

OLI Area Committee – Additional Report

Highlights from Session 2014 -15 Tobermory High School



Attainment and Achievement

Attainment at the school has been on the rise over the last three years and analysis of the figures since 2006 shows that the static and variable pattern from the period 2006 - 2011 has been improved and the current attainment pattern is the best for over ten years (See table 1 and 2 below with attainment expressed in old key performance indicators – KPI of 1+, 3+ and 5 + for Highers at the end of S5 and S6 since 2006).

Tobermory High School was very pleased to see that it made the top 50 schools in Scotland for the 2014-15 exam diet in terms of the percentage of students attaining five or more Highers by the end of S6. While such league type tables are not necessarily fair in what they are assessing what is notable is the school moved from a benchmark of 19 % five plus Highers to a figure of 38% - a substantial overall improvement and we would hope to maintain this level of performance at the higher benchmark levels in the future.

Table 1: By the end of S5 - % gaining awards at the stated levels. Percentage based on S4 cohort roll

KPI	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1 + level 6	54	48	50	67	62	53	57	48	65	60
3 + level 6	26	27	27	31	38	27	17	19	39	48
5 + level 6	10	9	9	8	12	13	7	4	17	26

Table 2: By the end of S6 - % gaining awards at the stated levels. Percentage based on S4 cohort roll

KPI	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1 + level 6	47	36	64	69	75	77	73	63	55	70
3 + level 6	29	56	45	35	47	58	37	43	33	48
5 + level 6	6	18	24	23	25	31	23	20	30	43

A close inspection of the examination data from the Area Committee report based on % A-C passes for Higher and National 5 Exams indicates the schools' pass rate was 10% higher than the national A-C pass rate for Higher and 6% higher for National 5.

Insight, the new senior phase statistical tool used nationally, produces data across different national benchmark areas including literacy and numeracy at level 4 and 5 (which is discussed in the main Area Committee report) as well as comparing attainment using total average tariff scores against sub-cohorts within the population of students sitting the exam (the cohort is divided into top performing 20%, middle 60% and bottom 20% of student cohorts. The tariff score is a point system based on the level of qualification and grade obtained). This benchmark figure indicates the average total tariff score for all sub-cohorts is well above the national results as well as the virtual comparator. This is again an outstanding result and is testament to the work of staff and the commitment of the students.

The other area we have concentrated on improving is wider achievement through the life and ethos of the school and personal opportunities to develop skills and knowledge both within and outside school. At the broad general phase (BGE) we now have a school based award that accredits wider learning both formal and informal through a credit score system. We collect information across the year to look at wider achievement and this data will inform any long term planning in relation to offering wider opportunities for achievement. Formal awards reported in the area committee report under wider achievement include Duke of Edinburgh, Dynamic Youth Award, Saltire Award, St John School First Aid award and a variety of ASDAN based awards.

Why has attainment improved? We believe that there are a range of factors; a consistent focus on teaching and learning, better course placement, improved curriculum architecture and pathways, improved teaching across BGE to prepare students for National 5 and Higher courses, better tracking, monitoring and intervention, our unique assessment model and better teacher practice to make learning outcomes explicit and a developing emphasis on collaborative teacher observation and discuss. In education it is often different to directly equate improved attainment with school improvement strategies but the school has deliberately focused on taking a broad approach to improving outcomes in terms of school policies and practices, improving teacher practice and also looking at improving student's approach to their own learning.

Innovation

The school has been highly innovative in its practices and has introduced a number of long term strategies to improve learning and attainment. The school has been recognised nationally for its innovative work – particularly the Visible Learning programme. In 2015 the school was one of the school case studies in Professor John Hattie's publication that charted how his research was being developed in school settings across the world. It is a credit to the school that it was the first Scottish school involved in the programme and that it has had international exposure. Further, the schools work appeared in the Times Educational Supplement and on television news programmes - BBC Alba (An La) and BBC Reporting Scotland.

Visible Learning

For the last two years the school has been developing a focus on learning through the Visible Learning © whole school professional development programme delivered by Osiris Education (UK), a leading professional development organisation in the UK. This work is about focusing on improved learning and teaching across the school and should impact on all learners, including the top 20% of year level cohorts.

