

# Millbank Primary School

## Local Authority Report – Continuing Engagement (Education Scotland)



This local authority report is prepared in support of Education Scotland HMI scrutiny activity for schools currently within Education Scotland Continuing Engagement visit processes. This report has been prepared for Education Scotland HMI review following Continuing Engagement visit to Millbank Primary School and 'The Bothy' (the Associated Schools Group provision for children with Additional Support Needs) in late November 2021.

### Introduction

Millbank Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland HMI in October 2018 using How Good Is Our School? version 4 Quality Indicator framework, with letter to parents and inspection findings published in February 2019. The school received the following evaluations across key quality indicators at the time:

Quality Indicator		Evaluation
1.3	Leadership of Change	Satisfactory
2.3	Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1	Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Weak
3.2	Raising attainment and achievement	Weak

*During this visit and in the parent letter following, a number of key strengths were identified:*

- Relationships between staff and children resulting in children who are happy, well-behaved and polite. They have pride in their school, are willing to learn and ready to take on more responsibility
- The work of the headteacher in consulting children, families and staff to develop the school's values, vision and aims. This has led to the headteacher and staff creating a positive school culture

*Following discussion with the Headteacher and local authority, the following areas for improvement were identified:*

- Develop more strategic leadership at all levels within the school and in doing so strengthen the use of self-evaluation processes which leads to an increased rate of change and improved outcomes for all children
- Staff should work collaboratively to ensure children experience consistently high quality learning, teaching and assessment which provides an appropriate level of pace and challenge in children's learning. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps
- Raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data and more robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement
- Implement revised approaches to health and wellbeing and inclusion to better support children's wellbeing and progress. In doing so, ensure all staff and children know, understand and use the wellbeing indicators as an integral feature of school life
- Develop progressive curriculum pathways for all curriculum areas which are relevant to the school's context, and which offer children opportunities to develop appropriate knowledge and skills

As a result of initial inspection in October 2018, an inspection team returned to visit the school in February 2020 with a further inspection report subsequently published in July 2020. While progress was noted against areas for improvement identified above, as a result of inspection findings Education Scotland HMI identified areas where improvements were still required. Due to circumstances in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic at time of report publication, with national lockdown during March to July 2020, further confirmation of next steps in relation to Education Scotland HMI scrutiny did not follow until Autumn 2021. This was also following a second extended period of national Covid-19 lockdown and disruption in early 2021 and ongoing Covid-19 mitigations in place with extended risk assessment (continuing to April 2022).

Following notification in October 2021, Millbank Primary School was visited by Education Scotland HMI for a third time in late November 2021, with inspection letter published in February 2022. This visit was undertaken in relation to the previous continuing engagement inspection visit in 2020 and progress made by that time. Following the November 2021 visit, the following was noted by the visiting Education Scotland HMI team:

*Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst these have had a significant impact on the work of the school, there have been notable improvements under the direction of the current leadership team. Senior leaders and staff are implementing well-considered plans to support recovery. They have also increased the pace of change in taking forward areas for improvement from the original inspection.*

*We recognise that as a result of the pandemic, **the school needs more time to realise fully the impact of recently implemented strategies on children's achievement and attainment. We have asked Moray Council to provide us with further information about the school's progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children within one year of the publication of this letter.** We will work together with local authority officers to agree what will happen next. Should we require another visit to the school, we will inform parents/carers. Otherwise, Moray Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality its education service.*

*Education Scotland, 2022, p3*

A local authority Quality Improvement Manager joined the Education Scotland HMI team in November 2021 as part of the scrutiny visit. This involvement provided detailed background in relation to visit findings and discussions at that time, in addition to further improvements required in order to ensure satisfactory progress for reversion to local authority scrutiny processes and reporting in line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools Acts etc (2000). On the request of the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), a local authority scrutiny and review visit has been undertaken in mid-December 2022 as requested by Education Scotland HMI in their February 2022 letter, where further information in relation to the school's progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children was requested by Education Scotland HMI within one year of February 2022 letter publication. Progress is now reported through this January 2023 local authority report where this report will now centre commentary around:

