

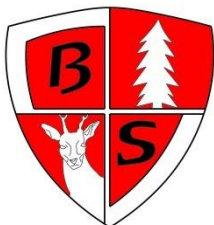


# STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AITHISG INBHEAN IS CÀILEACHD

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**2023-2024**

**Balnain Primary School**



# Introduction: Local and National Context

## Ro-ràdh: Co-theacsa 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 [HGIOELC](#)
- [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 90%	75% - 90%	50% - 74%	15% - 49%	Up to 15%

We are pleased to present our Standards and Quality Report for Session 2023-24. This report forms part of our quality improvement framework and 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 our practice. 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

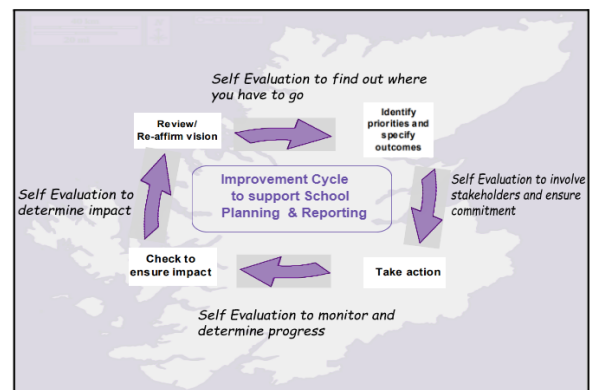
Looking to others for new ideas that challenge our practice and support continuous improvement allows us to learn from what works and what doesn't. This includes practice in other schools, learning communities and learning from educational research.

#### 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 daonna a' faicinn na Gàidhealtachd mar dhachaigh.

Mrs Julie MacLeod  
Head Teacher  
Balnain Primary School

## School Profile

### Pròifil na Sgoile

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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**  
96.1%

**Average Class Size**  
14

**Meeting PE Target**  
Target Met

**Pupil Numbers**  
14

**Teacher Numbers**  
2

**Pupil Teacher Ratio**  
9:3

Balnain Primary School is a small rural school, situated in the picturesque community of Glen Urquhart.

There are 14 children attending the school ranging from P1 – P6. Pupils are taught together in a multi-composite class.

The headteacher has overall leadership responsibility for Balnain Primary School and has a teaching commitment. The headteacher is supported by a class teacher who also provides Management Time. A part time PSA and Clerical Assistant also support our school, along with our Additional Support for Learning Teacher.

As the school roll comprises a small number of children, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is to ensure the identity of individuals is not disclosed.

Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. Children achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy and, across the school, a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Almost all children who face barriers to learning are making very good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Overall children are making the following progress:

**Reading**

Very good progress

**Writing**

Very good progress

**Listening and talking**

Very good progress

**Numeracy**

Very good progress

We have had no exclusions this year.

## School vision, values and aims

### Lèirsinn, luachan agus amasan na sgoile

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#### **Our Vision:**

To provide motivating learning experiences to develop our pupils' skills and talents which will prepare them for learning, life and work in the future. We will do this within a supportive, challenging and safe environment where everyone is valued and respected. At Balnain Primary School, we work together in a caring community to bring out the best in each other and support all of our learners to achieve their best in life.

#### **We aim to do this by:**

- Providing a safe, welcoming, caring and happy environment where all children are valued as individuals and have their rights respected.
- Ensuring that our pupils are listened to and are actively involved in their learning.
- Developing positive relationships based on respect for each other with a focus on inclusion and equality.
- Providing an engaging and challenging curriculum with opportunities to develop every child's personality, talents, and abilities to the full, encouraging achievement and celebrating success.
- Working with community partners to offer exciting, engaging and relevant learning experiences.
- Preparing pupils for their lifelong journey of learning and help them develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in the future.
- Developing an awareness of the world of work.
- Providing a sense of local community, culture and heritage.
- Connecting our learners to the wider world, beyond our local community, to learn about global issues and encouraging them to be respectful of diversity in the world.
- Encouraging an active, healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, showing care and respect for the natural environment.
- Evaluating and reflecting on our work regularly and identifying areas for improvement.