The focus of this work has been on developing enquiry-based practice through consideration of Professor John Hattie's work on what really works in education, uncovered through his large-scale research and this forms the basis of the Visible Learning © teacher development framework. The Visible Learning © programme's main focus is initially on developing classroom feedback and later effective classroom dialogue and higher order thinking skills. Staff have formed *trios* to work together to develop collegiate working and self-evaluate over the next session. This work will include collecting information on aspects of classroom practice and then thinking about ways to improve areas that are identified by individuals as being something they feel they could improve. Collegiate working occurs both within larger working groups as well as these small trios within a developing



coaching model. We are already seeing increased dialogue in relation to learning and teaching amongst staff and our increasing discussions with learners about learning is creating a dynamic where students are being encouraged to be more active in their own learning and reflect on their own part in the process.

A considerable amount of *in school* professional development training will occur in our context at Tobermory, rather than externally and a major aim is to create a strong practitioner base for sharing good practice and reflecting on improvement to maximise outcomes for all students. This will also be shared with cluster schools.



Assessment

The school's assessment approach at BGE is based on using *standards based assessment* and creating clear assessment outcomes in summative assessments or assignments undertaken by classes using tables of outcomes (or rubrics) that show students how to achieve not just at the curriculum level but also extended performance outcomes. These tables of assessment outcomes take into account performance that displays higher order thinking skills and challenge and application in learning.

This model is school wide across the Primary to the end of S3 and uses the same language of 'achievement at four levels – *'progressing to achieved'*, *'achieved'*, *'achieved with merit'* and *'achieved with excellence'*. These outcomes are recorded for all major class assessments at each year level and help evaluate progress in learning as they are tracked each month. We can also separate out cohort data into groupings such as the top 20%, middle 60% and bottom 20% to monitor progress. High performing students should be achieving assessment outcomes at Merit or Excellence levels and in future years teaching staff are going to be asked to set goals to improve the percentage of students attaining different grade bands.

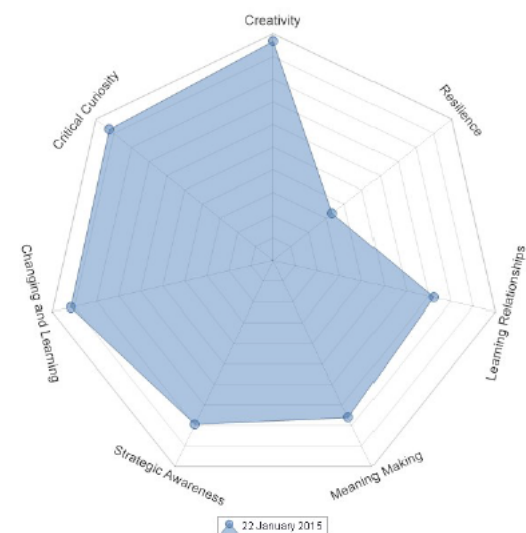
We see this as a very good model that answers questions about tracking achievement in the broad general phase of schooling including Primary. It will also enable us to tackle the issues raised in the results for cohort sub groups presented in the school attainment data. We believe that to improve the performance of our top 20%, middle 60% and bottom 20% of students across a cohort we need to identify issues earlier and track their progress and ability to cope with challenge in learning prior to the Senior exam phase. We know that the senior phase level of work e.g. at Higher, demands more consistent application to learning throughout the course may place some students under pressure if they have not had sufficient prior challenge in learning.

Lead Learners

At the beginning of 2013 the school signed a contract with Fiona Carnie, a leading UK Consultant on Pupil voice in learning, to deliver a two day programme to 20 S1-3 students to train them for leading learning as pupils in the classroom. This strategy has been devised to assist the school in encouraging pupils to have a much more active voice in their learning as well as supporting their peers to engage with their own education. Research shows that students need to understand how they learn and relate what is happening in the classroom to their own view of themselves as a learner in order to maximise achievement and overall attainment. Some of our learners do have good skills and understand their own role in learning but many do not and are passive in the classroom. This is true of all levels of learner and we believe that some performance evidence from the last few years for the top 20% students suggests they do not have the necessary personal skills and self-knowledge to attain as highly in exams as predicted by earlier success. With this project we hope to build new skills and attitudes that will ultimately lead to better attainment by all learners. As such it is a re-culturing of the way students are involved in school and learning.

