

Summarised inspection findings

Stronsay Junior High School

Orkney Islands Council

12 May 2026

Key contextual information

School name	Stronsay Junior High School
Council:	Orkney Islands Council
SEED number:	6003834
Roll (March 2026):	35 children and young people

Stronsay Junior High School serves the remote island of Stronsay, Orkney. The island has an approximate population of 300 residents. The headteacher has been in post for five years. She is supported by two principal teachers and they make up the extended leadership team.

A majority of staff are itinerant teachers, flying to the island daily from mainland Orkney to teach. Islanders experience occasional travel disruptions to and from the island due to poor weather. This impacts on local flight and ferry services. During the week of inspection, the island experienced disruption to its internet access due to damaged subsea cables.

Attendance is generally above the national average. In September 2024, all children and young people lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile four. In September 2024, the school reported that the number of pupils with additional support needs largely reflects the national average.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher is a caring and compassionate leader who is committed to securing positive outcomes for children and young people. Supported by the extended leadership team, she has created a positive school culture where staff prioritise well children and young people's sense of wellbeing. This is helping almost all learners to feel included and a strong sense of belonging to their school and local community. The headteacher is highly regarded by children and young people, staff, parents and partners. They value her approachable and solution-focused approach.
- The headteacher led an effective review of the school's vision, values and aims last session. She sought the views of stakeholders appropriately to ensure the vision reflects well the school's place within an island community. The newly adopted vision encourages a renewed focus on ensuring children and young people are ambitious in their learning. Children and young people suggested the values of being kind, inclusive, respectful and responsible and these were adopted as a result. Most children and young people and staff model these values effectively through daily interactions. A majority of children and young people demonstrate a clear understanding of the values and their relevance to learning experiences.
- The headteacher identifies appropriate priorities through the school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP is informed well by local and national priorities and responds effectively to areas identified from self-evaluation activities. There is clear evidence that strategic change has resulted in positive outcomes. These include the development of emotional coaching for learners and improved tracking and monitoring systems. These changes support improvements in children and young people's wellbeing and raised attainment and achievement.
- Whilst the headteacher consults widely when selecting areas for improvement, she should extend the ownership of SIP priorities further, in order to include more members of the school community. This includes staff, children and young people, parents and partners. The headteacher should ensure the SIP captures clearly how all staff are contributing meaningfully to implementing improvement and change.
- The extended leadership team implement effective quality assurance processes to support regular self-evaluation activity. They gather useful information from activities, such as sampling children and young people's work, lesson observations and seeking stakeholder views through questionnaires. They review children and young people's progress in learning and attainment robustly in order to consider further areas for improvement. The headteacher uses

How good is our school? 4th edition well with staff to evaluate aspects of school practice. She should continue to work with staff and the extended leadership team to improve their confidence in using this framework. Almost all children and young people feel the school listens and takes their views into account when planning change. The headteacher is well-placed to use information derived from self-evaluation to drive further improvements across the school, such as in the consistency and quality of learning experiences.

