

Fair Isle Primary School and ELC



Our Curriculum Rationale

Reviewed by the children, parents, parent council and staff

August 2024

To understand our Curriculum Rationale, we start with the uniqueness of our setting ...

Our Island



Fair Isle is the most remote inhabited island in the United Kingdom. It is situated roughly 24 miles from Shetland and the same distance from Orkney. Fair Isle is 3 miles long and 1.5 miles wide.

Fair Isle has been occupied since Neolithic times and has a rich heritage to explore. Fair Isle was purchased by the National Trust for Scotland in 1954 from George Waterston, the founder of the bird observatory. The population has been decreasing steadily from a peak of 380 in 1861 to around 50 residents today.

Fair Isle can claim to be the best place to witness bird migration in the country, with around 390 species recorded, including over 30 species that had never been seen before in Britain. The Fair Isle Bird Observatory (FIBO) was founded by George Waterston in 1948. A museum named after him is packed with displays of the island's history. Fair Isle is well-known for birds but, thanks to traditional crofting methods, it also has over 250 species of flowering plants. Grey and common seals can be seen year-round and porpoises, whales and dolphins mostly in summer.

The term 'Fair Isle Knitting' is now used worldwide but this unique style was developed on Fair Isle long ago. 'Shetland Peerie Makkers' sessions in school are run by volunteer knitters from our local community who work with the children to introduce them to knitting and to build their skills and confidence.

Fair Isle has many visitors from spring through to autumn and accommodation is found in one of our three guesthouses or in a self-catering cottage located at the south end. A key provider of accommodation was the Fair Isle Bird Observatory which, sadly, was destroyed in a fire in 2019; however, the rebuild is due to complete in 2025. Fair Isle is also a popular place to stop for cruise ships and private yachts. Cruise ship visitors spend a few hours on the island and this time is carefully coordinated through our community who offer transport, wildlife walks, museum stops and refreshments in the hall where artists and knitters set up stalls, as do our school children, to sell their merchandise.

Fair Isle is not connected to the National Grid so electricity is provided by the Fair Isle Electricity Company. Power is generated by a system of wind turbines and solar panels which provide the Isle with 24hr/day power. The isle is also served by a community nurse, fire and coastguard crew, post office and a small shop.

The island can be reached by plane and boat. Tingwall Airport near Lerwick serves the island with flights. Our ferry, the Good Shepherd IV, sails once a week in winter and three times a week in summer. The ferry is our main way of getting goods and vehicles on/off the isle. Royal Mail is delivered mostly on the plane and courier deliveries on the boat. Both methods of transport are often severely disrupted by weather.

Our School



Fair Isle Primary school has three classrooms with plenty of age-appropriate resources and activities for the children. The largest room is home to our ELC, which takes in children from age 2. The doors of our smallest classroom can be closed to aid concentration. Our middle STEM/creative room opens into our large ELC classroom. The community playpark is part of our playground, and we have access to the community hall for PE lessons, toilets and school lunches.

In 2020 we were awarded a grant from 'Keep Scotland Beautiful' to extend our garden. In 2021 we installed a covered area for fruit bushes to grow in, compost bins, a cold frame, seating, sand and mud kitchen areas. Our children, parents, staff and members of the community all contributed to the project.



Our unique location means that our children leave the isle to attend secondary school in Lerwick. They board in the Anderson High School Halls of Residence and return every third weekend or school holiday. This is a significant transition, and it is our priority to prepare our children well. In Primary 7, planned activities take place at AHS including PE, collaborative learning, PE and S1 transition days. Feeder primary schools work closely with AHS to share information and specific evidence of work. We have close links with pupil support and the ASN department, which are utilised if needed.

We go on activity-packed school trips to the Shetland Mainland most terms, often mixing with the smaller island schools of Foula and Fetlar. This helps to build relationships, which are especially important for the transition to secondary school. All trips are residential at the Anderson High School Halls of Residence, which builds familiarity with the facility and staff. Our school trips not only aid transition ahead of P7, but provide our pupils with activities they cannot access on Fair Isle e.g. swimming lessons, library, museum, cinema and art galleries etc. These trips are expensive, so if grants or funding cannot be secured then enterprise is essential. We sell our merchandise at Tingwall Airport, our local shop and directly to cruise ship visitors.



OUR VISION

We are a nurturing, supportive community where all children are encouraged to fulfil their potential and leave Fair Isle Primary School with happy memories.

OUR VALUES

F A I R and friendly

Inspired to do our best

Self-belief

Learning together

Empathy

OUR AIMS

Together, our whole school community aims to:

- create a happy, safe and inclusive school where everyone feels valued.
- foster a positive ethos that nurtures, supports and challenges our children.
- provide relevant experiences that allow all children to achieve and learn to the best of their ability.
- ensure that all children develop the attributes, knowledge and skills to transition to Anderson High School.
- support our children to:
 - develop a positive and resilient mind-set.
 - be enthusiastic, inquisitive and creative learners.
 - be responsible and independent in their learning and actions.
 - develop healthy lifestyles and relationships.
 - cooperate effectively with others, showing respect and integrity.
 - be aware of their rights and appreciate the rights of others.
 - be involved in all aspects of school life and value their place in school and the wider island community.

Reviewed by the staff, children and parents (August 2024).

Our Location

- We are the most remote school in the UK.
- We are geographically isolated but appreciate and embrace our rural environment.
- We have a rich history and heritage.
- We have an abundance of nature – bird migration, flora and fauna, marine protected area.
- We actively seek visitors, such as artists, photographers or researchers, to speak to the children about their work to enrich our children's learning experiences.

Our Community

- We are a small, close-knit island community of approximately 48 residents.
- Our school is valued and supported by the community.
- Our residents have a wealth of expertise and skills that complement our curriculum.
- Our school brings the community together.

Our Setting Size

- We are made up of: 5 Primary Children, 1 Teacher/Headteacher, 1 Learning Support Worker/Early Years Practitioner, 1 Music Instructor and 1 Art Instructor.
Our ELC is inactive this session as there are no families requiring this service at present
- Our small team of staff are dedicated, nurturing and flexible.
- Our school community of pupils, staff and parents has a close, family-feel.
- We are one multi-composite class; we learn together and have individualised programs.
- Being healthy, active and outdoors is very important to us.
- Our school garden provides a relaxing space to grow produce, play and appreciate nature.

What makes us unique?

Our Transitions and Connections with Partners

- Our ELC children are involved in whole school activities such as outdoor playtime, school lunches, community walks and ranger activities. This aids transition into primary 1.
- Our children board at halls of residence in Lerwick to attend Anderson High School.
- Residential school trips to the AHS Halls of Residence build familiarity and aid transition to secondary school.
- We foster close links with other primary schools, Anderson High and other agencies.

Our Enterprise and Global Citizenship Opportunities

- We develop products from concept to sale to fundraise for trips and to enhance learning
- Selling merchandise to visitors and cruise ships enables us to interact with people from all over the world

Our Curriculum Rationale is based on ...

What makes our school unique?

- Our geographical location
- Our community
- Our setting size
- Our transitions
- Our enterprising opportunities

Our Values

- FAIR and friendly
- Inspired to do our best
- Self-belief
- Learning together
- Empathy

Inclusive Learning

- We adapt approaches to support children with Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- We use CIRCLE to measure levels of inclusiveness and make appropriate adjustments

- Skills for Learning
- Skills for Life
- Skills for Work

Assessing and Planning Next Steps

- Progression Pathways
- Assessment is for Learning strategies
- CfE Benchmarks
- Learning intentions & success criteria
- Moderation Exercises
- High-quality Feedback
- Next steps in Learning



The 7 Principles of Curriculum Design:

- Challenge & enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes in:

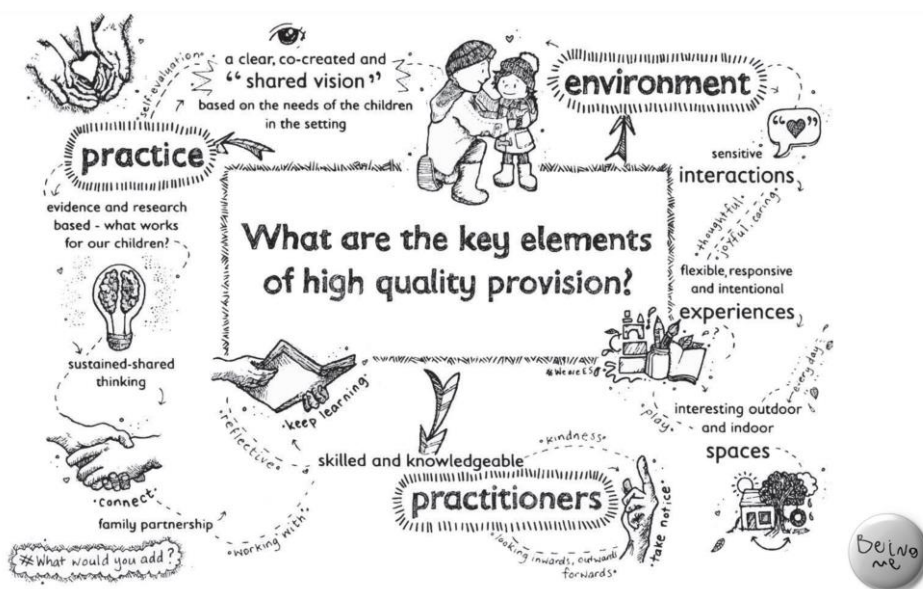
- Expressive Arts
- Health and Wellbeing
- Languages (MFL) and Literacy
- Mathematics
- Religious and Moral Education
- Sciences
- Social Studies
- Technologies

Our Early Learning and Childcare Rationale



At Fair Isle ELC, our aim is to nurture and support each individual child on their unique learning journey. Our small island community and small setting size, allow staff to work very closely with children and their families. We create a welcoming, positive and supportive environment where children feel safe, happy and inquisitive. Our approaches to learning and progression are underpinned by the national guidance document, *Realising the Ambition*. High quality interactions, experiences and spaces allow curious minds to flourish. Children grow and learn at their own pace, therefore fostering individual interests, ideas and needs is central to our pedagogy.

Realising the Ambition page 87



The Northern Alliance Mathematics Progression Pathway and the Highland Literacy Progression Pathway guide our learning outcomes and track pupil progress across the Early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

Early childhood is an important stage of human development, where play and a natural curiosity of the world around them are key drivers for learning. We feel it is a privilege to work with such young minds and it is our duty to offer the best provision possible. Sharing practice across the sector and attending regular training help us to become skills and knowledgeable practitioners. We also engage in regular self-evaluation of our ELC using the following frameworks:

- How Good is our ELC?
- *Realising the Ambition* challenge questions
- Health and Care Social Standards (My Support, my life)
- Care Inspectorate's Quality Framework for Day Care of Children

These processes help us identify our strengths, highlight areas for development and set action points for improvement.