

23 July 2024

Dr Gillian Munro  
Principal  
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Dear Dr Munro

A team of HM Inspectors from Education Scotland visited Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in April 2024 to undertake an Annual Engagement Visit. During our visit, we talked to learners, staff and stakeholders, and worked closely with the senior managers.

The team found the following major strengths in the college's work:

### **Learner progress and outcomes**

The overall successful completion rate for learners on part-time further education programmes is higher than the sector norm, while the rate of partial success is 8.96% lower. The overall withdrawal rate for learners on part-time FE programmes is 7% higher than the sector norm.

Tutors provide useful guidance to learners on the range of progression pathways to further study, aiding learners in effectively planning their studies and making informed decisions about future study and employment. Most learners who successfully complete their programmes progress to a more advanced level of study to continue their education in Gaelic and improve their language skills. Curriculum leaders engage productively with local community groups to coordinate and host cultural events, allowing learners to apply and enhance their language skills and knowledge of Gaelic culture within informal and social settings. Managers and staff prioritise building positive and productive relationships with local primary and secondary schools, improving and extending the range of opportunities available to pupils, teachers, and stakeholders to engage in Gaelic education and culture.

### **Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating**

Course leaders and support staff collaborate effectively to address issues and establish actions to improve the quality of the learning experience. Managers use data to assess the impact and effectiveness of educational provision, which is used for operational planning. Course leaders actively promote professional learning opportunities to tutors, facilitating the sharing of best practices and providing networking opportunities with peers and experts in Gaelic language and culture. Curriculum teams regularly adjust online learning and teaching materials to enhance the learning experience for learners, tailoring resources to accommodate different learning preferences and encouraging engagement and interaction. Tutors delivering online programmes are proficient in using digital resources and ensure classes are well organised. Tutors provide guidance on learning strategies and resources and arrange helpful one-to-one sessions with individual learners

to address issues or concerns. Curriculum staff use information in learners' personal learning and support plans to adapt lessons to meet individual needs.

## **Learner Engagement**

The Students' Association is well represented on all strategic committees, including the college board. Office bearers feel that their input is valued and that their views are taken seriously by staff. In response to learner feedback, curriculum leaders offer revision sessions to support learners in consolidating their skills and preparing for assessments, ultimately helping them gain confidence and skills to progress through programme levels. Most tutors effectively encourage and engage learners to contribute their views to improve the curriculum, taking into account their suggestions to adapt programmes and enhance the educational experience. Learners are well supported through additional conversational sessions to improve their Gaelic language speaking skills, with feedback indicating that these sessions are highly valued and enjoyable.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the senior managers:

- The overall withdrawal rate for learners on part-time FE programmes is 7% higher than the sector norm.
- Opportunities for staff to participate in regular, formal self-evaluation and sharing of practices are limited.
- Staff do not have access to centrally produced data to support and inform evaluation and planning activities. This is limiting the ability of managers and staff to draw on data to inform team, departmental and college-wide decisions.
- Not all ACI tutors are able to engage in formal reflection on learning and teaching approaches and sharing best practice, limiting their ability to benefit from professional learning and update their practice.
- There are no learner representatives in place for ACI programmes. Therefore, the opportunities for these learners to influence the design and delivery of the curriculum are limited.
- Arrangements for gathering learner feedback are not sufficiently consistent or systematic to support evaluation and planning activities fully.
- Almost all learners report that teaching staff use too wide a variety of learning platforms which presents challenges and complications for engaging in learning activities.
- Some learning and teaching materials on the VLE are out of date and require to be updated.

## Main points for action

None identified

## What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

Jacqueline McLellan  
HM Inspector

cc Chair of College Board, SFC Outcome Agreement Manager