- The headteacher supports teachers effectively to engage with research and pedagogy to improve their teaching. She has encouraged a culture of learning successfully across the school. Most teachers undertake relevant practitioner enquiries to explore new teaching approaches. A minority of teachers show successfully that these enquiries are helping them to adopt and embed effective pedagogical approaches into their practice.
- All staff engage meaningfully with annual professional reviews. The extended leadership team respond positively to staff's professional interests and help them to identify areas for development. Staff professional reviews and development plans should now be more clearly linked to the SIP and capture better how staff develop their leadership capacities.
- A minority of children and young people act as classroom representatives, gathering the views of their peers and contributing ideas to improve the school. A majority of children and young people demonstrate strong leadership in other ways. For example, they show effective communication skills by leading assemblies or delivering lessons to peers. A few young people act as positive role models and promote active, healthy lifestyles by offering sports clubs. A few children serve as junior road safety officers, encouraging peers to recognise and take greater responsibility over their safety. Staff should continue to explore and increase opportunities for more children and young people to adopt leadership roles.
- Staff work effectively with partners to provide learning opportunities for children and young people. Staff encourage partners to come to Stronsay proactively. Partners provide positive learning and life experiences to learners in their local community and across Orkney. Staff foster effective communication with key partners. They also work in close partnership with island organisations, including the Stronsay Development Trust who are increasing resources available to learners. This includes current work to improve outdoor learning facilities.
- All staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school. A few staff support young people effectively to identify career pathways related to different subjects and courses. This helps them to consider and plan for their future aspirations. Staff would like to extend their work with local Developing the Young Workforce teams to support young people further to plan for aspirational future careers and destinations.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The headteacher and staff work together well to ensure a warm, positive and welcoming environment. Staff, children and young people speak with pride about the strong sense of community across their school. Teachers create inclusive and well organised learning spaces. Learners' work is displayed prominently throughout the school. This helps children and young people to take pride in their learning. Children and young people are a strength of the school. They are positive, eager to learn, and demonstrate maturity and emotional resilience.
- Staff foster very positive relationships with children and young people. They know learners very well and understand clearly their learning needs. Almost all learners demonstrate respect towards each other, adults and visitors. Children and young people feel staff treat them fairly and with respect. A minority of teachers undertook well-considered professional learning to help children and young people understand and manage their emotions better. This supports a positive learning environment, where almost all children and young people behave very well.
- Almost all children and young people engage well with their learning. Teachers in the primary provide learning which aligns with children's interests, supporting their motivation in learning. A minority of teachers provide learning which is appropriately challenging and that is well matched to children and young people's age and stage. This should be extended further to ensure that learning is planned to meet the needs of all, including a significant minority who require increased challenge. In a majority of lessons in the secondary, learning is overly teacher-led. Teachers should increase opportunities for all children and young people to have increased responsibility for, and independence in, their learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. The headteacher worked with a minority of staff recently to develop the Stronsay Learning Standard. With further development, this has the potential to establish stronger classroom routines for children and young people. A majority of teachers require further professional learning, well-planned and regular collegiate time, and more opportunities to learn from practice adopted by schools across and beyond the local authority. Staff should develop and incorporate further the Stronsay Learning Standard, ensuring this is based on a shared understanding of the features of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should ensure that lessons are paced appropriately, with children and young people transitioning to active learning promptly.

- Almost all teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. This helps most children and young people understand the purpose of their learning. In a majority of lessons, teachers share the steps for success in learning appropriately with learners. Too often, these measures of success focus on the completion of tasks rather than the learning to be achieved. A few teachers in the secondary use helpful starter activities to focus young people and to help them to make links to prior learning. Almost all teachers use questions well to check for understanding and test knowledge. A few teachers use very well-considered questioning to encourage children and young people to think deeply about their learning. A majority of teachers should improve how they review children and young people's progress in learning during, and at the end of, lessons.
- Teachers have worked well to develop approaches to setting individual learning targets through learning conversations with children and young people. As a result, learners know their targets well and are developing the ability to discuss their next steps in learning. Children in the primary set targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (HWB) appropriately. Young people in the secondary set helpful targets for all curricular areas. Teachers should continue to support learners to set targets which are consistently specific, relevant and measurable. They should adopt consistent approaches to learning conversations that support meaningful self-reflection for all children and young people.
- Teachers in the primary create interesting learning areas for children to develop skills through play. For example, younger children develop their communication and cooperation skills while building together in the construction area. Teachers should continue to access high-quality professional learning relating to play pedagogy. This should help them to develop play experiences that are suitably purposeful and developmentally appropriate for all children.
- All children and young people access digital devices regularly to support their learning. Children play digital games to consolidate learning in literacy and numeracy. Younger children take pictures of their work confidently to evidence their progress. Young people use digital technology well to conduct research, prepare presentations and access learning materials online. Staff should now consider how to develop children and young people's digital skills in a planned and progressive way, using a range of technology. This is particularly important for children and young people living on a remote island. Teachers should continue to develop their creative use of digital technology in order to provide rich learning experiences.
- At times, itinerant teachers experience challenge travelling to Stronsay due to poor weather or technical issues impacting on the regularity of flights. This impacts on young people's continuity of learning. The headteacher, teachers and the local authority need to work together to find more creative solutions to these challenges. This includes through the use of digital technology to ensure children and young people's progress in learning continues.
- Teachers use a range of assessments appropriately to support their judgements of learners' progress. They regularly use summative and standardised assessments well to measure children and young people's attainment in learning. A few teachers use well-considered peer- and self-assessments to encourage learners to reflect on their progress. A majority of teachers use formative assessment strategies routinely. However, a majority of teachers need to use the information gathered from these assessments more effectively. They should consider how to adapt learning when assessments demonstrate gaps in understanding. This

will help them to identify when learners need to revisit aspects of learning or adopt retrieval practice.

