

18 June 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Gairloch Primary School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work. They apply to both Gaelic and English Medium Education.

- The acting headteacher is establishing a clearer sense of direction for the school. She is hardworking and committed to achieving successful outcomes. She is improving the use of information from assessment to focus on how children can make better progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Children are highly motivated and eager to make the best possible progress. They are responsible, reliable and determined in the way they complete learning activities. Those learning through the medium of Gaelic are proud of how their fluency is progressing.
- Children and staff enjoy positive and caring relationships. Staff's recent work on wellbeing is beginning to help children appreciate its importance to achieving success.
- In both nursery classes, children benefit from interesting and exciting opportunities to learn through play. There is an emphasis on the use of real-life experiences. Children clearly enjoy and benefit from their time in the nursery.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from The Highland Council. They apply to both Gaelic and English Medium Education.

- Ensure that all staff work together to bring about further improvements for Gairloch Primary School. This should be underpinned by arrangements for self-evaluation to assist in achieving a brisker pace of change.
- Continue to improve learning, teaching and assessment. Action is required to make learning more challenging and based on the needs of individuals. Staff would benefit from receiving more regular advice on how their teaching can raise attainment. Children need to be more aware of their own progress and next steps in learning, for which staff should carefully plan assessment.
- Continue to work with parents, and Gaelic partners and organisations, to develop equity for children in Gaelic Medium Education (GME). This should include all the nursery hours being delivered through total immersion. The vision, values and aims of the school need to define and promote an understanding of how GME and Gaelic (Learners) are integral to Curriculum for Excellence.

- Develop further the curriculum so that children build appropriately on their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. The current use of strategies to improve reading and writing need to be integrated into the curriculum to ensure consistently better outcomes.

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 Gairloch Primary School

Quality indicators for the primary stages	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
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	good
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/highland/5153425>

What happens next?

We are confident that the school is improving. Due to the interim arrangements that are in place for the leadership of the school, we will ask The Highland Council for a report on the school's progress with the agreed areas for improvement. This will be required within a year of the publication of this letter. We will use the progress report to decide whether further engagement is required with the school. This may involve another inspection visit. The Highland Council will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made. This will outline any further action that we intend to take, as agreed with The Highland Council.

Joan Esson
HM Inspector