



Standards and Quality Report Ballantrae Primary School and Early Years Centre

2025-2026

Introduction

Our Vision

A safe place to be where we are responsible and respectful and have no limits to our learning.

Rationale

Curriculum for Excellence identifies key values for learning, life and work. It recognises the four contexts in which learning takes place: ethos and life of the school, personal achievement, interdisciplinary learning and nine curricular areas into which learning is organised. Curriculum for Excellence identifies six entitlements for learners: a coherent curriculum from 3-18 providing opportunities for developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, and seven principles for curriculum design - challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, coherence, relevance, personalisation and choice.

These values, contexts, entitlements, principles and curriculum areas are at the heart of how we plan and deliver our curriculum in Ballantrae Primary School and Early years Centre and ensure that all children have opportunities to develop the four capacities and be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. All staff and children at Ballantrae Primary School and Early Years Centre are actively involved in developing our curriculum and creating a vision of what we value and view as essential elements which underpin all that we do in our daily practice to 'bring the curriculum alive' for everyone.

Our children are:

- successful learners, showing enthusiasm and motivation for learning. They have transferable skills for lifelong learning. They can think creatively and independently and make reasoned choices.
- responsible citizens, who respect others and have knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it. They can make informed choices and decisions.
- confident individuals, who have self-respect, secure values and beliefs, and ambition. They pursue an active and healthy lifestyle, make informed decisions and achieve success in different areas.

- effective contributors with an enterprising attitude, showing resilience and self-reliance. They can communicate in diverse ways, work in partnership, take the initiative and lead, apply critical thinking and solve problems.

Values

Our Values were updated during session 22-23 and involved children, families and school staff and revisited this session with our Early Years parents, children and staff. Each value has been looked at closely and children have identified what each value looks like in action. We recognise our values daily and children are identified as Values Ambassadors on a weekly basis.



Our Aims

- To build a caring and inclusive environment where every voice is heard, and every person is valued. Together, we're helping our children grow into confident, self-assured individuals.
- We encourage high standards and celebrate personal achievements—both in and out of school. Every child is supported to reach their full potential.
- Communication is key! We stay connected with families and our wider community through newsletters, our website, and local events—ensuring everyone feels involved and informed.
- Health and wellbeing are at the heart of our school. We promote respectful behaviour and global awareness, helping our pupils become thoughtful, responsible citizens.
- Our staff are committed to continuous improvement. Through collaboration and professional development, we ensure high-quality learning experiences for all

Context of the School / Early Years Centre

Ballantrae Primary School is situated within the village of Ballantrae, 13 miles south of Girvan. Ballantrae has a large catchment area and takes in the communities of Ballantrae, Lendalfoot and surrounding areas. The school roll this session settled at 40 children in

the primary school; split between three classes – Primary 1-2, Primary 3 & 4 and Primary 5, 6 & 7. There is an Early Years class, which can accommodate children between 2-5 years old. This session 18 children enrolled within the Early Years class; all attended 1140 hours. Almost all children in the Early Years are achieving most of their milestones.

~~Eighty-eight~~Ninety-two percent of pupils within the school fall within SIMD quintile 3. The remaining ~~12~~8% fall into SIMD quintile 1. Current FME (Free meal entitlement) and clothing grant entitlement sits at 18% with the local authority average being 22%.

Overall attendance has fallen slightly this session from 94.2% in session 24/25 to 93.8% in session 25/26. Overall attendance runs slightly higher than South Ayrshire Council average of 92.8%. Authorised absence has increased slightly from 4.8% in 24/25 to 5.1% in 25/26 session. Unauthorised absence remains the same at 1.1%. There have been no exclusions.

There are 38% of children with Additional Support Needs and 0% who are Care Experienced.

Children are supported very well by teachers, school assistants, Early Years practitioners and visiting support staff for music. Within the Early Years, staffing has been unsettled, due to staff absence and the inability to recruit supply staff.

