

The Highland Council

Lochaber Area Committee

29 August, 2019

Education Scotland Report – Strontian Primary School Report 1

Report by Area Care & Learning Manager

Summary

This report provides details on Education Scotland's report of Strontian Primary School of 19 September 2017. The Head Teacher at the time of inspection was Ms Pamela Hill.

1:0 INTRODUCTION TO INSPECTIONS

Education Scotland aims to provide assurance on the quality of Scottish education and promote improvement and innovation to enhance learners' experiences and lead to better outcomes. Their inspections also contribute to National Performance Framework reporting.

Each year, they inspect and report on the quality of education in a sample of pre-school centres, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, community learning and development services, colleges and residential educational provision. They also inspect the education functions of local authorities.

To support improvement, inspectors focus on the quality of children and young people's learning and achievement. They have a particular interest in the development of children and young people's skills and understanding in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing which enables access to the highest possible learning within a broad general education and beyond.

Details of all aspects of the work of Education Scotland along with all the reference documentation can be found on the Education Scotland website.

Link: <https://education.gov.scot/>

2:0 INSPECTION CONDUCTED

2:1

SCHOOL	AREA	INSPECTION DATE	NATURE OF INSPECTION	PUBLICATION DATE	ACTION
Strontian Primary School	Lochaber	May 2017	Full	19 September 2017	Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection in connection with the report of 2017.

2:2 Members are advised that as reports are published following inspection, they will be referred directly to Members and may be discussed at Ward Business Meetings. In this way relevant Members will see each published report as they arrive in the relevant area.

2:3 Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication "*How good is our school?*" Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Education Scotland evaluations are made on a 6-point scale as follows:

* Excellent/Very Good/Good/Satisfactory/Weak/Unsatisfactory

Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection in connection with the report of 2017.

Quality Indicator	Strontian Primary School
Leadership of Change	Weak
Learning, teaching and assessment	Weak
Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Satisfactory
Quality Indicator	Nursery Class
Leadership of Change	Good
Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
Securing children's progress	Very Good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good

The visit identified the following areas for improvement:

- Improve learning, teaching and assessment across the primary stages in order to improve attainment and achievement.
- Prioritise strategic leadership across the school to ensure well-paced improvement and change.
- Continue to review roles, remits and practices for children who need extra help in their learning.

The visit identified the following strengths:

- The teamwork of staff and their contribution to the life of the school within its community. As a result, children engage more with local partners, take part in residential visits and sporting events alongside local schools.
- All staff and children have worked well together to create an open, welcoming ethos throughout the school.
- The quality of learning and engagement in the nursery class.

The full Education Scotland Report can be found on the link below

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-reports/highland/5128323>

3:0 ACTIONS AS A RESULT OF INSPECTION

3:1 The Authority, Head Teacher and the public are provided with the report, “summary of inspection findings” (SIF) and an evidence report.

These documents evidence both good practice and areas for improvement and using this, the school will adapt its school ‘Improvement Plan’ and report annually the impact on learners through the Standards and Quality Report.

4:0 COMPARISON

4:1 Members are advised that it is not possible to use Education Scotland reports to compare across schools, as the curriculum is now tailored by schools to their individual circumstances, within the overall quality indicators.

4.2 Furthermore, it is not possible to compare previous reports for a school with more recent reports. This is due to changes in the inspection focus from year to year.

4.3 Consequently, reports should be viewed as a single snap-shot of a school’s performance, against a suite of national quality indicators as laid down in *How good is our school*.

The link below provides the Approaches to Inspection from August 2016:
Link:

<https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/about-inspections-and-reviews/new-approaches-to-inspection/Approaches%20to%20inspection%20from%20August%202016>

5. Implications

- 5.1 There are no resources, legal, equalities, climate change/carbon clever, risk, Gaelic or rural implications arising from this report.

6:0 RECOMMENDATION:

The Area Committee is asked to scrutinise and note the Education Scotland report on **Strontian Primary School** of 19 September 2017.

Designation: Quality Improvement Manager (West)

Author: Don Esson

Date: 29th July 2019.

The Highland Council

Lochaber Area Committee

29 August, 2019

Education Scotland Report – Strontian Primary School Report 2

Report by Area Care & Learning Manager

Summary

This report provides details on Education Scotland's report of Strontian Primary School of 4 December 2018. The Head Teacher at the time of follow-up inspection was Ms Pamela Hill. The school is now managed under the Acing 3-18 Management model, in conjunction with Ardanmurchan High School.

1:0 INTRODUCTION TO INSPECTIONS

Education Scotland aims to provide assurance on the quality of Scottish education and promote improvement and innovation to enhance learners' experiences and lead to better outcomes. Their inspections also contribute to National Performance Framework reporting.

Each year, they inspect and report on the quality of education in a sample of pre-school centres, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, community learning and development services, colleges and residential educational provision. They also inspect the education functions of local authorities.

To support improvement, inspectors focus on the quality of children and young people's learning and achievement. They have a particular interest in the development of children and young people's skills and understanding in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing which enables access to the highest possible learning within a broad general education and beyond.

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2:0 INSPECTION CONDUCTED

2:1

SCHOOL	AREA	INSPECTION DATE	NATURE OF INSPECTION	PUBLICATION DATE	ACTION
Strontian Primary School	Lochaber	September 2017	Follow-up	4 December 2018	Education Scotland have asked for a report on leadership arrangements in connection with the report of 2018.

2:2 Members are advised that as reports are published following inspection, they will be referred directly to Members and may be discussed at Ward Business Meetings. In this way relevant Members will see each published report as they arrive in the relevant area.

2:3 Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication "*How good is our school?*" Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Education Scotland evaluations are made on a 6-point scale as follows:

* Excellent/Very Good/Good/Satisfactory/Weak/Unsatisfactory

Education Scotland have asked for a report on leadership arrangements in connection with the report of 2018.

The visit identified the following improvements:

Improve learning, teaching and assessment across the primary stages in order to improve attainment and achievement

- The school has made good progress towards improving learning, teaching and assessment.
- Strontian Primary School continues to be a warm, friendly school where the wellbeing of children is central to day-to-day school life. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to develop a shared understanding of effective learning and teaching approaches. There are clear planning frameworks now in place that help teachers to plan learning more effectively across the multi-stage composite classes. As a result, lessons are better planned and children are engaged and motivated by their learning. The headteacher and staff have reviewed their use of national and local curriculum planning and assessment

guidance. Staff now plan rich assessment tasks to ensure children have opportunities to develop and apply their learning in new and real-life contexts. Planned moderation sessions provide valuable opportunities for staff to work with colleagues in other local schools to share standards and expectations of children's attainment. The headteacher has supported the professional learning of staff very well through arranging for teachers to visit other schools to learn about and share good practice.

- Since the original inspection, there are increased opportunities for children to lead their own learning. Children talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they now have for self and peer assessment. They talk with confidence about their learning, their strengths and their next steps. They engage in regular target setting, reflection and evaluation of their own learning. Children are proud of their pupil profiles, in which they record their own achievements and successes. These are recorded using an online platform so that information can be easily shared with parents to provide opportunities for discussing their learning at home.
- Opportunities for pupil voice have improved. Children feel that their ideas are now sought, valued and acted upon. For example, children in P7 took responsibility for deciding the activities for World Book Day. Children plan and lead the various activities and games during the popular 'Epic Friday' sessions. All children are now engaged in one of three consultative groups: the eco committee, the communications group and the learning council. The communications group plan to lead an assembly on the importance of staying safe online for all children. The eco group have produced posters and other information to inform the local community about the importance of caring for the environment and reducing litter. The learning council has implemented the 'Tuesday Chat' initiative. This is an effective and motivating mechanism to gain children's thoughts, ideas and opinions in relation to the school improvement. As a result of these improvements, children are growing in confidence as they participate in the wider life of the school. The headteacher has correctly identified that a next step is to track and monitor learners' skills and wider achievements, in order to identify any individuals at risk of missing out.

Continue to review roles, remits and practices for children who need extra help in their learning

- The school has made good progress in improving systems for identifying and assisting children who require additional support in their learning.
- The headteacher has reviewed classroom practice to ensure that the staged approach to intervention is working more effectively. Teachers are clearer about their role in meeting the needs of children requiring some extra help in their learning. Better approaches to lesson planning means that the tasks and activities set for children are more carefully differentiated. As a result, fewer children are now identified as requiring additional support for learning, as their needs are being met appropriately by the class teacher.
- Pupil support assistants provide valuable and sensitive support in a variety of ways. For example, through one-to-one assistance, group support, individual reading, writing and speech and language support. The school's educational psychologist and school nurse provide much appreciated support to the

school. They each feel welcomed as part of the school's extended staff team and that staff work very well in partnership with them to support children and families.

- The headteacher has developed a useful overview of children's progress and support for learning needs across the school. This new system allows her to monitor more strategically the progress of all children in literacy and numeracy on a regular basis. Fortnightly discussions with class teachers helps the headteacher and staff to pinpoint where children may need some extra help.

Prioritise strategic leadership across the school to ensure well-paced improvement and change

- The school has made very good progress in improving approaches to strategic leadership and in promoting leadership at all levels. This is leading to a brisker pace of change and better outcomes for children.
- The headteacher has taken a number of practical steps to ensure she has protected time and space to carry out her leadership responsibilities effectively. She has developed an appropriate calendar of monitoring activities to ensure key areas of school life are reviewed on a regular basis. These activities include observations of classroom practice; looking at teachers' planning and children's work; regular, focused professional dialogue with staff; and reviewing the progress made towards priorities in the action plan, and identifying next steps. As a result, there are now methodical systems and processes in place for the headteacher and staff to evaluate the life and work of the school on an ongoing basis across the school year. The headteacher and staff now have an accurate, evidence-based view of the strengths and areas of improvement of the school.
- All members of the staff team have additional responsibilities, either linked to areas of school life, or priorities for improvement within the school's action plan. As a result, there is an ethos of collegiality amongst the staff team, and a shared vision to do the best for children and families. Over the past year, children have willingly taken on new leadership responsibilities to help the school to continue to improve. Children are benefiting from regular opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills through the life of the school, for example as lunchtime monitors. Children speak with pride about their work in committees and groups and feel that their opinions count.
- In preparation for moving to new school accommodation, the headteacher has led an effective process of consultation and community participation in choosing a new identity for Strontian Primary School. Children, parents, staff, partners and the wider local community had the opportunity to vote for the new school logo.

The visit identified the following areas for improvement:

- Teachers should continue to ensure that they plan lessons carefully to ensure high-achieving children are suitably challenged in their learning.
- Staff should continue to build on the positive progress they have made in developing effective leadership at all levels. This will help to ensure that there is capacity for continuous improvement within Strontian Primary School, as

the community moves to its new setting and begins a new chapter in the life of the school.

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Designation: Quality Improvement Manager (West)

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