

Lybster Primary School Report

August 2026

A further inspection visit to Lybster Primary took place in March 2025, following a previous inspection of the school by HMIE in January 2024. The following main points for action were identified as a result:

Area of Improvement 1

Improve approaches across the school and nursery to make necessary changes at the right time. Involve children, parents, and staff fully in identifying improvements focused on maximizing pupil progress.

- Within the ELC, the service's vision, values and aims are now reflected in positive and nurturing staff practice and interactions with children, supporting inclusion and effective learning. This has been seen during authority visits and is reflected in the most recent CI report (June 26).
- Within the primary school, the vision, values and aims are in place but are not yet embedded. Further work is required to fully integrate the school vision and values across all aspects of school life.
- Significant progress has been made in developing quality assurance processes within the ELC, as evidenced by their robust quality assurance calendar which is used to support improvement, for example through effective support and supervision arrangements and the introduction of more systematic monitoring and self-evaluation processes. This is leading to identifiable improvements for children, including responsive interactions and improved experiences.
- The primary school also has a formalised quality assurance process; however, this is not yet being fully implemented. Sufficient progress has not yet been made in using observations and work sampling to identify next steps and areas for improvement.
- Within the ELC, parents are encouraged to share their views and to take an active role in contributing to developments within the setting. This has led to parents feeling welcomed and that their feedback is listened to, as evidenced in recent CI questionnaires and feedback.
- Within the primary school, opportunities for the wider school community to actively shape school improvement are expanding through open afternoons, parent council meetings and the use of questionnaires. The school is gathering powerful information via these opportunities but is not yet able to evidence how they are using this to drive improvement.
- Within the ELC, there are now distributed leadership opportunities which are driving improvement across the service – for example, staff taking a lead in providing mark making opportunities and in developing nurturing and safe lunchtime routines, based on the PDSA model.
- The school has not made evidential progress with identifying and developing leadership opportunities beyond the initial stage of forming pupil groups. Due to staff absences, the expected progress has not been made in this area; there is also a need for the identification and support of further opportunities for staff to take on leadership opportunities linked to their own professional development.

- Pupil Equity Funding has been deployed to fund additional support staff, focusing on health and wellbeing interventions aimed at eliminating barriers to learning. However, work is required to ensure there are appropriate systems in place to justify the identified focus and to evidence impact.

