

Advice on Gaelic Education

**Gaelic Learner Education: curriculum 3-18 and
Language Learning in Scotland: A 1 + 2 Approach**

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Key messages:

- The standards for Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) 3-18 are based on the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes from early to fourth level and the specifications of the Scottish Qualifications Authority and other awards and qualifications.
- *A 1+2 Approach for Language Learning* affords an important framework for increasing the number of those learning Gaelic in English medium education.
- Both Curriculum for Excellence and a 1+2 Approach promote learning a Gaelic in the broad general education as a continuum of learning with opportunities for awards and qualifications in the senior phase.
- Effective transition links between the primary and secondary sectors are key to building on language learning which has taken place at the primary stages.
- The learning of an additional language, which might be Gaelic (Learners), is an entitlement for all as part of the broad general education up to the end of S3, within the languages curriculum area.

16.1 The standards for Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) 3-18 are based on the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes from early to fourth level and the specifications of the Scottish Qualifications Authority and other awards and qualifications. This Advice for Gaelic Learner Education needs to be read in conjunction with other relevant documents which include:

- Curriculum for Excellence guidance;
- The Role of Gaelic Learner Education in a 1+2 Approach;
- Assessing progress and achievement for Gaelic (Learners) and the associated progression frameworks;
- Guidance and Advice on 1+2 Approach; and
- Scottish Qualifications Authority awards and qualifications, including for those for N3 through to Advanced Higher.

16.2 Courses are available for young people in English medium to learn **Gaelic as a second language**. In primary, these courses are referred to as Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) and in secondary as Gaelic (Learners). Gaelic (Learners) is available up to Advanced Higher level. In 2013-14, approximately 8000 children in primary schools were learning Gaelic as part of the GLPS programme. In the same academic session, approximately 3000 young people were learning Gaelic in secondary schools. All these young people are largely very interested and motivated by their learning experiences. There is now a body of best practice in learning and teaching across both primary and secondary to build upon in a 1+2 Approach to Language Learning.

16.3 *A 1+2 Approach for Language Learning* affords an important framework for increasing the number of those learning Gaelic in English medium education. Children may begin to learn Gaelic as a first or second additional language in P1 or P5. These opportunities are being referred to as Primary Language Learning and specifically in relation to Gaelic, **Gaelic Language Learning (GLL) which is replacing the use of the term Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS)**. At the secondary stages, young people's entitlement to learning a language continues to be referred to as **Gaelic (Learners)**. There are opportunities for young people to demonstrate their progression through National Qualifications

up to Advanced Higher. **Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) is an overarching term which spans 3-18 and beyond.**

16.3 Both Curriculum for Excellence and a 1+2 Approach promote learning a language in the broad general education as a continuum of learning. Currently, there are **challenges around the effective planning of GLE** as a continuum of learning. Delivery can be driven by whether suitably qualified staff are available and sometimes by the interests of the primary or secondary headteacher.

16.4 Effective **transition** links between the primary and secondary sectors are key to building on language learning which has taken place at the primary stages. Continuity for learners as they move from primary on to secondary school needs to be provided so that children can build effectively on their learning as they move on to S1 and beyond. This is particularly important for the language children will continue to study at S1. In most cases, this may be L2, the language studied from P1. Where continuity of L3 into the secondary school is possible, it offers additional progression in language learning. Ideally, therefore, the secondary school would be able to provide opportunities for further study of the same L2 and L3. This may be through master classes, through an option during the broad general education or through an additional qualification in the senior phase. At S3, master classes may also provide an opportunity for young people to achieve an SQA Languages for Life and Work Award and the Scottish Studies Award.

16.5 The advice in Education Scotland's Guidance the A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning applies to GLE also. However, it should be noted that **GLE has its own progression framework, Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes and associated resources.**

16.6 The Education Scotland publication, *Professional learning resource: Assessing progress and achievement for Gaelic (Learners)* and the associated progression framework give **advice on learning, teaching and assessment.** The progression statements identify key milestones that children and young people should be making at each of the curricular levels. GLE needs to be embedded across the curriculum in a planned, progressive and coherent way which is supplemented by discrete lessons in Gaelic to help children and young people connect all aspects of their learning. Schools need to have a clear plan and overview which sets criteria for success and ensures coherence in learners' experiences.

16.7 In developing a **rationale** for the curriculum, staff, young people, parents and partners need to be clear on the purpose and value of Gaelic Learner Education. This can be contextualised by learning about Scotland's identity, with a focus on the value and contribution made by Gaelic language and culture.

16.8 **All children and young people should have the opportunity to learn an additional language (L2) from P1 by 2020.** Where English and Gaelic Medium provision are within the same school, it is helpful in developing a shared understanding and positive and inclusive attitudes if all children learning through the medium of English have opportunities to learn Gaelic as L2 or L3, or about Gaelic language and culture as part of Scotland's identity.

16.9 The **learning of another language, which might be Gaelic (Learners), is an entitlement for all as part of the broad general education up to the end of S3**, within the languages curriculum area. The study of English does not fully cover this curriculum area. All young people may not undertake a full course in a language from S1 to S3, if this is not appropriate to their needs. Language study should still be part of their curriculum, however. Schools should not assume that young people who need support in their learning are not required to study another language at all.

16.10 From S1 to S3, young people should be introduced to another language in addition to L2. **Gaelic (Learners) can be either L2 or L3.** L3 does not have to be the same language as was studied for L3 at primary school, although it may be. It may not be possible to study this language in the same depth as L2 but it needs to be a progressive experience going beyond the learning of items of vocabulary. Schools may choose to deliver this through interdisciplinary work, a short course or an elective, for example. In planning motivating learning experiences, staff should be mindful of the opportunity to attain Languages for Life and Work Award through the study of one or more languages and also employability skills. The Scottish Studies Award may also be considered.

16.11 Schools who do not have staff trained in teaching Gaelic as part of primary language learning should consider accessing programmes organised by Gaelic groups such as Fèis Sgoil. For more information, please see the *Further guidance on L3 within the 1+2 policy*.

16.12 Learning of Gaelic needs to promote a sense of **purpose and motivation** for language learning. Characteristics of this learning include learning independently; taking responsibility for learning; active learning; collaborative learning; and applying learning and the development of skills.

16.13 Staff need to ensure that **outcomes of learning are well-defined** and linked to tasks and activities. This in turn enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding, capabilities and attributes and have responsibility for reviewing their own progress. Learners progress at different rates and will require different levels of support for tasks and activities. Teachers also need to be mindful of children's and young people's prior learning and how this may have been variable.

16.14 Staff need to **build children's and young people's confidence** in the use of Gaelic by making high use of Gaelic in both formal and informal situations to encourage learners themselves to also use Gaelic. The **'significant aspects of learning' and the associated progression statements** identify milestones in children's and young people's learning and achievement. Schools need to monitor and track children's progress and achievement in relation to Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes Gaelic (Learners), based on reliable assessment and moderation. These processes should confirm that learners are making well-paced progress. They also need to help learners know how to improve their work with staff acting on the results.

16.15 Learners' achievements will be recorded in the **P7 and S3 Pupils' Profile**. It is important to celebrate and to capture what learners have achieved, and to give clear direction as to where learners are with their progress in fluency in Gaelic and their next steps in learning. Well-maintained and evidenced pupil profiles are valuable records which help learners to make suitable progress. The profile serves as an important document for transition with learning and progression beyond the broad general education to pathways in the senior phase, future employment and training. Staff should also be mindful of the opportunity to recognise learners' achievements through the use of **awards** such as:

- Languages for Life and Work Award which entails the study of one or more languages and also employability skills; and
- The Scottish Studies Award which provides opportunities for learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Scotland, in terms of its people,
- languages (for example Scots and Gaelic), society, culture, natural environment and heritage, and to make connections across the curriculum.

The National Certificate of Celtic Studies may present opportunities, especially through partnership working with colleges.

