

# Summarised inspection findings

**Glenurquhart Primary School Nursery Class**

The Highland Council

30 May 2023

## Key contextual information

Sgoil Àraich Bun-Sgoil Ghlinn Urchadain is situated within Glenurquhart Primary School. It serves Drumnadrochit and the surrounding villages. The headteacher of the school has overall management responsibility for the Sgoil Àraich. The Sgoil Àraich provides 1140 hours of childcare and total immersion learning through the medium of Gaelic during term-time. The Sgoil Àraich was re-established within the school in March 2022. It was previously located in a centre close to the school. Children attend from the age of three until starting primary school. The Sgoil Àraich is registered for 16 children at any one time. Numbers attending are small.

Practitioners and children in the Sgoil Àraich make use of a spacious playroom with free-flow access to an outdoor garden area. They also use the gym hall.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Children in the Sgoil Àraich enjoy a warm, caring, supportive and immersive environment. Those new to the Sgoil Àraich quickly settle due to the positive relationships with practitioners. Children are actively involved in learning, including through real-life contexts. Children enjoy walks to the local library to foster good habits in reading books in Gaelic. Children are independent in making choices from the available resources within the playroom. They demonstrate a high level of motivation and concentrate for extended periods while leading their own total immersion play. Children also have free access to a wide range of play resources outdoors. They enjoy these during daily free-play sessions, with regular adult interactions in Gaelic.
- There is an appropriate balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led play opportunities. Children are increasingly independent and confident. Their interactions with each other are kind and respectful. Practitioners interact in Gaelic very well with children and support their language development using the principles of total immersion. These include the effective use of singing, continuous speaking of Gaelic, repetition and reinforcement to develop Gaelic. As a result, children are confidently hearing and absorbing Gaelic through total immersion play. Practitioners should continue to use "The Advice on Gaelic Education" (2022) to strengthen even further their approaches..
- Practitioners use digital technology effectively to enable children to express how they are feeling. They also use the interactive board to extend children's learning. Practitioners could extend the use of digital technology to make links with other Sgoil Àraich. This would enable greater interactions for children, begin to build a greater network of speakers of Gaelic and allow extended collaboration among practitioners.

- Practitioners involve children meaningfully in planning their learning experiences using floor books. These are also used as stimuli for reflecting with children on their learning and progress. Practitioners have a number of useful systems in place to evaluate and record children's progress. These include helpful comments on planners and evidence in profile folders. Children's learning is recorded in these profiles through photographs, comments and practitioners' observations. These are shared with parents who have been encouraged recently to add comments on aspects of their child's learning. Staff should build on this positive start by involving parents more regularly in their children's learning. For example, through sharing common Gaelic words and phrases linked to the focussed learning for the week.
  
- Practitioners have several effective systems in place to check and evaluate children's progress. These include age-appropriate developmental overviews, and what children will learn linked to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. There is potential for observations to have an even sharper focus on the skills and Gaelic language children are developing. This will support the identification of what children need to learn next. Practitioners should begin to check individual children's levels of understanding and their use of the Gaelic language in a more robust way. This would integrate further assessment and checking of progress.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

very good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
  - children's progress over time
  - overall quality of children's achievement
  - ensuring equity for all children
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- Children are making very good progress in communication and early Gaelic language skills. Almost all children understand well the Gaelic used during their "Àm Cearcall" circle time. Children join in singing songs to aid their learning of Gaelic. Children having snack and lunch together is helping develop their communication skills. Most children use Gaelic words or phrases to request their snack choices and to describe how they are feeling. Most children listen attentively to stories, including those read by children from the Gaelic Medium primary class. Children also show interest when encouraged to access pictures and text while singing songs. All children can recognise their name. Staff should provide more experiences to develop early writing skills in different contexts during play. They should extend individual children's knowledge of Gaelic letter sounds and formation where children demonstrate interest and readiness for this.
  - In numeracy and mathematics, children are making very good progress. All children are learning to count with increasing confidence in a range of contexts. A few children can count beyond ten. Most children can identify colours in Gaelic. A few children show understanding of measurement vocabulary in Gaelic through their play experiences. They are developing the concept of time through discussions of the days of the week and times in their day and using timers. Practitioners need to continue to ensure sufficient challenge for a few children using age-appropriate experiences to help individuals to make the best possible progress.
  - Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. Children new to the setting are settling in well. Parents report that children talk positively about nursery. Children show care and consideration for their peers. Physical activities in the gym hall are helping children to develop a range of skills and to be active. Most children are developing independence and self-care skills as they have snack and get ready for outdoor walks. Children show understanding about how to cross a road safely during walks to the library. Children take on responsibilities such as setting the lunch table in their role as 'Rionnag an Latha' (Daily Star). An 'emotional check in' at different times in the day helps children to express how they are feeling. Practitioners should develop further children's ability to talk about their own wellbeing and feelings.
  - Through observation and discussion with children during their play, it is evident that all children are making very good progress over time, since starting in Sgoil Àraich. Practitioners track children's progress using floorbooks and developmental overviews. They add evaluative comments on Gaelic early level progression frameworks. As numbers of children in the nursery

increase, practitioners can build on current practice to track and record individual children's understanding and use of Gaelic using early-stage experiences and outcomes.

- Children show increased confidence, resilience and independence even after a short time in the nursery. Children's achievements are visible within the floorbooks. Practitioners celebrate children's achievements at weekly whole-school assemblies. Parents are encouraged to add their children's achievements from outwith nursery to profiles.
- Practitioners know children and families well. They are aware of the need to ensure equity for all children and to take account of any barriers to learning that may exist. Practitioners should continue to promote regular engagement to help support parents with their child's language learning in Gaelic. A few children also attend other settings during the week. Practitioners are beginning to liaise with partners in these settings to ensure progression for children. This helps to ensure that they have a fuller picture of the progress individuals are making.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

The headteacher has been a key driver in establishing a strong vision for Gaelic Medium Education in her school and the community. The numbers at Gaelic Medium Education primary had decreased. Children had to travel for secondary Gaelic Medium Education to Inverness, as the local secondary did not provide Gaelic Medium Education. To increase the numbers in Gaelic Medium Education, the headteacher has improved progression so that a total immersion Sgoil Àraich is now available that delivers 1140 hours. Additionally, the headteacher has been instrumental in introducing literacy and Gàidhlig and other immersion experiences to the local secondary school. This integrates Gaelic within the local community and is sustaining education services within a rural community. The Sgoil Àraich provides 1140 hours of childcare and total immersion learning through the medium of Gaelic during term time. Children attend Sgoil Àraich from age three until starting primary school. This gives children a high-quality Gaelic total immersion experience. There is already evidence that children's attainment is being raised, with children now going into P1 having made very good progress with the early levels of Curriculum for Excellence through the medium of Gaelic. Staff at the Sgoil Àraich are fluent speakers of Gaelic. The children at the primary stages are fostering strong links with the Sgoil Àraich to promote their Gaelic language and employability skills. There are also strong intergenerational links. As such, staff are making very good progress with implementing the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017).

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.