

# Summarised inspection findings

**Islay High School**

Argyll and Bute Council

14 March 2023

## Key contextual information

School name: Islay High School  
Council: Argyll and Bute Council  
SEED number: 8109931  
Roll: 190

Islay High School is a non-denominational, six-year comprehensive school situated on the island of Islay. The Scottish Government defines this as a very remote rural school. Islay High School has five associated primary schools covering the islands of Jura and Islay. The school provides progression to Gaelic Medium Primary Education, with Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig taught to Higher level, and Advanced Higher if required.

The headteacher has been in post for seven years. He is supported by a Depute Headteacher. Both members of the senior leadership team currently have teaching commitments. Senior leaders report that staffing constraints, such as staff absence and recruitment, have been factors in the delivery of the curriculum offer.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average.

Exclusions are consistently below the national average.

In February 2022 8.7 percent of pupils were registered for free school meals.

In September 2021 0 percent of pupils live in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2021 the school reported that 49.0 percent of pupils had additional support needs (ASN).

### 1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence based- and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher has developed a caring, inclusive ethos across the school. His leadership is characterised by compassion, transparency and trust. He is supported by a deputy headteacher. Together they show a deep commitment to supporting young people and staff. They now need to consider the balance of support and challenge they provide to staff to ensure that the pace of change is more appropriate. Senior leaders and staff would benefit from career-long professional learning (CLPL) on national expectations and standards to develop a culture of high expectations for all.
- Senior leaders, staff and young people developed the school's vision, values and aims a few years ago. Staff display and promote the values of challenge, support, effort, resilience, safety, respect and aspiration throughout the school. Staff apply these values consistently, and young people, to a lesser extent. As planned, senior leaders should now review the vision, values and aims to reflect better the unique context of Islay High School, including Gaelic Education. This should create an opportunity for young people, parents, staff and partners to have an increased role in shaping the strategic direction of the school.
- Senior leaders identify improvement priorities and share these with departments for discussion. These areas are broadly linked to local and national priorities. Although staff are consulted on these priorities, the views of young people and parents are not currently sought. Senior leaders have identified the need to involve all stakeholders in creating school improvement priorities based on a wide range of self-evaluation evidence. Departmental improvement plans align well with the school improvement plan. Middle leaders should build on existing practice and ensure their plans include improvement targets specific to the needs of their individual faculties.
- Senior leaders are developing approaches to self-evaluation, many of which are informal. They have introduced a self-evaluation calendar with activities agreed at faculty and whole school level. This supports all faculties to evaluate their practice using 'How Good Is Our School? 4<sup>th</sup> Edition' quality indicators and analysing attainment data. All faculty leaders undertake surveys with young people to generate information about the quality of learning and teaching within their faculty. Senior leaders do not yet coordinate this at whole school level. There is limited evidence of the impact of self-evaluation on the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders should develop a more systematic and consistent approach to self-evaluation which would provide them with an overview of improvements required across the school.
- Staff engage well in a range of CLPL opportunities both in and beyond the school. For example, they participate in virtual learning opportunities provided by the Northern Alliance and Education Scotland. Staff also benefit from in-house training and discussion opportunities on in-service days. A group of teachers meets regularly to discuss professional reading. Teachers review their professional development annually against General Teaching Council for Scotland

standards and set their own CLPL targets. These targets could be aligned better to school improvement priorities. This session, almost all teachers identified areas of their practice that they wish to improve. Teachers now work in triads to observe, share and develop their practice. Senior leaders should continue to develop a practitioner enquiry approach to this work. Senior leaders should protect more time for professional dialogue, collegiate learning and self-evaluation through, for example, the working time agreement.

