



School Update

We now find ourselves racing towards the end of the Summer term, and what a term it has been.

Our first HMIE Inspection since 2011 acknowledged the fantastic whole team effort that goes into supporting and developing Unst's young people; pupils, staff, parents, partners and the wider community demonstrating everything we do is geared towards getting the best possible outcomes for our bairns. A very positive report (see box below) that everyone should be proud of.

This term, we were also presented with the Play Scotland Play Pedagogy Award - the first school in Scotland to achieve this award. A fantastic achievement for the staff and pupils who have championed play based learning.

Mr P. Thomson (Head Teacher)

Term Dates

Term 4:

Mon 13th April to
Fri 3rd July

Term 1 (2026/2027):

Wed 19 August (pupils return)

Important Dates

EY Graduation - 2nd July @10am
Prizegiving Night - 2nd July @6pm
Secondary Sleepover - 2nd July
Last Day Of Term - 3rd July



HMIE Inspection

At the start of the term, we welcomed a team of HMIE Inspectors - our chance to demonstrate what we do and who we are. It was a great experience, and one where our pupils got to shine. The Inspection team were in awe of our fantastic bairns who were kind, caring, articulate and confident high achievers. The team around them (staff/parents/partners/community) supporting them really well in their journey through Baltasound JHS. The full report is available online and a few quotes are provided below. Well done everyone!

Staff work exceptionally creatively and successfully to meet the needs of children and young people.

Children and young people are polite, friendly, and welcoming. They are proud of their school community and talk enthusiastically with adults and peers about their school experiences and their learning.

Staff develop approaches that meet very well the needs of the children and young people. These approaches help children and young people to develop well the skills and attributes required to thrive within and beyond their community.

The school motto of 'peerie school, big dreams' reflects very well the context of the school and ambition of its staff for the school community.

Staff's approaches to meet the needs of all is particularly important in the context of being in a small school in a remote location without access to specialist educational provision or local in-person services.

Across the school, highly positive, respectful relationships underpin a warm, inclusive and supportive ethos. This strong relational culture supports high levels of engagement and contributes to calm, purposeful learning environments.

The headteacher, staff, children and young people and the wider community are strong ambassadors for their school.

Children and young people are supported exceptionally well on an individual basis by school staff's very strong, evidence-based understanding of their needs and how these needs develop over time.

Children and young people are supported very effectively with well-planned and supported transitions as they move through the school. This includes moving from nursery to primary, from primary to secondary and after S4.

Attendance at school for children and young people in both primary and secondary classes is consistently above national average.

The evaluations for the whole school included 7 Quality Indicators; 4 of these were graded **good**, and 3 were graded **very good**. The full report is available on the HMIE website.

Play Scotland Play Pedagogy Award

This term we were presented with the Play Scotland Play Pedagogy Award - a significant achievement and an important milestone in our Play journey, which began back in 2019. A huge amount of work has gone into this, from pupils and staff, and to achieve this accreditation is amazing.