#### **Our school values are:**

Kindness    Respect    Creativity    Teamwork

## Review of progress for session

### Ath-sgrùdadh air adhartas airson an t-seisein

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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:

### Literacy for All

**Purpose:** To help raise attainment and achievement for all in literacy. Staff will gain an awareness and working knowledge of the core information in Highland Council's 'Literacy for All in a World of Neurodiversity' resource. Staff will develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the three wave model, as well as develop confidence in identifying, teaching and supporting children with a persistent literacy difficulty. Staff will become more confident to identify dyslexia and staff will be more able to support individuals with persistent literacy difficulties to help raise attainment in literacy.

#### **Progress:**

- ✓ Staff attended online training sessions for Literacy for All.

#### **Impact:**

- ✓ Staff have gained an awareness of the online resources available within Literacy for All to

Kindness    Respect    Teamwork    Creativity

- ✓ Staff have engaged in professional dialogue with Literacy Development Officer to discuss the new process identification of dyslexia.
- ✓ Staff have worked with ASNT to gather evidence and analyse data for 2 pupils who present with persistent literacy difficulties.
- ✓ Staff have worked with professional partners in the Speech and Language Team and have shared evidence gathered in school for 2 pupils.
- ✓ Staff have explored other resources to support children with specific difficulties e.g. CIRCLE resource.
- ✓ School assessment calendar has been reviewed and updated.
- ✓ Attainment tracker has been reviewed and updated, with Literacy Trackers being used to track individuals with literacy difficulties.
- ✓ Regular attainment meetings have been scheduled throughout the year in the CAT calendar.
- support individuals, track progress & identify difficulties.
- ✓ Staff feel more able to identify dyslexia and underlying issues that are preventing a learner from mastering aspects of literacy. This will lead to staff meeting learner needs more effectively to raise pupil attainment.
- ✓ Staff have developed a working knowledge of how to gather evidence and record in a tracker, which has led to an increase in confidence to continue this process with other pupils in future to create a whole school approach to tracking literacy difficulties from P1 to P7.
- ✓ This has led to further professional dialogue with the SALT team, who have followed up with further language assessments for individuals to identify underlying issues and target support. Results of SALT assessments have been shared with staff with recommendations of how best to support individuals. This ensures that all teaching staff and PSAs know how best to support individuals with literacy needs.
- ✓ Staff are now more aware of other specific literacy difficulties in addition to dyslexia, such as Developmental Language Delay (DLD) and difficulties that can present with an English as an Additional Language (EAL) profile. As a result, staff have gained knowledge on how to provide further support for individuals to help raise attainment for all.
- ✓ Assessments take place throughout the school year with regular attainment tracking, monitoring and reviewing. This has led to an improvement in the quality of support we give our learners, therefore enabling us to raise attainment in literacy for all our learners.
- ✓ Good progress was made in this area.

#### Next steps:

- The member of staff who has completed training in Literacy for All will continue to share knowledge with new members of teaching staff and PSAs. This will be planned for during Inservice training next session.
- To develop whole school approach, with Literacy for All trackers being used to record evidence and track pupils who have difficulties in literacy from P1-P7 from next session 2024/2025.
- To begin to use Blackwell Spelling Assessments annually from 2024/2025 to align with ASG, in addition to Schonell Spelling Test that school is currently using.
- Develop school guidelines on approach to persistent literacy difficulties.
- Further support parents of learners with persistent literacy difficulties by sharing links to new resources on Literacy for All, and having these links available on our school website.

## Listening & Talking

**Purpose:** To raise attainment in literacy, focusing on listening and talking. To increase staff confidence in using professional judgement of a CfE level. Teachers will plan wider opportunities for children to develop and use their skills in listening and talking. Staff will become more confident in planning, teaching and using a variety of assessment approaches for listening and talking to support professional judgement of attainment and CfE levels achieved. Staff will become more familiar with listening and talking benchmarks and this will lead to attainment being raised in listening and talking.

### Progress:

- ✓ Staff completed Listening & Talking training.
- ✓ Children have participated in workshop on presentation skills.
- ✓ Staff participated in ASG moderation of assessment tasks for listening and talking.
- ✓ ASG Listening & Talking Progression Framework was reviewed and updated.
- ✓ Class talk feedback sheets have been reviewed and updated to align with benchmarks.
- ✓ All pupils have prepared and delivered class talks.
- ✓ Feedback from class talks has been shared with pupils and families.
- ✓ Staff met with High School English Teacher to discuss approaches to debating.
- ✓ Pupils have planned and prepared speeches to participate in a class debate.
- ✓ Floor books are now being used to capture evidence of listening and talking skills in younger pupils.

