

16 January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In October 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail - The Nicolson Institute. 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.

- Most staff foster positive, caring relationships with young people across the school. They use praise effectively to motivate learners.
- Staff are increasing their ambition for Gàidhlig and offer more learning and teaching through the medium of Gàidhlig. As a result, most young people in Gàidhlig Medium Education, by the time they leave school, are confident and successful speakers of Gàidhlig.
- Almost all young people are supported effectively to plan and achieve positive post-school destinations. They are supported to do so through effective partnership working.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

- Staff should continue to raise the attainment of young people, specifically in numeracy and the quality of passes in National Qualifications.
- Senior leaders and teachers, with the wider school community, should develop a shared understanding of the features of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. This should include planning appropriately for young people who require additional support with their learning.
- Senior leaders should plan strategically, and longer term, with the local authority to increase staffing, professional learning and the use of technology to continue to extend learning and immersion for Gàidhlig. This should include increasing the numbers undertaking qualifications and awards for Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig.
- As a matter of urgency, senior leaders should work with staff, and the local authority to improve the quality of education for young people in the enhanced provision. Staff should focus on ensuring that all young people access relevant and well-planned educational experiences that engage them in their learning.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using 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 Àrd-sgoil MhicNeacail - The Nicolson Institute

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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:

[Details](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Inspection and Review](#) | [Education Scotland](#).

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings, we think that the enhanced provision unit needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the enhanced provision unit in the school within six months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the enhanced provision unit in the school, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the enhanced provision unit in the school has made.

Carolanne Calderwood
HM Inspector