

Summarised inspection findings

Mid Yell Junior High School

Shetland Islands Council

23 June 2026

Key contextual information

School name: Mid Yell Junior High School
Council: Shetland Islands Council
SEED number: 6103731
Roll: 80

Mid Yell junior high school serves the community of Yell, a small Shetland island to the North of the mainland. The headteacher has been in post for over 20 years and is supported by a depute headteacher, a principal teacher who leads the nursery and primary departments, and a principal teacher of support.

There are currently 80 children and young people who attend the school. There are 12 children in the nursery, 25 children in the primary and 43 young people in the secondary department.

Almost half of the children and young people who attend Mid Yell Junior High school are recorded as having an additional support need.

Attendance is above the national average.

There have been no exclusions since 2020/21.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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 well-regarded across the school and the community. Parents, staff and children appreciate his compassionate, caring and supportive approaches which have led to the development of a school environment which is warm and welcoming. Senior leaders recognise the uniqueness of each child and young person as an individual. They ably exemplify and model the principles outlined in the school values and have high expectations that staff will ensure the values have real life across the school community. Staff and learners are proud of their school and the important role it plays in the wider community. School staff know children, young people and their families very well.
- Senior leaders and staff understand very well the unique social, economic and cultural context of the school community. They plan carefully to overcome the challenges and constraints that come with the school's remote rural location. Staff plan a wide range of activities and experiences for young people within and beyond school that provide opportunities for skills and knowledge development. This is an important strength of the school.
- The headteacher, in consultation with stakeholders, reviewed the school vision in session 2020/21. The school values of Inclusive, Supportive, Learning, Aspirational, Nurturing and Developing (ISLAND) are well understood by the community. They summarise the school's aim of providing a learning environment that is broad, aspirational and enjoyable within a safe and inclusive school. The values are demonstrated in daily interactions between staff, children and young people and amongst children and young people themselves. Staff and other stakeholders also agreed a linked school motto, which is 'Mid Yell Junior High School, learning at the heart of our ISLAND.'
- Although the principles of the vision and motto underpin the work of the school, the majority of young people are not sufficiently familiar with them to talk clearly about how they support their schoolwork and relationships. As a result, the vision and motto are not yet supporting a unified sense of purpose across this all-through school. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to revisit the vision, consulting widely and especially incorporating the views of children and young people. At present, a minority of young people feel that school staff take their views into account.
- The headteacher and senior leaders work closely with teaching staff on the improvement planning process with a focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. The development of a clear School Improvement Plan (SIP) draws on self-evaluation and collegiate

discussion. Senior leaders empower staff to make proposals following their own professional interests and research. As a result, senior leaders have selected a wide range of SIP projects in recent years. These include work on reading, writing, assessment, health and wellbeing, mentoring, learning environments and feedback. At present senior leaders and other staff find it challenging to measure the impact of projects included in SIPs and staff are not always clear about their roles in achieving these priority areas. There is scope to simplify the school improvement planning process. This should include a sharper strategic focus on improving a small number of identified outcomes, using qualitative and quantitative information to measure their impact. It is important that senior leaders include all staff and stakeholders in the selection and planning of improvement priorities. They should ensure that stakeholders understand how they can contribute to the measurement of success.

- At present, senior leaders make parents aware of improvement priorities and a few young people are aware of the aims of the school's SIP. A significant minority of parents and young people do not feel that they are influential in helping to set the school's direction. A significant focus of future improvement activity should be on maximising the benefits for all children and young people aged two to 16 being co-located at Mid Yell Junior High School.
- Senior leaders have developed a clear plan for the spend of their allocated Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to ensure all learners participate fully in school activities. Senior leaders share plans for PEF with parents and should continue to seek further ways to involve parents in consultation from the earliest possible stages of PEF planning. This should support the identification of key priorities to mitigate any potential socio-economic barriers to learning.
- Senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers have developed detailed quality assurance calendars outlining quality assurance and self-evaluation activities undertaken across the primary and secondary departments. These include regular reviews of attainment and progress data, sampling learners' work, conducting lesson observations or learning walk. They also gather the views of young people and their parents and have developed Professional Review and Development (PRD), linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland professional standards. There is scope for senior leaders and staff to explore how the PRD process can support SIP priorities further.
- In the secondary department, staff analyse statistical data about examination results to identify any areas for concern about young people's attainment. From this, teachers develop subject improvement priorities aimed at maximising young people's outcomes. Senior leaders should now consider how to make more targeted use of the information drawn from all quality assurance activities to influence whole school improvement priorities. For example, inconsistencies identified during classroom observations could be used to arrive at agreed areas of focus for classroom teachers to refine their teaching practice.
- Senior leaders take careful consideration of workload and staff capacity when planning improvement activity. As a result, almost all staff feel they are valued members of the school community and most feel that collaborative working across the school is effective in taking forward improvement.
- All teachers in the school prioritise looking outwards to seek support and professional dialogue with colleagues across the local authority. These subject networks help teachers in Mid Yell