- Most teachers provide children and young people with high-quality verbal and written feedback on their work. Teacher's verbal feedback provides children and young people with praise and encouragement. Their written feedback is helping a majority of children and young people to understand well what they need to do to make further improvements to their work and progress in learning.
- Teachers engage in moderation activities with colleagues in and outwith the school. Teachers in the primary discuss writing standards with each other to support their professional judgements. Teachers in the secondary link with colleagues across the local authority to help them verify assessment standards. They would benefit from more regular moderation opportunities, particularly focusing on their approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment together. This will help to increase a few teachers' confidence in making judgements of progress in curricular areas beyond literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers use a range of approaches to planning learning across the curriculum. Teachers in the primary use short-, medium- and long-term planning in literacy, numeracy and a majority of other curricular areas appropriately. This is beginning to include planning for assessment. Teachers in the secondary plan learning using the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes (Es and Os) and National Qualification (NQ) course specification guidance. A majority of teachers are increasing the involvement of children and young people in planning by seeking their views on what and how they learn. The headteacher should support staff to streamline the approaches used to plan and help them to adopt consistent approaches across the school and curricular areas. This should help staff ensure that all learning is progressive and provides appropriate breadth and depth of learning across all curricular areas.
- Staff track children and young people's progress in learning effectively, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. The headteacher and teachers engage in regular dialogue and review learner progress to identify those are off track in their learning. They use tracking information to put in place helpful interventions for those needing extra support. Staff track young people's progress in the secondary using their individual targets. They should ensure tracking approaches also recognise young people's progress through CfE levels and align well with the Es and Os and NQ standards.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff from the nursery work well with teachers as children transition to primary. They share helpful information about children that ensures support is planned and sustained. Young people are also supported well when they transition from school at the end of S4. They routinely move to Kirkwall Grammar School to continue their senior phase. As this involves young people boarding on Orkney mainland, staff engage proactively with pastoral staff to ensure almost all young people transition positively. Young people also visit establishments to increase their confidence and to prepare them for the move.
- Staff, children and young people recognise clearly the schools place within a remote island community, as demonstrated in the school's curriculum rationale. However, staff need to develop further opportunities to employ the unique context and environment of the school as a feature of the curriculum being provided. This will help children and young people to see the relevance of their learning to their daily lives.
- Teachers in the primary use progression pathways successfully to inform their planning for numeracy and mathematics. However, progressive planning pathways are not yet in place for all curricular areas. Teachers should now work together to ensure all curricular areas are planned progressively. This should help to ensure that all children regularly learn and revisit skills across all curricular areas.
- The range of itinerant teachers working in the school allows children and young people to benefit from a broad and well-considered curriculum, taught by subject specialists. Children in the primary benefit from learning provided by subject teachers. They ensure children develop their skills in areas such as music, modern languages and physical education (PE). Children in P7 participate in weekly cookery classes. This helps them to develop their practical cookery skills, including measuring and weighing ingredients. Young people in S1-S2 access learning from across all curricular areas. Staff have introduced wider achievement courses for S1-S4, supporting young people to develop skills and interests in a range of areas. These include leatherwork, model building and circus skills. Staff should develop a skills framework that allows young people to reflect on their skills progression over time.
- Children and young people receive their entitlement to religious and moral education (RME). They also receive two periods of high-quality learning in PE. The headteacher recognises that there is further potential to develop how all staff contribute to literacy, numeracy and HWB as a responsibility of all. This will ensure children and young people recognise more clearly the skills they are demonstrating across their learning.
- Children in the primary receive their entitlement to learning modern languages. They all learn French and children in the upper primaries also learn Spanish. Children in the lower primary have regular opportunities to take part in outdoor learning. They develop well their understanding of nature and sustainability through growing plants and food in the local community centre. Children in P7 and S2 attend a residential experience on Hoy where they develop skills in independence and resilience. Staff should provide further opportunities for children and young people to develop their skills for learning, life and work through regular progressive outdoor learning.

- Young people as they move into S3, select seven subjects, beyond English, mathematics, PE, RME and HWB. Young people appreciate the free choice of options, but this results in a majority of young people not continuing their learning in all curricular areas. For example, young people study French and Spanish throughout S1 and S2 but do not have to continue their learning in languages during S3. The headteacher should ensure young people in S3 receive their entitlement to modern languages by complying with the expectations of Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach. Teachers in a majority of subjects start NQs at the beginning of S3 rather than progressing young people through CfE fourth level experiences and outcomes. This limits young people's breadth and depth of learning in the BGE.
- Young people in S4 benefit from a strong range of courses and awards, particularly in relation to the size of the school. Staff ensure they plan the curriculum in line with the needs and interests of each individual young person. They provide flexibility in the number of courses undertaken by young people, underpinned by an aspiration of ensuring all learners attain the highest number of qualifications before they leave school.
- Staff work well with a range of partners that result in positive learning experiences and outcomes for young people. For example, Active Schools staff provide sports clubs and Youth Sports Leaders programmes for children in the upper primary. Children value visits by national theatre companies providing performances within the school. Community Learning and Development teams also provided a Confidence in Cooking course for young people in S1 and S2, helping to build on their practical cookery skills.
- Young people value the support they receive from Skills Development Scotland in considering their post-school plans. Staff work well with visiting speakers and partners to increase career inputs. As a result, young people increase their understanding of potential careers available to them. Young people in S4 value the opportunity to study at college as part of their timetable through the Orkney Offer.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- All parents report that they feel comfortable contacting the school with any worries or concerns. They are confident that staff will seek to address any issues.
- The headteacher communicates with parents regularly using a weekly bulletin. She uses the bulletin to recommend resources available to help parents support their child's learning from home. A few parents would like more information about what their child is learning at school. They would also like more detailed information relating to their child's progress in learning. This may help parents to understand better their child's next steps in learning and how families can support increased progress.
- Staff have offered a few helpful family learning activities, with a focus on emotion coaching and developing children and young people's literacy and numeracy skills. Whilst feedback from a few parents has been positive, the uptake for these opportunities has been very low. Staff should continue to work with parents to identify and plan family learning events that meet the needs of both the school and parents.
- All parents are invited to contribute to the work of the school through the parent forum. The headteacher seeks parental feedback on the SIP, and on the use of pupil equity funding (PEF). However, almost all parents do not take up these opportunities. This results in most parents not being involved in the life and work of the school. The headteacher and staff should continue to explore creative and new ways of engaging parents further as meaningful partners.
- A few parents are frustrated by the regular impact of itinerant teachers being unable to attend school. They would like further support from the local authority to address these issues.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Children and young people's wellbeing lies at the heart of the work of the school. They have a firm sense of belonging to their school community and their place within a remote island context. Staff use the school values well to support children and young people to understand their wellbeing. Children in the upper primaries produced booklets with guidance to their peers on demonstrating kindness to others. Young people in the secondary regularly act as positive role models to younger children, showcasing how to be kind, inclusive, respectful and responsible effectively.
- Most children and young people recognise that staff help them to understand the factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They meet with teachers regularly to discuss the extent to which they feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. Teachers conduct regular wellbeing check-ins with children and young people, allowing them to address any factors impacting on their sense of wellbeing. Staff are at an early stage of implementing a wellbeing tracker across the school, having trialled a few options recently. This has the potential to allow staff to identify and address universal and targeted wellbeing issues more proactively. Most children and young people understand the wellbeing indicators well, and their relevance to their daily lives.
- Extended leaders led effectively the development of staff's understanding of emotional wellbeing. They led useful professional learning and embedded a whole-school approach to emotional coaching for children and young people. This is supporting improvements in the behaviour of children and young people and the development of a respectful school ethos. Children and young people are more able to recognise their feelings and use strategies to overcome negative emotions as a result.
- Children and young people are developing an increasing understanding of children's rights. They value teachers seeking their views when planning learning collaboratively. Children in the primary use classroom charters linked effectively to their rights. A few children and young people have formed a steering group to take forward work on rights. They have created a visual display and are beginning to develop an action plan for improvements. This work should be continued to ensure all learners develop a deeper appreciation of their rights.
- Children and young people regularly learn about the importance of adopting an active, healthy lifestyle. Children in the primary participate in regular toothbrushing to improve their

oral health. Children and young people develop important life skills through cookery classes, such as food hygiene, using equipment safely and maintaining a healthy and balanced diet.

