

Argyll and Bute Council: Community Services – Education

Islay High School Report 2011/2012

Introduction

2011/12 was another successful year for Islay High School. Exam results overall were very good, the fabric of the building has continued to receive investment, the school continues to offer a wide range of residential experiences and other extra-curricular activities and the continued implementation of Curriculum for Excellence is well on track.

Developments through the Improvement Plan 2011/12

- S2 courses were all delivered through the new Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Experiences and Outcomes.
- The new CfE S1 courses were reviewed and adapted where necessary and this will now be an ongoing process.
- Spanish was embedded into the curriculum with delivery of Intermediate 2 and Higher courses. It was not possible to introduce Spanish into the S1 and S2 curriculum but that has now happened in this session (2012/13).
- Drama was reintroduced into the curriculum, both in S1/S2 courses as well as at Intermediate 1 level. We were also able to give students in S2 the choice of 2 out of the 3 of the aesthetic subjects (Music, Art and Drama).
- Interdisciplinary learning continued to develop and a coordinated plan was set up across the curriculum in S1/S2.
- The three permeating themes (Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well Being) have all been successfully incorporated in all S2 courses.
- Literacy was a major focus for the Islay and Jura school cluster which resulted in successful implementation of moderation, joint projects and standardised assessment.
- The majority of the PSE programme was successfully transferred to the PE department so that it could be delivered in a more interdisciplinary approach.

Attainment 2012

A summary of the exams results is presented in the table below:

Courses	No of presentations	No of passes	No of fails	Pass rate
Advanced Higher	9	8	1	89%
Higher	102	55	47	54%
Intermediate 2	159	134	25	84%
Intermediate 1	110	91	19	83%
Standard Grade	24	75% Credit, 21% General, 0% Foundation 4% (1 candidate) No Award		

By end of S4 numbers achieving 5+ at level 5 (SG credit or Intermediate 2) or better is:

2012	44%	(16 students)
2011	26%	(12 students)
2010	31%	(13 students)

By end of S5 numbers achieving 1+ at level 6 (Higher) or better is:

2012	37%	(17 students)
2011	38%	(16 students)
2010	38%	(15 students)

By end of S6 numbers achieving 3+ at level 6 (Higher) or better is:

2012	29%	(12 students)
2011	26%	(10 students)
2010	41%	(19 students)
2009	15%	(8 students)

In addition we delivered 11 different Skills for Work courses:

- Rural Skills – Int 1 and NPA Level 5
- Hairdressing - Int 1 and Int 2
- Hospitality - Int 1, Int 2 and NC level 5
- Cosmetology – Int 1
- Construction – Int 2
- Child Care – Int 2
- Web Design - NPA Level 5

This represented 78 presentations with 71 passes (91% pass rate)

Conclusions:

1. Advanced Higher, Intermediate 1 and 2 and Standard Grade courses all achieved good results.
2. Higher result pass rates are disappointing but actual numbers achieving higher by the end of S5 and S6 is not significantly different to previous years.
3. Concern over the number of parental insurances at Higher level. Where Parental insurances are taken into account, pass rates exceed 80%.
4. Skills for Work courses are very popular with the vast majority of students achieving success

Comparison of CAT scores with Prelims and final results show that the majority (approximately 80%) are achieving at or better than their predictions with approximately 40% exceeding their predictions.

Building Refurbishment Work

Over the last few years the authority has invested a significant amount of money in upgrading the school building. Over the last year and a half the following has taken place:

- Nearly the whole school has been rewired with new lighting including emergency lighting. We have been left with areas in our loft space where there may be still some asbestos and this has prevented the whole school from being rewired.
- The canteen has been completely refurbished
- New ceilings have been installed in the gym, library, assembly hall and design studio
- Nearly all windows have been replaced with double glazed units.
- The flat roof on the extension corridor has also been replaced.
- The sloping roofs of the extension corridor and the games hall have been replaced as have all the tiles on the assembly hall
- Much of the tarmac outside has been resurfaced
- Most of the external walls have been repainted
- A significant amount of asbestos has also been removed as part of the building works but as stated earlier there are still areas that have not been completely cleared.