Effective Life Long Learner Inventory (ELLI)

The ELLI tool is a specific questionnaire and associated staff professional development programme that focuses on building specific learner knowledge and skills. The ELLI tool is based on education research at Bristol University that identified 7 common characteristics of good learners and these have been used to design a self-report on-line questionnaire that can be taken by either Primary or Secondary students. Results can be reported as spider diagram which shows the relative strength within a web (see right hand figure) and this can be discussed and used for coaching and mentoring of students to develop areas of weakness. At the beginning of the 2013-14 session all Tobermory Primary Teachers and some support staff were involved in an introductory workshop along with staff from another cluster school – Salen Primary. This was followed by a second day for Project champions who were going to take the work forward. Mrs Lilian Mitchell –Stephen has been developing the programme over the year along with her Primary colleagues and they have been developing students understanding of the language, helped through the use of distinct animal metaphors. The work also involves coaching and mentoring conversations to allow staff to get alongside students and look at strengths and weaknesses. A Primary parent event at P3/4 level was held in May, 2015 where we invited parents to complete their own inventory and discuss it with their child.



Last year we successfully applied to Education Scotland's Innovation Fund for £4500 to finance a cluster development of the use of the tool and develop its use in the Secondary school, starting with the S1 cohort. This project has largely been delivered, apart from a phase two workshop with the ELLI trainer that will take place during the August Inset. This strategy is again designed to address aspects of students' personal self-development in raising achievement and

developing the necessary mind-set to improve their own meta-cognition (thinking about how they think) and cognition (thinking processes in relation to learning). We will report further on progress with this tool over coming sessions.

Additional Highlights for 2014-15

August 2014

Molly Reade, S3, was in action at the Scottish Athletics National Age-Group Championships, held in Aberdeen on 24th August. She took the bronze medal in the U-15 girls' High Jump. Later in the year, she began the new season with a bang at the Scottish Indoor Qualifiers, jumping clear at 1.55m, and is currently ranked 1st in Scotland and 3rd in the UK in the U15 Girls High Jump.

Music Event – Comar

On Friday the 22nd of August, S1 and S5 music students had the rare opportunity to form a creative partnership with world famous Scottish musicians Rab Noakes and Kathleen MacInnes as part of a workshop organised through COMAR

Edinburgh Festival

Organised by our librarian, Mrs Penny, a group of teenagers descended on Edinburgh to sample the delights of Edinburgh Festival. As well as experiencing the music, dance and live street theatre, the students also met with two authors; Gill Arbuthnott and Sean Damer. Gill writes novels and stories for young children and teenagers, and Sean writes about Scottish history. This is just another way that literacy is supported and encouraged through the school and working with the Librarian.

September 2014

School Pipers

The year started with the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Competition in Edinburgh. At present we do not have a school pipe band so we entered the quartet competition. This was our first competition as a school and we were extremely proud of this group who took first place. The Quartet continues to flourish under Callum MacLean's tutelage and a pipe Band is the key aim and should be in place by 2015. *The photo below, shows the current Pipe Band which has been developed since 2014-15 and was placed third at the latest National Schools Competition.*



Mull Mod

Pupils from across the school participated in the 2014 local Mòd. This was also the first year that 'uniformed' students assisted on the day with the running of the event and this was commented on by many visitors who were impressed with the smart uniform and attitude of the students. There were a large number of prize winners in both group and individual categories and a number of competitors attended the national Mod later in the year.

S1/2 RME trip to Iona Abbey

This is an annual event and is part of the RME programme at school which is run through thematic Conference days across S1-3 these continue to be well run events that provide excellent learning opportunities. The school will be reviewing the RME programme over the next few sessions to look at the programme and overall progression.

