



## Welcome

Welcome to the first education newsletter informing parents & carers of the work of the Education Service. We aim to produce two newsletters per year in May and September. These will provide an overview that will support you as parents/carer to gain information about the Education Service. Improving the level and quality of parental engagement is a priority for our schools. Parents/carers play a critical role in promoting the education of their children and are partners with schools in providing clear pathways for

all young people. Very useful and supportive information regarding family engagement can be found at <http://engagingwithfamilies.co.uk/>.

I hope this newsletter is helpful and would welcome any ideas or thoughts on what would be useful for inclusion in our newsletters.

Kind Regards



Anne Paterson, Acting Head of Service: Education

## Education Authority Inspection

The report highlights key strengths and areas for improvement. They are detailed as:

### Key strengths

- The proportion of young people who move on from school to a positive destination.
- The contributions of the Early Years Team and the Educational Psychology Service in delivering a strong foundation and support for children's learning.
- The positive and wide range of partnerships which help staff to meet learners' needs, particularly those of MOD families and refugees.

### Main points for action

The education authority should:

- significantly improve young people's attainment across the authority;
- improve the use of data, ensuring greater rigour;
- continue to improve the quality of educational provision with consistently higher levels of support and challenge from central officers and elected members;
- improve relationships and communication, promoting a more positive ethos amongst all stakeholders; and
- improve the quality of strategic leadership and direction at all levels within the education authority.

<https://www.education.gov.scot/assets/contactorganisationinspectionreports/argyllbuteinea210317.pdf>

We are very pleased that our children and young people are getting a good foundation for learning when they start their education in Argyll and Bute. They also are leaving us well equipped to build happy, prosperous lives.

Our service has a number of strengths and we are already taking action to progress improvement where needed. We have been working on these improvements across the service since the visit of Education Scotland in September 2016. I am pleased to note that change for the better is happening already.

We will continue to work with Education Scotland as part of improvement journey.

Our priority now, as always is on delivering services that work for our young people. Our strategy, 'Our Children, Their Future' is a key part of this. We note the main points for action recommended in the Education Scotland report, actions which are in line with the aims of the new Education Vision and Strategy.

Importantly we will continue to build on our existing strengths. *We are already for example in the top five nationally for the number of young people moving from school into education, training or further and higher*

education and Our Early Years Service recently achieved success as finalists in the National Quality Improvement Awards.

Action already taken and planned by the Council in developing the Education Service includes for example:

- The roles of centrally employed officers have been revised to provide increased support for schools and early years settings. This includes advice in curriculum areas such as literacy, numeracy and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM);
- A Head Teacher Advisory Group has been introduced with the main purpose of improving communication and engagement;
- Further improvements have been made to communication with schools and services through the publication of regular education bulletins;
- Curriculum guidance materials have been updated and made accessible to all staff through the Sharing Argyll Learning (SAL) site. These are designed to support staff in taking forward learning and teaching;
- A new approach to reviewing school examination results was introduced in September 2016. This is focused on increasing the use of data to improve outcomes for learners,
- Improvement planning materials for use by schools in session 17/18 are currently being revised in consultation with Head Teachers.

A copy of 'Our Children, Their Future' is available [https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/argyll\\_bute\\_vision\\_strategy\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/argyll_bute_vision_strategy_final_web.pdf).

## Teaching in Argyll & Bute

We would be delighted to welcome any suitably qualified teachers to our workforce in Argyll and Bute. Any teacher who is currently registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and is interested in registering for supply teaching in Argyll and Bute can access the supply teaching application forms online at <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/teaching-supply-pack> or by phoning Argyll House Reception on 01369 704000.

### **Opportunities to become a qualified teacher.....**

Do you have a degree?

Do you think you would enjoy working with children and young people?

Would you like to contribute to a positive and creative workforce?

Have you ever considered teaching?

Did you know that funding is available to support graduates for training into teaching for a Post Graduate Diploma in Education?

Our University link partner University of Highlands and Islands supported dozens of graduates in the last few years to gain their PGDE and will support you into a rewarding, motivating and exciting profession of working in the classroom.

The course lasts for a year and further details can be found at the following link:

[www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/pgde-primary-teaching](http://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/pgde-primary-teaching)

#### **Further details:**

You need to hold a degree that is validated by a higher education institution in the UK or a degree of an equivalent standard from an institution outside the UK. You also need Higher English and Standard Grade Mathematics (or equivalent).

Places can be funded and you can apply for payment of tuition fees through the Students Awards Agency for Scotland at [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk)

Other Universities that offer training for teachers include:

The University of West of Scotland [www.uws.ac.uk/graddipeducationprimary](http://www.uws.ac.uk/graddipeducationprimary)

The University of Glasgow [www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/education](http://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/education)

The University of Strathclyde [www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduatetaught](http://www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduatetaught)

Further details in relation to pursuing a career in teaching can be found at [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)

## Choice of School

It is customary for children to attend their local school; however, parents may make a written request to place their child in any school under the management of the education authority. Such a request is referred to as a placing request.

Information concerning the authority's schools and the procedures to be followed in making placing requests is available at every school and at the Education Offices, Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon PA23 8AJ (Tel: 01369 704000). This information is also available for inspection or reference at public libraries. Information in relation to any particular school is available at that school.

## Parental Engagement Strategy

Our Parental Involvement Strategy sets out how the Education Service will support schools to help parents to become involved in their child's education. This is within the context of the **Scottish Schools [Parental Involvement] Act 2006, the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education** and the **Education (Scotland) Act 2016**.

Argyll & Bute Parental Involvement strategy can be found: [https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/parental\\_involvement\\_strategy\\_december\\_2016.pdf](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/parental_involvement_strategy_december_2016.pdf)

## Our Children, Their Future

An Education and Vision strategy has been created by Argyll and Bute Council's Education Service to ensure that children and young people continue to achieve the best possible outcomes as a result of changes to local and national policy. This strategy has been titled Our Children, Their Future. The strategy will be launched on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January at Tarbert Academy.

In Argyll and Bute, we want to ensure that young people are equipped through their Education to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. We want young people and families to remain in this area, and be attracted to live here.

The document highlights the following areas which we will address:

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all;
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people;
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed;
- Equip young people to sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life;
- Strengthen partnership working and community engagement, and
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.



These will be the key areas which will be taken forward through all our work in 2017.

## Digital Learning Strategy

The Digital Learning Team are preparing a draft Digital Learning Strategy and Action Plan and would be delighted to hear feedback on the introduction to the strategy. The draft introduction can be viewed on the following link. Please email comments/observations and feedback to either [wendy.brownlie@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.brownlie@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or [gary.clark@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:gary.clark@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/SAL/files/2017/01/Digital-Learning-Strategy-Consultation-003.pdf>

## Gaelic Education (GME) in Argyll & Bute

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) provides an opportunity for children to become bi-lingual. Pupils are taught entirely through Gaelic during their first three years in primary school. This total immersion is very important, and it means that your child does not have to be fluent in Gaelic when they begin Gaelic Medium Education in primary school. After P3, English is gradually introduced through the medium of Gaelic, but Gaelic remains the predominant language of the classroom in all areas of the curriculum. This ensures that the immersion continues until the end of primary school and beyond.

In addition to their class-based education, pupils will have the chance to meet and work with people from the community who have Gaelic and Gaelic organisations, such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Comunn na Gàidhlig, in order to encourage children to use the language in different situations. At the end of seven years in primary education each child will have at least two languages and will have all the benefits associated with that.

<http://www.cnag.org/index.php/en/>

<http://www.feisean.org/en/>

Gaelic Medium Education is available in several locations across Argyll; Rockfield Primary School in Oban, Strath of Appin Primary School in Appin, Salen Primary School in Mull, Tiree Primary School, Bowmore Primary School in Islay and Sandbank Primary School in Dunoon.

Where GME is available, pupils receive Gaelic Medium Education at secondary level for, at least, Gaelic as a subject.

Several locations providing GME in primary also have a Gaelic Pre-5 facility, known as Sgoil Àraich; Rockfield, Salen, Bowmore, Tiree and Sandbank.

If you wish for your child to be educated through Gaelic and there is no provision near you, it is possible to make a request for Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE) to the Education Authority.

Further information on current provision and the request process is available on our council website, following the link below:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/gaelic/requests-gaelic-medium-education>

## Literacy and Numeracy

In Argyll and Bute there has been an Education Officer seconded to support and take forward Numeracy and Literacy this session.

### Numeracy

A Principal Teacher for Numeracy has supported the Education Officer and this session there has been a focus on mental agility. Almost all schools have received training and resources to develop pupils' ability to explain their mathematical thinking, allowing them to think of different ways to answer problems.

### Objective 1

Further developments have been made on the Sharing Argyll Learning platform (SALi), which provides support for staff, pupils and parents,

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/sali/category/professional-development/Numeracy/>.

Hermitage Academy 6<sup>th</sup> year pupils have been creating short videos explaining mathematical computations and these are being uploaded on to the Numeracy section of SALi, to support learners, staff and parents.

### Objective 1,3,4,5,6

There has been training and provision of an interactive resource, Sumdog, which has been offered to all our schools. This has raised enthusiasm and motivation for our learners, as well as developing number skills.

The Authority have also funded external assessments which have been made available for all P1,P4, P7 and S2 pupils which provides additional evidence for teachers professional judgement regarding attainment. **Objective 1,3**

### Literacy

The Literacy Forum continue to undertake developments across the Authority. A PT for Literacy is in place working closely with the Education Officer.

We have been supporting Secondary Schools in the area of Literacy across Learning. Assessing Literacy is the responsibility of all teachers and this is being explored and supported to make it manageable. We are working with pilot schools, trialling resources to support pupils with Literacy in S1 and S2. **Objective 2**

There have been a number of literacy roadshows over this session, providing training to staff in both Primary and Secondary during evening events across almost all Clusters. The PT for Literacy has provided tailored support for schools, developing and supporting Literacy at school level. **Objectives 1-6**

We have a new Literacy website, <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/able/>, to support staff, pupils and parents. **Objectives 1, 6**