Staffing

There have been a number of changes to the staffing in the school over the last year and a half.

At the end of session 2010/11 we had four teachers leave: Mrs Jean Campbell (Music, retired), Ms Mairi McDermaid (Gaelic, moved to mainland), Mrs Gillian Higgins (Maths, moved to England) and Miss Lucy Bremner (Business Studies, moved to mainland). For various reasons we were not able to fill these posts with permanent staff until well into the following session and in the case of the Gaelic post, not until the start of this session. However, we do now have a full complement of staff.

In addition the Head Teacher, Dr Liz Cunningham, who has been on secondment to the authority for the last 2 ½ years has resigned and the new Head Teacher, Mrs Joanna Holmes, who was appointed at the start of this session, took over her new role on the 5th November.

Implementation of Curriculum for Excellence

Broad General Education: The implementation of the courses for Broad General Education is now complete. Work will continue on these courses to review and improve them on an annual basis. Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing have all been incorporated into the courses and interdisciplinary learning has become embedded into the curriculum. More work still needs to be done on assessment strategies and reporting progress to parents.

Senior Phase: The school is in a fortunate position of already having a well established Senior Phase. Planning for the implementation of the new National courses (National 4 and 5), which will be replacing Intermediate 1 and 2 and Standard Grade courses, is well on track and we are confident of successfully delivering the new courses in session 2013/14.

Cluster Developments: the school is working well with its cluster Primary schools. Moderation of work at levels 2 and 3, development of joint projects and using standardised systems all help to ensure that the P7/S1 transition is as smooth as possible.

Wider Achievement

The school prides itself in the amount of extra-curricular and residential experiences it offers the students, which allows students to excel in non-academic areas. The following is just some of the events that have taken place:

Sports Ambassadors Conference, September 2011: The school has six Sports Ambassadors (4 at Platinum and 2 at Bronze status) which is the most of any school in Scotland. They attended the National Young Sports Ambassador's Conference at Ratho, near Edinburgh to give presentations on the ideals of the Paralympic and Olympic movements. Later in the session they also attended the annual Sports Ambassadors Leadership Conference at Strathclyde University, which also took place on the 9th March. They took part in various teamwork and leadership workshops and also gave a presentation on all the sports leadership activities they lead or are involved in at Islay High School. In addition to that, our Sports Ambassadors are doing tremendous work here, particularly with collaborating with the Primary schools on the delivery of PE. This has been great experience for our students but has also been wonderfully inspiring for the primary school children.

Paris Trip, November 2011: Twelve pupils studying French and two teachers (Miss Ellie MacGregor and Mr Calum Murray) recently took part in a 5-day linguistic and cultural trip to Paris. They stayed in the Montmartre area, very close to the Sacré Coeur Cathedral and were able to visit many of the excellent tourist attractions. In addition they had the opportunity to be shown round the TF1 French TV studios. The following is a quote from one of the students:

"Throughout the trip we sampled lots of delicious French cuisine and were able to practise our French all the time. Overall, the trip taught us a lot about French culture and we enjoyed ourselves so much that we're now planning our next trip!"

CAST Project, 5th - 7th November 2011: Two art tutors and a music tutor from the Creative Arts in Schools Team worked with a number of our S3 – S6 students. The aim of the project was to produce a piece of recorded music and a number of different art pieces in different mediums to celebrate wave and tidal energy. There was inspiration from a wide range of fields including poetry from Norman Bissel and scientists from the CAMS team at Dunstaffnage. The students were totally engrossed in the project and ended up producing some excellent work, all of which has been recorded on a CD which was shown at the Christmas Concert.

