

**Sgoil Lionacleit
Benbecula
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
10 June 2008**

Contents

Page

1. The inspection	1
2. Continuous improvement	1
3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action	1
4. Conclusion	4
How can you contact us?	5

1. The inspection

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) published a report on the inspection of Sgoil Lionacleit in June 2006. Working with the school, the education authority prepared an action plan indicating how they would address the main points for action identified in the original HMIE inspection report.

HM Inspectors revisited the school in February 2008 to assess the extent to which the school was continuing to improve the quality of its work, and to evaluate progress made in responding to the main points for action in the initial report.

2. Continuous improvement

Since the original inspection the acting headteacher had secured the post on a permanent basis. He was highly committed to the care and welfare of pupils and well regarded by parents and staff. He had ensured that there was good communication within the school and had taken positive steps to involve staff in decision making. The headteacher was well supported by two depute headteachers. While the school's processes for self-evaluation and improvement had been enhanced, they were not yet systematic or rigorous enough.

The school continued to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. There were plans to extend the number of vocational courses at Intermediate level to add to the very successful boat building course. Staff were making preparatory arrangements to introduce a Crofting/Land Use course and a Catering and Hospitality course in June 2008. The pupil support structure was now well embedded in the school and had improved pastoral care and learning support for pupils. The school promoted pupils' wider achievements very well. Displays around the school to celebrate pupils' success had improved. The Pipe Band and the Flying Fiddles Group had brought recognition to the school. A team from the school had recently won a national Gaelic debating competition held at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.

At S2, the majority of pupils achieved appropriate national levels of attainment in reading and maths. There had been a dip in attainment in writing. By the end of S2, less than half of pupils achieved the appropriate attainment level. The school had maintained its previous good standards of attainment in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations during the three-year period (2005 to 2008).

3. Progress towards meeting the main points for action

The initial inspection report published in June 2006 identified five main points for action. This section evaluates the progress made with each of the action points and the resulting improvements for pupils and other stakeholders.

3.1 Improve curricular links with associated schools to ensure more continuous development of pupils' learning.

Progress in meeting this main point for action was weak.

The school and the education authority had not placed sufficient emphasis on ensuring the continuous development of pupils' learning across associated schools. While curricular links had been included within the school improvement plan, implementation strategies were not specific enough and had not been planned in conjunction with associated schools. As a result, there was not an agreed plan of how staff from the associated schools would work together to ensure appropriate progression in pupils' learning. Positive steps had been taken by the English department to develop a unit of work with one of the primary schools and share a common course with one of the S1/S2 schools. However, there was not a coherent approach to implementing this strategy across departments which would benefit pupils from all the associated schools.

3.2 Ensure that all teachers provide ongoing feedback to pupils on the quality of their classwork, help them to revise regularly at home, and report on their attainment at S1/S2 in a consistent way.

The school had made good progress towards meeting this main point for action.

Staff had taken productive steps to improve feedback to pupils on the quality of their classwork. On the whole, pupils knew what to do to improve their work. Senior managers and principal teachers required to monitor practice more closely to ensure that a consistently high quality of feedback to pupils was being achieved. Good practice which had been established across the school should now be shared.

The school had increased its emphasis on learning skills and homework. All pupils received guidance on learning skills as part of their personal and social education (PSE) programme. Senior pupils were issued with a study skills book which assisted them with revision techniques. The provision of homework classes during the lunch interval and after school had been enhanced. Senior pupils received training in the use of course software which they were able to access at home. All pupils were issued with homework diaries, but the use of these required to be monitored more consistently by teachers. The school had recently revised its homework policy and there was now a need for senior managers and principal teachers to monitor the frequency and quality of homework across the school.

The format of S1/S2 reports had been improved to ensure that all subjects now reported to parents on their children's progress in a consistent way. These reports and those at other stages included helpful comments on how pupils could improve their performance.

3.3 Provide training for all staff on child protection and racial equality.

The school had made very good progress with this main point of action.

Appropriate procedures were in place for dealing with child protection issues. The school had provided appropriate training for staff. As a result, staff were more confident about what to do if they had any concerns about pupils' welfare. Child protection cases were discussed

at weekly support team meetings. Information was carefully recorded and shared with staff on a confidential basis.

The school had produced a policy on race equality and staff had been fully briefed on its contents. Race equality issues were included in the pupil PSE programme and in a number of subjects. The school promoted global citizenship well and had raised funds for India and countries in Africa and South America.

3.4 Improve school security and repair leaking windows.

The education authority had made unsatisfactory progress with this main point for action.

The management team had been proactive in liaising with the council's technical services department regarding improvements to security and repairs to the building. Although a plan for improvement had been drawn up in consultation with the school, no action had yet been taken. A number of windows had been repaired and some replaced. Despite requests made by the school, there remained much work to be done to ensure that all windows were watertight.

3.5 Improve approaches to self-evaluation and development planning, including systematic approaches to monitoring and improving the overall quality of learning and teaching.

The school had made adequate progress in meeting this main point for action.

The senior management team had taken productive steps to improve some aspects of self-evaluation and development planning. They had established more rigorous approaches to setting targets for pupils' learning and tracking their progress. As a result, pupils had benefited from improved approaches to meeting their learning needs. The attendance monitoring system was well established and worked effectively. Working with principal teachers, senior managers had improved the depth and quality of their analysis of examination results. There was a need to ensure that aspects identified for improvement through this analysis always led to planned action.

The school development plan did not sufficiently define implementation and monitoring strategies, timescales and responsibilities for key priorities. As a result, approaches to planning and evaluation were not systematic enough. Across departments, there were inconsistencies in the quality and depth of planning. The programme of monitoring did not sufficiently focus on evaluation of improvement plan priorities. Positive steps had been taken by senior managers and principal teachers to visit classes to observe learning and teaching. There was a need to ensure that these arrangements and other methods of evaluation were systematically focused on key priorities and improved outcomes for pupils.

4. Conclusion

The school and the education authority had made very good or good progress in meeting two of the main points for action. While there had been adequate progress in improving approaches to self-evaluation, there required to be improvements to the process of planning across the school. Progress in improving curricular links with associated schools was weak. There had been unsatisfactory progress in improving school security and leaking windows.

The school had demonstrated its capacity for improvement. However, as a result of the lack of progress in taking forward two of the main points for action, HMIE will continue to engage with the school and the education authority and will make a further visit to the school within one year. This will result in another report to parents and carers within one year of the publication of this report.

Nigel Lawrie
Managing Inspector

10 June 2008

How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the headteacher and school staff, the Director of Education, local councillors and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Europa Building, 450 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8LG or by telephoning 0141 242 0100. Copies are also available on our website: www.hmie.gov.uk.

HMIE Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of follow-through inspections, you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to the SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 (fax 0800 377 7331) or e-mail: ask@spsa.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsa.org.uk.

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