

24 September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2023, HM Inspectors published a letter on Sgoil Ùige agus Sgoil-Àraich - Uig Primary School and Nursery Class. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement, which we agreed with Sgoil Ùige and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Recently, as you may know, we visited Sgoil Ùige again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the executive headteacher and staff. The executive headteacher and other staff told us about the steps Sgoil Ùige have taken to improve. 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 have made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Since the original inspection, the executive headteacher supported Sgoil Ùige, including during the further inspection. The substantive headteacher was absent at the time of the further inspection. There were also other staffing absences during the further inspection. From October 2023 to January 2024, a headteacher within the Comhairle supported Sgoil Ùige.

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 sgoil.

There is insufficient progress with this area for improvement.

The supporting headteacher begun successfully to advise teachers on planning the curriculum and assessment. She also supported the strategic leadership of Sgoil Ùige by clarifying the curriculum. Teachers were enabled to improve children's learning, although this is not yet consistent.

For the majority of time, teachers are improving children's experiences in the classroom. There are some improvements in children's progress in literacy and English and Gàidhlig, and numeracy and mathematics. Strategic leadership of children's learning, assessment and attainment at Sgoil Ùige is still to improve.

Staff require quality professional learning on the improvement and emerging needs of Sgoil Ùige. This should include additional support needs, planning the curriculum, raising attainment, developing reading and writing strategies, and Gaelic Learner and Medium Education.

Parents/carers are keen to engage further with Sgoil Ùige. They appreciate improved information about the curriculum. Communication and collaboration between senior leaders and parents/carers needs to improve. Parents/carers have not been involved in developing the improvement plan. They need more engagement with important matters in the sgoil.

Sgoil Ùige needs to move towards a culture of mutual respect between all staff. The education authority needs to take immediate action in ensuring long-term senior leadership and staffing arrangements are in place for Sgoil Ùige.

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.

Children continue to make an important start to fluency in Gàidhlig by attending Sgoil-àraich Ùige. Practitioners, together as a team, create high-quality total immersion experiences. Children understand and use Gàidhlig very well. At the primary stages, staff are achieving some positive progress at the total and initial immersion stages. As children move further through Sgoil Ùige, improving their immersion experiences is a continued priority.

The substantive headteacher has created an immersion policy. Parents/carers have not been involved in this. The policy needs to be more strategic and based on Sgoil Ùige's context. It needs to advise on retaining children in Gàidhlig Medium Education, without changing to English Medium. This is a very important action to be prioritised at pace.

Gàidhlig is visible and heard in classrooms, and shared areas of Sgoil Ùige, such as the dining hall. Children observe religious observance through Gàidhlig daily. Children have better access to books in Gàidhlig and English. They achieve well in national events to promote language and culture, such as the Mòd and Cuach na Cloinne (football competition through the medium of Gàidhlig).

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 progress towards this area for improvement.

Teachers have worked well to begin to address aspects of this area for improvement. They worked with the seconded headteacher to enhance how they plan learning. Teachers now use recently introduced pathways to plan learning for curriculum areas. This is a positive step to ensuring children build on their prior learning more successfully. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers in planning and taking forward longer-term improvements. At pace, senior leaders need to develop a whole-school approach to teaching reading and writing in Gàidhlig and English. The improvement plan should have clear priorities to support a whole-school approach to raising attainment.

Children in English Medium Education learn Gàidhlig in a more structured and planned way. Teachers share phrases of the week and use Gàidhlig as part of their daily classroom routines. Children are proud of the Gàidhlig language skills they are developing. The staff team should continue to work with children to explore ways to promote and celebrate Gàidhlig across the life and work of Sgoil Ùige. It would be important to continue to building on the successes of having had Gàidhlig singing feature regularly in children's curriculum.

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

There is insufficient progress with this area for improvement.

Children are beginning to make improved progress in their learning. However, they can attain much higher. Senior leaders are at the very early stages of recording and using information about individual children's progress and attainment. Teachers need to have regular and meaningful discussions with the substantive headteacher about their judgements on children's progress. There is an urgent need to establish a thorough approach to checking children's progress and attainment. This should link to national Benchmarks and evidence of what children can and cannot yet do. The substantive headteacher has created an assessment calendar. This provides teachers with guidance on when assessments in literacy and numeracy should take place. Individual teachers are beginning to make use of the assessment information gathered to inform their planning. There remains a focused need to develop a strategic approach to gathering and analysing assessment information. This will support staff to identify and address gaps and trends in attainment.

In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning, and how children will be successful. For most of the time, teachers provide helpful verbal and written feedback to children on what they are doing well and their next steps. A majority of children are gaining confidence in talking about themselves as learners. Teachers should build on this positive start and support children to set targets in their learning.

Teachers have participated in a few activities with colleagues from local schools to strengthen their understanding of national standards. This has had a focus on approaches to teaching writing. Teachers should continue developing further their understanding of national expectations to support them make thorough judgements about children's progress and attainment. Teachers in Gàidhlig Medium Education should prioritise moderation of listening and talking as an important aspect of immersion. Children in English Medium Education continue to need a structured way of having their progress in Gaelic (Learners) recognised. Children should also have their progress monitored and tracked as part of being on a pathway to fluency.

What happens next?

Sgoil Ùige has made insufficient progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar regarding Sgoil Ùige's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of Sgoil Ùige within six months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect Sgoil Ùige, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress Sgoil Ùige has made.

Joan C. Esson
HM Inspector