Pupil Equity Fund

Our PEF funding entitlement was £15120. This ~~Due to the disruption of Covid 19 Lockdowns, the original PEF plan to support Summer School did not go ahead. Instead~~ this funding was used to ~~empty~~employ 18 hours of an EYP in P1/2 to support a play-based learning approach. Almost all children within the PEF cohort have ~~made very~~made very good progress against their wellbeing indicators and whilst some pupils within the PEF cohort are not achieving their age/stage appropriate levels, they are making very good progress at their own level of ability. Additionally, a small number of children, not necessarily in our PEF cohort, have been identified as requiring some added support due to a range of educational and social circumstances. Supports identified for these children are delivered daily by school assistants. These include daily targeted intervention in 5-minute numeracy/literacy boxes, Catch-Up Literacy activities, differentiated classroom activities and Readingwise. Achievements in their progress is monitored by class teachers who further support learning within the wider classroom experiences. Almost all children requiring additional support are making good progress from prior levels.

The National Context

"Scottish education is well recognised globally as valuing both equity and excellence. The system invests significant resources to tackle poverty, close attainment gaps and strengthen the teaching profession. "

International Council of Education Advisers, November 2023

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) is Scotland's strategic plan for education, aiming to achieve excellence and equity by improving outcomes for all children and young people.

It sets out Scotland's vision, key priorities, and outcomes for children and young people.

Our vision for education in Scotland

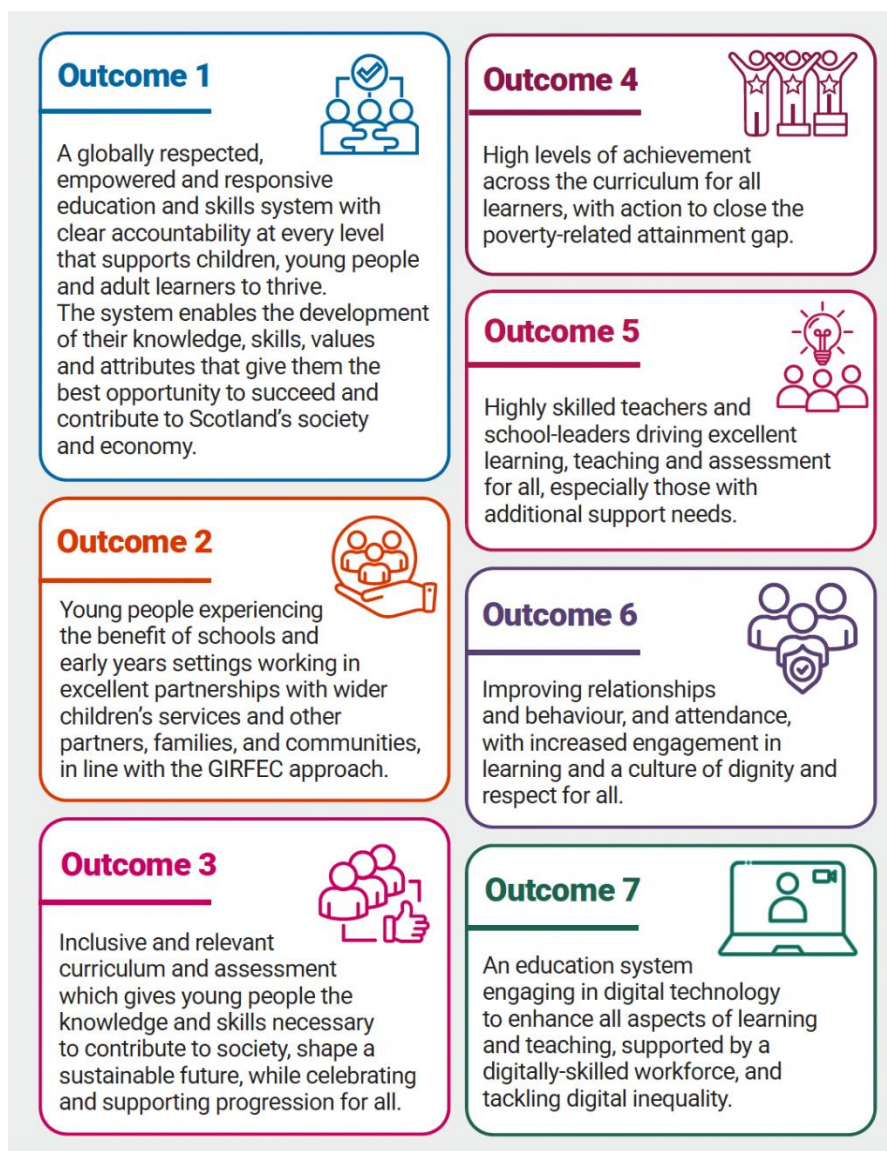
Scottish education should be ambitious, inclusive, and supportive in order to deliver:

- Excellence through raising achievement and improving outcomes: ensuring that every child and young person achieves the highest standards they can.
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed.