Christmas Show ("Grease – the Musical"): This production brought out the best in everyone and the level of teamwork from staff and students was immense. As a result, the two performances of the show were tremendous. Ms Emma Cummings, part-time English and Drama teacher, deserves a huge amount of credit for having the vision, skill and commitment to make this ambitious project such a success. However, she would be the first to praise the talent of the cast, the innovative and creative work of staff producing the sets, props and costumes, the skill of the students and staff from Cosmetology and Hairdressing who did all the make-up and hairstyling and just the general willingness from everyone to help out with whatever needed to be done.

S6 Leadership Events: S6 students, as in previous years, were given the remit to organise and deliver a number of events throughout the year. This is just some of them:
After 3 weeks of thoughtful planning together with the minister, Rob Barlow, the sixth year students

led the whole school in a very moving and engaging Remembrance Service on November the 11th, at the same time raising approximately £130 for the cause.

On the 5th October, the sixth years organised a jeans day (Jeans for Genes) where students had to pay a pound to wear jeans all in the aim of raising money for children with genetic disorders. A total of £240 was raised on that occasion.

Then on November 18th, the sixth year students organised a number of fundraising events for Children in Need, with students coming in wearing pyjamas, throwing wet sponges at some brave S6 students and staff, leg waxing and a number of the senior boys getting their hair dyed. It was a great day with a lot of fun and a total of £410 was raised.

Lastly they have also organised three very successful dances, the Freshers, Halloween and Christmas dances. All of which were very successful.

Loch Eil Outward Bound: In February, all of our S2 students attended our annual 5-day residential experience at the Loch Eil Outward Bound Centre near Fort William. This is an excellent programme aimed at developing self esteem, confidence, leadership and teamwork skills, target setting and responsibility. It's challenging and hard work but the students have great fun and gain enormously from the experience.

Film G Nominations, March 2011: Our Gaelic students submitted a film to the Film G competition and, although not winning any awards, they were nominated for two categories: Best Film and Best Production.

Sports Events: The sporting calendar is always very busy and, despite the costs, we are able to send students to a large number of events on the mainland. These have included:

- Football tournament, Lochgilphead in November 2011 (36 students)
- Tri-sports event, Lochgilphead, Nov 2011 (8 senior students)
- Basketball tournament, Oban, Dec 2011 (28 students)
- Badminton - Argyll and Bute Schools Championships, Lochgilphead, Feb 2012 (12 students) with Chloe Wood, U19 finalist and James Williamson and Cameron Scott U19 semi-finalists.
- Volleyball tournament, Campbeltown, March 2012 (12 students)
- Sport Relief whole school sponsored walk, which raised just over £1000
- Rugby Tournament, hosted at IHS, May 2012 with 100 students attending from all over Argyll and Bute.

Music: the school boasts a band of over 25 students with a large junior band made up from the Primary School pupils. They perform three concerts over the session and also compete at the Argyll Music Festival in Lochgilphead. At the concerts, not only do the bands perform but we also have pipers, singers and Highland dancers, all of which makes for excellent entertainment for the community and a tremendous way to celebrate the talent that exists in the young people on Islay and Jura.

'Water of Life' Film: Twelve of our students produced a high quality 30 minute short film entitled "Water of Life" which tackles issues of isolation, bereavement, bullying and alcohol abuse. This was done through the charitable organisation, Spirit Aid founded by the Scottish actor, David Hayman. Apart from trying to alleviate poverty in a number of regions round the world, the organisation also has a professional film-making team and the school was successful in obtaining grants to fund this team to facilitate the production of the film with our students. This team of young people came up

with the issues that were important to them and, from an initial draft script, came up with the final film in which they had been directly involved in every stage of its production. The film is now available to purchase as a DVD.

Expedition to Venezuela (Summer 2013): Eleven senior students are in the middle of fundraising and planning a 1-month expedition to Venezuela. We deliver these expeditions every two years as an intense personal development programme designed to provide young people with the adventure of a lifetime while at the same time developing essential transferable life skills to a high level. The skills, experience and confidence that the group will gain from achieving this venture will be immense and is likely to have a huge impact in their future lives.