Junior High School to build confidence about assessment judgements and planning courses, particularly Qualifications Scotland courses. There is potential for these subject networks to be used in a more targeted way to support improvement activity in the school.

- Teachers benefit from a helpful programme of professional learning about high-quality classroom practice, delivered by staff, the local authority and partners. Groups of staff work together to explore pedagogy grounded in research and strong practice. In primary stages, staff are highly collaborative. They draw upon pupil attainment data and current research to improve approaches to learning and teaching. For example, staff have implemented progressive approaches to the teaching of literacy which are showing early signs of improvement in spelling and writing. It is important that professional dialogue about pedagogy includes teachers from all departments in the school. Sharing common approaches across the school will develop further a consistent experience for children and young people across the school.
- In the secondary department, a significant minority of young people have leadership roles such as in the pupil council, pupil voice, pupil ambassadors and sporting opportunities. These provide young people with a robust platform to share their ideas within and beyond the school. They help those involved to develop leadership skills and resilience which they understand will help them when they move beyond the school. Young people involved in these activities feel very well supported by school staff and by members of the wider Mid Yell community. There are fewer opportunities for children in the primary department to take on meaningful leadership responsibilities.
- Senior leaders and staff should now consider how to increase opportunities for children and young people of all ages to lead change across the school. Staff should consider how equal weight can be given to the views of children in the primary department as they work alongside secondary young people. This could include, for example, the further development of leadership groups across departments, focussed on areas of school improvement.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- Across almost all classrooms, teachers and young people enjoy positive, nurturing, mutually respectful and productive relationships. Staff demonstrate great care for children and families and have developed positive relationships across the school community. This provides a calm environment for learning. Young people value the support and advice they receive from their teachers. Almost all young people engage very well with their learning and incidences of dysregulated behaviour are rare. Staff have a strong and sensitive focus on supporting children and young people to regulate their emotions. They are mindful at all times of children's emotional support needs.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. In a majority of lessons teachers provide starter activities that relate back to young people's prior learning. In most lessons, teachers provide a clear statement of the purpose of the day's learning and share with young people how they can be successful in their learning. In the primary department, visible learning walls outline the key learning for the term. This supports learners well to understand the purpose of their work, reinforcing key concepts, and enabling them to revisit prior learning as they progress. In a minority of lessons, learning intentions are overly task based and measures for successful learning are limited to describing task completion. Senior leaders should consider how their programme of classroom visits could be used more effectively to identify and share the strongest practice to increase consistency. This includes identifying and sharing good practice in using questioning which encourages children and young people to think more deeply about their learning. Further development of success criteria would also help to ensure learners have a more precise understanding of what successful learning looks like.
- Almost all children and young people respond very well to opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. In a minority of lessons, teachers provide young people with rich and stimulating contexts for learning, related to real-life experience. In the strongest examples, young people have opportunities to collaborate on their work and make effective use of digital technology to enhance their learning. They would benefit from more frequent opportunities to be more actively involved in their learning. At present, in a minority of classes learners are often passive. In a majority of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers should consider how to ensure lessons start promptly and that a brisker pace is maintained throughout the lesson.