The Key Priorities of 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.

The National Improvement Framework identifies 7 key outcomes for Scotland's education system:



Key Drivers

To achieve these outcomes, the NIF focuses on **six strategic drivers**:

- **School and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) leadership** - improving leadership quality and impact.
- **Teacher and practitioner professionalism** - enhancing professional learning and teaching effectiveness.
- **Parent/carer engagement and family learning** - supporting families to participate in learning.
- **Curriculum and assessment** - ensuring learning is relevant and prepares learners for the future.
- **School and ELC improvement** - monitoring and improving educational quality.
- **Performance information** - using data to identify priorities and guide improvement.

Working in partnership with South Ayrshire Council, our school is fully committed to delivering these ambitious aims. We ensure these priorities are taken forward and each driver developed through our school improvement plan and standards and quality report.

Assessment of children's progress.

We are required to report on Curriculum for Excellence achievement levels for literacy and numeracy. This information is collected at the end of Early level (P1); First Level (P4) and Second Level (P7). This data is submitted to South Ayrshire Council in June each year and later collected by the Scottish Government. This data is based on teachers' professional judgement, which is informed by a wide range of evidence including standardised assessments where appropriate. This session we continue to be required to take part in the National Standardised Assessment (NSA) project. Information from NSA will help to inform a teacher's professional judgement and allow teaching and support staff to track learning and identify next steps.

Almost all children are achieving their appropriate CfE levels at key stages of P1, P4 and P7. Most children in the other stages of primary education, P2, P3, P5, and P6 are making very good progress within a CfE level. Those children not achieving expected levels are in receipt of the right support and are making good progress based on prior levels of attainment.

Almost all children assessed using NSA during session 2025/26 performed well and in line with teacher judgements. Primary seven children were assessed in October and further supports in learning were identified from NSA feedback. Primary 7 children have

made very good progress overall. Children in Primary 4 and Primary 1 were assessed in May and almost all children at these stages are progressing very well and are meeting expected targets and, in some cases, exceeding these. Assessment information from NSA correlates with teacher professional judgment in CfE levels.

This session children from Primary 3 to Primary 7 were assessed using GL assessments in literacy and numeracy. Assessment results for most children were positive, and most are making very good progress based on prior learning.

Within Early Years, children's milestones for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in learning are recorded and our Early Years children are making good progress overall. Milestone information correlates with expected levels within CfE at Early Level, and most pre-school children have met expected levels.

Other evidence for children's learning is gathered through classroom observation, teacher and peer formative assessment and Learning Journals.

School Improvement Planning

This session Ballantrae Primary school staff have been working towards achieving priorities identified in our School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan is

informed from the National Improvement Framework, Key Drivers and school self-evaluation using quality indicators in How Good Is Our School 4 and Early Years Framework. Evidence of improvement has been gathered from several sources:

- School monitoring and self-evaluation activities.
- Tracking Personal Achievement and associated data informing children's progress
- Stakeholder views
- Children's Profiles in Learning Journals
- Transition plans from Early Years to P1, and Primary 7 to S1.
- Teacher CLPL (Career Long Professional Learning) and evaluations
- Children's reports and personal plans
- Staged Intervention processes.

Key Priorities for Improvement 2026-27 (see School Improvement Plan 2026-27)

Priorities for improvement in session 2025-26 were identified and agreed using current self-evaluation information, identified local authority priorities and the refreshed National Improvement Priorities.

