

27 August 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Sgoil Bhàgh a' Chaisteil (Castlebay Community School) and Sgoil Àraich (Nursery Class). During our visit, we talked to parents/carers, children, and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- A very positive start made by the headteacher which is improving the culture for change within the school. She has recently established more effective systems and processes for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Children and young people learning through Gaelic and English are keen to learn. Their learning is enhanced and enriched from regular and effective use of the school campus and the local community. Children and young people's physical wellbeing is supported well through the comprehensive range of sporting and cultural activities provided by the local community.
- The partnership work between staff, parents, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and partner agencies has increased the numbers enrolling in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) at the nursery and primary stages. The wider community values the way the school celebrates what is important to Gaelic, the island and culture through whole-school projects.
- Strong attainment in the senior phase where young people achieve success across a range of national qualifications.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school and nursery. Teachers need to provide greater levels of challenge so that children and young people are fully engaged and motivated by their learning.
- Within the broader framework of reviewing the curriculum, it is important to develop clear progressive programmes and courses for all curricular areas across the school. This will support teachers to plan more effectively so that they build on children and young people's prior learning.
- Use national advice and guidance to embed self-evaluation in the practices of the nursery and primary through Gaelic and English. Staff should develop a more outward looking approach. It would be useful to continue to develop a shared understanding of what effective practice looks like in early learning and childcare, including for total immersion.
- With support from the local authority, the school should continue to strategically develop Sgoil Bhàgh a' Chaisteil as a Gaelic status school. This should take full account of

national advice on GME and Gaelic (Learners) as a second language. As a matter of urgency, senior leaders, with the support of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, need to improve continuity in the secondary GME curriculum leading to uptake for qualifications and awards.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Sgoil Bhàgh a' Chaisteil

Quality indicators for the school	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Securing children's progress	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:
[https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/eilean-siar-\(western-isles\)/6203132](https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/eilean-siar-(western-isles)/6203132)

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. We will ask the education authority for a progress report on the action point for the secondary curriculum for GME. This will be within a year of publishing the letter and will be used to decide if further scrutiny activity is required. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will inform parents/carers about the school's progress on other areas for improvement as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Guch Dhillon
HM Inspector