- In line with school priorities, senior leaders encourage staff to undertake leadership and management roles in the school. Currently, all principal teachers have management duties to support senior leaders address immediate staffing issues. Other staff have also assumed leadership responsibilities. These include, for example, coordination of the Student Council, Breakfast Club, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (HWB) strategies, and Gaelic events. Staff within student support are leading important areas for strategic responsibility, such as wellbeing, inclusion and equality, effectively. As a result, there are improved outcomes for young people within this area. Senior leaders should capitalise on these leadership opportunities by considering how they could help deliver school improvement.
- Young people have a few opportunities to demonstrate leadership in their school community. For example, a few actively represent their year group on the Student Council. Young people in fifth and sixth year welcome the opportunities to become student leaders. Young people should now be enabled better to take a more active role in leading change and improvement across the school.
- The school improvement plan includes appropriate references to the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda and the development of career management skills. The overall DYW strategy to coordinate the roles of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff, the DYW coordinator and teaching staff is articulated in the school's 'Target Operating Model'. The Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan is incorporated into the Education Services Plan for the local authority. Joint planning between LiveArgyll and the local authority is at an early stage. Senior leaders should now consider a more formal approach to working with partners. This will help to ensure that partners contribute to the priorities of the school.
- Currently, senior leaders are heavily class committed which constrains their ability to lead strategic improvements across the school. The local authority should support them to review this arrangement in order to provide a more appropriate balance of time.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Most young people enjoy learning in a calm, orderly environment and enjoy respectful, supportive relationships with staff. Staff have prioritised building positive relationships across the school. This is having a positive impact on the learning environment where young people feel valued by staff and peers alike.
- In the majority of lessons, young people are aware of the purpose of what they are learning, but not always how to be successful. In a few lessons, young people are actively engaged in their learning and enjoy learning independently. In a minority of lessons, teachers use a range of different learning activities to engage and motivate young people. Teachers should plan more stimulating learning activities which encourage curiosity and promote engagement, enthusiasm and confidence among young people. The school library is often used as a study room for older pupils. There is scope to develop voluntary roles in the library further, as well as more varied and active library-led activities.
- All young people and staff have tablet computers. Teachers regularly upload tasks and resources to a digital platform and young people submit work electronically. This is particularly helpful given the very rural and remote context. A few young people are occasionally unable to travel to school; others have increased anxieties following COVID-19 mitigations and continue to learn, in part, at home. In the majority of curricular areas, young people make good use of the digital learning platform, e-Sgoil, to support their learning. Teachers should consider ways to integrate further digital learning into classroom experiences.
- In S1, young people develop skills in targeted classes such as the 'Innovation, Creativity, Opportunities and New horizons' (ICON) class where they learn skills to support their learning across and beyond the school. There is scope for staff to develop a progressive skills framework as part of their review of learning and teaching to support teachers embed these skills in their teaching.
- In most lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and they use questioning well to check young people's knowledge and understanding. There is significant scope to develop young people's higher order thinking skills through more effective questioning. In a minority of lessons, the pace and challenge of learning for young people is appropriate. Teachers in a few curricular areas are beginning to use opportunities for outdoor learning, using facilities such as the new poly tunnel well.
- In most classes, teachers set universal tasks and activities for the whole class with limited differentiation. As a next step, teachers should plan tasks and activities that meet the needs of all young people better.