School Improvement Plan 2026-2027

Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

- 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 achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy. ✓

Our Improvement Plan for session 2027-26 session, focuses on the priorities of the National Improvement Framework first and foremost. Our School Improvement Plan's priorities, reflect the NIF in the following ways:

School Priority 1 - Relationships - creating a whole school policy

School Priority 2 - Literacy - Oracy: improving our children's talking and listening skills

School Priority 3 - Learning for Sustainability -

Cluster Priority 4 - Practitioner Enquiry

PEF - Play-based Learning

SAC Priorities: Included, Engaged and Involved and Curriculum Reform

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Following our very successful implementation of 2024/25 school improvement plan when our focus was on Curriculum, we continued to consider how our curriculum is developed with our school context in 2025/26. Within this theme, our aim is to create progressive and coherent pathways in learning throughout the school, relevant to children's everyday lives and interests. Our curriculum is responsive and child led. Pupil voice features highly. Teaching and support staff effectively develop curriculum, based on a clear understanding of pedagogical approaches in learning and teaching. Pupil voice and pedagogical approaches are embedded within consistent, high-quality learning and teaching across all stages in the school. Profiling children's learning and sharing learners progress in all curricular areas with parents will continue through Learning Journals. Knowledge and understanding of meta skills continue to enhance learning and teaching within all areas of the curriculum, in particular outdoor learning and play based learning.

School Priority 1 - Oracy

Across the school, learners have actively participated in a range of learning experiences grounded in the Voice 21 Oracy Framework. Through more structured opportunities to talk, listen, and reflect, pupils have been working on their ability to communicate confidently and effectively, working collaboratively with peers and engaging thoughtfully with different viewpoints. Using a 'Word of the Day' has helped children to expand their vocabulary by introducing new and engaging words in a meaningful context. Regular use and discussion of these words have begun to support children in confidently using richer language in their speaking and learning. By engaging in oracy development in classroom practice, the school is beginning to foster a culture where learning together through purposeful talk is valued and celebrated.

Next Steps for 2026-27

As we continue to build on our work in oracy, the school will provide further opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills across all areas of learning. We will continue to engage with the Voice 21 Oracy Framework to support progression in physical, linguistic, cognitive and social-emotional skills. Parents will be supported with additional resources and ideas to encourage purposeful talk at home, helping to strengthen the link between school and home learning. Together, we will continue to promote confidence, clarity and respect in communication, ensuring all children have a strong voice in their learning.

School Priority 2 - LfS - Climate School 180 and Green Skills

The Climate School 180 project challenged our school to embed climate change education across the curriculum and use the school grounds as a learning environment to support all pupils' understanding of climate change. Our school engagement with the CS180 project involved a comprehensive four-stage process. Initially, staff members completed learning modules through online training to build on their foundational knowledge of climate change. This was followed by a school grounds climate audit to assess current policy and practice, as well as climate impacts affecting the school campus. Staff participated in a half-day workshop focused on discussing strategies for prioritising climate change curriculum and exploring pupil-led practical implementation approaches tailored to our school contexts.

Further to CS180 staff undertook CLPL in Stemovators Climate Smarter project. Learner participation in the combined project has had a positive impact by significantly increasing engagement and motivation through hands-on, real-world STEM activities. Children have developed strong problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration skills while deepening their understanding of climate change and sustainable solutions. The opportunity to design and present innovative models has improved confidence and communication skills, while interaction with industry links raises awareness of future STEM pathways. Overall, the project has supported children to become more confident, informed, and proactive learners with a greater sense of responsibility and optimism about their role in addressing global challenges

Cluster Priority 3 - Cluster Improvement (Outdoor Learning, Digital Skills and Experiential Learning)

Practitioners described their overall experience very positively, using terms such as enjoyable, thought provoking, inspiring and beneficial, with many highlighting the value of collaboration and the impact on their confidence.

As a result of the four practical professional learning sessions and the Practitioner Enquiry most practitioners reported that they are growing in confidence across all three areas. This highlights the direct impact of high-quality facilitation on practitioner development.

The final Sharing Session of practice was viewed as a highly valuable opportunity for reflection, collaboration and professional learning by many practitioners. Many described it as enjoyable, inspiring, and full of useful ideas to take forward. They appreciated seeing others' positive experiences, development, and enthusiasm, and found it helpful in reinforcing the skills learned throughout the enquiry. However, a few practitioners expressed concerns around presenting to peers.

Practitioners also responded very positively to the resources shared during sessions on Padlet/Teams, suggesting they were both useful and effective in supporting professional learning.

Sustainability and Next Steps

Moving forward, most practitioners would like to focus on reflecting on what is working well and seek further opportunities to embed digital learning, experiential learning and outdoor learning to further develop their skills and confidence. This is important to ensure that the impact continues as practitioners move into Year 2.