### Impact:

- ✓ Staff are now aware of further opportunities to develop pupils' skills in listening and talking and can incorporate these into planning, learning and teaching. This has led to an increase in opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in listening and talking, and an increase in pupil motivation and enthusiasm for developing their skills in listening and talking.
- ✓ Through the workshop on presentation skills, pupils have increased awareness of how listening and talking skills are skills required for learning, life and work.
- ✓ As a result of ASG moderation, staff have reviewed and updated assessment tasks for listening and talking which are linked to Benchmarks. This has led to staff being more familiar with Benchmarks and therefore more confident in using professional judgement to award a level.
- ✓ Pupils in P1-6 have participated in class talks, this has led to them becoming more confident individuals.
- ✓ Families have given positive feedback on how class talks can develop confidence in talking which is necessary skills for life and work.
- ✓ As a result, staff felt more confident to organise a class debate and pupils have become more confident when presenting in a more formal situation.
- ✓ Staff have gathered further evidence of listening and talking, this has led to increased teacher confidence with achievement of levels.
- ✓ Good progress was made in this area with all pupils in P1 achieving early level and all pupils in P4 achieving first level in listening and talking.

### Next steps:

- Consider how digital technology could be used to gather further evidence of listening and talking during group discussions for assessment purposes.
- Plan for a variety of listening and talking opportunities throughout school year, including more debates with 'Points of Interest' included to further challenge their listening and talking skills.

- Consider having debate with other schools in ASG, with GUHS English staff, as part of transition programme.
- Incorporate Oracy Skills Framework into whole school listening and talking progression planners.

School Priority:

## Embed Skills for Learning, Life and Work

**Purpose:** To raise awareness of skills for learning, life and work with staff and pupils to improve the skills developed by our learners.

### Progress:

- ✓ Head Teacher has undertaken professional reading of Skills Progression Frameworks.
- ✓ Through learner conversations, Head Teacher has begun to discuss skills for learning, life and work with pupils.

### Impact:

- ✓ Head Teacher has become familiar with the Skills Progression Framework and has gained deeper professional knowledge & understanding.
- ✓ Head Teacher has been making pupils aware of skills being developed in learning and identifying next steps to enable improvement in skills. With further development, this could be improved so that there is a record of improvement in skills for all pupils.
- ✓ Limited progress was made in this area, and it will be further developed in next year's improvement plan, linking in with our development of digital profiles.

### Next steps:

- Share skills progression framework with wider staff team at inservice day.
- Include a skills development focus into lesson planning where appropriate so that children become more familiar with skills progression.
- Plan further opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills.
- As part of our digital profiling next session, plan regular learner conversations to help pupils reflect on skills developed.
- Incorporate skills progression into digital profiles so families become aware of skills being developed.

## Progress and impact of Pupil Equity Fund

### Adhartas agus buaidh Maoin Cothromas Sgoilearan

We have effective systems in place to monitor attainment and target interventions. Pupil Equity Funding was used for additional supply teachers to support class teachers to complete baseline assessments and deliver targeted interventions. Additional PSA hours were used to support individuals to increase attainment in spelling, reading and maths. We subscribed to Nessy, an online pupil resource for Spelling and Reading, to provide support for individuals. All pupils used Nessy regularly, in addition to Wraparound Spelling and 1 minute spelling with PSA. This is helping to reduce attainment gaps and support individuals to make good progress.

All targeted pupils made progress over 6 months with gain in spelling age. See individual pupil gains below.

1. +9 month gain
2. +10 month gain
3. +1 year 2 month gain
4. +9 month gain



For reading, individual pupil gained 8 months on reading age since August.