17th and 18th September – Senior Girls Rugby events and 25th September S1 and S2 Rugby Development Day

S3 travelled from Mull to Glasgow and back in a day to attend a performance of "Private Peaceful" at the Theatre Royal. This gave them the opportunity to see the characters of the novel brought alive in a moving and powerful one-man performance, bringing together their learning from S1 English and S2 Social Subjects, whilst preparing them for their study of War Poetry in S3 and their trip to Paris/Ypres next year.

The Referendum Debate

Senior pupils in school debated the issues surrounding Scotland's future. A panel, chaired by Mairi McFarlane and consisting of Mary Scanlon MSP, Andrew Kain, Brian Swinbanks and Rebecca Munro, ably answered questions from the floor and put forward their own views on the question: "Should Scotland be an independent country?" The debate was a good way to ensure young people eligible to vote were politically informed.

October 2014

Mull Rally

We are lucky to host an amazing Motorsport event every October in Mull. The Mull Rally was in its 45th year and the pupils of P3/4 were amongst many children who were invited to see, climb in and experience the front of a competitive Rally car. All Secondary and Primary Pupils were also addressed at an Assembly where spectator safety was fully discussed and the very much anticipated complimentary Rally bags were distributed.

National Mod

Congratulations to all pupils and staff who competed at this year's National Mòd during the second week of October in Inverness. A number of Tobermory High School pupils participated in the Mòd, with the assistance of Comunn Gàidhealach Mhuile (Mull Mòd Club). The Mòd Club junior choir took first place in their Choral Unison competition and received two trophies. Our most successful pupil was Shannon MacLean, S6, who took first prize in the Solo Singing (Open) for 16-18 year old girls, winning the Meryl Mae Stewart Trophy for the highest marks in Music, and a gold badge.

November 2014

At 11.00am on Armistice Day, 11th November, Tobermory High School fell silent. Pupils from P1-S6 and staff took part in an Act of Remembrance assembly.

12th November – Education Scotland Dance workshops and National Youth Choir student workshops

BBC Children in Need

On Wednesday 13 November the Student Council organised a day of events to raise money for BBC Children in Need. We held a non-uniform day, and encouraged pupils to dress up as heroes. Pupils and staff took part in a Bake Off, judged by our special visitors, Mrs Margaret Broad and Mrs Paula MacLean. The school's various activities raised £454.78 for Children in Need.

Geography Field Trip – 12th and 13th November

Senior Geography pupils visited the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks as part of their geography course. They descended 80m underground into caves to see stalactites and stalagmites, walked through dry-valleys and over the karst landscape of limestone pavements.

Scottish Book Week

The 24-28 November 2014 was Primary pupils enjoyed visits from S6 (sharing their favourite books) and S2 (reading their rainforest stories) and tuned in to a live broadcast from poets Roger McGough and Valerie Bloom. Mrs Penny, school librarian, and a group of eager volunteers created Narnia on the decking over the course of five lunchtimes, with lights, music, craft activities and book readings.



December 2014

Senior Ball – 5th December 2014

Senior pupils were joined by several members of staff for the annual School Ball, held this year at Glengorm Castle. After a delicious meal we danced to music from Wynnefride Moir's Ceilidh Band. This Annual event is organised by senior pupils and the event is always a testament to the fine young people in the senior school.

January 2015

Burns Supper

On 23 January 2015 Primary held a Burns Assembly and each class did a performance for parent and

community visitors.

Holocaust Memorial Day

This world-wide event remembers not only the victims of the Holocaust but commemorates those killed in the genocides in Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda and Darfur. S3 worked in RME to plan a memorial in Tobermory High School. The gym was transformed by lights, music and candles to become a temporary Holocaust Memorial. Display boards gave information on the genocides and Holocaust.

