

Agenda Item	7
Report No	ER/04/20

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Easter Ross Area Committee

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Report Title:** Education Scotland Activity in South Lodge Primary School

**Report By:** Lynsey Third, Education Quality Improvement Manager

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the outcomes of the visit by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) to South Lodge Primary School (Invergordon ASG) from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019. This HMI visit was a follow-up to the inspection of September 2018, previously reported to Committee. The Head Teacher (HT) at South Lodge Primary is David Hayes-MacLeod and the Depute Head Teacher (DHT) is Gillian Winter.

### 2. Implications

- 2.1 Resource - none
- 2.2 Legal - none
- 2.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – none
- 2.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - none
- 2.5 Risk – none
- 2.6 Gaelic – none

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
  - i. Note the content of this report.

### 4. Background

4.1 In September 2018, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited South Lodge Primary and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting for a full inspection. The

outcome of this inspection, published on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018, was that the school was evaluated as follows:

- Leadership of change – satisfactory
- Learning, teaching and assessment – weak
- Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – satisfactory
- Raising attainment and achievement – weak

The ELC setting was evaluated as follows:

- Leadership of change – satisfactory
- Learning, teaching and assessment – satisfactory
- Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – satisfactory
- Raising attainment and achievement – satisfactory

4.2 The school was given four key points for action as follows:

1. Improve learning, teaching and assessment to ensure the needs of all children are being met and that they are fully engaged in their learning.
2. Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. The HMI team asked staff to evaluate how well the range of initiatives currently in place to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy are leading to improvement.
3. Improve how the school and ELC setting track children's progress and use this information to inform plans for children's next steps in learning.
4. Further develop the curriculum and how learning is planned to ensure an appropriate pace of learning for all children against national standards.

4.3 The conclusion of the HMI team was that the school needed additional support and more time to make necessary improvements and that an HMI team would return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of the inspection report.

4.4 Since the publication of the original inspection report, which can be found by clicking [this link](#), staff at the school have worked in a very focused way to bring about the necessary improvements. This work has been carried out in partnership with peers from other schools within the Associated Schools Group, Highland Council development officers, staff from the Mid Area Office and the school's Quality Improvement Officer.

4.5 During the revisit in September 2019 the HMI inspection team talked to children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. Team members heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. The current report summarises the conclusions reached by the HMI team, under each of the areas for improvement mentioned above. The full report, which contains some further details, was published on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, and can be found by clicking [this link](#).

## **5. Improve learning, teaching and assessment to ensure the needs of all children are met and that they are fully engaged in their learning.**

5.1 The HMI team noted that South Lodge Primary School and Nursery Class continues to be a warm and friendly environment, where the wellbeing of children and families is central to the day-to-day work of all.

5.2 Since the last inspection, the headteacher and promoted staff have taken a well-judged approach to improving learning, teaching and assessment across the primary and nursery classes. There is clear evidence of the positive impact this work is having.

5.3 There are now more opportunities for children to engage in active learning including learning outdoors. Parents and children commented positively to the HMI team about

these changes. Children are enjoying their school experiences more and are now motivated to make better progress in their learning.

5.4 Parents of children who have additional needs are very positive about the support they receive from teachers, support staff and school leaders, commenting that the HT and DHT support families in an inclusive, positive and non-judgemental way.

5.5 In the ELC setting practitioners are improving their skills in questioning to encourage children to be fully engaged, creative and inquisitive as they play. Practitioners have made great strides in developing the outdoor environment to provide varied and rich experiences for children.

5.6 Overall, teachers, practitioners, children and parents have explored together what good learning and teaching looks like. As a result, there is now a better understanding across the staff team of expected standards and features of good practice, including careful planning, maintaining high expectations, and using assessment data.

**6. Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. The HMI team asked staff to evaluate how well the range of initiatives currently in place to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy are leading to improvement.**

6.1 The HMI team found that since the last inspection, the HT and DHT have taken a measured and effective approach to raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. They have appreciated the strong support of officers from The Highland Council, who have helped staff to implement new programmes for teaching spelling, reading, writing and numeracy. Pupil support assistants have received training in providing high-quality, targeted assistance for children who face barriers to their learning.

6.2 Staff and children are very positive about the new approaches, which have led to a brisker pace of learning. There are early signs that children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is improving as a result.

6.3 In the ELC setting, practitioners have a strong focus on helping children to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. Children continue to gain confidence in talking and listening. This enhanced focus on literacy and numeracy, together with practitioners' careful tracking of each child's progress, is helping to improve children's attainment.

**7. Improve how the school and ELC setting track children's progress and use this information to inform plans for children's next steps in learning.**

7.1 The HT and DHT have demonstrated clear and effective leadership in introducing better approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress. Staff have worked well together to ensure they have a shared understanding of national standards and expectations. Senior leaders and staff place great value in collaborating and sharing practice with other local schools. As a result, staff are implementing new approaches to assessing children's progress, which is making a difference for children.

7.2 Teachers and practitioners in the ELC setting have made significant progress in developing a rigorous system to track younger children's progress. Tracking for individual children helps practitioners to identify where children are meeting their developmental milestones and where they may require more support. Practitioners use this detailed information to identify key targets for individual children.

7.3 The HT and DHT have developed a helpful overview of whole school and class-by-class attainment, from nursery to P7. Through the development of this system, the HT now tracks carefully the progress of individuals and cohorts of children, for example those facing challenges or barriers in their learning. Staff should continue to monitor the progress of children and cohorts.

**8. Further develop the curriculum and how learning is planned to ensure an appropriate pace of learning for all children against national standards.**

8.1 Over the last year, staff have worked with children and parents to develop a curriculum rationale that is unique to the context of South Lodge Primary School and ELC setting, aligned to its bespoke vision and values. The headteacher has appropriate plans in place to continue to develop and refresh the curriculum over time. Staff should continue to develop inter-disciplinary learning.

8.2 Staff have adopted a greater focus on developing children's skills for learning, life and work. The school community has identified its own set of 'super skills' which children are supported well to develop. These include collaboration, teamwork and organisational skills.

8.3 Teachers are taking the lead in developing the curriculum, for example through the school's new "enrichment days", where children and families have opportunities to learn together and share talents and interest. The enrichment days are very well received by the whole school community and engage children particularly well in their learning.

**9. Conclusion**

9.1 The HMI team concluded that the school has made good progress since the original inspection. They expressed confidence that the school has the capacity to continue to improve, and no further HMI visits will be made to the school in connection with the original inspection.

Designation: Education Quality Improvement Manager

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Author: Lynsey Third

Background Papers: Education Scotland September 2018 inspection letter [here](#) and Education Scotland September 2019 revisit letter [here](#).