



sustainable thriving achieving

East Dunbartonshire Council

www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk



Hillhead Primary School
Standards and Quality Report
2025/26

Context of the School

Hillhead Primary School is situated in the heart of the community of Hillhead within Kirkintilloch. The school was opened in 1956 and its traditional classrooms and corridors have recently been given a refresh. The building consists of 5 classrooms, a library, a large Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), central hall which hosts PE lessons, a newly developed garden, a Nurture space (affectionately named by pupils as the Calm Cocoon), a family room which consists of a fully functioning kitchen and a learning support room. The school grounds and surrounding greenspaces around the local community are used for outdoor learning experiences and wellbeing activities at all stages.

Our school is a non-denominational, coeducational school which caters for children from Primary 1 to Primary 7. Our current school roll is 81 with 5 classes. At the end of Primary 7, most children at Hillhead Primary transition to Kirkintilloch High School.

Our staffing complement consists of 9.36 full-time equivalent teachers and which includes the Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher, Principal Teacher, 6 class teachers, a Nurture Teacher and an Educational Support Teacher. Our school contains a nurture space which is fondly known as 'The Calm Cocoon' which is the base for our Nurture Teacher and Family Learning Assistant. The school is well supported by a dedicated team of staff.

At Hillhead Primary School and Early Years Centre, our vision is to provide education and care in our nurturing, inclusive school where every child feels they belong, is respected for who they are, and supported to grow, learn and thrive together, as one community. In recent years, we have been successful in achieving our Silver Reading Award and are currently working towards our Gold Reading Award, UNCRC Bronze Award and Bronze Sports Award.

We aim to provide a number of extra-curricular activities. This year our children enjoyed football, dance, curling and skateboarding afterschool clubs as well as daily lunchtime clubs taken from suggestions by the children themselves. We work closely with our colleagues at Active Schools and SFA Coaching to provide new and exciting opportunities and listen closely to the voices of our children through our councils and committees. Pupil participation is encouraged through our committees which consist of Eco, Inclusion, Jnr Management Team, Reading, UNCRC, Health & Wellbeing and Junior Road Safety.

Although officially recognised as part of Kirkintilloch town in East Dunbartonshire, Hillhead functions as a distinct neighbourhood. The population predominately resides within an area described as deprived according to data from the Scottish Index of Multi-Deprivation. The majority of children are currently entitled to free school meals and clothing grant.

In session 2025-26, the school received £48090.00 from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support the Scottish Government's ambition to close the poverty related attainment gap through the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Hillhead Primary has an active Parent Teacher Association and is in the process of establishing a Parent Council. Our parent body plays a crucial role in advocating for our children, fostering parent involvement and providing opportunities for our children. Our families are very supportive of our school and together we are unwavering in our dedication to provide positive experiences and outcomes for both the school and its community.

We strive to foster a collaborative and welcoming environment for parents and carers to engage with the school where they feel valued and supported. We provide pupil progress reports through Parents' Evenings in October and May and provide a written report in March. Throughout the year, parents and carers can also attend Learning Workshops along with other curricular events. We gather their views through various forms of questionnaires, surveys and feedback forms.

We share children's work through the online learning platform Seesaw, focus assemblies, school performances and open evenings. Our corridors celebrate children's success and demonstrate the wide range of exciting experiences and opportunities Hillhead Primary provides.

Our attendance is closely monitored, as at Hillhead Primary we are aware that good rates of attendance are vital for children's learning, wellbeing, and wider development, supporting their long-term educational outcomes.

This report was created in partnership with learners, parents, staff and partners through gathering their views, direct observation of practice and looking at a range of data and evidence.

Our Vision, Value & Aims & Curriculum Rationale



HILLHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

VISION

In our nurturing, inclusive school, every child feels they belong, is respected for who they are, and is supported to grow, learn and thrive – together, as one community.

VALUES



ACHIEVEMENT



KINDNESS



RESPECT



RESILIENCE

AIMS

Through a nurturing, consistent approach, and a focus on positive relationships, we aim to ensure every child feels included, supported and able to thrive emotionally and socially – living out our values of kindness and respect in all interactions.

We aim to provide motivating high-quality learning and teaching that develops skills for learning, life, and work, enabling every child to experience achievement, build resilience in the face of setbacks, and develop a growth mindset.

NURTURE GROWTH & INSPIRE LEARNING AT HILLHEAD

HILLHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nurturing Growth, Inspiring Learning



WELLBEING & BELONGING

Prioritising mental health, emotional security, and a sense of belonging. Creating safe spaces where every child feels valued, respected, and heard.

LITERACY & COMMUNICATION

Embedding strong reading, writing, and speaking skills across all subjects. Empowering pupils to express themselves confidently in diverse contexts.

NUMERACY & PROBLEM SOLVING

Building practical maths skills for real-life application. Encouraging logical thinking, curiosity, and perseverance.

EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

We believe every child, regardless of background, deserves a rich, inspiring education that nurtures their talents, builds resilience, and opens doors to future success.

RESILIENCE & GROWTH MINDSET

Encouraging pupils to embrace challenges and learn from setbacks. Celebrating effort, progress, and personal achievement.

LIFE SKILLS & ASPIRATIONS

Teaching financial literacy, digital literacy skills, and career awareness. Connecting learning to real-world opportunities and role models.

CREATIVITY & CULTURAL CAPITAL

Providing rich experiences in arts, music, drama, and design. Broadening horizons through trips, visitors, and community projects.

COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP

Working closely with families, local organisations, and support services. Strengthening the school as a hub of hope and opportunity.

At Hillhead Primary, nurturing relationships, inclusive practice and high-quality learning and teaching create meaningful experiences and opportunities for all. Our curriculum develops children who are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

OUR CURRICULUM IS BUILT ON:

♥ Nurturing Relationships 🤝 Inclusion & Equity ⭐ High Expectations 🌐 Community Partnerships



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(SIP) priorities

School Priority 1	
Improvement in equity and wellbeing through the CIRCLE Framework & UNCRC	
NIF Priority	HIGIOS?4 QIs
Improvement in children's health and wellbeing. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children. Placing human rights and need of every child at the centre.	1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection 3.1 Wellbeing, equality and inclusion
Progress and Impact	



C CHILD
I INCLUSION
R RESEARCH INTO
C CURRICULUM
L LEARNING
E EDUCATION

The school made very good progress in improving inclusive learning through the CIRCLE model, sustaining and building on the achievements of year 1. We used the Framework to continue our development of inclusive practices to support the wellbeing and progress of all learners. We also aimed to improve our provision of nurture in order to better support the wellbeing needs of our children and our families.

All staff participated in CIRCLE Framework training and built on last year's focus on improving the learning environment to support inclusion through improved structures and routines. In August, all staff repeated the good practice of auditing their classroom using the CIRCLE Inclusive Practice Scale (CIPS), identified next steps and created an action plan. Our Inclusion Committee collected pupil and staff voice in regards to 'non-negotiables' which have led to consistent approaches across the school in morning and end of day routines, resource signposting and structured wellbeing approaches and check-ins. This was strengthened by feedback from our educational psychologist who completed individual Pupil



Participation Scales for children on targeted support plans in order to provide further advice to teachers. The predictability and routine of the school day, along with clear expectations has had a marked improvement on emotional regulation. As a result of these measures – inclusion has visibly improved – the general noise levels within the school have reduced, conflicts have decreased and staff have noted that many children are now proactively supporting peers who might otherwise be marginalised. We are on the road to turning inclusion from an ideal to daily lived experience.

Pupil voice has been central to elevating children's rights awareness across the school. Through the creation of a dedicated pupil ambassador group (UNCRC Committee), termly whole school assemblies and planned curricular lessons and activities linked to the UNCRC, all children have moved from being passive recipients to active advocates of their rights. We are beginning to embed rights-respecting language and each class has a co-created class charter. Primary 7 members of the UNCRC Committee attended all sessions of the EDC initiative 'My Voice, My Choice' and we have recently submitted our application for the Bronze UNCRC Award.

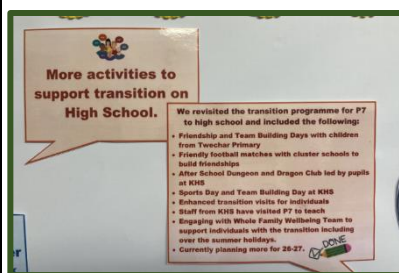


We have developed two new nurture spaces within the school. The Calm Cocoon which is our newly established Nurture Base and a second area which serves as a nurture space for children and parents to meet with outside agencies for example, counsellors, outreach specialists and social workers.



We introduced whole school wellbeing weeks to address emotional needs, creating a safe foundation for learning following a break from school. These were led by the Nurture Teacher and provided children with opportunities to re-establish and fostering new strong connections with their peers and teachers

and to reconnect with the school as a safe, supportive learning environment. This was very popular with pupils and parents and feedback was extremely positive. This will be further developed next session.