- Positively, children and young people participated in focus groups to discuss how to keep themselves safe as part of the school's approach to safeguarding. They raised issues of safety and areas they would like to learn about. For example, using social media appropriately to keep in touch with friends beyond the island. All children and young people feel safe at school. They know they have a trusted adult to speak to if worried or upset. They recognise that living within a remote island context can present challenges with transport and communication. Almost all children and young people demonstrate high levels of ability to adapt, be resilient and solution focused when problems arise.
- Teachers plan the HWB curriculum successfully, ensuring it provides children and young people with a range of appropriate learning experiences. As a result, most children and young people have a clear understanding of how to maintain positive physical, social, emotional and mental wellbeing. They also have an increasing understanding of relationships and sexual health as they progress through the school.
- Partners provide children and young people with meaningful experiences that supports their HWB well. Health agencies provided a helpful input to young people relating to alcohol and substance misuse. A partnership with Active Schools offers learners opportunities for exercise. These include through activities developing learner's skills in football, rugby, netball, and cycling. A minority of young people would like more opportunities for regular exercise. Staff should continue to seek opportunities to extend experiences available to young people.
- Almost all staff understand well their responsibilities and statutory duties in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Staff appreciate their role in relation to Child Protection and safeguarding. They recognise how they contribute to getting it right for every child.
- Children and young people learn in welcoming spaces supporting their readiness to learn. They know they can access designated calm spaces if they are dysregulated or need quiet time. Children in the upper primary use a 'calm corner' well and young people benefit from the positive environment of the school library to regulate emotions. Learners access resources to help sensory issues, such as ear defenders or fidget toys. This helps most learners recognise how staff encourage them to be responsible for their own wellbeing needs and actions.
- The headteacher and staff use clear processes to identify children and young people who require additional support with their learning. They use child's plans to outline strategies to help these learners progress in their learning. Children and young people contribute to planning and staff liaise well with outside agencies as required. Whilst plans include relevant targets for those requiring support, staff should ensure they are consistently specific and measurable, with clear outcomes to measure success. Staff should ensure they systematically record the progress made towards targets following reviews. The headteacher recognises the need to develop further the whole school overview of those requiring additional support. This includes defining the roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels more clearly in relation to record keeping and reviewing child's plans. Support for Learning Assistants (SfLA) provide well-considered support through a range of one-to-one and small group interventions. They

are sensitive and encouraging in their interactions with learners. Overall, most children and young people who require additional support are making good progress in their learning.

- Almost all children feel that staff deal well with bullying. A majority of young people agree that the school deals well with bullying or have never experienced it. A minority of young people and a few parents do not feel that the school deals with bullying effectively. The headteacher and staff should continue work with children and young people, and parents to address concerns. They should work with all stakeholders to review the anti-bullying policy and improve approaches to understand, identify and address incidents of bullying. They should promote clearly what constitutes bullying and how they are working to address it.
- Children and young people develop well their understanding of diversity and equality. Staff encourage an inclusive culture appropriately where learners are encouraged to accept difference in others. Children and young people have a secure understanding of different religions and show respect for different faiths. Staff offer lessons on racism which encourages a better understanding of these concepts and learner's ability to challenge racial discrimination. The headteacher recognises the importance of challenging intolerance, particularly as children and young people do not live in, or have regular exposure to, a diverse community. Staff developed an inclusion policy which should now be shared widely with the school community. Staff should provide children and young people with further opportunities to learn about diversity and inclusion.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- Attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels. This is because of the very small numbers of children and young people at each stage. Almost all young people in the secondary transition to Kirkwall Grammar School at the end of S4 to complete their senior phase. A few young people over the past five years left school after S4 to an initial positive post-school destination. The very small numbers of young people leaving school makes the data unreliable for comparison.

Primary stages

- Overall, most children achieve national standards in reading and writing. Almost all children achieve national standards in listening and talking. Most children achieve national standards in numeracy and mathematics. Staff maintain detailed tracking records which show that most children are predicted to achieve national standards this year. Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards their individual targets. Across the school, a minority of children would benefit from more challenge in their learning to accelerate their progress and attainment.

Progress in Literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English. Almost all children make good progress in listening and talking.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen well to others during group and class discussions, taking turns and building on the thoughts and ideas of others. Almost all children talk clearly and audibly in an age-appropriate way. Children at the lower and middle stages enjoy sharing their views with their class through presenting in 'show and tell' activities. They would benefit from more experiences to talk to a wider range of audiences. Children at the upper stages describe clearly the features required when presenting to their peers such as eye contact and using tone of voice. Older children participate in debates and would benefit from further opportunities to do this to develop their understanding of persuasive language.

