



Item: 10

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 10 September 2025.

Education Scotland – Dounby Community School.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. In February 2025, Education Scotland undertook an inspection of Dounby Community School. This was a full model inspection.
- 1.2. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:
 - Children are expressive, enthusiastic and articulate. They are curious and eager in their learning. Children are very proud of the school and its history.
 - The headteacher and staff work well together as a team. They foster positive nurturing relationships with children and create an inclusive, attractive learning environment.
 - Staff work effectively with a wide range of partners to support children's learning and achievement. This is helping children to develop important skills and extend their knowledge.
 - Senior leaders and staff have effective processes in place to identify and assist children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing.
- 1.3. The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Headteacher and the Service Manager (Primary Education):
 - The headteacher and staff should continue their work to review and develop further approaches to high-quality learning and teaching across the school. This should include assessing and monitoring children's learning and progress more regularly and with more rigour.
 - Staff should now work to ensure that all children experience learning across the broad general education that takes account of the school's unique island context. They should ensure that that all planning and assessment enables children to build on their skills and knowledge progressively over time.
 - The headteacher and staff should develop further approaches to raise attainment and accelerate children's progress in literacy and numeracy across the school. Clear targets should be set that can be measured. This will help staff to check that any changes are leading to improvement in children's outcomes.

- 1.4. The evaluations given to the quality indicators for the primary school are as follows:
- Leadership of change – satisfactory.
 - Learning, Teaching and Assessment – satisfactory.
 - Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - satisfactory
 - Raising attainment and achievement – satisfactory.
- 1.5. HM Inspectors are confident in the school's capacity to continue to improve and will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
- 1.6. The areas for improvement, outlined above, will be taken forward by the school as part of the school improvement planning process and will feature on the plan for Dounby Community School over the next few years to ensure that they are developed and embedded in practice.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
- i. Note the inspection letter in respect of Dounby Community School, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, issued by Education Scotland on 17 June 2025.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. **Financial** – Not applicable.
2. **Legal** – Not applicable.
3. **Corporate Governance** – Not applicable.
4. **Human Resources** – Not applicable.
5. **Equalities** – An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – An 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.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
- 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 June 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2025, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Dounby Community School. 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.

- Children are expressive, enthusiastic and articulate. They are curious and eager in their learning. Children are very proud of their school and its history.
- The headteacher and staff work well together as a team. They foster positive nurturing relationships with children and create an inclusive, attractive learning environment.
- Staff work effectively with a wide range of partners to support children's learning and achievement. This is helping children to develop important skills and extend their knowledge.
- Senior leaders and staff have effective approaches in place to identify and assist children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing.

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

- The headteacher and staff should continue their work to review and develop further approaches to high-quality learning and teaching across the school. This should include assessing and monitoring children's learning and progress more regularly and with increased rigour.
- Staff should now work to ensure that all children experience learning across the broad general education that links well with the school's local context. They should ensure that all planning and assessment enables children to build on their skills and knowledge progressively over time.
- The headteacher and staff should develop further approaches to raise attainment and accelerate children's progress in literacy and numeracy across the school. Clear targets should be set that can be measured. This will help staff to check that any changes are leading to improvements in children's outcomes.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school \(4th edition\)](#) 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 Dounby Community School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | 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.

Lisa Marie McDonnell
HM Inspector