Collected views and opinions of parents and carers were used to create a 'You Said, We Did!' communication board. One popular request was to provide children with opportunities beyond the boundaries of the Hillhead Community. We made sure that every child in the school attended one academic outing linked to their class learning, one excursion which focussed on

supporting wellbeing and one cultural outing. This supported our pupils' wellbeing by providing a break from classroom routines and supporting key wellbeing and social needs. Time in nature was used to share experiences to strengthen peer relationships and teacher – pupil connections. Children were encouraged to try new activities, problem-solve, and manage risk, fostering a sense of achievement and self-efficacy. For pupils who rarely experience trips outside their neighbourhood, these excursions provided equal access to cultural and natural spaces, reducing feelings of exclusion and boosting self-worth.



This year we have developed new links with Twechar Primary School. Both schools have a small roll and are destined to transition to the same secondary school, therefore we have begun and will continue to build new friendships to support transition to high school.

"I made a new friend and I can't wait to meet up with her again at Kirkintilloch High School!"
"It was great working with the other children from Twechar Primary. I hope we get to meet up again before high school."

Moving forward, we have planned a joint residential trip for Primary 7 and will expand the joint ventures across the wider school community.

School Priority 2

Raising attainment in Reading through improved Learning and Assessment.

NIF Priority	HIGIOS?4 QIs
Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.	2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.	3.2 Raising Attainment in Achievement

Progress and Impact

This session, we have continued to develop our approaches to raising attainment in reading through an ongoing focus on teaching approaches, interventions and assessments.

New approaches continue to raise the profile of reading across the school, building upon and extending curriculum development work carried out in 2024-25. We purchased PM Benchmarking Assessments which enabled us to assess every pupil within the school, giving us valuable feedback to support teacher judgement and to plan appropriately to raise attainment. New Reading Recovery and Support Resources included Rainbow Readers and Rapid Readers which increased pupil confidence, accuracy and independence.



Almost all class teachers reported a positive shift in pupil enthusiasm and motivation for reading and, in turn, targeted pupil attainment has improved in almost all areas of the curriculum. The authority Reading Recovery trained teacher (also Literacy Lead) has also been able to provide targeted support for identified pupils resulting in a marked improvement in progress in reading. She has also worked with some teaching staff to ensure sustainability in interventions and targeted support.



The school has continued its journey towards the Gold Reading Award and has recently submitted our application. Our Reading Committee members have played an active role in the promotion of a reading culture across the school. They have worked with our Literacy Champion to maintain the school library, host whole-school Assemblies and events and used their pupil voice when choosing new reading material for our school library and classes.

All classes access our school library at least once a week. Parents and families came to school for 'Family Story Sessions' and P1-3 Read, Write, Count gifting sessions.

Partnership working with our local library has continued this year supporting our whole-school celebrations such as 'Scottish Book Week' or 'World Book Day', and our 'Read Around the Christmas Tree' family event in December.

A reading Café lunchtime club was established and proved to be very popular leading to many of those attending working with the committee to create and display book recommendations in community spaces and windows.



By the end of the school year every class will have had been to visit our local library in Kirkintilloch and two pupils from Primary 6 represented our school at the Ambassador Showcase Event in February.

We have shared our progress with colleagues from across our local authority, and arranged peer visits between cluster schools as part of moderation work and to share good practice. Our P6 children also visited the local care home where they have established 'Reading Pen Pals' with the residents, who have shared how keen they are for our children to return.



Evaluations have been completed on several occasions by pupils and staff in relation to reading engagement throughout the year where results have shown a defined shift of attitude in most pupils who now view reading in a more positive manner.

All of the events noted and interventions put in place have had a positive impact on attainment, with our combined ACEL data for reading showing a 10% increase from last year. We feel well placed to continue to build on this moving into next session.

Progress in National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities

Attainment and Achievement Data

Curriculum for Excellence Levels at the end of June 2024				
	Reading	Writing	Talking & Listening	Numeracy & Mathematics
Early level by end of P1	majority	majority	majority	majority
First level by end of P4	less than half	less than half	less than half	less than half
Second level by end of P7	majority	most	majority	less than half

Placing the human needs and rights of every child and young person at the centre of education

At Hillhead Primary School, we place the human needs, rights, wellbeing and dignity of every child and young person at the centre of our educational practice. Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we are committed to ensuring that every child is listened to, valued, respected and supported to achieve their full potential, regardless of their circumstances or background. Our use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) reflects this commitment. We use PEF strategically to reduce barriers to learning, address inequalities and improve outcomes for children and young people experiencing disadvantage. Decisions about support are informed by evidence, the individual needs and voices of learners, and our understanding of the barriers that may affect their participation, wellbeing, attainment and achievement. By placing children's rights, equity and inclusion at the heart of decision-making, we aim to create a school community where every child feels they belong, has their voice heard and has an equal opportunity to learn, succeed and flourish.

