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School Priority 3: ASG ~ Reading Moderation		
School Improvement Plan Priority		
Summary of progress and impact	Next steps	Stakeholder Views
- Almost all teachers attended ASG sessions - All ASG teaching staff~ invited to engage in contributing their views, ensuring shared ownership of ASG SIP priority. 3 schools engaged in looking outwards this session and had peer visits across our ASG - As yet limited engagement from feeder high school.	Year two of reading moderation programme - Build teacher confidence in reading assessment. (almost all staff requested this) - Further opportunities to share high quality reading lessons across ASG - Raise awareness of Curriculum improvement Cycle with a focus on literacy including new technical framework and language matters toolkit - Work with SaLt to raise awareness of universal strategy ~ Words Up and how this supports reading - Increase teacher confidence in supporting children with persistent literacy difficulties learning from our link Educational Psychologist. - Further invitation to feeder secondary school.	Link questionnaire here
Impact		
Almost all teachers demonstrate a level of increased confidence in moderating Reading (on a scale of 1:5 55% scaled 3 and above for increased confidence)		

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- 60 % of ASG teachers found CAT sessions useful.
- Staff told us they wanted further guidance around;
 - ~How lessons are structured and ideal lesson
 - ~5 components of reading:
 - ~phoneme awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension

Year 1 has led to a clearer plan for year 2 ~As school leaders we are aware that across ASG we have a spread of knowledge/ expertise.

Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

Merkinch Primary – PEF Impact Summary (Session 2024–25 → informing 2025–26)

Overall Impact

PEF funding has had a positive impact on closing attainment gaps, particularly in literacy, through targeted interventions, skilled staffing, and a strong focus on relationships and inclusion. Most children identified for support made measurable progress or achieved expected levels, with improved engagement and confidence across the school.

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1. Literacy Interventions

- Targeted P1–P7 literacy “boost” groups resulted in:
 - Majority of pupils making good progress or achieving expected levels
 - Strongest impact in early stages (P1–P3) where:
 - P2 and P3 pupils were all on track
 - Most P1 pupils on track, with others making clear progress
 - Across upper stages:
 - Significant proportions either on track or showing clear progress
 - Interventions were responsive (e.g. support reduced/stopped when no longer required)

2. Early Years & Play Pedagogy

- Implementation of Story Dough, Drawing Club, and Message Centre approaches:
 - Increased engagement in mark-making
 - Improved ability of children to retell stories
 - Staff confidence improved in some approaches (e.g. Story Dough), though variability remains
- PSA follow-up strengthened consistency of storytelling and language development

3. Leadership & Staff Capacity

- Staff led key priorities (RRS, digital learning, play pedagogy):
 - Increased leadership confidence across staff
 - Development of specialist practitioners (e.g. Story Dough leaders)

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- Professional learning supported improved classroom practice

4. ASN / Equity Support

- Targeted ASN support and planning:
 - Increased clarity around IEP needs and intervention planning
 - Some disruption due to staffing changes impacted consistency
- Planned increase in IEPs reflects improved identification of need

5. Inclusion, Engagement & Equity

- High proportion of pupils (approx. 92% identified as PEF/at risk) supported through universal and targeted approaches
- Increased participation in:
 - Learning
 - Wider achievement
 - Pupil voice and profiling
 -
- Highly effective targeted literacy interventions
- Strong relationships and consistent adult support
- Growing staff leadership and professional capacity
- Clear commitment to equity and inclusion across the school

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Wider achievements

Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

During session 2025–2026, Merkinch Primary School has continued to provide a wide range of high-quality wider achievement opportunities, contributing positively to learners' skills development, health and wellbeing, and overall attainment. These experiences support learners to develop the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and ensure they are included, engaged and achieving.

Learners have accessed a broad and inclusive offer including climbing at The Ledge, Family Club, Lego Club, Ukulele Club and Scripture Union. Participation in these activities has supported the development of confidence, creativity, resilience and teamwork, with increasing numbers of pupils engaging in activities beyond the classroom.

We have further strengthened our sports and leadership pathways, with pupils participating in basketball, football, shinty and ASG (Associated School Group) sporting events. Leadership opportunities such as Playground Leaders are having a positive impact on pupils' sense of responsibility, communication skills and contribution to school life. Our participation in NFL flag football has been a particular success, with pupils reaching the finals for two consecutive years, demonstrating commitment, teamwork and sustained achievement.

Outdoor learning is a focus, with learners benefiting from progressive experiences including a P6 day at Altnacriche and a P7 residential experience. These opportunities are supporting learners to develop independence, resilience and positive relationships. Targeted support has ensured that equity of access is central to residential opportunities. We are looking forward to developing our partnership working with Aban and have planned outdoor nurture sessions next year. We will move into year two of a partnership with CALA (Care and Learning Alliance), who have supported us in developing our outdoor space and invited some of our pupils to share our learning at a conference they were hosting.

During this session, we have also provided targeted wider achievement opportunities to support inclusion and wellbeing. This has included additional swimming sessions for identified children, art therapy, and access to a sensory bus, ensuring personalised support for those who benefit from alternative approaches to engagement and emotional regulation. P7 pupils have also participated in *Inspiring Young Voices*, contributing to opportunities for pupil voice, leadership and confidence building at a wider level.

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During this session, we have engaged in year one of the Growing Together programme, which is beginning to strengthen pupil leadership, collaboration and participation. Early evidence shows increased pupil voice and opportunities for learners to take on leadership roles in our ELC.

Our partnership working continues to enhance outcomes for learners. Collaboration with High Life Highland has enabled access to high-quality music experiences, including drumming and participation in the Highland Youth Choir. These opportunities, provided free of charge, have supported equity and inclusion by removing financial barriers. Partnerships with organisations such as Abban and Highland Boxing Academy have also contributed positively to pupils' health, wellbeing and confidence.

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Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

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

At Merkinch Primary, we have identified ongoing challenges in capturing parent voice through formal approaches. Historically, many parents have shown a reluctance to engage with structured consultation methods, preferring more informal opportunities to share their views. To respond to this, we have adopted creative strategies such as the use of “M&M tokens” alongside scaffolded support to encourage participation and make feedback more accessible.

In Session 2025–26, we further explored digital approaches to widen engagement. A Google Forms survey issued in Term 3 resulted in approximately 10% uptake. In Term 4, we trialled a mobile phone text-based survey to increase accessibility; however, this approach yielded a lower response rate of around 5%. While engagement across both methods remains limited, the feedback gathered has provided valuable insight.

From this small but informative data set, we recognise a need to strengthen parents’ understanding of our approaches to learning and teaching, as well as how they can support their children’s learning at home. This has emerged as a key area for improvement in our parental engagement strategy.

In addition, discussions with a small focus group of parents highlighted specific barriers related to contributing to high-quality assessment processes. Parents shared that being asked to write comments during parent appointments can feel pressured and unclear, with many unsure of what is expected of them. This feedback has prompted further investigation into local authority expectations and best practice in eliciting meaningful parent voice.

As a result, we have identified the need to adapt our approach to gathering parental input in assessment and reporting. A revised process, designed to reduce pressure and provide clearer guidance for families, is planned for implementation in Session 2026–27. This will aim to build confidence, improve the quality of parent contributions, and strengthen partnerships between home and school.

Overall, while participation rates remain an area for development, we are using evidence from engagement activities to inform targeted improvements and ensure that parent voice is more inclusive, meaningful, and effective.

In Session 2025–26, pupil voice at Merkinch Primary has been meaningfully developed through a focused improvement priority on playground spaces. Whole-school engagement was achieved through the use of assemblies, providing an inclusive platform for all classes to contribute ideas and take part in collaborative discussion and planning. This approach ensured that every child had the opportunity to influence decisions about their environment.

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Through this process, children demonstrated a clear ability to articulate their preferences and needs. They contributed thoughtfully to the zoning of the playground, identifying how different areas could support a range of play experiences, and suggested resources that would enhance inclusion, creativity and physical activity. This highlights growing pupil awareness of wellbeing, fairness and shared space, as well as their capacity to engage in participatory decision-making.

We use floor book style collection of pupil voice and talking mats.



Merkinch Primary ~ SU Group Pupil Feedback 2025/26

Feedback taken 2/6/26

This report provides a summary of pupil feedback gathered from 13 children who completed SU Group feedback forms during the 2025/26 session. The purpose of the report is to highlight levels of enjoyment, the aspects of the SU Group that pupils value most, and the main suggestions for future development.

Headline Statistics

Measure	Result
Number of feedback forms completed	13

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Pupils giving the highest enjoyment response	12 out of 13 (92%)
Pupils giving a moderate enjoyment response	1 out of 13 (8%)
Most frequently mentioned valued aspects	Friends, crafts and fun
Most common requests for improvement	More outdoor activities and swimming opportunities

Most Valued Aspects of SU Group

Aspect valued by pupils	Evidence from feedback
Friendships	Mentioned by all 13
Crafts	Mentioned by 12
Positive and enjoyable atmosphere	The word “fun” was the most frequently repeated
Staff and leadership	Leaders were mentioned positively by 5 pupils
Bible content	Bible-related activities were mentioned positively by 4 pupils

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

We have submitted our class structures and level of need to the authority team with a request for an additional class teacher. This will support us in our improvement journey.

Key priorities for improvement planning

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Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

Raising Attainment
Play Pedagogy
ASG reading Moderation

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 school Facebook page @ officialmerkinchprimary or by contacting the school office.

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