- All teachers know young people very well and provide work at a suitable level in most classes which challenge learners appropriately. They should now consider how tasks might be further varied to appeal to young people's learning preferences. Senior leaders have already identified the need for teachers to develop further their approaches to presenting content which is set at the right level of difficulty for all children and young people to ensure that needs are met, including the most able.
- Staff have developed a template for a high-quality lesson in Mid Yell Junior Secondary School, called 'Good Lesson Journeys.' This supporting well, a structure for lessons and sets out the expectations for teachers. While this provides a very useful guide for teachers, in its present form, it is complex and is not well understood by a few young people. Senior leaders should continue with plans to review and streamline this lesson template, with the aim of producing a version which takes into account the views of young people. There is potential for staff and learners from across the primary and secondary departments to work together on this. This should ensure that learners' classroom experiences are increasingly consistent across Mid Yell Junior High School.
- Children at the early stages experience high quality play-based learning. Teachers effectively plan an appropriate balance of adult-directed, adult-initiated and child-initiated learning. Teachers and support staff are embedding play through children's day to ensure children have opportunities to explore, experiment and be creative together. They revisit play experiences throughout the day, building on previous thoughts and extending their play. This approach is supporting children's social and communication skills very well. As planned, these approaches should be further extended into the upper primary school to help children build on their key skills of curiosity, creativity and exploration.
- Additional support for learning staff provide classroom teachers with detailed information about individual learners' specific learning needs and strategies to address them. As a result, almost all teachers know children and young people learning needs very well. They make highly appropriate adjustments to ensure that children and young people do not face barriers to their learning. This includes modifying their lesson planning and providing mitigations to enable young people to achieve success. Children and young people with dyslexia use coloured overlays to support their learning. Children and young people also make use of assistive technology well when they require this support to access their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff have created an agreed assessment policy and calendar for primary and secondary stages. This gives staff a clear overview of attainment and achievement throughout the year. Almost all teachers in the secondary department use summative assessment well to measure learners' progress towards agreed targets, especially in S4 when young people tackle Qualifications Scotland courses. Most staff make effective use of a range of formative assessments and standardised assessments to assess young people's understanding during lessons. They track the progress of children and young people effectively inform next steps. In the primary department, teachers use 'learning stories' to capture key assessment evidence, linked to termly learning profiles which they share with parents. This allows parents to be involved in the learning journey and celebrate their child's achievements. Senior leaders should continue with plans to streamline the assessment policy, with a specific aim of creating a version that will help young people to understand more clearly the various

purposes of assessment. In particular, young people should have more frequent opportunities to self and peer assess. At present, this only happens in a minority of classes.

- Almost all staff provide very helpful feedback to learners about their progress in learning. Children and young people value the feedback they receive, recognising that it helps them to evaluate their progress and plan next steps. In almost all classes, teachers spend considerable time in one-to-one conversations with learners. As a result, children and young people are clear about how they are progressing in their learning and feel that teachers understand their progress. Young people in S4 are very clear about their progress towards agreed targets. Senior leaders and staff are currently developing approaches to improve the consistency of feedback. This should support young people to be able to analyse the depth of their understanding and comment upon it in their learner profiles. It is too early to measure the impact of this work. Teachers provide parents with information about their children's progress through report cards and parents evenings, and almost all parents find this feedback helpful.
- Teaching staff in the secondary department have a strong understanding of standards in National Qualifications. They work well with colleagues in other schools to verify assessment standards. In the Broad General Education (BGE), teachers are building confidence in their understanding of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. These judgements are increasingly reliable, especially in the primary department. Teachers engage well with teachers in other schools across the local authority in moderation activity. This is supporting them to have greater clarity, for example, about how young people can demonstrate achievement of a level across a body of work. Teachers make increasingly effective use of CfE experiences, outcomes and national Benchmarks to plan and assess young people's learning in the BGE. They should continue to develop their approaches to developing the learning, teaching and assessment cycle across the departments of the school. This should include consideration of how progressive planning can be used to create a seamless transition from the primary department to the secondary department.
- Senior Leaders have developed and updated effective approaches to tracking and monitoring of children's and young people's learning and progress. Teachers engage in attainment and achievement meetings with senior leaders termly. In the primary department, they track children's progress in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy, and coverage across all curricular areas. In the secondary department, teachers track children's progress across all subjects in the BGE. When young people reach S4 their progress is carefully tracked against agreed targets. Senior leaders and teachers use the school's tracking system to monitor the progress of individuals and cohorts of children, which is leading to bespoke and targeted supports to address any gaps in learning. In S4, this helps to keep young people on track to achieve to their potential in Qualifications Scotland courses.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders and staff should focus on refreshing the curriculum approach to ensure that it more clearly reflects the school's unique context, local needs, culture. It should also better reflect and the shared vision of a whole school community. This should build on initial work on the relevance of the current curriculum.
- Teachers across the primary and secondary stages are at the early stages of developing young people's meta-skills. As this work progresses, senior leaders and staff should formalise a progressive skills framework that enables learners to apply, consolidate, and transfer these skills across the curriculum. Developing a whole-school approach will help ensure that skills are explicitly referenced in learning and teaching. It should support young people to recognise and articulate both their existing skills and their next steps.
- Staff make good use of the local area to enrich outdoor learning experiences for children and young people. For example, children grow their own produce, which is then used in cooking lessons and entered into the local community show. As planned, senior leaders should now map out a coherent programme of outdoor learning, including the valued residential experience offered at the upper primary stages.
- The school library is a very valued and well-used resource. Young people enjoy a wide range of materials appropriate to all stages. Children and young people are involved in suggesting texts which match their interests.
- Young people across primary and secondary stages receive their full entitlement of two-hours of high-quality physical education each week. In relation to modern languages, the school does not currently provide experiences in this area aligned to national expectations. All secondary classes receive one period of RME each week.
- Transition arrangements are well supported for P7 to S1. From term three, P7 pupils have weekly opportunities to meet with subject teachers and build relationships. They work collaboratively on a shared project resulting in a pupil-led residential trip. There are a number of potential opportunities for more collaborative work between primary and secondary in discrete curricular areas to build on children's learning. Improving this collaborative work will help support children's progress more effectively when they start the secondary phase of their education.

Primary stages

- At the primary stages, children from P1 to P7 benefit from specialist teaching in physical education (PE), music, and art. This approach supports children well in making the transition to S1, as they are very well used to learning in the secondary environment.
- Staff group together experiences and outcomes to plan learning that links different areas of the curriculum together. This approach to planning makes helpful connections across the curriculum. This approach enables effective use of children's personalisation and choice. At the start of a topic, children choose the areas they would like to investigate and co-construct the lines of investigation they will follow.

Secondary stages

- Literacy and numeracy as the responsibility of all are not yet fully embedded across all aspects of the curriculum. The next step for the school is to plan how best to strengthen current approaches to literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and staff should implement these areas more consistently and meaningfully across all subjects.
- Subject networks are in place to support curriculum development and the sharing of effective practice. The effectiveness of these networks remains variable, with some areas demonstrating strong collaborative approaches while others are at an earlier stage of development. Supported by the local authority, these networks should continue to strengthen collaboration and develop high-quality shared resources. They should ensure greater consistency, coherence, and progression across all subject areas.
- In line with Scottish Government's 1+2 languages policy, young people do not currently receive their full language learning entitlement throughout the BGE.
- In S1 and S2, learning that links different areas of the curriculum together is regularly supported by partners, ensure experiences reflect learners' individual needs and interests. Towards the end of S2, young people make informed choices for specialisation in S3, which leads to National Qualifications in S4. Learner pathways are highly personalised, enabling individuals to select subjects that align with their interests, strengths, and future aspirations. In S4, young people typically study up to seven courses leading to National Qualifications, most commonly at SCQF levels 4 or 5, with some at level 3. Most learners in S3 and S4 also attend local college provision fortnightly to undertake relevant qualifications. As planned, senior leaders and staff should continue, where appropriate, to broaden the range of qualification and accreditation pathways available for all young people. They should, ensure these align with learners' evolving interests and intended next steps, enabling all young people to maximise their attainment.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the Career Education Standard and work effectively to ensure young people receive their entitlements in this area. Learners benefit from a range of one-to-one and personalised group engagements through which they are well supported by staff and key partners. This supports young people to make informed decisions about subject choices and possible career routes. Examples include opportunities such as aquaculture days, which broaden learners' understanding of local industries. Almost all staff are aware of the priorities of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). There is a consistent and individualised approach across the school to ensuring that young people receive the guidance they need to make well-informed decisions about progression into the senior phase and their longer-term destinations.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Overall, parents and carers are positive about their child's educational experiences at Mid Yell Junior High school. They appreciate the work of all staff to ensure positive experiences for children and young people and the ways they are supported to attain and achieve well. They report feeling very positive about the focus teachers have on the wellbeing of children and young people and the benefits this brings in relation to their children feeling safe and well supported.
- Most parents feel confident in approaching the school with concerns or suggestions. A few parents feel that the senior leaders should respond more swiftly when concerns are raised. Almost all agree that staff treat their children fairly and with respect. Almost all report that feedback on their child's learning is helpful. Most parents report that school staff know their children well and provide them with work that meets their needs well.
- A majority of parents recognise that the school staff consider their views when making changes within the school. Senior leaders, however, should continue to employ a variety of approaches that involve a broader range of parents in self-evaluation activities. In particular they should consider how to engage parents in school improvement planning processes.
- Parents feel that senior leaders communicate with them well, for example through emails and the regular newsletters. A few parents think this could be improved. Parents report that they do not always have a clear understanding of what action is taken by the school to deal with bullying. The school would benefit from having a clear policy in place so that parents and staff are clear about what action is taken and when. Senior leaders should ensure that parents and all children and young people are included in the development of a policy.
- The Parent Council works effectively with the school and the headteacher. Funds raised by the parent council help to support children and young people's learning and wellbeing. These funds are used to provide fruit during breaks and lunchtime, paying for equipment and funding travel. Parent council members would appreciate greater involvement in planning for school improvement.

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

- The headteacher has created a culture where staff, children and partners work very closely together to sustain a highly supportive ethos across the school. Relationships between staff and children are highly positive. Staff know children very well and value them as individuals. Most children and young people speak confidently about how the school helps them understand others' differences and support needs. Partners speak about the very effective support children and young people receive when requiring additional support to settle and be included. Staff's approach embodies the school value of inclusive.
- Across the school, almost all children and young people behave consistently well and engage positively with the school. Teachers in the primary have taken steps to develop children's independence and focus during tasks. Overall, children and young people are supportive of their peers and talk well about how staff ensure everyone is well supported and included. Support staff are proactive in their approach to supporting identified learners who require help to manage their emotions and behaviour. They use effectively movement breaks and sensory approaches to help children manage transitions. Staff model strategies such as deep breathing for those learners who require it. These strategies are consistently applied to ensure children and young people receive very effective support to self-regulate.
- Staff in the primary classes use environmental audits to improve the quality and inclusivity of their classroom environments. They are developing consistent routines and expectations to help children understand more clearly what good listening and engagement in learning looks like. They are building well children's independence through clear visual work programmes. Children freely access resources to support their learning including assistive technology and visual supports such as times tables cards. Secondary staff are strengthening their inclusive approaches through the introduction of 'help desks.' These resources ensure young people have access to universal supports to help them in their learning. Across the school, children and young people have access to daily check-ins and quiet spaces to support emotional regulation. Staff use praise and non-verbal cues to support learner engagement through positive reinforcement. As a next step, primary staff could share their strong approach to inclusive classrooms across the school to ensure children experience smooth transitions at each stage.
- Children in the primary benefit from the calm and engaging learning environments. They feel confident asking questions if they are unsure about their learning. Most children and young people across the school feel they have someone they can talk to if they are worried or upset. In the primary, children have regular opportunities to talk to staff both during class reflection

time and informal snack and play opportunities. Young people in the secondary, benefit from the strong pastoral support and have opportunities to talk to a trusted adult when needed. Children and young people have a strong sense of belonging to the school. They speak positively about the community feel and the supportive way everyone looks out for one another. Although most children and young people feel safe at school, staff should support the few children who do not, and who are unsure how the school supports them to feel safe.