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

The school was awarded £48090.00 in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) which has enabled the school to strengthen its commitment to equity, closing the poverty-related attainment and wellbeing gap. By prioritising health, wellbeing, and nurture, we have created a supportive, trauma-informed environment where every child—particularly those facing disadvantage—feels safe, regulated, and ready to learn.

Key interventions include the Hamish and Milo programme, which has benefited individuals and small groups of children through its emotionally literate approach to friendship, resilience, and self-esteem. Following engagement with the CIRCLE Framework, calm corners in every classroom have been resourced to provide quiet space for self-regulation, reducing incidents of distress and improving concentration.



This year we introduced 'Wellbeing Weeks' to address emotional needs and create a safe foundation for learning following a break from school. This enabled us to re-establish and foster new strong connections between children with their peers and teachers to create a safe, supportive learning environment, engage

with children and families to understand what has happened in the child's home life and community during the holidays, using this insight to rebuild a sense of belonging and clearly communicate the year's goals and address any gaps in learning to reduce anxiety. For those seeking movement and challenge, taekwondo taster sessions, dance lessons and skateboarding workshops offered thrills and a chance to build resilience. Meanwhile, STEM challenges including *'Egg-cellent Engineering Challenge'* partnered older pupils with younger to collaborate, problem-solve, and celebrate the process of trial and error. Feedback from staff and families was positive with children involved in the evaluation of the events success and planning of next steps to improve.

I wasn't so worried about coming back to school because we had a fun eek ahead!

I learnt this week that my mental health is just as important as

I enjoyed the fruit tasting the most. I liked the Honeydew melon the most, it tasted juicy and soft in my

I really hope that this is what we do when we come back from every holiday! So many different things to look forward to doing!



In February this year we introduced nurture board games to support improved emotional literacy and Attendance Talking Mats Cards to help children in sharing and articulating barriers which can prevent them from attending school, allowing for bespoke plans to be created. Attendance this year has increased by 4% with more families engaging in support offered to improve their child's overall attendance at school.

Wellbeing excursions have offered enriched experiences to pupils who may otherwise miss out, building confidence and social skills. PEF was used to booking and resourcing after-school sports clubs to offer free extra-curricular activities, removing the financial barrier for families.

Across the whole-school we have seen a measurable reduction in behaviour issues, improved attendance rates, and increased pupil feedback rating feelings of safety, belonging, and happiness. In summary, the intentional deployment of Pupil Equity Funding has not only provided resources but has fundamentally shifted our culture towards nurture, equity, and proactive wellbeing—benefiting every pupil.

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

The strategic allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been instrumental in providing equity in order to raise attainment in reading across the school. By purchasing resources which specifically target early

identification and structured support allowing us to reduce barriers to reading acquisition for our most vulnerable learners.

A significant portion of PEF was invested in a suite of reading resources and intervention programmes designed to create a consistent, progressive approach from the early years through to upper primary. This has enabled the school to move beyond a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model to a responsive, targeted support system.

PEF was used to help mitigate the cost of the school day and reduce financial barriers that could prevent children from fully participating in school life. The funding was used to support access to essential learning resources including new concrete maths boxes for every class, Play2Learn resources for infants, class trips linked to class topics and to provide a residential experience for our Primary 7 children. This support helps promote positive outcomes for every child at Hillhead Primary School. This approach reflects our commitment to the UNCRC Article 28 - the right to education.



Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Overall attainment across the school has improved, with a greater number of children working within the expected Curriculum for Excellence level. This improvement reflects a clear focus on using assessment evidence to identify individual learning needs, gaps in learning and inform planning and teaching.

Analysis of attainment data over time demonstrates *****

Small class numbers mean that just one pupil can lower the percentile considerably.