## Wider achievements

### Coileanaidhean nas fharsainghe

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- ❖ Achieved Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award.
- ❖ Pupils entered two Cross Country competitions.
- ❖ Supported a former family, raised £12,000 with community support, by completing the Baxter's 5K.
- ❖ All pupils in P2-6 completed Baxter's 5K fun run.
- ❖ All pupils have developed food technology skills through Cooking Club which was led by our PSA.
- ❖ Raised £500 for MFR Cash for Kids Appeal, from community 'Cakes and Crafts' Coffee morning.
- ❖ PSA and Head Teacher are now Companions for Seasons for Growth having completed training.
- ❖ We have delivered the Level 2 Seasons for Growth programme to 4 pupils.
- ❖ We delivered an Online Safety Parent Workshop.
- ❖ All pupils in P2-6 were awarded a Silver Blue Peter Badge.
- ❖ Balnain Primary School was nominated for Highland Heroes School of the Year Award and our school was a finalist at the Award ceremony.
- ❖ 6 pupils competed in Inter-Schools Sports, all pupils won medals.
- ❖ 10 pupils in P4-6 competed in INVOC orienteering schools league.
- ❖ School Team won Orienteering league, presented with Small School Award.
- ❖ 3 individual pupils won medals for orienteering.
- ❖ P1-4 pupils entered Baillie Cup athletics event alongside pupils from Cannich Bridge Primary School.
- ❖ 2 individual pupils won medals at Baillie Cup.
- ❖ P6 pupils participated in the Primary Schools Maths Challenge.
- ❖ Awarded a 'School for Nature' certificate in recognition of our RSPB Wild Challenge Award.
- ❖ Whole school participated in the 'Puddles to Ponds' Programme.
- ❖ Completed a Champhibian Survey of our school pond.
- ❖ Whole school entered Art Competition as part of Highlife Highland Countryside Rangers Project.

# Comments from learners, families, stakeholders and staff

## Beachdan bho luchd-ionnsachaidh, teaghlachan, luchd-ùidhe is luchd-obrach

### Comments from our learners:

#### Listening & Talking Feedback:

*We enjoy doing class talks and it's good to get to choose who we want to do a talk about.*

*Doing a class debate was really fun and we really want to do it again!*

*I liked doing the debate with a partner.*

*It would be great to do debates on different topics.*

*Could we add 'Points of Information' in our next debates, like the way they do it in High School?*

*It's fun to buddy up with a partner and have a topic to discuss and then feedback to the class. It makes us listen harder so that we can remember what our partner has said. We can ask questions to find out more if they've not told us much or if we don't really understand something they've said.*

#### Spelling Feedback:

### What has helped you to improve spelling this year? Pupil Voice 19.03.24



### What learners have enjoyed this year:

- \*We're really proud of doing the Baxter's 5K as a school and raising so much money for Ailsa and her family. We're so happy to get Silver Blue Peter Badges as well.
- \*Playing with Microbits and getting to discover what all you can do with them! We enjoyed making a step counter and an interactive 'pet' which responds to different things.
- \*P1-2 pupils enjoy going to the little class to play with all the resources there.
- \*We are very proud to get the Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award. There's not many schools in Highland with it. We liked giving the visitors a tour of the school and showing them what all we've been doing.
- \*It was great to use the tool bench to create crafts for Christmas sale. Can we use the tool bench more to make our own things?
- \*We liked having the community come to our craft fair. It was good fun serving them with tea, coffee and cake. We felt like real waiters!
- \*It was great that the whole school got to go and try curling.
- \*We love orienteering!
- \*It's great that the whole school goes swimming. It's an important life skill, especially for here near the loch.

### Comments from Families:

*I do feel learning is exciting for my child and that her achievements are recognised. School provides a good range of learning opportunities and has obvious recognition of pupils' achievements.*

*Thank you for all that you do to make school such a happy, nurturing learning environment.*

*My child enjoys seeing her achievements on display in school.*

*My child has been using their cooking club skills at home and has made pizza and soup for us.*

*It's great to see them doing class talks from a young age. I was a lot older before I had to do it in high school and I was really nervous then! It's great that they can practice this in a safe comfortable setting with people they know so well. It's a real skill for life though as it is needed in a lot of jobs these days.*

### Comments from Gold Rights Respecting Visit:

*Our Highland UNICEF Adviser was most impressed with the progress the school has made and will be advocating for them to be Gold accredited. This is huge news and all being well once the report is approved, they will soon become our 6<sup>th</sup> school in Highland to have achieved their Gold RRS Award.*

*The children were so polite, warm and welcoming - it was a real privilege to be part of the process this morning. They showed pride and confidence as they shared their successes and achievements with us during the wider class discussion.*

### Extracts from report:

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

### **Strengths of the school include:**

- Very articulate children who demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of rights. They knew a wide range of articles and were confident in the concept of rights.
- A strategic approach of the headteacher and staff to embed a rights respecting approaches, putting it at the core of the school's ethos, linked explicitly to the curriculum rationale (designed with children).
- A common language of rights which is used across the school and supports children to explore and discuss a range of issues.
- Pupil voice is valued highly. All pupils have ample opportunities to put forward their ideas, trusting they will be taken seriously.
- Children see themselves as global citizens. Conversations happen linked to news and current events and children are supported to make positive changes with an empowered voice.