- Most children and young people across the school discuss articulately how the school helps their wellbeing. Most children and young people have a sound understanding of the shared language of wellbeing. They benefit from the wellbeing indicators being discussed regularly at assemblies to help them relate them to everyday experiences. Older children use their knowledge of the school values to help articulate what it means to be nurturing and inclusive. For example, children in the upper class discuss feeling nurtured as they are loved and taken care of by staff. They recognise that being included means by their peers when playing and as a result of staff's support when learning. Young people discuss the actions and circumstances that help them be safe. They recognise the many opportunities on offer to be physically active.
- Children in the lower class explain what they should do if they find themselves in an unsafe situation. They are learning what to do in an emergency and act out situations to help them respond confidently in real life situations. Children in the upper class talk about the importance of water safety when living on an island. They identify an important range of strategies to help them stay safe online. Children in the upper class recognise that there are many aspects to staying healthy. They discuss that sport and exercise outdoors not only helps physical health but staying healthy mentally also. They understand the school's approach to healthy snacks and regular toothbrushing helps them to stay physically healthy. Teachers plan together to ensure children's learning across the lower and upper classes is progressive and appropriate to their age and stage. Teachers should consider how they provide learning that also reflects children's unique context to help them apply learning to their own experiences.
- Staff in the secondary departments are currently reviewing young people's learning experiences in health and wellbeing. They use a life skills progressive planner to ensure they experience quality planned learning in areas such as drugs and sex education. Young people can discuss what practical solutions they have to make positive and informed choices about aspects of their wellbeing. They recognise that planned learning about mental health supports them well. There are effective and practical supports they can access such as the mental health counselling service. They explore topics such as neurodiversity which promotes increased understanding of the needs of others. Identified children and young people benefit from targeted wellbeing interventions, including small group swimming and gym sessions. This impacts positively on learners' confidence, fitness and resilience. Staff should continue to involve young people in discussing course content and align this learning closely to young people's needs and context.
- Senior leaders and staff have a strong understanding of their statutory duties and have effective processes in place to ensure staff receive regular training to meet the wide range of needs of children and young people. Senior leaders work with staff to develop detailed overviews of children's strengths and needs where required. They have developed pupil passports that capture well the needs of individuals. These highlight effectively the strategies required to help them succeed in their learning and engage positively with school. Children and young people have appropriate plans in place with clear and measurable targets to evidence

progress. Staff involve families, partners and most children and young people in developing their plans to ensure everyone has a shared understanding of the support in place. As a result of staff's meticulous tracking and, where required, highly individualised support, most children make good progress against their individual targets. It is important that all staff understand clearly the needs and strategies required to help children and young people achieve success.

- Across the school, highly skilled support staff ensure children and young people with identified needs are supported very effectively. They know children's individualised needs very well and respond promptly to manage transitions and any challenges children and young people may experience. This approach supports teachers very effectively to use their time exceptionally well to provide individualised support to children who require it.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the local authority school meals provider that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The headteacher and staff have developed and sustained, highly positive and impactful partnerships with a wide range of educational professionals. They share the strong practice staff have embedded in the school to ensure they get it right for children's and young people's individual needs. Staff and partners are responsive to the needs of children, young people and their families. They work relentlessly to plan approaches to meet the needs considering the school's unique context. For example, the headteacher ensures the school is a base for a wide range of supports such as accommodating medical services. This ensures that children and young people can access the same resources as those on the mainland without missing a full day of school due to travel times. Partners talk positively about the improved outcomes of children and young people as a result of their joint working with the school.
- Senior leaders and all staff promote a culture of fairness, tolerance and inclusion across the campus. They are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners at the school and are aware of the needs of children in their classes. Children and young people learn about their rights through their work on UNCRC and the school have achieved a silver accreditation at national level. Important focused weeks and events which celebrate equality and diversity include a focus on black history month, and mental health week. There are informative displays to support children and young people who are neurodiverse and helpful information guides to help them to understand difference. Senior leaders should continue to support all children to understand, value and celebrate diversity in 21st century Scotland, and to challenge discrimination.
- Children and young people work with community groups to learn about the life experiences of others and challenge discrimination. They develop positive working relationships with, for example the local care home, providing information sessions about what they are learning, as well as providing Christmas entertainment. In addition, the Peerie Makkers craft group come

into the school to work with children on knitting projects to preserve the traditions and heritage of the Shetlandic culture.

- The school library promotes a 'Reading Diverse' programme, encouraging and supporting young people and staff to learn about diversity through reading. Children and young people are responding well to the programme and receive a celebratory certificate to acknowledge their achievement in reading and learning about diversity. As a next step, equality, diversity and inclusion should be a focussed area for development in the lifeskills programme experienced by all children and young people. Celebrating difference should be highlighted for everyone across the school community.