P1 Comparison	Reading	Writing	L&T	Numeracy
Primary 1 - 2024/25	58% 7 out of 12	41% 7 out of 12	75% 7 out of 12	58% 7 out of 12
Primary 1 - 2025/26	84% 11 out of 13	77% 10 out of 13	84% 11 out of 13	84% 11 out of 13

P4 Comparison	Reading	Writing	L&T	Numeracy
Primary 4 - 2024/25	47% 8 out of 17	29% 5 out of 17	82% 14 out of 17	41% 7 out of 17
Primary 4 - 2025/26	33% 2 out of 6	0% 0 out of 6	0% 0 out of 6	17% 1 out of 6

P7 Comparison	Reading	Writing	L&T	Numeracy
Primary 7 - 2024/25	55% 6 out of 11	45% 5 out of 11	64% 7 out of 11	55% 6 out of 11
Primary 7 – 2025/26	72% 13 out of 18	61% 7 out of 18	72% 13 out of 18	44% 8 out of 18

While attainment data for the school remains below the national average in some areas, there is clear and encouraging evidence of a positive improvement over time. The school has strengthened its approaches to assessment, tracking and monitoring. Longitudinal analysis demonstrates that an increasing proportion of pupils are achieving expected levels particularly in reading and listening & talking. With a noticeable improvement across all curricular areas at Primary 1. This improvement is significant within the context of the school.

We recognise that there remains a gap between attainment and national outcomes, however, the direction of travel is positive and the focus is now on sustaining the trajectory of this improvement.

Hillhead Primary is committed to ensuring that attainment continues to improve and that all pupils, irrespective of background or circumstance are supported to achieve.

The school continues to analysis attainment data carefully, working collaboratively with staff to identify areas for improvement and ensure that all pupils are appropriately supported and challenged. There is a clear message from senior leaders that Hillhead Primary has an on-going commitment to closing attainment gaps and ensuring that every child is supported to reach their full potential and

Impact of Interventions for Equity and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

At Hillhead Primary we have used our PEF money to purchase resources and develop areas of our school grounds and building to raise attainment and meet the needs of all learners. Overall, our school has seen a rise in attainment across almost all stages, directly attributable to the strategic deployment of Pupil Equity Funding to provide evidence-based assessments which support teacher judgement to pinpoint specific barriers and gaps in learning, phonics and numeracy resources, Play2Learn items, programmes of work and targeted interventions. We have also introduced a new phonic programme in Primary 1 which will be rolled out through infants over the next three years. Recent assessment data has shown a significant rise in pupils recorded as 'On Track' across literacy and numeracy in comparison to previous cohorts.

The new Rapid Readers programme is used with identified upper primary learners working below expected levels. The non-childish content has supported them to re-engage, while the structured repetition closes specific gaps in comprehension and automaticity.



The 5-Minute Phonics Box has been delivered daily to all pupils in P1 and three times weekly to pupils in P2 and P3. These timed, review boxes are used for daily 'keep-up, not catch-up' sessions and have allowed support staff to rapidly consolidate phonics throughout the infant classes.

Data from the P1 attainment figures shows a 26% increase in learners achieving Early Level Reading before the end of P1 and a 17% increase of those achieving Second Level before the end of P7.

The PEF investment in reading resources has been transformative, shifting our pedagogy from reactive support to proactive, equitable provision.

Self-evaluations of How Good Is Our School? (4th edition)

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation	Inspection/ Authority evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good	not applicable
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good	not applicable
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	Satisfactory

Summary of School Improvement priorities for Session 2026/27

- **Wellbeing & Inclusion**
Continue to embed CIRCLE Framework (Motivation), Improve Attendance, and Building Confidence & Resilience.
- **Improving Our Pedagogy**
Raising Attainment and Achievement in Numeracy through high quality learning, teaching and assessment.

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

Staff at Hillhead Primary are committed to high standards and improving outcomes for our children and their families. We aim to build on the momentum gained this year and will continue to strive to engage all our parents and carers in the life and work of the school to providing the best education for all pupils.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is developed in line with local authority guidelines and time is allocated with the collegiate agreement to ensure key priorities are addressed. Progress on its implementation is continually reviewed and carefully monitored to ensure continuous improvement.

This year we have made very good progress on our SIP priorities and this is evidenced through well planned and relevant self-evaluation procedures and a wide range of evidence imbedded in qualitative and quantitative data. We regularly reflect on current practice and evaluate new initiatives we have introduced, identifying key strengths and areas for future improvement.

We are committed to improving our self-evaluation and quality assurance practices to ensure they are accurate, rigorous and robust, based on reliable and comprehensive data and information. Staff have a good understanding of the school's social and economic context and they recognise that all staff must work together to create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment.