

29 April 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Sgoil Ùige agus Sgoil-Àraich - Uig Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement that we agreed with the school and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. We subsequently returned to Sgoil Ùige to look at how it had continued to improve its work, and published another letter in September 2024. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff. We heard from the acting headteacher and other staff about the steps Sgoil Ùige has taken to improve. An executive headteacher, who is the strategic lead for rural schools in Lewis, described their support for Sgoil Ùige. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress Sgoil Ùige has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Increase the leadership and pace of improving key areas impacting on learning and attainment, based on robust self-evaluation arrangements. A range of stakeholders, including the staff team, parents and children should have lead roles for taking forward improvements in the school.

There is positive progress with this area for improvement from having an acting headteacher lead Sgoil Ùige. Progress now needs to be sustained. The acting headteacher is improving the strategic leadership of learning at Sgoil Ùige. She has set successfully a clear direction, climate and conditions for change. This is based on trust and positive relationships with parents/carers, staff and children. The community at Sgoil Ùige feel they are beginning to contribute to the direction and improvement of the sgoil. Recently, the pace of change has been accelerated to start to address important weaknesses in the sgoil. The local authority now needs to ensure these changes are sustained and the sgoil continues to improve.

Children have clear roles and responsibilities for improving their sgoil. They are members of groups that impact on the ethos and life of the sgoil. Children make decisions as part of Comataidh Gàidhlig – Gaelic Committee, protecting the environment, promoting children's rights and Comhairle na Sgoile – Pupil Council. Children articulate clearly and fluently how their views lead to improvements.

Senior leaders now communicate and collaborate more productively with parents/carers. As a result, parents/carers engage very well with Sgoil Ùige. This reflects the importance of Sgoil Ùige within the community. Parents/carers appreciate being consulted and involved in resetting the sgoil's vision, values and aims. They are beginning to influence policies. The acting headteacher should now discuss further the policies with parents/carers to promote a shared understanding of their purpose and planned impact.

The acting headteacher and the school community are making steady and positive progress with required improvements over the last six months. Staff now have more effective processes and systems in place for assessing what is going well and what they need to do next. The acting headteacher has produced a school improvement plan linked

to national and local priorities in line with statutory guidance. This plan should now be clearer on how Sgoil Ùige contributes to meeting targets in the Comhairle's Gaelic Language Plan.

Develop and use a policy for total immersion education to strengthen children's progress and fluency in Gàidhlig. This should increase the quality and entirety of total immersion across all areas of children's learning.

Staff are achieving positive progress in improving the total and initial immersion stages. However, this progress is not secure given the temporary allocation of staffing in the sgoil.

Children continue to make an important start to fluency in Gàidhlig by attending Sgoil-àraich Ùige. Children are confident in joining their older friends for some of their total immersion. They enjoy drama and performance on their new classroom stage. Across the sgoil, children hear staff's very fluent Gàidhlig as an enriching element of immersion. This includes the local Gàidhlig dialect. Children are now more confident in speaking Gàidhlig in the classroom and in shared areas of the sgoil. They work with partners to use Gàidhlig for leisure and sport. Teachers engage in much better planning to extend children's vocabulary and grammar in Gàidhlig. Partners should plan how learning beyond the classroom can enhance children's specific vocabulary and grammar. The executive and acting headteachers have much improved the policy on immersion. This policy is now more strategic. It provides a wider range of advice and expectations. The school handbook needs to clarify that teaching for the older children is through total immersion. This should be in line with Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017.

Children learning Gàidhlig as an additional language - Gaelic (Learners) enjoy successes. The acting headteacher has much improved the way that Gaelic (Learners) is part of the curriculum. Gaelic (Learners) is successfully taught as separate lessons and is integrated into daily routines. Children in Gàidhlig and English Medium Education make decisions on Gàidhlig as part of Comataidh Gàidhlig. For example, they have discussed the visual prompts that learners of the language need in immersion activities, such as assemblies.

Children have established a Cafaidh Gàidhlig – Gaelic Café. They invite the community to join them socially and educationally to develop their fluency. Community members have shared how they use Gàidhlig in their careers. Children have assisted Comhairle Officers create promotional materials to encourage parents to enrol their children in Gàidhlig Medium Education. These promotional materials are being used across the Comhairle. Children are developing further a deep sense of belonging to a Gàidhlig community.

Continue to develop the curriculum to be clear on the progress that children make as they move from stage to stage at Sgoil Ùige. Teachers should have well-defined approaches to developing reading and writing, in Gàidhlig and English, health and wellbeing and Gaelic (Learners).

There has been some positive progress towards this area for improvement, with more required. The acting headteacher has continued to clarify the curriculum. She is advising teachers on planning and delivering the curriculum. This is beginning to impact on key areas, such as literacy, Gàidhlig Medium and Learner Education and assessment. The acting headteacher has correctly identified that the curriculum needs more work. The curriculum should be clearer on how key entitlements and features are taken forward over a child's time

in Sgoil Ùige. The acting headteacher should continue to work with parents/carers to show how important local matters are part of children's learning.

Raise children's attainment in all aspects of learning and make better use of information from assessment, professional dialogue and tracking meetings.

There is some progress with this area for improvement, with potential for a faster pace of progress.

The acting headteacher has established a process to check children's progress and attainment. She is discussing children's progress with teachers in a thorough way to help raise attainment. Teachers consistently share the purpose of learning with children and the steps they need to take to be successful. Teachers more regularly provide helpful feedback to children on what they are doing well and their next steps. This is beginning to support all children to develop a stronger understanding of their strengths. Children's additional support plans are in place, with appropriate targets. Parents/carers are fully involved in creating, reviewing and evaluating additional support plans.

The acting headteacher has created a strategic assessment calendar. Teachers have clear guidance on assessing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This is helping them develop confidence and their understanding of national expectations. They have moderated listening and talking in Gàidhlig and English with colleagues from another school, as well as moderated writing within the school. Children are improving their progress in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, through the medium of Gàidhlig and English. Older children still have gaps in their learning, for which teachers are providing additional support. The acting headteacher and staff are at the very early stages of having reliable evidence to underpin their professional judgements on Curriculum for Excellence levels.

What happens next?

The sgoil has made some positive progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within a year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Joan C. Esson
HM Inspector