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 in literacy and English

- Overall, most children's progress in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen well to staff and each other during class discussions. Younger children express their ideas well and can explain their choices and opinions. A few children use interesting and sophisticated vocabulary during discussions. Most older children work well in small groups, sharing their opinions and negotiating ideas when solving a given task. They are less skilled at presenting information and their ideas to different audiences.

Reading

- Most younger children use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read simple words and sentences. They use clues in a text to help predict what will happen next. A few younger children are skilled readers, reading unfamiliar texts with fluency and understanding. Most older children discuss skills such as summarising and key themes when talking about different texts. They read aloud with fluency and use contextual clues to understand new and complex vocabulary. Across the school, a few children could identify preferred genres, authors and give reasons for their choice. Teachers should support children further to strengthen their understanding of genre.

Writing

- Younger children are developing well their use of sounds and blends to write simple words. They use a capital letter and full stop accurately when writing a sentence. They apply these skills during their play but need greater opportunities to write freely during taught writing. Older children write most sentences with capital letters and full stops included accurately. They use simple punctuation to strengthen their writing but could incorporate a wide range appropriate to the text. Across the school, children have improved their tools for writing and increased progress with their spelling abilities. They now need to apply these skills more consistently across the curriculum and have opportunities to write at length.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children demonstrate secure number recognition to 20 and confidently sequence numbers forwards and backwards within this range. They add and subtract within 10 with accuracy. As they progress children, round confidently to the nearest 10 and 100 and apply a growing range of strategies for addition, subtraction and multiplication. Confidence in applying strategies to division is less well developed and remains a key area for improvement. Children round to one decimal place. Their understanding of the relationships between decimals, fractions and percentages requires further consolidation. They read, record and convert time between 12- and 24-hour notation with confidence. At all stages, children's mental agility requires development.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all younger children sort, describe and create patterns with two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They use the language of position and direction in games. Older children identify symmetry in patterns and pictures. They use and apply their knowledge of the features of 2D shapes to create tiling patterns. Children confidently compare, describe and estimate the size of angles in relation to a right angle. They are less confident in using mathematical language to describe the properties of different three-dimensional (3D) objects.

Information Handling

- As children make progress from early to second level they select and use the most appropriate way to gather and sort data for a given purpose in relation to their age and stage. Younger children sort items by colour, shape or size. They have opportunities to interpret simple information from a graph. Older children identify a range of charts and graphs. They would benefit from using digital technologies to develop further their data handling skills.

Secondary stages

BGE

- In 2025/25, by the end of S3, all young people in the secondary department achieved CfE third level in literacy and numeracy. The majority of young people achieve fourth level in numeracy by the end of S3. Senior leaders should now work closely with appropriate teaching staff to ensure that professional judgements in assessing fourth level outcomes in literacy are accurately recorded.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics are good.
- Most children in the primary department are making good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- In 2025/25, by the end of S3, all young people in the secondary department achieved CfE third level in literacy and numeracy. The majority of young people achieved fourth level in numeracy by the end of S3. Senior leaders should now work closely with appropriate teaching staff to ensure that professional judgements in assessing fourth level outcomes in literacy are accurately recorded.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders collate evidence of attainment in literacy, numeracy. They gather relevant data and analyse trends over time. All departments in the secondary provide attainment data on an

individual basis which senior leaders gather and analyse across all curriculum areas throughout the BGE.

- Senior leaders and pupil support staff use data and regular attainment and progress meetings to support early identification and strategies to support children and young people across the campus who are not progressing appropriately in their learning, or face barriers to their learning. This is leading to improved progress for these young people.
- Senior leaders monitor and track rigorously attendance across the school. They work closely with families and professional agencies when required to ensure learners attend school. As a result, attendance is consistently above the national average.

Senior Phase

- The number of young people in each school year is small. Young people are presented for qualifications up to and including S4. Care has therefore been taken when interpreting and analysing data in order not to identify any of the small number of young people taking qualifications.