- Almost all teachers ensure young people are actively involved in evaluating their progress and identifying next steps in learning. Almost all teachers provide individualised feedback to young people both verbally and in written form. Young people engage well in the regular learner conversations with their teachers. To build further on this, leaders should consider ways to share the most impactful examples of feedback. Teachers can then build on this good practice by incorporating it into their own planning.
- Teachers across all subject areas improved their knowledge of expectations and standards in National Qualifications in senior phase during COVID-19 mitigations. The use of internal and external verification processes helped improve their practice. As a result, this is leading to more reliable teacher judgements of attainment, particularly at the senior phase. Middle and senior leaders are at the early stages of developing effective moderation processes in the broad general education (BGE). There is not a shared understanding of what moderation involves. Many teachers view it simply as cross marking. There is a need to develop fully an understanding of moderation so that judgements of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels are more reliable and valid.
- Senior and middle leaders recognise the importance of formative assessment and using a range of information to contribute to decisions about young people's progress. They should now ensure that planning of learning, teaching and assessment programmes reflect this accurately and consistently. This will help reduce the over-reliance on high stakes summative assessments.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of the local and unique features of Islay that could help inform the curriculum, and the design of programmes and courses. The headteacher has identified what he wants young people at Islay High School to achieve by the time they leave school. An important next step would be to shape these ideas into a shared rationale for the curriculum, based on national and local advice, while taking account of the school's context.
- Most departments offer progression through CfE levels in S1 and S2. Young people's learning in the majority of subjects is deepened, and expectations raised, with learning becoming more challenging across the third and fourth level experiences and outcomes throughout S1 and S2. However, the BGE curriculum does not allow for all young people to receive their national entitlement to experience the full range of experiences and outcomes, across all curriculum areas in S3. Senior leaders and local authority officers should consider how best to provide an appropriate degree of personalisation and choice while at the same time delivering the entitlement to a BGE.
- Building on CLPL, senior leaders introduced 'targeted learning' for two periods per week in S1 for young people to learn about learning. This led to improved scores in cognition for most young people. Additionally, young people in S1 follow the school's 'ICON' course to ensure they build on prior learning and to provide continuity of learning. This allows young people to build on the expedition course undertaken in primaries 6 and 7. Senior leaders should review the impact of these courses. Senior leaders should also review the allocation of time in the BGE for subjects such as home economics and technologies that are currently delivered only in S2.
- Student support teachers and senior leaders help young people make choices at several points in their learning pathways through individual meetings with them. Support for young people's choices from S2 into S3 is limited by a lack of reliable data on progress in CfE levels. At S4, S5 and S6, performance in national qualifications along with young people's interests and aspirations inform these discussions. All staff should ensure that coursing is informed by a strong understanding of appropriate progression and set the highest expectations for young people.
- Staff actively seek ways to increase subject choice in the senior phase. This includes vocational learning opportunities. There are particular constraints related to the context of the school that impact on the curriculum. Senior leaders report that staffing constraints, both in terms of teacher availability and shortages of staff in selected subjects, are impacting adversely on the senior phase curriculum offer and delivery. Given the composition of the senior phase, multi-level teaching and multi-age classes allow young people to study different levels of national qualifications.
- Senior leaders should ensure that all young people continue to experience learning in RME that is meaningful and progressive from S1 to S6. The school is not yet meeting the minimum national recommendation in relation to physical education (PE). High quality core PE provision should be in place for young people in S5 and S6.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Positive relationships between young people, staff and parents support young people's learning in school and at home. Most parents are confident to approach staff with questions or suggestions and enjoy attending events in the school such as concerts, parents' evenings and senior phase information evenings.
- Staff use social media and other digital communications well to provide helpful information and celebrate young people's achievements. Young people enjoy having their achievements celebrated at an annual event and more regularly through social media channels. This extends to achievements in a variety of clubs and out of school activities. Most parents are satisfied with the level of communication they receive from the school.
- Senior leaders need to strengthen the composition and role of the Parent Council. New parents have recently joined the Parent Council; however, it is not yet representative of the whole community. The Parent Council would benefit from further support to expand membership and increase engagement of a wider group of parents. The headteacher makes regular visits to meet with parents on Jura to help ensure that the needs of young people from that community are understood well.



