

# Advice on Gaelic Education

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

Updated March 2022

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

### 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 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.

### Key messages from the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education

- Children and young people can continue or begin their learning of Gaelic throughout the broad general education.
- Education authorities should offer a high-quality and progressive language learning experience in GLE with the aim of continuing this through into secondary education to Gaelic (Learners) National Qualifications and awards at the senior phase.
- When Gaelic and English medium provision are together in the same school, there should be opportunities for young people in English medium to learn Gaelic and learn about Gaelic language and culture as part of Scotland's identity.
- In relation to ethos and environment, the school and the education authority should ensure that Gaelic is visible and audible in and around the school. This can be achieved by including Gaelic in daily activities such as assemblies, breakfast clubs and in school dining rooms. Gaelic should also be reinforced through school signage, websites and communications.

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;
- Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks
- Guidance and Advice on 1+2 Approach;
- Statutory Guidance for Gaelic Education; and
- Scottish Qualifications Authority awards and qualifications, including for those for National 3 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. 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.**

**16.4** 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.

**16.5** Effective **transition** links between the primary and secondary sectors are key to building on language learning that has taken place at the primary stages. Learners need continuity in their learning of languages as they move from primary on to secondary school. This will enable children to build effectively on their learning as they move on to S1 and beyond. Young people should be able to continue or begin their learning of Gaelic throughout the broad general education. 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. The policy for 1+2 Languages has been relaxed to enable more children to continue with L3 as their main additional language at the secondary stages. 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.

**16.6** 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.**

**16.7** The Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks for Gaelic (Learners) set out the national standards expected within each level. Their purpose is to make clear what learners need to know and be able to do to progress through the levels, and to support consistency in teachers' and other practitioners' professional judgements. 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.

**16.8** 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.

**16.9 All children and young people should have the opportunity to learn an additional language (L2) from P1.** 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.

**16.10 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.

**16.11** 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.

**16.12** 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 and e-Sgoil. For more information, please see the *Further guidance on L3 within the 1+2 policy*.

**16.13** 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.

**16.14** 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.

**16.15** 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 **Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks** 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.

**16.16** 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 that 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 using **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 Gaelic and Scots), 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.

### An additional delivery model for L3

**16.17** The statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017 enables children and young people to begin their learning of Gaelic at any stage. In 1+2 approach currently, at the primary stages, children who experience a coherent and progressive experience of L3 from P5-P7 may choose to continue with that language into S1 and to the end of the broad general education. For purposes of planning the secondary curriculum, this would become young people's L2. For this to be the case, children need to have achieved the second level, or be **"approaching the second level"** by the end of P7. In addition, there should be pathways to National Qualifications, other awards and work-based learning in the senior phase for that language. To achieve this, the planning for the L3 language needs to result in a coherent and progressive experience from P5-P7.

**16.18** Here are some useful steps to guide self-evaluation and incorporating this delivery model for children to achieve the second level, or be **"approaching the second level"** by the end of P7:

- Revisit the curriculum rationale, particularly in light of the local context, to ascertain if increasing the numbers approaching the second level of Gaelic (Learners) is a priority for the school.
- Work with the other primaries in the cluster and the associated secondary school to plan a coherent 3-18 experience.
- Ensure strong links between primary and secondary specialists who are delivering Gaelic (Learners).
- Review the structure of the curriculum to see how planning learning, teaching and assessment would enable children's achievements to be approaching the second level.

- Review how well the contexts of the curriculum are used as a means of increasing outcomes for Gaelic and assisting young people in making connections in their learning.
- Review how partners and organisations for Gaelic are used to increase the time allocated to Gaelic (Learners) in the curriculum.
- Plan for progression and coherence by using the Experiences and Outcomes to show how you will develop knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities.
- Plan the use of Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks for Gaelic (Learners) to set out clear statements about what learners need to know and be able to do to achieve a level.
- Plan how Gaelic (Learners) will be integrated into in the life and work of the school.
- Use the principles of curriculum design to plan learning to motivate children for Gaelic. In particular, ensure that children understand the relevance of Gaelic, including for achieving a positive destination on leaving school.

For more information on the delivery of L3 in the 3-18 curriculum, please see [Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach - Further guidance on L3 within the 1+2 policy](#). It is a matter for schools to determine the exact design of the curriculum, using the flexibility that Curriculum for Excellence affords them, to ensure that children's achievements are "approaching a second level".

## 16.19 Challenge questions

The following evaluative questions are offered to guide self-evaluation for improvement. They are related to the quality indicators of How good is our school? (Edition 4). They should be used with the Advice on Gaelic Education and the statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education.

### How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?

- n How well is Gaelic language, culture and heritage captured in the school's vision, values and aims?
- n How well does the school take account of planning for improvement for GLE? How can impact be demonstrated?
- n How familiar are staff with the arrangements for the 1+2 Approach to Languages, particularly in how it relates to GLE? Are they planning for the change to the delivery model to enable children to demonstrate that they are "approaching" the second level?
- n How does the school have regard for the local authority Gaelic Language Plan (GLP)? How well does the school contribute to achieving its objectives?
- n What professional learning, including collaborative activity, do practitioners access to assist them in delivering high-quality experiences?

### How good is the quality of the care and education we offer?

- n How well is the curriculum structured to enable those learning Gaelic as L2 to achieve
  - the second level experiences and outcomes by the end of P7? (or be approaching the second level)
  - the third level outcomes by the end of the broad general education?
- n How well is the curriculum structured to enable children and young people to make and sustain good progress in GLE?

- n How well is GLE, either as L2 or L3, being embedded across the curriculum and its context? Do children and young people have regular access to learning, hearing and using Gaelic?
- n How successful are schools planning for transition and continuity in learning between and across key stages?
- n How effectively is the design of the secondary broad general education curriculum enabling progression for L2 from primary and enabling young people to experience L3?
- n How well is the curriculum developing all of children's and young people's language skills of listening, talking, reading and writing in a holistic manner?
- n To what extent does the curriculum raise children's and young people's understanding of the social, economic, cultural, environmental, historical, linguistic and vocational benefits from learning Gaelic?
- n How well is ongoing and periodic assessment used to help children and young people know how well they are progressing?
- n How well is learning, teaching and assessment in S3 preparing young people for a progressive transition into the senior phase? What steps are being taken to ensure that awards and National Qualifications for Gaelic (Learners) are an attractive option in the senior phase?
- n How well is the school working in partnership with other providers to support children and young people's learning?
- n How are early learning and childcare settings, primary and secondary schools collaborating to ensure consistency and progression in children's and young people's learning experiences? From stage to stage, are children and young people continuing with Gaelic (Learners)? Should they not be, how well are the reasons for this being analysed and improvements sought?
- n How well are teachers planning for progression?
- n How effectively are learning activities sequenced to reinforce children and young people's skills in listening, talking, reading and writing Gaelic and their inter-dependency?
- n Do teachers of Gaelic L2 and L3 make increasing use of Gaelic for instructions, and other communication, both as part of learning in the classroom and beyond?
- n Is there sufficient consolidation of new vocabulary and grammar to ensure children and young people are developing their fluency?
- n How well are teachers intervening to improve the quality and accuracy of children and young people's oral Gaelic language skills?
- n How well is children and young people's learning connecting, applying and building on what they have learnt in previous lessons?

### How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all of our learners?

- n How well are children and young people attaining?
- n In the broad general education, to what extent are teachers engaging with the Benchmarks for Gaelic (Learners) to gain an understanding of standards?
- n In the senior phase, are the entries for National Qualifications showing good continuation and pass rates? How well is attainment being raised and quality passes achieved in the senior phase?
- n How do teachers, and the children and young people themselves, know that appropriate progress is being made in lessons for GLE?

- n How successfully are children and young people involved in opportunities for achievement, including events and activities in the community in where they are able to use their skills in Gaelic?
- n To what extent are children and young people exemplifying positive attitudes and enjoyment of learning Gaelic?
- n How well do children and young people articulate the benefits of learning Gaelic and becoming increasingly bilingual?
- n Are children and young people getting universal and, where applicable, targeted support which enhances their learning of Gaelic?
- n How well does the establishment's ethos promote Gaelic language and culture? Is there a positive attitude towards learning Gaelic?
- n How embedded is the use of Gaelic in displays and signage within the establishment?
- n How well is Gaelic used informally and formally for oral and written communication? Does Gaelic have a sufficiently high profile at whole-school events?



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