

24 May 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Eday Community School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently held discussions with parents, staff and the local authority during a visit to the school. Our engagement helped us learn more about how you and your families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches to support your children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed the progress the school and its nursery has made since the original inspection with the service manager for primary education and the headteacher.

### **Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19**

Since the original inspection, Eday Community School has experienced significant changes to staffing. During the pandemic, the headteacher of Sanday Junior Secondary fulfilled a dual role successfully acting as headteacher for Eday Community School. During this period the children and families of Eday were supported well. The acting principal teacher was appointed in February 2021 and liaised closely with the acting headteacher to ensure continuity for children in their learning, and improvement to the ethos of the school. The acting principal teacher has recently been appointed on a temporary basis to the acting headteacher post. She takes a nurturing approach to supporting the individual needs of children and has fostered positive relationships with families. The acting headteacher provides much needed continuity for the school. The education authority supports the school well through enhanced provision in staffing and investment in travel. It is important now to sustain stability in staffing to allow the school to make a successful recovery and children to achieve their full potential.

### **Progress with recommendations from previous inspection**

Staff in the school and its nursery provide a warm and welcoming environment for children. The introduction of a well-attended breakfast club, supported by the community, helps children to be ready for learning. Children demonstrate improved respect for one another. They have impeccable table manners when having lunch together and take responsibility for ensuring everyone feels included. They are also understanding and managing their own behaviour and reactions more effectively.

Children have access to digital technologies to support their learning, and new resources to support the development of their social skills. The curriculum is broadened through the weekly visits to Sanday where children have swimming lessons and mix with other classes for dancing, for example. The curriculum for music has included guitar playing provided by the Youth Music Initiative. This culminated in children performing together and was valued highly by parents. Children are developing skills in sewing and use their own time after school to make items of their choice. All parents report that children are now more interested

in learning, want to go to school and return home again content to complete their homework tasks. They attribute these positive signs to the efforts of the acting headteacher.

The nursery provision is supported well by the local authority and continues to be a strength of the school. Practitioners reflect on children's experiences and adapt and adopt new ways to engage children effectively in their play. The nursery has continued to improve learning experiences for children through its environment where children make very good progress. The school should continue to focus on improving children's attainment and achievement to ensure all reach their full potential.

The acting headteacher continues to develop her skills and experience as a class teacher. She recognises the need for a sustained focus on children's wellbeing and is improving the range of resources to do this effectively. Improvements to the learning environment, the structure of the school day and a broad curriculum programme are at an early stage of development but show promising signs of impacting on improved experiences for learners. Consideration should be given to ways in which children can take more responsibility for their own learning and increase opportunities for them to learn outdoors. The acting headteacher is developing reflective practices and should ensure her observations of children's learning are noted. This will help inform planning next steps in learning and allow for flexibility in the approaches taken to deliver high quality experiences on a day-by-day basis.

There are more effective approaches in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery. These approaches now need to be extended across the school, with a particular focus on developing high quality learning, teaching and assessment. Consideration should now be given to developing the school's vision, values and aims to reflect the school's unique context. The acting headteacher should continue to build on the effective work done in the nursery to develop a whole-school vision in partnership with the community. The Parent Council should resume its activities and harness its support in taking the school and its community forward with the new acting headteacher and her team.

### What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are prioritising their plans to support recovery. As a result, the school needs more time to take forward the recommendations from the original inspection. We will carry out another visit to the school within twelve months of the publication of this letter. When we carry out another visit, we will write to you informing you of the progress the school has made.

Susan Gow  
Managing Inspector