

12 March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In September 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Seamab School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and young people and worked closely with the Head of Education and staff. We heard from the Head of Education and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the Head of Education. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children and young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Staff need to ensure that all children and young people receive their full entitlement to a broad general education, in line with national guidance.

Teachers are taking initial steps to increase the range of subjects available to learners. They should continue this positive start and ensure children and young people experience learning across all of the curriculum areas. Children and young people access significantly fewer hours of learning than they would do in other similar schools. Senior leaders need to review the school week to ensure children and young people receive their full entitlement to high-quality learning.

The school is not yet ready to provide a senior phase of education for those young people nearing the end of their broad general education (BGE). There are a minority of young people, currently at the school, that are nearing the end of their BGE phase of learning. Senior leaders should ensure that all of these young people have a smooth transition from the BGE into the senior phase. In doing so, senior leaders should work closely with young people and parents/carers to plan learning that meets the needs and aspirations of each young person.

Staff need to improve the quality of learning and teaching through planning that increases engagement and builds on what children and young people already know.

Senior leaders and staff are successfully supporting children and young people to return to positive patterns of school attendance following periods of non-attendance at previous schools. Most learners respond positively to staff and feel their needs are met well when in school. Since the original inspection, staff's expectations of what learners can achieve has improved. For example, they have been successful in supporting more children and young people to engage for longer periods within classroom settings. However, there is a need for staff to continue to raise expectations further.

Overall, teachers take better account of learner's skills and capabilities when planning learning. As a result, learners are engaging better in learning across all classes. Teachers use verbal and written feedback more effectively to help learners know they are working well on a task. Teachers should now help learners link the activity they are doing to the progress they are making in learning and skills they may need in the future.

Teachers have developed a more consistent approach to planning children's learning activities. Teachers are planning increasingly well, taking fuller account of children and young people's prior learning and monitoring their progress more regularly. However, too often teachers use whole class approaches to learning which results in activities being too easy for a minority of learners. Teachers should ensure that all learning experiences are progressive, enjoyable and well matched to the needs and interests of individual learners. They need to be clearer on how they will know learners are making progress with their individual learning programmes.

Senior leaders have implemented opportunities for teachers to work together to improve their understanding of how well learners are progressing in learning. Senior leaders and teachers have correctly identified that their approaches to assessment remain in the early stages of implementation.

Staff need to improve children and young people's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and across other curriculum areas.

Overall, learners are making better progress with their skills in both literacy and numeracy. While this is promising, learners are capable of making more progress. Senior leaders should continue to prioritise improving learner's attainment in literacy and numeracy and help them improve their skills at a quicker rate. As tracking of attainment has only recently started, it is still too early for senior leaders to see clearly what progress learners have made with attainment over a longer period of time for literacy, numeracy and other curriculum areas.

Teachers should continue to ensure learners have a wide range of opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills in a progressive way. Learners are improving how well they read aloud to familiar adults. A few learners are reading for enjoyment more regularly. Teachers should build upon this positive start of motivating learners to read and ensure this results in improved attainment. Learners are writing more frequently and independently when in school. Teachers now need to measure effectively how well learners are improving their writing skills compared to their prior learning. Overall, learners are developing their numeracy skills well, particularly in number, money and measure. However, teachers should ensure they help children become more confident across all areas of numeracy and mathematics.

Staff should improve how they evidence and recognise children and young people's achievements. In doing so, they should support children and young people to understand the skills they are developing through all of their learning.

Learners celebrate their achievements more often, for example, through weekly assemblies. They have also shared their successes and achievements with parents/carers. Senior leaders continue to consider and implement new ways to recognise, record and evidence learners' achievements. They are helping learners access youth award schemes to provide them with opportunities to experience success. Senior leaders and staff should build on this positive start and work with the school community to help learners celebrate their achievements and attainment more fully.

Outdoor learning is a strength of the school and is popular with learners. They appreciate the freedom and joy which they find in nature. Staff are beginning to support learners to recognise and celebrate the skills they are developing from learning outdoors.

The school uses the 'Seamab Sea Changers' characters effectively to encourage learners to engage with the school values. For example, learners receive awards based on the characters such as 'Free', 'Joy' and 'Brave' at assemblies. The increased focus on recognising learners' achievements is encouraging children and young people to participate more across a range of activities.

What happens next?

Seamab School has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Seamab regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within nine months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Seamab the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

David M^cKellar
HM Inspector