Taking into consideration the practitioner feedback, the number of sessions will be reduced to five sessions and the venue for each session will be reviewed accordingly.

Self - Evaluation Summary

Quality Indicator	School Self Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Leadership across the school and Early Years is strategic, collaborative, and clearly focused on continuous improvement. The Head Teacher provides a clear vision rooted in the school's values—happy, honest, hardworking, creative, courageous, and accepting—which is shared and understood by all stakeholders.
Grading: 5 very good	Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to professional learning, engaging in a wide range of CLPL opportunities including Nurture, Attunement, STEM and Outdoor

	Learning. All staff, including Early Years worked collaboratively with cluster colleagues to take part in reciprocal visits and training in Outdoor Learning, Experiential learning or Digital Learning. These opportunities have strengthened pedagogical confidence and contributed to a culture of reflective practice. Staff worked collaboratively to improve their own practice via Practitioner Enquiry The pace of change is well-judged and strategically planned, ensuring that developments are sustainable and inclusive. Time is protected for professional dialogue, collegiate working, and self-evaluation, allowing all staff to contribute meaningfully to school improvement priorities. Staff have consistently high expectations of learners, and this is reflected in the high levels of engagement and attainment across the school. Learners understand these expectations and respond positively, demonstrating ownership of their learning and pride in their achievements. Leadership at all levels is encouraged, with children actively involved in outdoor learning projects. This has fostered a sense of agency and responsibility among learners. The school's strong community presence and partnerships further reinforce its commitment to inclusive leadership and shared values.
2.3 Learning and teaching	Children's Rights are embedded across our curriculum and underpin the ethos of our school. During session 24/25, we proudly achieved the Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award, reflecting our commitment to fostering a rights-respecting culture.
Grading: 5 very good	This culture has now become embedded in our day-to-day life and work in the school. All children and staff demonstrate a strong understanding of children's rights, and rights-respecting language is consistently used throughout the school and Early Years setting. This session, our Early Years children, parents and staff reviewed our school values and aligned these with our Early Years ethos. Our learners in Early Years and Primary are engaged, confident, creative, and independent. They show awareness of global issues such as climate change. Children articulate a desire to make a positive impact and are empowered to take meaningful action. This session, whilst working on Climate School 180 and Stemovator, our learners have become confident in a range of meta-skills, are creative and innovative and worked collaboratively with other local schools to explore future technological solutions to climate change. A wide range of out-of-school learning experiences—including after-school clubs, swimming, Biosphere activities, and ACE programmes—ensures equity of opportunity and inclusion for all. Through Active Schools, older pupils have participated in initiatives such as Spirit of Sport and the Junior Coach Academy, which have supported the development of leadership and resilience. Children in the Primary School are encouraged to express their views and make choices within their learning environment. They actively contribute to planning through Assemblies, Outdoor Learning, Tinker Time, and Loose Parts Play. Staff

	have entrenched Meta Skills within day-to-day teaching and learning and use these to structure plenaries and to promote cooperative and self-led learning. Play pedagogy is a key feature across the school. In Early Years and Early Primary, play-based learning is established in daily practice, enhancing children's skills through both child-initiated and teacher-led activities. In the upper stages, play continues to be central, particularly through Loose Parts, Tinker Time, and Outdoor Learning, supporting the development of independence, confidence, and creativity in almost all learners. Staff have benefited from reciprocal visits within the cluster, particularly improving the quality of learning and teaching in Outdoor Learning, Experiential Learning and Digital Learning. This has been evidenced in classrooms, where children are independent, co-operative, collaborative and learning is self-led. Assessment is planned at multiple levels, formative and summative—with staff demonstrating a deep understanding of their learners. GL Assessments in literacy and numeracy continue to be used, with results analysed collaboratively with our partner school. Next steps are identified collegiately, ensuring that almost all learners make very good progress and build effectively on prior learning.
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Staff across the school place a strong emphasis on promoting children's wellbeing and health. As a result, almost all children feel safe, secure, and supported within the school environment. A wide range of activities is in place to support wellbeing, with all children benefiting from these opportunities.
Grading: 5 very good	This session, staff have undertaken CLPL in Nurture and Attunement which has led to a deeper understanding of the Nurture Principles and key features of attunement. As a result, children are listened to, and overall behaviour is very good throughout the school. Staff are very understanding and involve children in restorative conversations which have helped children to understand impact, take responsibility, and move forward positively in day-to-day relationships. Children's voices are actively encouraged and heard through working groups and other participatory activities. Wellbeing indicators are embedded in daily practice, with children confidently using the language of wellbeing during daily check-ins and termly wellbeing webs. These tools help identify personal wellbeing targets and support individual growth. During break times, Loose Parts Play has significantly enhanced children's skills in turn-taking, problem-solving, and collaborative thinking. In the upper school, Tinker Time further develops creativity, questioning, and problem-solving abilities.