Ski Trip 2015

This biannual event normally occurs in January or February and is very popular with Secondary students and a large group of student enjoyed a great week at the French Ski resort, Alpe d'huel

March 2015

Red Nose Day events

Tobermory High School pupils raised just over **£1300** on Red Nose Day this year. Pre-5 pupils dressed up and made their faces look funny. They also cooked funny face biscuits and pizzas. Younger Primary pupils held a danceathon and the older ones went on a sponsored walk to Aros Park, where they enjoyed a healthy lunch followed by a cake made out of fresh fruit. Various Secondary events including a non-uniform day were also held. Tobermory High School continues to raises a very large amount every year for global and national causes.

Loch Eil trip

This trip to the Outward Bound Trust facility happens annually and is a chance from students to experience a range of personal outdoor challenges as well as building team and leadership skills. Many students who don't necessarily shine in the classroom setting excel in the environment, building new skills and confidence in themselves.

Talent Show

This was held in the Aros Hall on Wednesday 18 March. Fifteen entries, ranging in age across Primary and Secondary, performed before a packed house at the Aros Hall. Tickets were sold on the door, raising £500 for Comic Relief.

Airspace Trip

On Tuesday 24 March, the PE Higher class and the Trampoline Club had the opportunity to go on a trip to Airspace, which is a huge urban trampoline playground in Glasgow. On the day we had a two-hour session involving all the activities, including air bag, power jumping, free- jumping, Dodgeball, slam dunk, wall ramp, and shoot out. This was a further opportunity to extend skills learnt in PE and as participants in the School's Trampoline club.



Film G Awards

Shannon MacLean, S6, won the award for Best Young Filmmaker at the 2015 FilmG Awards, held at The Old Fruitmarket in Glasgow. Shannon first entered the FilmG competition, with her fellow classmates, in S2 and she has continued to enter the competition every year since. In 2013, her class's film 'Tha an t-acras gam tholladh' ('I'm famished with hunger') won the FilmG Theme Award. Shannon received her award from Alasdair Allan MSP.

April 2015

Tobermory High School Players recently performed Mr. Lowe's play "1915" as part of the Mull Drama Festival.

Tobermory High School Student piper, Fraser Mitchell added poignancy to the final moments of the play by playing "Highland Cathedral" on the pipes. The cast, made up of THS students were awarded the trophy for Best Juvenile Play. Miss McDonald entered a Gaelic version of "The Three Little Pigs" which was very well received by the audience.

Gaelic Week

Pupils enjoyed a range of activities during the week, designed to raise the profile of the Gaelic language in the school community. Pupils participated in karaoke and a quiz, and visited Primary with the help of a Gaelic speaking teddy bear. The week culminated with a Gaelic language assembly for the whole school, followed by a ceilidh for Secondary pupils during the afternoon.

June 2015

Annual Secondary Sports Day at Garmony

Mull and Iona Primary Schools Sports Day at Garmony

S2+S3 Youth Games - Oban

RNLI Fundraising: In June, pupils left their uniforms at home, and bought cakes and biscuits at break, to raise a total of £390 for the RNLI.

Annual Paris- Belgium Trip

This annual trip is a mixture of activities– visiting the Eiffel Tower, a trip down the Seine and sampling early evening on the streets, visit to Musee D'Orsay and visiting the Palace at Versaille. In Belgium the trip takes on more poignancy as the students visit the German war graves at Langemark and Tynecot Cemetery where there are many allied graves. The simple ceremony while at the cemetery is very affecting for



all, and staff and students learn a lot from the trip. The students also visit Hill 61 – a slightly elevated position in a very flat terrain near Ypres where they can experience what the trenches looked like for allied troops. This is now a tree filled area and it is hard to imagine how difficult and dangerous it would have been as a position denuded of trees, with artillery and sniper fire all around. Indeed, there are still unexploded munitions within the site. The S4 trip was given an extra dimension this year, as our three S4 pipers were invited to play during the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate. They represented us with pride and skill, and their performance was appreciated by all who heard them.

Sporting Success:

Congratulations to Lewis Brown, S4, who has been chosen to join the Scottish Golf Academy. The Academy offers a grant towards coaching, and arranges national competitions and assessment camps based at Stirling University.

For further information about tobermory High School please visit - www.tobermory.argyll-bute.sch.uk

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