

18 June 2024

Professor Jane Lewis  
UHI College Shetland

Dear Professor Lewis

A team of HM Inspectors from Education Scotland visited UHI Shetland College in May 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**

In 2022-23 the overall rate of successful completion for full-time further education (FE) programmes was 69.6%, which is 6% above the last published sector norm. This high performance was consistent with the previous year. The overall rate of successful completion for part-time FE programmes was 93.7% which is 16.4% above the sector norm. This was an increase of 4.1% on the previous year.

Data from the national student survey (NSS) confirm that learner satisfaction rates are above the sector norm and learners have a high level of confidence in college staff. School-college programmes have high levels of successful completion and progression rates. This creates increased demand from schools for senior phase provision and leads to higher numbers of school leavers applying for full-time college programmes.

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

Teaching staff receive helpful opportunities to update and enhance their professional skills in learning and teaching, and assessment. This includes being supported well to develop and extend the use of digital technologies during lessons. Almost all areas of the college draw productively on well-established links with local employers, and from feedback from stakeholders to inform and adapt the curriculum offer. For example, new Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) programmes in care are being delivered to address staff shortages in the care sector and support people into work within local communities. Staff make effective use of informal discussions and unit and course questionnaires to obtain learner views. They draw constructively on the findings to reflect on the quality of the learning experience, before implementing improvement actions.

### **Learner Engagement**

The Students' Association (SA) work proactively to increase the number of programmes that have formal learner representation. Almost all full-time class groups now have a student voice representative. This enables the college to have a more comprehensive understanding of learner views. Learners representatives engage actively on key college committees, including the college board, to contribute their views and influence improvements.

Learners' views and concerns are brought to the attention of senior staff through meetings of student voice representatives, learner representation on college committees, and regular meetings between learners representatives and the principal. A student newsletter provides regular feedback for learners on actions taken by staff in response to learner feedback, and of key dates and upcoming activities. The college has supported a project over three years to help care leavers share experiences to help shape available support.

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

- There are insufficient opportunities available to staff to refresh their craft, technical and vocational skills, and ensure they are engaged in recent industry practice.
- The college does not have a data sharing agreement or memorandum of understanding in place with the local authority. As a result, the level of information shared between school and college staff about the needs of school-age learners who are attending college is not sufficiently consistent. This limits the ability of the college to fully plan in advance to meet the needs of these learners.

### 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.

Dr John Laird  
HM Inspector