		Healthy eating habits are promoted through a daily healthy snack service, which benefits almost all children. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, contributing to improved health and increased awareness of nutritious food choices. Staff engage in ongoing professional learning to stay informed about best practices for supporting children with additional needs. As a result of timely and effective interventions, fewer children require targeted support, and their needs are increasingly met through adaptive teaching approaches within the classroom. The school's core value of "accepting" underpins discussions and practices around diversity and inclusion. Most children demonstrate inclusive behaviours and are confident in challenging discrimination. Peer support is strong, with almost all children showing empathy and kindness towards one another.
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement		Overall, children's attainment in Literacy and English and Numeracy and Mathematics is very good. Most children are achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing, talking and listening, and numeracy. Most children are making very good progress from their prior learning. A clear and strategic approach to implementing Oracy Skills throughout Early Years and Primary has led an overall improvement in listening and talking.
Grading: very good	5	At Early Level, children listen attentively to adults and contribute their thoughts, feelings, and ideas confidently. At First Level, almost all children speak about their experiences and share ideas with assurance. At Second Level, almost all children are confident in expressing their views, ideas, and opinions. Across the school, children read fluently and with strong comprehension skills. They have access to a wide range of texts both in school and through the visiting library van. Pupils can articulate their preferences for different genres and authors. Children write effectively for a variety of purposes. Children in Early years are beginning to regularly mark-make and write their own names. At Early Level, children use their phonics knowledge to spell common words and construct sentences independently. While a few children at First Level require additional support to write independently, Second Level pupils write with accuracy and creativity. Most can produce a range of texts with accurate grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and demonstrate the ability to create engaging characters and settings using genre-specific features. In Numeracy and Mathematics, most children are making very good progress, and overall attainment is very good. Children's achievements are regularly celebrated through weekly class-based success celebrations, where they receive house points, values certificates, and may be recognised as Values Ambassadors. Achievements are documented in individual Learning Journals, supported by strong partnerships with parents and carers who actively share and celebrate their children's accomplishments. These achievements are linked to the four CfE capacities and skills for learning, life and work, with all children increasingly connecting their achievements to meta-skills. Staff have a deep understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context of the school community. They are highly attuned to the unique rural setting and demographics, enabling them to support families effectively and respond to learners'

	needs. Staff across the school and Early Years place a strong emphasis on nurturing the emotional and social wellbeing of all children. The Parent Council provides excellent financial support through fundraising activities, ensuring all children can access enriching educational experiences such as visits to the pantomime and ACE activities. This year's P7 residential trip to SportScotland, Inverclyde was also made possible through a successful Parent Council application to Foundation Scotland and supported our Primary 7 children with transition to secondary school.
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What is the capacity for improvement?

A new headteacher will undertake the role of Shared Headteacher of Ballantrae Primary school and Early Years and Colmonell Primary School and Early Years. She is highly skilled and enthusiastic and will continue to build upon the existing good practice within both schools. The capacity for improvement within Ballantrae Primary School and Early Years is very good. A full staffing compliment is currently in place. All staff within the school are highly qualified and look to improve their own professional learning at every opportunity. There is a very positive link with the local community. A collaborative approach to planning, assessing and recording has increased teachers' confidence in their professional judgment. Closing the Gap and attainment in literacy and numeracy is a continuous focus and remains a high priority and regular, informal monitoring of day-to-day class work which is leading to improvements. Parents are very positive about the work of the school and their children's learning and development. Leadership of change is well managed and at an appropriate but challenging pa

