

9 June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2026, a team of HM Inspectors of Education visited Baltasound Junior High 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.

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported effectively by the leadership team. Together, they have developed a culture where staff are empowered to lead improvements across the school and nursery. Staff's work to improve their practice has resulted in a highly inclusive and nurturing environment where children and young people grow and thrive together and as well-supported individuals.
- Children and young people are articulate and confident individuals. They are supported well to develop these skills and are proud of their school and community. Their school is at the heart of their island community and learners develop important skills, knowledge and achievements closely connected with their island community and beyond.
- Staff foster highly effective relationships with each other and with children and young people. They know learners and their families very well. Staff use this knowledge to plan and provide very effective support for children and young people who experience barriers to their learning.
- Staff work very effectively with a range of partners. They provide children and young people with a range of quality learning and achievement experiences, such as play and digital learning. This supports very well the school's culture to be ambitious for every learner.

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

- Staff should continue to develop high-quality and consistent approaches to learning and teaching. For example, develop and strengthen the use of the 'four tenets of teaching' policy to improve pace and challenge across primary and secondary classrooms. This should also support raised attainment.
- Staff in the nursery should review and amend the approach to planning for children's learning. They should ensure a more effective balance of responding to children's interests and planning intentionally for children's learning. Children would benefit from opportunities to learn in greater depth and progressively across the curriculum.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school \(4th edition\)](#). 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 HMIE's evaluations for Baltasound Junior High School

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

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the ELC's work using three quality indicators from the [Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors](#).

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Curriculum	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Wellbeing, inclusion and equality	very good

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the HMIE website at: [Baltasound Junior High School | Inspection Report | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in 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. Shetland Islands Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Graeme M Brown
HM Inspector

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland