

14 March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Islay High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- Senior leaders and staff work well together to develop a caring ethos where almost all young people feel valued and included. Members of the community support the school well.
- Young people receive a range of useful, individualised feedback particularly from S3 to S6. As a result, by the end of S6, young people attain well in National Qualifications.
- The student support staff team is highly effective in planning and reviewing young people's learning and wellbeing needs. As a result, young people who require additional support feel included and achieve success in their learning.
- Young people are keen to learn and achieve through Gaelic in a range of situations. This is achieved within school, with the use of technology and through established partnerships in the community.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and representatives from Argyll and Bute Council.

- All staff should develop a more consistent approach to checking the progress in school improvement. Senior leaders should monitor closely the pace of change and ensure that stakeholders work together more effectively to identify improvement priorities. This should lead to more meaningful, relevant, and ambitious priorities. These priorities should include a review of the S1 - S3 curriculum to ensure that young people experience their full entitlement.
- Teachers should develop further a clear and shared understanding of the key features of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should plan more stimulating learning activities which encourage curiosity and promote engagement, enthusiasm and confidence among young people.
- As planned, staff should develop an overall, whole-school approach to support the wellbeing of all young people. This should include all staff developing further their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting the wellbeing of all young people more effectively. Staff should also review the personal and social education programme so that all young people experience a relevant and progressive programme which helps them develop personal resilience and confidence.

- Senior leaders should continue with their plan to improve Gaelic Learner and Medium Education at an increased pace. This should help to increase the numbers of young people achieving awards and qualifications in the senior phase.

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 Education Scotland's evaluations for Islay High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	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	

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. Argyll and Bute Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Frances E. Graham
HM Inspector