Literacy and numeracy

- All young people in S4 attained literacy at SCQF level 4 or better from 2021/22 until 2024/25. All young people in S4 attained numeracy at SCQF level 4 or better during the same period. The pattern of attainment in literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 5 is variable. Teachers share attainment information with Anderson High School to support the transition into S5. This includes evidence of progression, planning for young people with additional support needs (ASN), subject choice and support.
- All young people with an additional support need achieved SCQF level 4 in literacy and numeracy from 2022/23 until 2024/25.
- Young people perform consistently well in National Qualifications up to SCQF 5 level. Senior leaders and teachers should consider presenting young people at SCQF 6 level including at Higher, where this is appropriate for the individual learner. In addition, senior leaders and staff should consider ways in which to broaden the curricular offer to young people to meet their needs appropriately. This may include alternative accreditation, and the introduction on additional courses, including NPAs.

Breadth and depth

- In S4, over the past two years, most young people attained six or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better, and the majority achieved seven or more. There has been a decline at this level since 2020/21 until 2022/23, when attainment was significantly much higher than the virtual comparator. Young people also attain well at SCQF level 5D or better where most attained five or more qualifications at this level over the past two years. At SCQF level 5C or better the majority of young people achieved four or more awards over the last five years of data. The majority of young people achieved one award at SCQF level 5A or better over the last five years.
- There is scope for the school to work with departments to improve further the performance of all young people at National 5, including high quality passes at SCQF level 5A.

- More effective tracking of young people's progress, developing progression pathways and a review of the BGE curriculum offer would support the school in further enhancing the quality of passes in the senior phase.

Achievement

- Teachers and staff know children and young people well and take note of their hobbies and personal interests both in and out of school. These are celebrated in classrooms and in assemblies. In addition, young people can choose to participate in initiatives which bring national accreditation, including for example, the work they do in relation to children's rights. Staff are able to easily identify where there may be gaps for children who are non-participants and encourage and support them to take part in lunchtime and after school activities. All staff should retain their sharp focus on ensuring that participation for everyone is prioritised in order to avoid possible social isolation in this rural community.
- Young people in the primary departments participation in school improvement groups supports them to well develop their teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills. This impacts positively on other aspects of their work in school They also have a focus on sustainability and outdoor work. These groups should now be strengthened and developed to include children and young people from across all stages in the school. An action plan with measurable outcomes would support these groups to have maximum impact.
- Young people in the senior school are becoming increasingly more confident and successful. They ably describe the skills they are learning and how these can be applied in other contexts. Youth Ambassadors and those involved in Youth Voice are becoming more resilient and confident. As they progress through the school, children and young people gain a range of helpful attributes, helping them engage with their local and the wider Shetland community. A few young people are beginning to gain recognition for their learning through the Duke of Edinburgh's award. All young people in S3 participate in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI).
- Senior leaders track appropriately, young people's achievements and skills through pupil profiles. Young people understand how these are helping them gain skills and experiences that will support them when leaving school. They talk confidently about how this adds value to their achievements.
- Young people involved in the pupil council feel empowered and think their voice is heard. Class representatives gather and represent the views of others. This is leading to small changes in the school such as new clubs and activities and replacing equipment.
- The wide range of partners working with the school are supporting young people to gain life skills, for example, learning to swim and administering Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Youth workers support young people to gain awards and participate in youth events across Shetland.

Equity for all learners

- Almost all staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic circumstances of children and young people in this small community. They are focussed on removing any barriers to learning associated with the rural nature of the school and the potential for social isolation of children and young people. They work closely with partners to provide support, develop

meaningful initiatives, opportunities and events, and work with the local community to support children and families with the cost of the school day. For example, visits to the mainland, involvement in Shetland based competitions, free swim sessions and working with local groups. These include Makking and Yakking craft group and community library events.

- The school is using its PEF allocation for a range of supportive interventions and supports to ensure all children and young people are able to fully access their education. This includes a mentoring programme for targeted children and young people and the provision of a free breakfast club. In addition, free fruit for children and young people at break and lunchtimes are available and access to appropriate resources children may require. These funds also support a play worker who works with children in the primary department. These are helping to support the attendance and engagement of young people. In addition, items of clothing are purchased for identified children and families where appropriate. All school trips and outings are fully funded by the school through fundraising and local sponsorship. This is ensuring that almost all children and young people can be fully involved in all aspects of the curriculum free of charge and have full access to wider achievement opportunities.

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.