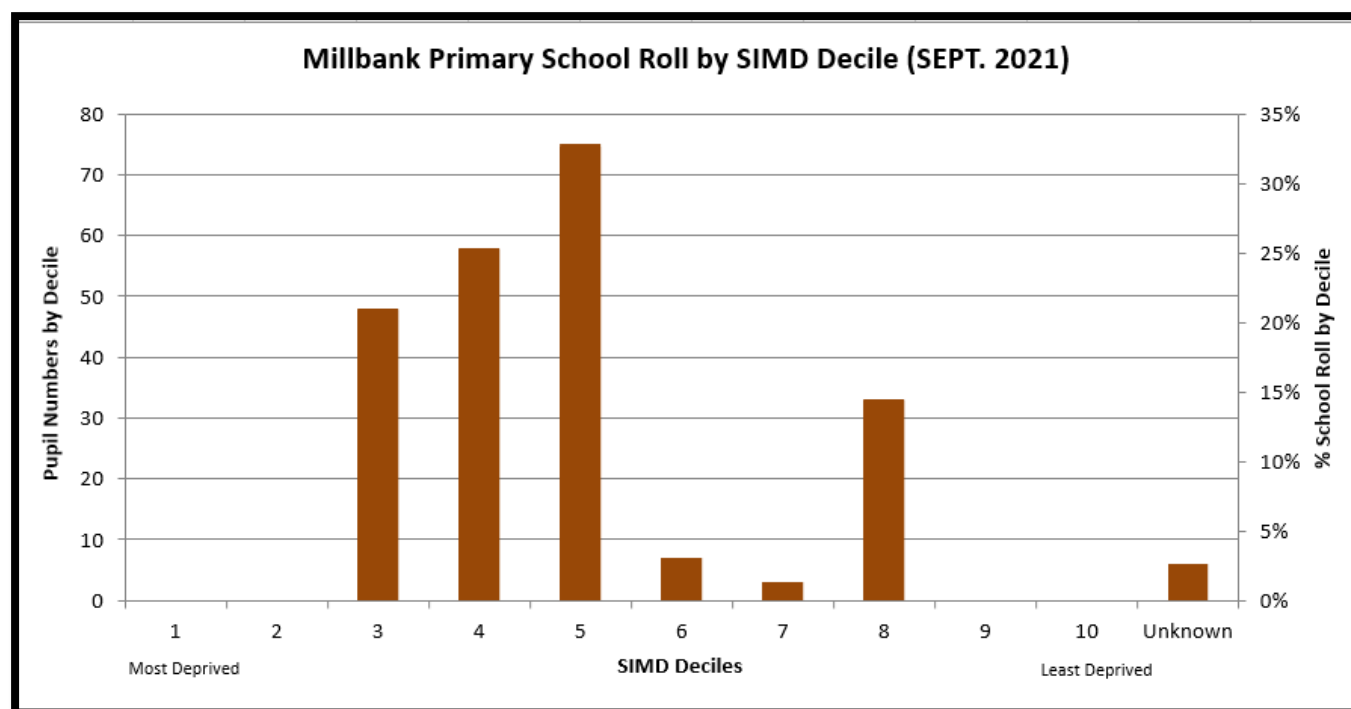
- School Context; support for children and families
- Covid-19 recovery and school response
- School progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children
- Learning and Teaching
- Local authority recommendation

*In order to gather evidence for this report, the following activities have been undertaken:*

- Discussions with the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher over that latter part of session 2021/2022 and ongoing during session 2022/2023 as part of local authority continuing engagement arrangements and quality assurance processes (including school visit programme)
- Review of school self-evaluation and key documentation including Standards and Quality Report (2021/2022), School Improvement Plan (2022/2023), Improvement Action Plan (ASN) and school summary Self-evaluation Profile
- School and Enhanced Provision (The Bothy) learning walkthrough undertaken as part of the reviewing visit in support of this local authority report for triangulation on Thursday, 15 December 2022
- Review of school data in relation to ACEL/SNSA and intervention mapping against key data messages
- Review of school attainment mapping and value added analysis and PPM meeting records
- Targeted discussion with the Senior Leadership Team during visit on Thursday, 15 December 2022 relating to impact of strategies for raising attainment, key data messages and focus on improving outcomes for all pupils

## School Context

Millbank Primary School serves a diverse town and rural catchment area both within Buckie and bordering the main A98 on the edge of the coastal town of Buckie. Based on September 2022 Scottish Government roll census, there were 234 pupils on roll with notable PEF funding (£61,250) received in support of children and closing identified poverty related and wider attainment gaps. At Millbank Primary School, approximately 40% of children are identified as having an Additional Support Need. Millbank pride themselves on being a school **where everyone matters**, built on core values of **respect, fairness and perseverance**. As noted by the senior leadership team, they welcome all children and families as part of their school community where learning and caring go hand in hand in the Millbank approach.



### PERCENTAGE by Cohort

Cohort	SIMD Decile											Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Unknown	
P1	0.0%	0.0%	22.6%	38.7%	22.6%	3.2%	0.0%	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	100%
P2	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	22.9%	37.1%	5.7%	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	100%
P3	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	25.7%	28.6%	0.0%	5.7%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
P4	0.0%	0.0%	24.1%	13.8%	37.9%	0.0%	0.0%	24.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
P5	0.0%	0.0%	20.6%	23.5%	32.4%	5.9%	2.9%	14.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
P6	0.0%	0.0%	22.9%	31.4%	25.7%	2.9%	0.0%	17.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
P7	0.0%	0.0%	16.1%	19.4%	45.2%	3.2%	0.0%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	100%
Total	0.0%	0.0%	20.9%	25.2%	32.6%	3.0%	1.3%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	100%

As SIMD profile highlights above, most children attending Millbank Primary School (78.5%) are from lower SIMD deciles 1-5, with 20.9% of children living within SIMD 3 decile. Millbank Primary School roll also includes children attending the Primary Enhanced Provision base for the Associated Schools Group as part of their school – The Bothy – where 15 children currently attend as their main education provision. A further 2 pupils are on individual timetables and 4 pupils are supported by the central Social, Emotional and Behavioural (SEBN) team. A 30 place Nursery is also located within the main school building, managed and run separately by local authority provision

through an Early Years' Service and centrally directed management structure. The school continues to work closely with nursery colleagues on curricular and wellbeing transitions in support of all children of Millbank.

Millbank Primary School continues on their journey of improvement over the past four years following previous inspection and scrutiny activities. The school has a very committed and long standing staff team, who are fully committed to supporting their children and families. Following scrutiny visit in November 2021, the school refocused and refined their School Improvement Plan for the remainder of the session and continued in 2022-2023, with focus on raising attainment for all, underpinned by nurture and wellbeing.

### Covid-19 recovery and school response

Following Covid-19 disruption including two periods of national lockdown, Covid-19 risk assessment and extensive mitigations and resulting impact on children and families, Millbank Primary School continues to ensure children are cared for and supported in both wellbeing and learning. The school have acted in a timely manner to all immediate requests from the Scottish Government and Moray Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to date, initiating wellbeing and learning interventions in support of all children and families. The school is committed to getting it right for every child and throughout the pandemic, ensured as far as possible within Covid-19 restrictions in place that no learner was disadvantaged through provision of digital devices, paper-based resources, wellbeing supports, universal and targeted interventions. Following return in August 2021 the school has continued to work with children and families to improve outcomes for all. This has included through a range of wellbeing and family support interventions including the Foodshare scheme in partnership with a local supermarket.

The school has a well-developed School improvement Action Plan updated over the past four years to reflect progress and impact of change, with relentless focus on ensuring positive outcomes for all. The school continued to progress key areas for improvement identified through inspection throughout Covid-19 at appropriate pace. This session, the school continues with an ambitious improvement plan linking with key improvement actions previously identified by HMI for both the school and specific Additional Support Needs (ASN) base, 'The Bothy'. A linked School Improvement Action Plan for Additional Support Needs aligning key actions for The Bothy, The Bridge Room, Universal Support for Learning and PEF groups ensures actions related to improvements required for pupils with Additional Support Needs remain at the forefront of pupil-centred interventions for improving outcomes for all.

Following appointment of the Acting Head Teacher on a permanent basis in October 2021, the Acting Depute Head Teacher was further successful at substantive Depute Head Teacher post interview in October 2022. Both senior leaders have provided stability and strategic leadership of change required to lead Millbank Primary School forwards, well regarded across the school community and changing the perception of children, families and the local community towards Millbank. Ambitious in their aspirations for the school moving forwards, their inclusive and evidence-based approaches to school improvement priorities and planning guided by ongoing self-evaluation is showing impact on attainment and achievement of children attending the school.

### School progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children

Led by the Senior Leadership Team and working in partnership with all staff, Millbank Primary School continue to put in place data and evidence informed interventions in support of stages, groups and individual pupils. School ACEL data is presented below for reference:

	P1 - Early					P4 – 1 <sup>st</sup>					P7 – 2 <sup>nd</sup>				
	LT	R	W	LIT.	NUM.	LT	R	W	LIT.	NUM.	LT	R	W	LIT.	NUM.
<b>Millbank</b>															
<b>2022</b>	65	58	58	52	55	84	66	59	59	66	93	73	63	63	73
<b>2021</b>	70	58	55	52	55	32	36	29	26	36	63	50	40	40	50
<b>2020</b>	83	47	50	47	33	48	55	48	48	12	45	58	43	43	40
<b>2019</b>	80	53	53	50	43	83	41	34	34	52	88	75	54	54	54
<b>2018</b>	69	63	43		46	59	63	38		41	49	44	29		51

From ACEL data above, it is noted that across stages, improvements in attainment over time have resulted, particularly at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> levels. Working together as a staff team, the school have continued their focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. This has included roll-out of Talk 4 Writing across the school, developing a reading culture (Reading School accreditation), developments in maths and numeracy including problem solving focus and outdoor learning and wider supports through targeted interventions. A Literacy Action Plan and Numeracy Action Plan are in place to ensure timely and appropriate interventions are in place in support of raising attainment. Interventions include individual and small group supports, daily and precision teaching, SEBN supports, emotional regulation, outdoor learning, SEBN sessions, Talk Boost, 5 and 10 minute numeracy/maths boxes, Support for Learning interventions, Exchange counselling, social skills development and ignite sessions (Outfit Moray). Following identification of need, individual assessments are completed and timetables of support enable allocation of pupil support assistant, support for learning teacher and wider universal/targeted intervention. As a result of the considerable suite of interventions in place, staff can evidence improvement for individuals and cohorts. Staff across the school are better able to identify gaps in learning, with a strategic approach to interventions now in place.

The school recognises the importance of moderation of achievement of curriculum for excellence levels in order to strengthen practitioner confidence in robust professional judgements. Increased moderation activities are undertaken by practitioners across the school and with Associated Schools Group colleagues where possible, supported by Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs). Regular stage meetings are planned to facilitate moderation and planned Pupil Progress Meetings led by the Senior Leadership Team support triangulation of evidence used to provide holistic judgements of learner level achievement. Improved rigour in Pupil Progress Meetings has resulted in more robust data interrogation for adding value, based on rigour in approach and planning for interventions/identification of next steps as a result of data and evidence review. There is now a greater understanding of standards across the school community with staff more confident in making judgements. The Senior Leadership Team are continuing to support and challenge practitioners across the school in a collegiate manner in order to ensure every pupil achieves the best outcomes that can be supported at Millbank Primary School.

As a result of school approaches, pupils are increasingly confident in talking about their learning and progress they are making with data increasingly showing pupils are achieving within age and stage appropriate CfE levels. The school recognise that they continue on a journey of raising attainment, now in a positive position based on systems and processes in place to track, monitor and enact interventions (universal and targeted) to meet learning needs. As shown below, the school recognise attainment gaps against National averages and review approaches and interventions to address to support identified learning gaps. The school are more proactively planning for individuals, groups and cohorts of pupils. Working with teaching and non-teaching staff across the school, the Senior Leadership Team and staff continually review intervention impact grids for positive impact and value added.

	P1					P4					P7				
	LT	R	W	LIT.	NUM.	LT	R	W	LIT.	NUM.	LT	R	W	LIT.	NUM.
<b>Millbank</b>															
<b>Moray 2022</b>	84	76	73	69	78	81	73	67	61	69	83	74	70	65	69
<b>2022</b>	65	58	58	52	55	84	66	59	59	66	93	73	63	63	73

All staff take responsibility for whole-school approaches including literacy, numeracy, play pedagogy, talk 4 reading, library developments, number talks, strategies for learning and support one another in use of concrete materials for scaffolding numeracy based learning. Working in collaboration with the secondary school, senior pupils volunteer to work with children to support reading and literacy. All staff at Millbank Primary School focus on equity of opportunity and support for all children in a caring and nurturing environment, committed to professional learning activities within a culture of high expectations.

The school use National Standardised Assessments to inform where there may be identified gaps in learning, supporting planning of learning and teaching and targeting of interventions:

## Primary 1

The school have worked to address identified gaps for P1 (now P2) through a range of targeted interventions for Literacy. This is over and above approaches outlined on the previous page. Achievement in Numeracy is greater than Literacy overall. Developmental delays are a result of the pandemic are noted in P1 data where the school enacts recovery supports and interventions to meet learning needs. An increasing number of children from across the Associated Schools Group attending The Bothy are working on the milestones curriculum, reflected in school ACEL attainment noted previously and predicted to increase further next session based on future P1 intake profile.

## Primary 4

The school continues to address identified gaps for P4 (now P5) through a range of approaches and interventions for literacy and numeracy for targeted individuals and groups. Pupil Progress Meetings continue to inform success of block interventions and revisions required.

## Primary 7

At P7, the school continued to support children and address identified attainment gaps. The school note variance in cohort performances across stages year on year with interventions mapped with increased rigour in tracking and monitoring approaches. Pupil Progress Meetings and professional dialogue for reviewing pupil progress and planning next steps with SLT and Principal Teacher of ASN further guide interventions for improvement.

## Learning and Teaching

Across all classes, positive and nurturing relationships between staff and children were noted where children were treated equitably underpinned by a rights based approach across classes. In all classes, almost all children were keen to engage in learning activities underway, where planned learning experiences were matched to learner interests and needs. This included play based learning with evidence of children making choices and offering opinions (pace and challenge supported with teacher observation/direction), creative writing tasks, numeracy and maths based activities, individual and group based tasks, targeted intervention groups (in class) and RME themed learning activities. Digital technology was integrated in learning where appropriate, both as planned learning activities and in support of individual learners.

Learning Intentions were evident across all classes with link to development of skills for learning, life and work in the majority of classes visited. Success Criteria were noted across all classes covering a range of contexts for learning, co-constructed with learners in a few of the classes visited linked to seasonal theme. In the majority of classes visited, teachers were observed providing in the moment feedback to children on learning and this was further noted where classwork was reviewed. A range of learning activities focused on literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, RMPS, talk for writing, phonics, play pedagogy, reading, imaginative writing, number talks and physical activity were observed, planned to meet the needs of learners.

In some lessons, pupil led learning was evident with evidence of personalisation and choice in the majority of lessons visited. Learners were actively participating in learning activities underway, keen to engage with all adults and share their learning. Pace and challenge was appropriate for most lessons with children supported as appropriate by all staff. Self, peer and teacher assessment were in use across the majority of classes visited. Evidence of closed questioning for recall as a check for understanding was noted across almost all classes visited. Open-ended questions were used to support development of higher order thinking in less than half of lessons visited, with positive reinforcement by class teachers through warranted praise. The school have strong arrangements for supporting children who require further support through The Bothy, The Bridge, Universal Support Groups and PEF groups in a targeted and caring manner. Leaders have in place further plans to improve outdoor learning areas and are developing approaches to involve parents and the community more in learning activities. This included developments related to the outdoor classroom and school library. Overall, consistency in approaches to learning and teaching was noted in line with Millbank's approach, supporting learner wellbeing and achievements.

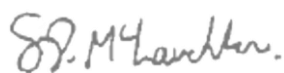
## Local Authority Commentary and Next Steps

In summary, Millbank Primary School continues to make good progress since the original inspection in 2018 and subsequent continuing engagement visits in 2019 and 2021. Response to Covid-19 and return to school following both periods of lockdown ensured learners were supported to engage and participate in learning – both Remote Learning and subsequent in-school learning – where strong wellbeing supports have been enacted in an equitable manner for all children and families. Positive change has resulted to school ethos, quality of learner’s experiences, leadership at all levels, learning and teaching.

Senior leaders, working with staff and a range of partners are better able to plan, analyse and track interventions. The school have improved mechanisms in order to identify attainment gaps with planned interventions in place and under development in order to address these gaps. Clear actions for improvement have been acted upon with next steps identified for further improvements over time.

The school has a caring and nurturing approach to ensuring all children at Millbank Primary School belong and have potential to achieve their full potential, well led by the substantive Senior Leadership Team now in post and supported by a committed staff team who lead on key areas for continued school improvement. School values of respect, perseverance and fairness are known and lived across the school community and embedded within school culture and ethos.

We are confident that Millbank Primary School has capacity for continued improvement with ongoing support and challenge from the local authority. This will continue to be managed at pace under the leadership of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher and in collaboration with all staff.



Stewart McLauchlan  
**Quality Improvement Manager**  
Lead Officer and 2021 HMI Inspection Link Officer  
23 January 2023



Vivienne Cross  
**Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)**  
Reviewing Officer  
7 February 2023