## **2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS**

<b>STRAND A</b>	<b>Highlights and comments</b>
1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere.	<p>The children demonstrated a good knowledge of their rights, citing many examples from the CRC. They shared their understanding of the nature of rights saying, "All children under eighteen in the whole entire world have these rights," "We are born with our rights" and, "We don't have to do anything to earn our rights and they can't be taken away" The children also acknowledged how rights are affected globally, saying "Some children in Madagascar have to walk for a long time to find water... and then it's not clean," "Some families have to work instead of going to school," and, "In some Asian countries children work in factories which is not protecting their rights." Children also mentioned they had learned about earthquakes, flooding and war and their effect on children's rights through watching Newsround.</p> <p>Staff explained that children learn about rights through focussed assemblies with a 'right of the fortnight', topics (e.g. Victorians), novel studies, and school events (e.g. fundraising, and COP 26) with conversations related to rights coming up "...ad hoc," when they watch Newsround. Children showed off a range of displays linked to rights and shared projects supporting their rights such as the Terracycle Enterprise project, the confectionary bin and the cooking club.</p> <p>The headteacher explained, "We all have a deeper understanding of rights and a realisation that we have supported children's rights for a long time... It's now part of the life and ethos of our school." Rights are peppered through policies such as Equality &amp; Diversity, Safeguarding and Behaviour. Children shared the school's curriculum rationale, (depicted as a tree with roots, branches and leaves) explaining that the CRC, values and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were amongst the roots in the diagram, "Because it builds up to our curriculum goals." The headteacher also said, "Children are empowered to teach rights to others, parents and staff, so the families are learning too."</p>

Kindness    Respect    Teamwork    Creativity

STRAND B	Highlights and comments
2. In school children enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	Children shared how they enjoy their rights in school, pointing out signage that references their rights and describing the role of adults as, <i>"Duty bearers who look after us,"</i> as they proudly shared the duty bearer display in the hallway. Children discussed clear connections between the school's values (kindness, respect, teamwork and creativity) and their rights, and also said, <i>"We review these regularly."</i> Children talked about fairness and equity in the context of learning, saying, <i>"Some people need extra help because they learn in a different way... so they will be treated differently to make sure everyone gets the same opportunities."</i>
3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights.	The headteacher shared, <i>"We have very positive relationships here... restorative practice means we have conversations with children, so they have a say... and we use rights language to resolve issues."</i> Staff wear lanyards to remind them of rights language and children talked about their charters saying, <i>"It's an agreement of how to respect each other's rights."</i> The school shared positive feedback from children, parents and it's wider community on relationships across the school.
4. Children and young people are safe and protected and	Children agreed that they feel safe and protected in school with one child stating, <i>"I feel safe because I trust the adults and my friends."</i> Some talked about staff being first aid trained and acknowledged, <i>"This links to global goal 13 and article 24 for medical care."</i> Some children mentioned their JRSO team saying, <i>"They</i>
know what to do if they need support.	<i>help us to be safe on the road"</i> and pointed out the 'safer routes to school' survey they had contributed to. Others shared they had learned about, <i>"Online safety, to keep safe using the internet."</i>
5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	The school puts the health and wellbeing of their children at the front and centre of everything they do. Children talked about Emotion Works, saying, <i>"We use the emotion cogs to talk about how we feel."</i> Some children described the 'banana bench' as the buddy bench explaining it is there to, <i>"Help people if they want some company."</i> Others talked about the beanbags in the reading corner, yoga to <i>"Make my brain relax,"</i> and a visitor using <i>"A diffuser with cinnamon to help us relax."</i>
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	Children expressed opinions such as, <i>"Everyone is different."</i> They shared ways in which they feel valued and included in their school through things such as the 'Achievement Tree' described as, <i>"For in and out of school achievements... it makes me feel proud when everyone sees our achievements."</i> Children also talked about fairness in relation to Fairtrade saying, <i>"It helps people to be paid the right amount so it's fair."</i> Staff shared, <i>"We have reviewed our books to reflect topical issues and different family set ups."</i>
7. Children value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	Children understand <i>"...quality learning"</i> to be a right that is upheld in their school. They have opportunities to discuss their next steps in learning through <i>"Learning conversations with staff,"</i> as well as self and peer assessing. Open afternoons also allow three-way conversations between children, staff and their families on their progress. Children contribute to their own end of year reports and also share their views on the 'Thoughts on my Learning' forms.

STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	There is a strong sense that children feel empowered in their school to share their ideas, with one child pointing out that, <i>"We are the adults of tomorrow."</i> The school's motto is 'small but mighty' which the children embodied in the conversations around feeling empowered to take action. The headteacher added, <i>"The children know why they have a voice,"</i> with the school facilitating house groups to ensure pupil participation in school improvement with examples shared such as: outside space, play equipment and sports resources. Children explained, <i>"We get a lot of choices in everything,"</i> and some children described the recent campaign on improving the heaters in the hall when they wrote to their facilities manager outlining their rights – new heaters have since been installed.
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Children explained, <i>"We decide a charity to support each term, we include everyone and take turns to lead on it."</i> Children understand themselves to be global citizens, with one saying, <i>"Climate change is a child rights issue. If the global goals are ticked off then it helps with our rights."</i> Children went on to explain how <i>"Fundraising helps others,"</i> listing many causes they have supported: Red Nose Day; Save the Children; Highland Hospice Baxters 5K; Highland Foodbank; Books2Africa; Fairtrade; and Water Aid. Children enthusiastically described their Enterprise Projects in detail, explaining that, <i>"We had the ideas and a budget... we had to create a logo, make the product, packaging and sell it,"</i> and, <i>"We chose 2 charities to support: Bees Abroad helps children go to school in other countries; and Mikeysline is a mental health charity in this country."</i> A child explained, <i>"Mikeysline helps children with their emotions if someone is sad, they get help with a therapist."</i>

### Comments from Partners:

*The children were so engaged and enthusiastic during the workshop. You could tell they were connecting learning to what they already knew and had super questions. It was great to see the older ones helping and supporting the younger pupils. It was a pleasure to work with them!* - Generation Science

*You could tell all of the children enjoyed the ballet workshop and it was great that they went to see the production at Eden Court prior to our visit. They really understood the storyline with all the twists and gave good feedback on the performance. They're so enthusiastic and a pleasure to work with!* – Scottish Ballet

Kindness    Respect    Teamwork    Creativity

## Comments in local newspaper for Highland Heroes School of the Year Nomination:

*“THE most fantastic wee school, like a small family” is how Balnain Primary School, Glen Urquhart is described in a nomination.*

*The school, which has 14 pupils, is right at the heart of the community, often referred to as the ‘gem in the glen’ and ‘small but mighty’! The school has a strong bond with its pupils – former and present – their families and the residents of the wider community.*

*Last October, Balnain raised over £12,000 running the Baxters 5k to support the family of a former pupil; senior citizens are personally invited to school shows; and it recently developed links with a community hub to enable families to access free transport to after school care.*

*A nomination said: “Children have been given many opportunities to work with partners in the community to experience a wide range of activities in areas such as science, drama, music and sport. As a tiny school in a rural area, we’d love to see them rewarded with this accolade, encouraging them to continue with all the hard work they do.”*

*Head teacher, Julie MacLeod, was thrilled the school had been shortlisted and praised the efforts of her team and all connected with the school: “We work very much as a team and we’re very close with our community. Former families have stayed in touch and have always shown support. These relationships last forever. It’s a very positive place to be. We’re absolutely amazed to have been nominated, it was a real surprise. It’s heart-warming to be recognised, especially for such a small school, it’s a huge achievement for Team Balnain.”*

## 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
<b>QI 1.3</b> Leadership of change	Choose an item.	Good
<b>QI 2.3</b> Learning, teaching and assessment	Choose an item.	Good
<b>QI 3.1</b> Wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Choose an item.	Good
<b>QI 3.2</b> Raising attainment and achievement/Securing children’s progress	Choose an item.	Very good

Our overall evaluation of our capacity for continuous improvement is:

We are confident in our capacity for continuous improvement.

## Key priorities for improvement planning

### Prìomhachasan airson planadh airson leasachadh

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Raising Attainment in Writing  
Developing Digital Profiles  
Achieving Digital Schools Award

## Planning ahead

### A' planadh air adhart

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Full details of the school's 2024/25 improvement priorities and actions are detailed on the school improvement plan, which can be accessed on our website <https://sites.google.com/glenurquharhigh.org.uk/balnainprimary/home> or by contacting the school office.