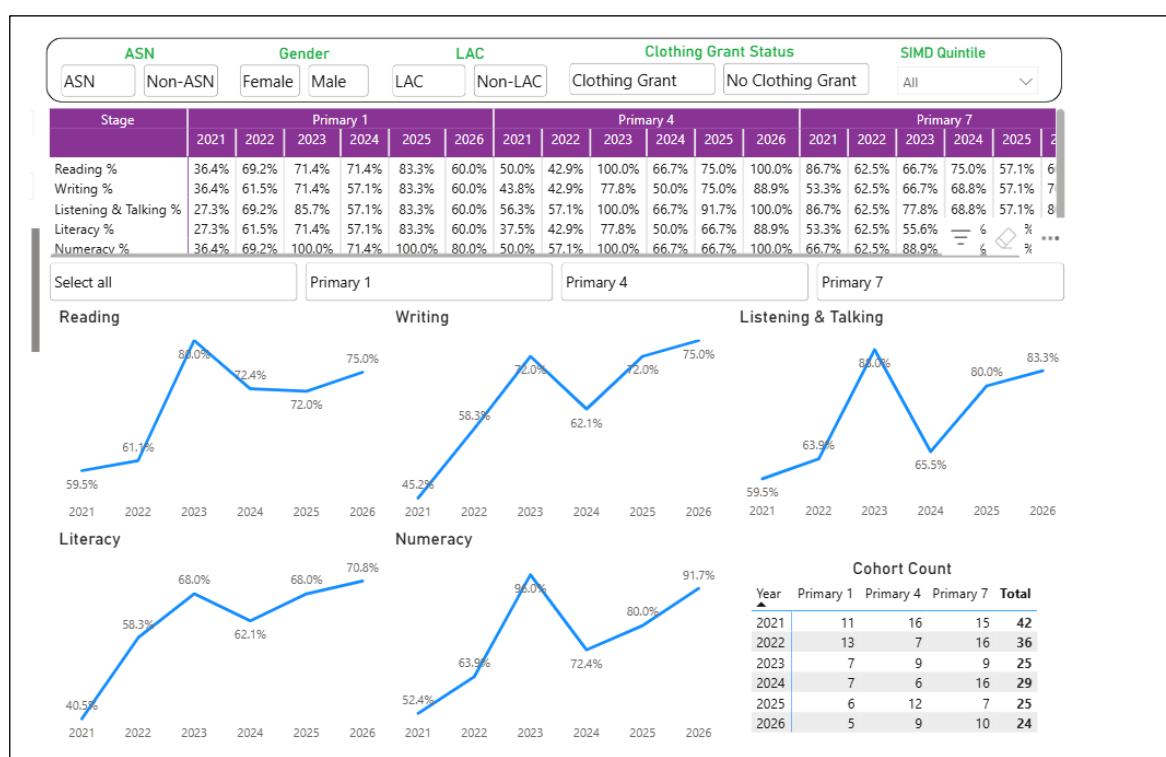
Area for Improvement 2

Improve learning, teaching, and assessment to ensure all children experience consistently high-quality learning that is challenging, motivating, and set at the right level.

- Within the ELC, children experience consistently high-quality learning experiences, which are set at the right level for them, as evidenced during authority visits and the recent CI inspection. Staff know the children well and use this to develop plans and opportunities for learning to be extended through play and other experiences, following the curiosity approach.
- The school's learning & teaching policy also provides a positive framework for change and improvement but is not yet embedded across the school, meaning there is not yet a consistent approach towards improving learning and teaching. Teachers are sometimes using technology in a planned way to motivate and encourage learning - e.g. through the creation of digital comic strips, and through real-life STEM contexts, such as a recent carbon capture project, to drive motivation. Work is required to ensure effective planning is in place which promotes engagement and attainment.
- A whole-school marking policy has been implemented which is promoting consistency for learners. Children receive feedback and praise in almost all lessons; however, this is not yet sufficiently aligned to individual learning to fully support progress and development. There is insufficient evidence yet to show an increase in pace or challenge.

Area for Improvement 3

Improve children's progress and attainment across the curriculum, with a clear focus on literacy and numeracy,



- Over the past year, progress has been made in all areas of literacy and in numeracy, which is also reflected overall in progress over time. For example, since 2022, attainment within writing has risen from 49% to 75%, and within numeracy, from 52.4% to 91.7%.
- The primary tracking and monitoring system allows staff to track core aspects of children's progress and attainment; this requires further development to evidence the impact of interventions and to cover wider areas including health and wellbeing and to track skills.
- A number of staff have taken part in training for the National Improvement in Writing Programme and are using Highland Literacy and Numeracy Progressions. There is a need for a more consistent approach towards introducing and using these across the school, to support the development of effective pedagogical approaches towards literacy and numeracy.

Area for Improvement 4

In the nursery, senior leaders should develop a robust system to track children's progress in learning. This should include an overview of the progress children have made since starting nursery.

- Within the ELC, staff have made positive efforts to improve approaches to tracking children's progress in learning, as evidenced by authority visits and the recent CI report. This is increasingly supporting children's progress. Staff are making better use of observations and developmental information to meet individual pupil needs. ELC tracking now extends into First Level to capture higher-ability pathways.
- Care Plans are reviewed on a monthly basis and Developmental Overviews are updated continuously, supporting staff to meet children's needs.
- Practitioners use children's individual profiles to record children's wider achievements and how this is supporting them to progress in their learning. The transition to paper-based profiles has boosted family engagement and tracking accuracy.
- Staff have begun explicitly highlighting skills for lifelong learning during daily interactions and now need to develop tracking of skill development and participation within wider activities.
- Parents work in strong partnership with the setting and are encouraged to contribute towards their child's learning and experiences. There is scope for further strengthening communication so parents receive meaningful updates on their child's progress.

CONCLUSION

Lybster ELC has made strong progress since the publication of HMIE's letter in 2025; the authority is confident that this will continue. The school has not yet made the expected progress and is aware that urgent improvement is required across each of the 4 areas identified within this Report. The newly appointed Acting Head Teacher will be supported by the Area Quality Improvement Team to achieve this.

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