



**Uyeasound Primary School  
Unst  
Shetland Islands Council  
18 May 2010**

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, children and the local community know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which children are involved. We also gather the views of children, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well children are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support children. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from children, parents and staff. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

## **Contents**

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children learn and achieve?
4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?
5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?
6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?
7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?
8. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Uyeasound Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the community of Uyeasound and surrounding area. The roll was ten when the inspection was carried out in March 2010. Children's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Stimulating learning experiences provided for children.
- Outstanding progress made in embracing *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Very strong and productive links with parents and the wider community.
- Innovative approaches to self-evaluation and improving the work of the school.
- The shared commitment to leading the school forward among all staff.
- The creative vision of the headteacher.

## **3. How well do children learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Children enjoy school and learning. They are interested in a wide range of topics and talk enthusiastically about the various projects they have carried out. They welcome the many opportunities they have to help decide what they will investigate and the activities they will undertake. Children work together very well. They share ideas and explore possible solutions. They use the stimulating displays of work throughout the school to help them recall what they have learned. They gain much from their involvement in rich tasks based in the local environment and from contacts with other schools and bodies, including those in other countries. They are, for example, working with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of

Scotland to determine the age and precise location of now-ruined crofts. They welcome visitors and invite them to take part in a short musical welcoming ceremony. Children feel respected, well looked after and involved in their learning. They appreciate the care taken by staff to promote their physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Children are developing very successfully as learners. They benefit from many opportunities to build on their strengths, develop their self-esteem and enjoy success. They are very aware of the importance of eating healthily, physical exercise and having a positive outlook. They have gained accreditation for the school as a health promoting one and are developing a keen awareness of how to improve the environment. Their work in constructing a greenhouse from empty discarded plastic bottles has won both local and national awards. Their involvement in a range of such ecological activities enables them to develop responsibility as young citizens. They participate enthusiastically in an impressive range of after-hours activities, including swimming, badminton and youth club. Notably, several enjoy making music and learning musical instruments such as the fiddle and accordion. The 'Peerie Fiddlers' play and entertain tourists during the summer months. Children's contributions to decision making, working with the community and meeting visitors are helping them to become more confident.

Children are attaining well, in line with their capabilities. They listen attentively and talk confidently in discussion. They are interested in books and reading. Older children can talk about books they have read, identify key features and offer a personal response. They mostly write well for a variety of purposes, often in connection with topics or practical work. Increasingly, they use information and communications technology to help with their writing. In mathematics, children are mostly making secure progress in mental and written calculations. They used pedometers to record the steps they have taken. They can then calculate how far they would have walked in a virtual marathon across Britain. Younger children use computer applications successfully to identify a variety of two-dimensional shapes. They apply their mathematical skills as part of topics such as their

investigation of the bog remains known as 'Gunnister Man'. They recorded the reductions in size and weight of drying peats and plotted the information in graphs. They approach practical problems, such as creating stained glass panels, with a genuine sense of enquiry and a willingness to explore strategies.

## **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

The school has made very considerable progress in embracing *Curriculum for Excellence*. Staff quickly identified the principles underlying the new curriculum as those upon which they would wish to develop their curriculum. They then actively set about creating a rich set of learning experiences securely based on active learning using local resources. They complemented this with contacts from further afield, in Britain and abroad. As the experiences and outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence* became available they used these to review their emerging practice and refine it. This process continues. As a result of this prompt and enthusiastic start, the school provides children with a most impressive, interesting and stimulating curriculum. A highly commendable feature is the extent to which the well-thought-out experiences respond to suggestions from children and parents. Children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education each week.

Staff make very effective use of their detailed knowledge of children and their needs. They are skilled in identifying personal, emotional and social needs as well as learning needs. They match learning activities and support well to children to enable them to make progress in line with their capabilities. Where children are experiencing difficulties staff provide well-judged help. The close involvement of children and their parents in taking decisions about support helps achieve a high rate of success.

#### **4. How well do staff work with others to support children's learning?**

Staff liaise very effectively with parents, consulting and involving them at all stages. The Parent Council, which comprises all parents, is highly appreciative and supportive of the school. Many parents play an active part in helping with school activities. Additionally, they help by drawing attention to stimulating opportunities for study, such as a beached dolphin or a cluster of new frogs. The school has forged many productive links with local musicians, artists and writers. These have helped enrich children's learning and strengthened their appreciation of Shetland culture. Contacts with others abroad, including through the Internet, provide further enrichment. Staff make good use of the expertise of other professionals such as speech and occupational therapists. Parents are well informed about the work of the school and their children's progress. They are consulted on a range of issues including health education. The school has suitable procedures for responding to any parental complaints. Children are very well supported when they move to Baltasound Junior High School.

#### **5. Are staff and children actively involved in improving their school community?**

Children benefit from the very strong sense of teamwork among staff who work together very effectively, contributing and combining their talents. Staff continually discuss all aspects of the work of the school and plan how to improve. They take full account of the views of children and parents. Children relish the opportunities they have to initiate and lead developments, to represent the school and to enter competitions. For example, they have taken part in photographic and art competitions, music festivals and won the Stevenson Prize for Religious Observance. They are justifiably proud of the school's high reputation and the awards received. Children are pleased to share the school's successes with the many visitors who come to see its work.

## **6. Does the school have high expectations of all children?**

Children are valued as individuals and treated with consideration and respect. They help and support one another. They behave very well and are friendly and confident when welcoming visitors. Staff consistently seek to identify children's strengths and to build on these. They provide a commendably encouraging and nurturing environment within which children thrive and learn. Children's successes are regularly celebrated and they are encouraged to aim high. Staff place great importance on children's wellbeing. They take seriously their responsibilities for child protection and are familiar with procedures to keep children safe. Children have a good awareness of equality, diversity and equal opportunities. Staff actively encourage children to make healthy eating choices. Children have regular opportunities for religious observance.

## **7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?**

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. With the very active involvement of parents she has put in place a vision for the school which aligns very closely with *Curriculum for Excellence*. She enjoys the strong and active support of parents and the full cooperation of staff. All staff willingly assume leadership roles and work closely together to improve further children's experiences at school. With the headteacher, they rigorously evaluate their work using an approach which emphasises and builds on identified strengths. As a result the school provides the highest quality of education for its pupils and is very well placed to continue to improve.

## **8. What happens next?**

The inspector was able to rely on the school's robust self-evaluation. As a result, he was able to change his focus during the inspection to support further improvements within the school.



The school provides a very good quality of education. Therefore, we will make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The education authority will inform parents about the school's progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its schools.

We have agreed the following area for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Continue to improve the school as planned.

Quality indicators help schools and nursery classes, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of a school and a nursery class. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publications *How good is our school?* and *The Child at the Centre*. 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 and nursery classes are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Uyeasound Primary School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>excellent</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>very good</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>excellent</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>excellent</b>

**HM Inspector:** Nick Pepin

18 May 2010

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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Text phone users can contact us on 01506 600 236. This is a service for deaf users. Please do not use this number for voice calls as the line will not connect you to a member of staff.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk) or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

Where the school has a nursery class, you can contact the Complaints Coordinator, Headquarters, Care Commission, Compass House, Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY, telephone 0845 603 0890.

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