## 2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Young people benefit from positive and caring relationships between each other and staff. As a result, young people are able to go to at least one trusted adult to seek help to address wellbeing concerns. Almost all young people feel safe as a result of the calm and respectful ethos in school. Staff provide supervision and designate specific areas for young people who require quieter spaces at unstructured times in the school day. This helps young people who face additional challenges to feel safe.
- Staff are attuned to the needs of young people and use the wellbeing indicators effectively to inform the student support team of any wellbeing concerns. The student support team responds in a timely manner to ensure that young people are supported well. Student support staff monitor young people's wellbeing carefully and share information with staff appropriately. Staff need to consider ways to increase young people's use of the wellbeing indicators. This should help young people be more responsible for understanding and maintaining their own wellbeing.
- Most young people feel that staff and other young people treat them fairly and with respect. Almost all young people are courteous and proud of their school. As planned, staff should continue to update and refresh the positive relationships policy. This needs to take account of CLPL on restorative and nurturing approaches. As a result, young people should benefit from a consistent response from staff who understand and appropriately respond to young people's needs.
- Staff promote the benefits of physical health through the HWB curriculum and wider curricular activities. As a result, young people explain how being active will improve their long term health. The whole school focus on promoting positive mental health helps young people understand the importance of mental health. Most young people are aware of the range of supports they can access, if required.
- Staff work well with available partners to support young people to address their wellbeing concerns. Staff work closely with Mid Argyll Youth Development Services who provide counselling support to young carers and additional input for young people at risk of leaving school without a positive destination. This is developing resilience, coping mechanisms, and confidence for these young people. Staff should continue to explore creative solutions to overcome the barrier that the geographical remoteness poses for young people.

- Staff leading HWB developments across the school have well-considered plans to refresh and update the school's HWB strategy taking into account local and national guidance. This includes helping more staff reflect on CLPL and how that informs their role in supporting all young people with their wellbeing. As part of this improvement priority, staff need to review and significantly update the personal and social education programme (PSE). All young people need to experience a more coherent and relevant PSE programme to equip them with the knowledge they need to develop the resilience, confidence and skills for their next step in learning, life and work.
- Senior leaders and the student support team have a sound knowledge of the needs of young people and fulfil their statutory duties well. Teachers are developing their knowledge of barriers to learning and are becoming skilled in identifying the needs of young people. As a result, attendance is above the national average. Staff recently updated the anti-bullying policy to take account of updated national guidance. Incidences of bullying and exclusion are very low. Support staff work well to meet the needs of all young people within their local community. It would be helpful for them, together with the local authority, to review provision for a few young people who require significant additional support.
- Almost half of young people have identified additional support needs. Support for learning staff plan interventions, informed by young people and their parents, and monitor young people's progress regularly. These plans are shared appropriately with staff. As a result, most young people feel that staff know them well and that they are supported in class to achieve well. A next step is for staff to use information on young people's needs consistently. This will help ensure that activities better match the needs of all young people who require additional support with their learning. All staff should continue to maintain confidentiality in both verbal and written communications.
- Most young people feel that the school helps them understand and respect other people. Most young people, particularly in the senior phase, have part-time jobs on the island. Given the global reach of local industries, this leads to young people learning about other countries and cultures. Young people who have protected characteristics are valued and included in the school community. Young people who have joined the school from other countries feel welcomed and part of the community. Increasing the range of resources in the school library would help develop young people's appreciation of diversity further.
- In a few curriculum areas, young people learn to understand others. Staff across the school should build on this so that young people learn to actively challenge discrimination, should this arise. Staff should provide greater opportunities to celebrate diversity across the curriculum and through whole school events.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Teachers use a range of assessment data, including standardised assessments, to support and inform their professional judgements of achievement of a CfE level. Teachers welcome opportunities to engage in internal and, where possible, external moderation activities. Locally developed assessments, particularly in numeracy, are clearly linked to national benchmarks, and lead to more reliable professional judgements. As planned, teachers should continue to develop further their understanding of the purpose of moderation.
- Faculties track and monitor young people's progress in different ways, although all teachers input data on this at key points during the session. A more formalised and consistent approach to tracking and monitoring would allow teachers and school leaders to have a more comprehensive and responsive whole-school overview of young people's progress in learning. This would allow a greater range of interventions, comparisons and analysis for individuals and different groups of young people. It would allow teachers to track the progress of individuals and groups to help ensure they make appropriate progress.

### Broad General Education

- Teachers are becoming more confident in using a range of assessment information to support their professional judgement of achievement of a CfE level. As a result, these judgements are more reliable in recent years.

### Literacy

- By the end of S3 almost all young people attain third CfE level in reading and listening and talking in 2021/22. All young people attained writing at third CfE level in 2021/22. This is consistently above both the local authority and national percentages.
- Most young people attained fourth CfE level in reading, writing and listening and talking in 2018/19, however less than half attained at this level in 2021/22. Senior leaders report that almost all young people in S3 attained SCQF level 4+ or better in English in 2021/22.

### Numeracy

- By the end of S3, almost all young people attained third CfE level from 2015/16 to 2018/19. Most attained third level CfE in numeracy in 2021/22. This is generally in line with the local authority and the national percentage in 2021/22.

- Most young people attained fourth CfE level from 2015/16 to 2017/18, the majority attained fourth level numeracy in 2018/19 and in 2021/22. This is below the national percentage in 2021/22. Senior leaders report that most young people in S3 attained SCQF level 4+ or better in mathematics or numeracy in 2021/22.

## **Senior phase - Leavers**

### **Literacy**

- Most young people leaving school in 2017/18 achieved Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5+ or better in literacy. Most young people leaving school in 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 4+ or better in literacy. This is significantly lower than the virtual comparator (VC), except in 2018/19 when it was in line with the VC for SCQF level 5+ or better. Less than half of young people leaving school from 2019/20 to 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 6+ or better in literacy. This is significantly lower than the VC.
- Most leavers with ASN left school in 2020/21 with literacy at SCQF level 4+ or better. The majority left with SCQF level 5+ or better. The percentage of young people with ASN who left in 2020/21 with SCQF level 6+ or better in literacy improved from the previous year.

### **Numeracy**

- Most young people leaving school from 2016/17 to 2020/21 attained SCQF level 4+ or better in numeracy. This is in line with the VC in 2017/18 and 2019/20. The majority of young people leaving school between 2016/17 and 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 5+ or better in numeracy. This is in line with the VC. Less than half of young people leaving school from 2016/17 to 2020/21 achieved SCQF level 6+ or better in numeracy. This is in line with the VC.
- The majority of leavers with ASN left school in 2020/21 with numeracy at SCQF level 4+ or better. Less than half left with SCQF level 5 or better. Less than half of leavers with ASN in 2020/21 with SCQF level 6+ or better in numeracy.
- A minority of young people leave school at the end of S4 with no literacy or numeracy award at SCQF level 3+ or better. Teachers should ensure that those at risk of leaving school without literacy or numeracy awards at SCQF level 3+ or better are supported to attain at the highest level possible.

## **Attainment over time**

### **BGE**

- Teachers follow the local authority procedures for reporting progress and achievement in the BGE. This requires them to report on progress within CfE levels three times per year across all curricular areas. Teachers are becoming more confident in reporting on progress within CfE levels. They use this information at departmental level to inform conversations with young people and their parents about expected outcomes, and to provide additional support as required. Senior leaders are at an early stage of developing whole school tracking systems to enable them to make more informed decisions. Senior leaders now need to ensure that they have a strategic overview of progress through CfE levels and over time across all curricular areas in order support young people better.

## Senior phase

- In S4, the attainment of the lowest attaining 20% and the middle 60% of young people is in line with the VC, when compared using average complementary tariff points. The highest attaining 20% of young people in S4 attained significantly higher than the VC from 2018/19 to 2021/22.
- By S5, based on the S5 roll, the lowest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% of young people attain broadly in line with the VC. The highest attaining 20% of young people attained significantly above the VC in 2017/18 and in 2020/21.
- By S6, based on the S6 roll, attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of young people improved from 2020/21 when it was significantly below the VC, to being significantly above the VC in 2021/22. The middle attaining 60% of young people, and the highest attaining 20% of young people, attained in line with the VC until 2021/22 when they attained significantly above the VC.

## Breadth and depth

- Senior leaders and local authority officers provided additional information showing an accumulation of attainment at national qualifications in S3 and in S4. At S4, when taken together with awards gained in S3, most young people achieved 5 or more awards at SCQF level 4+ or better in 2021/22. The majority of young people achieved three or more awards at SCQF level 5+ or better in 2021/22. This is in line with the VC. A minority achieved one or more award at SCQF level 6+ or better in 2021/22.
- By S5, based on S5 roll, the percentage of young people attaining 6+ qualifications at SCQF level 6C+ or better was significantly above the VC in 2017/18, 2019/20 and in 2020/21. The percentage of young people attaining 6+ qualifications at SCQF level 6A+ or better was significantly above the VC in 2019/20 and above the VC in 2020/21. A minority achieved one or more award at SCQF level 7+ or better in 2021/22.
- By S6, based on S6 roll, the percentage of young people attaining 7+ qualifications at SCQF level 6C+ or better, and 8+ qualifications at SCQF level 6A+ or better was significantly above the VC in 2021/22. By S6, based on S6 roll, the percentage of young people attaining 4+ qualifications at SCQF level 7C+ or better was significantly above the VC in 2021/22. The percentage of young people attaining 3+ qualifications at SCQF level 7A or better was significantly above the VC in 2021/22.

## Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff are working well to re-establish links with partners after COVID-19 mitigations and to develop new partnerships. CLD providers support young people's mental HWB and help develop their social skills. Partners provide relevant activities linked to employability opportunities for young people. For example, young people who are interested in farming as a career learn rural skills.
- Staff make good use of the school's location and learning environment to offer programmes such as abseiling and orienteering. These programmes help young people build confidence and improve team work skills. A few young people in the senior phase complete the John Muir Award. Young people would benefit from staff reinstating the Saltire Award. This would allow them to achieve recognition for activities they are undertaking as part of wider achievement.

- Staff are aware of the achievements young people gain through activities outside of school. Staff should now track and monitor the wider achievements and skills development of young people. This will give staff a better understanding of young people's progress over time and enable them to target those young people who may be at risk of missing out.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders recognise that living in a very remote, rural island brings with it benefits and challenges for young people. The SIMD classification does not necessarily reflect the levels of advantage and disadvantage that some young people and their families face. As a result staff have correctly focussed on improving attendance and timekeeping at school for a few young people. The newly created 'Attendance and Engagement Team' proactively works with a few young people and their families to improve their attendance at school, attainment and mental health. Staff discretely provide young people with digital equipment and personal items such as uniform and PE kit as required. This helps ensure that all young people access all aspects of the curriculum.
- Almost all young people stayed on at school from S4 to S5 from 2017/18 to 2019/20. In 2020/21 most young people stayed on at school from S4 to S5. The majority of these young people stayed on to S6, and leave school to continue their education or begin employment. A minority leave school to pursue training opportunities. Almost all young people, from 2016/17 to 2020/21, move on to an initial positive destination on leaving school, in line with VC. The percentage of young people in an initial positive destination improved from 2019/20 to 2020/21.

## Quality of provision of Gaelic Medium Education

### Leadership of change

- Gaelic staff have plans to improve the delivery of Gàidhlig and Gaelic (Learners) as subjects. The impact of these plans is yet to be realised, largely as a result of instability in staffing. Senior leaders are addressing this by investing in a staff development programme that is specific to Gaelic. Staff for Gaelic work collaboratively with colleagues across the local authority to share practice in teaching, learning, assessment, moderation and immersion.
- The school improvement plan shows that national 'Advice in Gaelic Education' (2022) and 'Statutory Guidance for Gaelic' (2017) are used increasingly to improve the effectiveness of the school's strategic planning for Gaelic Education. Staff should continue to monitor the impact of these plans and enable sufficient resourcing.
- Senior leaders aim to increase the number of young people progressing to study Gàidhlig and Gaelic (Learners) in both the BGE and senior phase. A minority of young people demonstrate a good level of fluency in Gaelic. Others need a greater proportion of their curriculum to be delivered through Gaelic. Senior leaders should increase the time allocated to literacy and Gàidhlig in the BGE, particularly as few immersion opportunities are available in the curriculum.
- An enhanced offer of Gaelic medium subjects needs to be planned in collaboration with young people, parents, staff and Gaelic organisations. Senior leaders should explore whether Gaelic immersion and learning could be enhanced further from within current staffing resources, or through partnership delivery including the Islay Gaelic centre, Ionad Chaluim Chille.
- Teachers are beginning to engage with SDS and DYW resources and events relating to Gaelic. Young people's awareness of career-related economic opportunities available to those fluent and acquiring the Gaelic language, is still limited.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and are confident in their interactions.
- The lack of continuity in staffing has impacted negatively on learner experience and attainment over time. To mitigate this, the school has been proactive in engaging with a national digital platform to deliver SCQF level 5 and 6 courses and provide CLPL in Gaelic. Adults with the Islay dialect support young people in class and during transitions. This adds commendable value to pupil experience.

### Learning pathways

- Senior leaders have developed a rationale and priorities document for Gaelic, which recognises the legislative commitment to securing a sustainable future for the language at subject level. This document needs to be owned by all staff and stakeholders. Its aims should be implemented across the school. Senior leaders, working with the community, should embed the rationale to help increase the number of Gaelic speakers on the island.
- All young people have access to literacy and Gàidhlig in the BGE, with progression to national qualifications. Senior leaders should continue with their plans for all young people to continue with Gàidhlig or Gaelic (Learners) along with English and mathematics to the end of S3/4 next session. Currently, a minority of pupils continue studying Gàidhlig and Gaelic (Learners) in the senior phase.



- Staff make good use of placements in the Gaelic Medium primary school, Sgoil Àraich and community venues for Gàidhlig and Gaelic (Learner) pupils in the senior phase. This helps develop young people's fluency. Senior leaders should ensure that young people access qualifications and awards, including Foundation Apprenticeships that are delivered locally or remotely through the medium of Gaelic. Senior leaders should strive to ensure continuity in their use of external accreditation. The John Muir Award should be delivered through Gaelic next session.
- Senior leaders should investigate further enhancing Gaelic medium subject choice in both BGE and senior phase through Ionad Chaluim Chille and on-line offers from partner agencies.
- Senior leaders should articulate the curriculum offer for Gaelic and ensure that they are delivering year-on-year improvements.

### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

- Staff appreciate the importance of Gaelic to the island community and its culture. Staff should ensure equality of provision and opportunity for young people learning through the medium of Gaelic through the school's vision, values and aims, its' handbook and website.
- Senior leaders should continue with plans to introduce vertical house and tutor activities for young people in Gaelic Medium Education next session. This will enhance equality and inclusion for young people learning Gaelic.

### **Raising attainment and achievement**

- The majority of young people make good progress in Gaelic Medium Education and Gaelic (Learners). A minority of young people continue with Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig and achieve well in National Qualifications. A few young people continue with Gàidhlig or Gaelic (Learners) to national qualification level.
- A range of Gaelic activities is provided by Comunn na Gàidhlig, Spòrs Gàidhlig, Film G and other partner agencies. An inclusive approach encourages all pupils to take part. Young people who have paused their Gaelic subject learning participate in these activities to maintain their fluency. Senior leaders should systematically track participation rates and consider how they can measure progress of individual young people's achievement in relation to the language.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.