Reading

- Children choose from a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books in school and class libraries. They also choose from a mobile library that visits the school monthly. Older children use reading ladders well to set themselves and younger children with reading challenges. For

example, children are asked to read a book with an animal as a character. This supports their reading for enjoyment.

- Across the school, most children enjoy reading books and stories according to their age and stage. Children at the lower stages discuss the features of a story well and read familiar texts using their knowledge of letter sounds. Children at the middle and upper stages are increasingly able to share their favourite authors and genres with reasons. They summarise events well to recount the main ideas of a story. Children at the middle stages recognise the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts successfully but should now explore the features of non-fiction texts in more detail. Children at the upper stages describe the features of non-fiction texts well. They would now benefit from exploring a wider range of genres and texts of increasing complexity.

Writing

- Most younger children write at least one sentence accurately using a capital letter and full stop. Children at the lower and middle stages write using appropriate punctuation according to their age and stage. They write different words in Scots well such as 'braw' and 'feart'. They should be encouraged to write at greater length independently. Children need further support to form letters of the correct shape, size and position in order to improve their presentation. Children across the school, write poems on different subjects, demonstrating an understanding of the features of poetry such as rhyme and descriptive language. Children at the upper stages enjoy writing stories or continuing story starters to create their own texts. They write at increasing length, using spelling and punctuation accurately. Children are less confident using features of language such as metaphor and simile.

Progress in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Children at the lower stages recall number sequences up to 20. They require further experience of recognising the number of objects in a group. Children at the middle stages round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They are not yet confident using the correct notation for common fractions to tenths. Children at the upper stages, write and order sets of decimal fractions to three decimal places. They are not yet able to multiply decimal fractions to two decimal places by a single digit.

Shape position and movement

- Children at the lower stages understand and correctly use the language of position and direction. They are less confident following instructions involving left and right. Children at the middle stages identify a range of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects confidently. They are not yet able to use mathematical language to describe their properties. Older children use the language of circumference, diameter and radius when describing a circle. They are less confident using mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles.

Information Handling

- Children in the middle stages extract key information from bar graphs. They should have increased opportunities to interpret information from a variety of data sets. Children at the upper stages use knowledge of colour and shape to match and sort items into different sets.

They are developing their skills in interpreting simple charts. Children in the upper stages use the language of probability accurately to describe the likelihood of simple events occurring. Children across the school need more experience in using a variety of methods to display data appropriate to their stage of development, including using digital technology.

Attainment over time (primary)

- The school roll and changing cohorts makes it difficult to identify trends and patterns over time. Overall, most children make good progress over time. Staff track the progress of children in literacy and numeracy using robust monitoring and tracking. They analyse attainment data carefully to track progress and plan interventions to raise attainment.
- Staff implemented a whole school approach to the delivery and assessment of children's listening and talking skills over the last few years. This included gathering reliable and valid assessment evidence of children's progress to support raised attainment. Staff have recently focused on improving approaches to children's writing. They should continue to measure carefully the value being added by whole school and targeted interventions.

Attendance (primary and secondary)

- Children and young people's attendance is above the national average. There are very few learners with attendance of less than 90%. The headteacher follows the local authority policy carefully to support increased attendance. She also communicates regularly with parents to offer support and guidance as required. No learners have been excluded from school in the past five years.

Secondary stages

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy at the secondary stages is generally positive.

Broad General Education (BGE)

- Over time, all young people routinely achieve CfE third level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. The attainment of young people at CfE fourth level in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3 is less consistent over time. Young people's attainment at CfE fourth level in literacy has decreased from 2021/22 to 2024/25. The headteacher continues to work with staff to improve the consistency of teacher professional judgements in relation to CfE fourth level. Staff should extend further opportunities for high quality moderation activities to increase teacher confidence in awarding CfE fourth level based on reliable assessment evidence. This includes work with teachers in the primary and colleagues from other schools.
- The extended leadership team track the progress of individual learners robustly to measure young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Young people requiring additional support are identified well for interventions that support their progress in learning. Staff should continue to develop their approaches to measuring the impact of specific interventions on targeted young people.
- The headteacher demonstrates clearly that over time young people who require additional support with their learning and those entitled to free school meals, attain well in literacy and numeracy by the end of S3, in line with their peers.

