



**Item: 7**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 13 November 2024.**  
**North Walls Community School and Nursery Class – Inspection.**  
**Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.**

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## **1. Overview**

- 1.1. In June 2024, Education Scotland undertook a short model inspection of North Walls Community School and Nursery Class.
- 1.2. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
  - Confident children who are safe, included and happy. They are supportive of each other and proud of their school and nursery.
  - All staff work well as a team. Led effectively by the headteacher, they have developed consistent and well-considered learning and teaching approaches.
  - Children across the school and nursery learn in stimulating and engaging environments. Children are motivated by relevant and meaningful learning experiences.
  - Practitioners in the nursery use skilled questioning and high-quality interactions to support children to make very good progress in their learning.
- 1.3. The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher, the Service Manager (Primary Education) and the Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare):
  - Staff in the school and nursery should continue to develop opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning. This should help children to understand better their progress and have a meaningful voice in choices which affect their learning.
  - Staff in the school should build on their approaches to assessing children's progress in learning. This should include the headteacher and staff continuing to develop approaches to reaching a shared understanding of standards about children's attainment across the curriculum.
- 1.4. The evaluations given to the quality indicators for the primary school are as follows:
  - Learning, Teaching and Assessment – good.
  - Raising attainment and achievement – good.

- 1.5. The evaluations given to the quality indicators for the nursery class are as follows:
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment – very good.
  - Securing Children’s progress – very good.
- 1.6. HM Inspectors are confident in the school’s capacity to continue to improve and will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- 1.7. The areas for improvement, outlined above, will be taken forward by the school and nursery as part of the school improvement planning process and will feature on the plan for North Walls Community School and Nursery Class over the next few years to ensure that they are embedded in practice.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
- i. Scrutinise the inspection letter in respect of North Walls Community School and Nursery Class, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, issued by Education Scotland on 17 September 2024, in order to obtain assurance.

### For Further Information please contact:

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Catherine Diamond, Service Manager (Early Learning and Childcare), extension 3220, Email [catherine.diamond@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk](mailto:catherine.diamond@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk).

### Implications of Report

1. **Financial** – Not applicable.
2. **Legal** – Not applicable.
3. **Corporate Governance** – Not applicable
4. **Human Resources** – Not applicable.
5. **Equalities** – Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.

- 7. Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
- Growing our economy.
  - Strengthening our Communities.
  - Developing our Infrastructure.
  - Transforming our Council.
- 8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
- Cost of Living.
  - Sustainable Development.
  - Local Equality.
- 9. Environmental and Climate Risk** – Not applicable.
- 10. Risk** – Not applicable.
- 11. Procurement** – Not applicable.
- 12. Health and Safety** – Not applicable.
- 13. Property and Assets** – Not applicable.
- 14. Information Technology** – Not applicable.
- 15. Cost of Living** – Not applicable.

### List of Background Papers

None

### Appendix

Appendix 1 – Letter from Education Scotland.

17 September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited North Walls Community School and Nursery Class. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Confident children who are safe, included and happy. They are supportive of each other and proud of their school and nursery.
- All staff work well as a team. Led effectively by the headteacher, they have developed consistent and well-considered learning and teaching approaches.
- Children across the school and nursery learn in stimulating and engaging environments. Children are motivated by relevant and meaningful learning experiences.
- Practitioners in the nursery use skilled questioning and high-quality interactions to support children to make very good progress in their learning.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from Orkney Islands Council.

- Staff in the school and nursery should continue to develop opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning. This should help children to understand better their progress and have a meaningful voice in choices which affect their learning.
- Staff in the school should build on their approaches to assessing children's progress in learning. This should include the headteacher and staff continuing to develop approaches to reaching a shared understanding of standards about children's attainment across the curriculum.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#) and [How good is our early learning and childcare?](#) Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

## Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for North Walls Community School and Nursery Class

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Raising attainment and achievement</b>	<b>good</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
<b>Learning, teaching and assessment</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Securing children's progress</b>	<b>very good</b>
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

[Details](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Inspection and review](#) | [Education Scotland](#)

### What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Orkney Islands Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Simon Gallon  
HM Inspector