

SQA exam results (pre appeal) 2011: Tobermory High School

1. **S4:** almost all pupils took 8 SG courses + units in Int 1/2 RMPS. For the first time, a group of 4 pupils took Skills for Work Hospitality Int 2 in partnership with Argyll College and the Western Isles Hotel and all passed.

Two pupils from S3 sat SG Maths, gaining Credit 1 and General 3 passes. I have not included them in the statistics in this report.

30 pupils were on roll in September but only 29 pupils sat exams; one pupil moved away during the year. 9 pupils qualified for special arrangements.

- 1.1 at level 5:** 50% of cohort achieved 5+ Credit passes. Of those pupils, 10 (33% of cohort) achieved seven or eight Standard Grades at Credit level and a further 2 achieved six Credit passes. Three pupils added another qualification from supported self study; Standard Grade Geography and Music (Credit 1 and 2), and one in Int 2 Physics (A2). Most pupils achieved or exceeded CAT predictions in most subjects.

- 1.2 at level 4:** 90% of pupils achieved 5+ passes from General 4 to Credit 1.

- 1.3 at level 3:** 97% of cohort (i.e. all who took exams) achieved 5+ passes level 3 or better.

1.4 Commentary

- On the whole, a very good set of results from a year group whose S3 CAT scores indicated their potential was above national average.
- Pupils with Additional Support Needs achieved well. Only two pupils from the whole year group did not gain at least one Credit pass.
- S4 is a year group with only 7 boys and 22 girls. I do not think it helps to make an attempt at gender analysis on these results.
- Pupils are still much more likely to achieve Credit passes in English (18) than in Mathematics (9), despite the challenge, this year, of the S4 English group being taught as one class of 29 pupils from January to May due to difficulties in finding a supply teacher to cover a long term sick leave. Most candidates' Maths results were above or in line with CAT predictions.
- Staff have been asked to continue to improve the proportion of Credit 1 passes; once again this year, pupils with CAT predictions of Credit 1 or 2 were more likely to achieve Credit 2 than 1 passes. Girls were much more likely than boys to achieve 2 or more Credit 1 passes.
- Due to family circumstances (and one place gained at the Plockton School of Traditional Music), 4 of the highest achieving S4 pupils will

be moving to other schools for their S5 year; this is likely to impact on the 2012 Higher statistics.

2. **S5:** curriculum; Higher Geology offered for the first time, in partnership with Argyll College. 12 of the 28 pupils sitting exams in S5 qualified for special arrangements in exams. The S4 cohort was 30 pupils. A Work Experience unit provided an additional qualification.

2.1 3+ passes at level 6: 23% (7 pupils) is around local and national averages

2.2 5+ passes at level 6: 13% (4 pupils) is above local and national averages.

2.3 1+ level 6: 43% (13 pupils) is around local and national averages but a weaker result for Tobermory High, reflecting the make up of this year group.

2.4 Commentary:

- On the whole, a creditable set of results from a year group whose S3 CAT scores indicated their potential was not significantly different from the national average and whose Standard Grade results showed few Credit 1 passes. For example, 2 of the 4 5-Higher candidates achieved a total of only 3 Credit 1 passes in S4.
- It was pleasing to see an improvement in Maths results, this year; for 9 pupils in S5, Maths was their best result. I was pleased to note a marked improvement in Higher PE results.
- Intermediate 2 results in Chemistry were poor but not significantly different from teacher predictions or from pupils' performance in their other subjects.

3. **S6 :** This was a year group with 26 pupils in S4. 5 of those did not sit exams at Tobermory High in S5. In S6, 15 pupils sat exams. 4 qualified for special arrangements and one of those pupils achieved an Advanced Higher pass at "A" in Graphic Communication.

3.1 1+ level 7: 31% (8 pupils) I am delighted to see further evidence of improved achievements by more able pupils, with a high proportion of AH passes at "A" or "B". One pupil achieved 3 Advanced Higher passes at A1; a first for Tobermory High and one of only 85 pupils in Scotland to achieve this result. Two pupils have achieved 5 or 6 Highers plus 3 Advanced Higher passes.

An indication of the success of Tobermory High's inclusive approach is that three pupils have left school with a cumulative total of only two Highers, but have added an Advanced Higher in a subject where they have shown talent. Given that pupils meet teachers for only 2 periods per week and otherwise work towards Advanced Higher through supported self study, these results indicate some success in the school's aim to create autonomous learners.

3.2 1+ level 6 by the end of S6: 73 % of S4 cohort; a superb result.

3.3 3+ level 6 by the end of S6: 53%; well above local and national averages

3.4 5+ level 6 by end S6: 31%; well above local and national averages

4. S5/6 Commentary:

- Pupils, parents and staff felt that the decision taken (following the review of 2009 SQA results) to move S5/6 prelims to March with an additional report to parents on actual achievements compared to pupils' aspirational targets and providing clear individual action points, continues to be helpful. Teachers' EX5 estimates are more accurate.

5. Significant variations in relation to the outcomes expected and action taken:

- All teachers are asked to comment on any variation between predicted and actual grades in S4,5 and 6 and this is discussed at HT meetings with PTs.

6. Vulnerable learners:

- When the school's part time "Learning Mentor" left to take up a post in Orkney in 2011 we were unable to recruit a replacement and have had no success, so far, in gaining counselling support for pupils from GIRFEC. This has undoubtedly impacted negatively on the school's ability to meet pupils' social and emotional needs.
- An S4 pupil who was looked after and accommodated by his grandmother, in the care of Bradford Social Services, moved back to Bradford at the start of S4.
- An S4 pupil who joined the school in P4 speaking only Portuguese achieved 6 Credit and 2 general passes.
- An S5 pupil who joined the school in August 2010, with English as an additional language to his Lithuanian and Russian, struggled to achieve his high aspirations. He achieved a "C" pass in Int 2 English and will hopefully go on to add further qualifications in S6.
- An S6 pupil who moved to Tobermory to live with members of her extended family following difficult circumstances at home did well, achieving three passes at Higher and one Int 2, having achieved only one Higher and one Int 2 pass in S5 in her former school.

Jenny Des Fountain, 10.8.11