Senior Phase (S4 only)

- At S4, young people's attainment at Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 4 and level 5 in literacy and numeracy was in line with the virtual comparator (VC) from 2020/21 to 2023/24. There were no young people in S4 during session 2024/25.
- Young people attain SCQF level 4 or level 5 in literacy and numeracy through the full course award in National 4 or National 5 English and Mathematics. A few young people were presented for National 5 Applications of Mathematics in selected years, with varying levels of success.

Attainment over time (secondary)

BGE

- Staff demonstrate through current monitoring and tracking systems that young people progress well in their learning as they move through the BGE. Most teachers are increasingly using learner conversations and target setting with young people to support them to take greater ownership over their progress in learning. The headteacher needs to continue to improve the quality and consistency of young people's targets and teacher approaches to learning conversations. This will ensure all targets are meaningful and challenge young people.
- The headteacher recognises the need to develop tracking systems further. In particular, she should ensure systems capture young people's attainment in relation to CfE levels, for curricular areas beyond literacy and numeracy. Staff are not yet able to demonstrate young people's attainment over time using CfE levels, by the end of S3.

Senior Phase (S4 only)

- At S4, when compared using average complementary tariff points, the performance of the lowest attaining 20%, middle attaining 60% and highest attaining 20% of young people is generally in line with the VC for the five-year period. In 2023/24, the highest attaining 20% of young people attained significantly much higher than the VC.

Breadth and Depth (S4 only)

- Staff are committed to providing a range of NQs and other SCQF courses that maximise opportunities for success for young people in S4. At S4, most young people achieved four or more courses, at SCQF level 4 or better in 2023/24. All young people achieved this from 2020/21 to 2022/23. This is in line with the VC across all three years. All young people achieved four or more courses, at SCQF level 5C or better in 2020/21 and 2022/23. This changed to a majority of young people in 2021/22 and 2023/24. For all four years, this is in line with the VC. A majority of young people achieved one or more courses, at SCQF level 5A or better from 2021/22 to 2023/24. This is in line with the VC.

All SCQF courses

- At S4, all young people achieved one or more courses at SCQF level 5 or better from 2020/21 to 2023/24. This is above the VC. All young people achieved five or more courses at SCQF level 5 or better in 2020/21 and 2022/23. This is above the VC. However, this was previously a majority of young people in 2021/22 and 2023/24, which is generally in line with the VC.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all children and young people participate in achievements in and outwith school. This includes popular after school clubs with high attendance, such as Dungeon and Dragons Club.

These clubs help learners to develop communication skills and social connections. A few children and young people participate in the Silver Darlings community run music group. They develop confidence and music and performance skills. Children and young people also develop important life skills through a craft club, including knitting and crochet.

- All young people in S1 and S2 worked in teams to undertake the Youth Philanthropy Initiative. This helped young people to increase their understanding of social issues by researching charities and their impact on the local community. Staff and volunteers support children and young people well to try a variety of activities that will help them achieve, develop their interests and gain a wider understanding of the world. This includes attending events and competitions that involve other Orkney schools. For example, all young people in S3 attended a Youth Conference focussed on mental health in Kirkwall. This increased their sense of responsibility and teamwork skills. A number of children participate in a netball club, run by a parent. They train and compete across Orkney, developing their competence in the sport.
- Staff celebrate learners' achievements well through noticeboard displays and awards. A minority of children and young people gain national awards through their achievements. Staff use various tools to track learner's achievements. They should develop how they help learners to track the skills they develop through achievements. This would help them to better understand the skills for learning, life and work being developed over time.
- Children and young people contribute well to each other's learning and community life. Most children and young people took part in the community pantomime demonstrating their creativity and confidence. A majority of young people presented at the Stronsay Development Trust Youth Summit last session. Participants helped to identify and share needs and issues relating to young people living in an island community. Staff should continue to build further volunteering opportunities for more children and young people.

Equity for all learners

- Staff use relevant data relating to the socio-economic context of the local community to reduce costs associated with the school day. Staff used additional funding to ensure all learners had a pencil case with appropriate stationery. Staff also signpost families to financial assistance, including free school meals and clothing grants. They offer discreet support to families, for example by partially or fully funded residential visits as required. This helps ensure family circumstances are not a barrier to children and young people's full participation in school life.
- Following consultation with learners and parents, the headteacher used PEF to purchase resources to improve children and young people's literacy skills, and to provide teachers with resources to help learners who are neurodivergent to access their learning. Staff also worked with the local authority to secure national funding to provide all children and young people with a free breakfast. The headteacher also provides a range of relevant study materials for young people in the secondary.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

On behalf of the Office of His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland