

1 April 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Bun-sgoil Dhùn Bheagain - Dunvegan Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement, which we agreed with the school and The Highland Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

The headteacher and staff should continue to accelerate children's progress in reading and writing in English, and in Gàidhlig (Gaelic) Medium Education. They should embed permanently the more effective approaches to total immersion, introduced of late, in the school and sgoil-àraich.

The headteacher and staff have made positive progress with this area for improvement.

The headteacher has led effectively on improving the bun-sgoil (primary school). The headteacher and staff have much better arrangements in place to see changes in children's progress and act on these more quickly. In Gàidhlig Medium Education, teachers used intensive total immersion approaches to improve children's fluency at pace. This has been very successful. Children's progress and fluency in Gàidhlig is much improved. All children are happy and confident in using Gàidhlig to learn across the curriculum. Most children talk fluently in Gàidhlig with teachers and each other. Children are now receiving high-quality immersion. However, the teachers who deliver this are not yet permanent to the bun-sgoil. The education authority needs to ensure that Gàidhlig Medium Education is staffed and promoted in line with statutory guidance. They should also ensure that teachers continue to get regular and coherent feedback on learning and teaching from specialists in Gàidhlig.

In English Medium Education, most children are making appropriate progress in literacy and English. Children have a few gaps in their learning. Most children use a rich range of vocabulary. They are articulate in conversations. The older children need to work together more to debate and discuss issues in paired and small group activities.

In both Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, children have improved their reading skills in both English and, as relevant Gàidhlig. Children are more confident in reading aloud. They use phonics better to pronounce tricky words. Children enjoy reading novels and talk about their favourite authors. They detail a few features of an enjoyable book and should continue to develop this skill.

In both Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, children's writing is continuing to improve. Children write increasingly across the curriculum. Children are clearer on how to write well and assess their own progress. Teachers need to focus on improving children's spelling, punctuation and handwriting. In Gàidhlig Medium Education, children need to be clearer on the use of accents on letters.

In English Medium Education, the younger children learn Gaelic (Learners). Children practise well the language learnt through puppetry. The older children are not learning Gaelic (Learners) in a continuous way. They miss out on natural opportunities to learn Gaelic on an ongoing basis. Children should continue to develop an understanding of the link between language and culture. Teachers should help children achieve national expectations in Gaelic (Learners) before they leave bun-sgoil.

In both Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, children make improved progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most of the younger children are performing in line with national expectations, with a few attaining beyond that standard. The majority of the older children are working at the appropriate stage for their age. A few children need more focused support to be at an age-appropriate level. In these situations, teachers' planning of progress should revisit key areas to help children consolidate their learning.

In both Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, children are motivated from activities that develop their skills in a range of situations. The majority of children develop resilience and problem-solving skills through learning outdoors. Children in Gàidhlig Medium Education celebrate well the Gàidhlig language and culture from taking part successfully in the local Mòd. They won a prize for their òrain luaidh - waulking song. Additionally, all children may choose to develop their musical skills from instrumental tuition in chanter, drumming, strings and percussion. All children develop knowledge and skills in performing for an audience at well-received whole-school and community events.

The headteacher and staff should ensure that children experience consistently high-quality learning and teaching within the nurturing atmosphere that staff have created. This should be based on a range of assessments, increased use of technology and continued use of national advice, such as 'The Advice on Gaelic Education.' Teachers should receive regular feedback to assist them in supporting children reach their full potential.

The headteacher and staff have made some positive progress in this area for improvement.

In both Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, most of children's learning is consistently of a high standard. Children learn in a nurturing, kind and caring atmosphere. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff and each other for almost all of the time. A few children are less engaged when learning is not at the right level of difficulty. Most teachers use clear explanations and well-crafted questions. They promote children's curiosity in their learning. Children use their skills in meaningful and relevant situations. Children learn through some play in the outdoors and through creative projects. Teachers use a range of activities to keep most lessons interesting, such as storytelling, digital technology and games. Most children are enthusiastic about their successes in learning. Teachers give children oral feedback to help them make progress. The headteacher is planning for all children to experience further specialist regular learning in a woodland environment through Gàidhlig and English.

In both Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, teachers use information from assessment better to plan the majority of lessons well. Children identify questions on areas they would like to learn. Teachers use guides produced by the education authority to help plan progressive learning. In some cases, teachers should improve further their planning of

learning to be at the right level of difficulty. Teachers should revisit main learning areas more regularly. Staff have successfully established supportive spaces in the bun-sgoil to assist children who require additional support with their learning (ASN). Children with ASN benefit from a range of valuable experiences to develop independence and life skills. Staff should ensure planning for ASN is based consistently on specific, challenging and progressive targets.

The headteacher and staff have developed guidance on what high standards of learning and teaching looks like. They should continue to use this guidance where more improvements are required. At times, in English Medium Education, children's learning should build on prior learning and enable children to explore, discuss and share their ideas to support their own and others' learning.

The headteacher and staff should increase children's learning across the breadth of the curriculum, including achievements. Teachers should continue to engage in medium- and longer-term planning that enables more challenging learning for children and, for those in English Medium Education, extends Gaelic (Learners).

The headteacher has taken forward positive steps to clarify the purpose of the curriculum. Children's learning is effectively based on relevant values and aims that identify what is important to the local, Gàidhlig and national context. The role of Gaelic (Learners) should be identified further in the values and curriculum aims. Staff are yet to capture their use of current high-quality total immersion approaches in the purpose of the curriculum. Children prioritise Gaelic (Learners), Gàidhlig and sign language as the languages important to the school. These languages are used at whole-school events, such as the recent Christmas show staged for the community. Teachers should ensure that partners for Gàidhlig, and national organisations, continue to support the curriculum in a progressive way.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The Highland Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Joan C. Esson
HM Inspector