

Summarised inspection findings

Newtonmore Primary School

Sgoil Bhail' Ùr an t-Slèibh

The Highland Council

17 June 2025

Key contextual information

Newtonmore Primary School - Bun-sgoil Bhail' Ùr an t-Sleibh, is a non-denominational primary school situated in Newtonmore in The Highland Council. It offers learning through the mediums of Gàidhlig (Gaelic) and English. The school serves the areas of Newtonmore, Laggan, Dalwhinnie, Gergask and surrounding rural area for children learning in the medium of English. For children learning in the medium of Gàidhlig, it also serves the wider areas of Aviemore, Alvie, Kingussie, Newtonmore, Laggan, Dalwhinnie, Gergask and the surrounding rural area. Newtonmore Nursery Class, Sgoil-Àraich Bhail' Ùr an t-Sleibh is situated within the school building. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the school and nursery class.

The school roll is 107 children, arranged across three multi-stage classes for children learning through the medium of English and two multi-stage classes for children learning through the medium of Gàidhlig. There are 38% of children learning through the medium of Gàidhlig, with the remaining children learning through the medium of English. Over time, there has been steady increase in uptake for Gàidhlig Medium Education at Newtonmore Primary School - Bun-sgoil Bhail' Ùr an t-Sleibh. There are 56% of children who require additional support with their learning or wellbeing. A few children have English as an additional language. There are 87% of children who reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 6. The remaining 13% of children reside in SIMD deciles 7 and 8. A few children are entitled to free school meals.

In June 2024, the headteacher and principal teacher left the school. The headteacher had a teaching commitment of 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE). Since then, there has been significant instability in leadership. The subsequently appointed headteacher was in post between August and October 2024. An acting headteacher was in post for four weeks in September 2024. Between October and December 2024 there was a different acting headteacher for four weeks. In the remaining time between October and December 2024, local authority officers provided leadership support when required. Since January 2025, a local authority officer has served as the acting headteacher. The principal teacher was not replaced and there are no other senior leaders in the school.

There have been significant changes to teacher staffing in the Gàidhlig Medium Education classes since session 2023/2024. During session 2023/2024, the school was unable to provide full-time Gàidhlig Medium Education for children learning in the Gàidhlig medium classes due to lack of staffing. In August 2024, there were two teachers to provide full-time immersion Gàidhlig Medium Education for children learning in the Gàidhlig classes. Between October and December 2024, the local authority was unable to appoint a teacher of Gàidhlig Medium Education for the Gàidhlig P4-7 class. As a result, children in this class did not experience Gàidhlig Medium Education during that time. Since January 2025, there are two teachers who work 1.8 FTE to teach children learning in the Gàidhlig classes. Just over half of children in Gàidhlig Medium Education now experience learning in Gàidhlig medium five days a week. The remainder experience learning in Gàidhlig Medium Education four days a week.

1.3 Leadership of change

unsatisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- There are major weaknesses in this aspect of the work of the school. As a result of these major weaknesses, there has been very little change which has resulted in improvement. Outcomes for children are not improving at an appropriate pace. Local authority officers need to take prompt, structured and well-planned action to improve the school. They need to provide regular communication, clear direction and support as a matter of urgency to all staff about all aspects of school improvement and leadership. They need to ensure the pace of change significantly increases and that change results in improved outcomes for all children.
- In August 2024, the newly appointed substantive headteacher shared new values with the school. The headteacher did not ask staff, children and parents for their views to support the development of these values. Most children cannot recall these values or what they did to fulfil them. Very recently, the acting headteacher has reinstated the original values of 'more kindness, more learning, more teamwork.' A minority of children can name one or more of these values and most children give an example confidently of how they demonstrate more kindness. For example, younger children say they show more kindness as they play with others. However, a few children do not demonstrate this value well most of the time. Most children find it challenging to articulate clearly what 'more teamwork and more learning' mean for them. Local authority officers need to take prompt action to support school staff to review and refresh the school values. These need to be meaningful and relevant to the current context of the school.
- This academic session, there has been very little self-evaluation of the work of the school. At the start of the session, the previous headteacher produced a programme of collegiate activities to take forward key areas of school improvement. This did not include any monitoring of learning and teaching. However, due to the subsequent inconsistency in school leadership, only a few planned activities took place, such as a staff meeting. As a result, staff have not engaged in planned training or working groups to develop learning and teaching. The acting headteacher has observed learning and teaching in each class and reviewed evidence of children's work in jotters very recently. There has not been sufficient time to see any impact or improvement in the next steps which were identified. As a matter of urgency, local authority officers need to put clear plans in place for robust and regular monitoring of learning and teaching to support teachers to improve pedagogy. Local authority officers must ensure they support all staff to fulfil the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards for full registration, including statements for Gàidhlig. This should help to ensure that attitudes to Gàidhlig are positive and inclusive.
- At the start of the academic session, the previous headteacher produced a school improvement plan with key priorities identified for literacy and numeracy. The identified key priorities were to increase attainment in literacy and numeracy by 8%, raise staff confidence in supporting children in literacy and numeracy and provide targeted interventions. The key

priorities identified did not match those identified at the end of the previous academic session. Due to inconsistency in leadership, there has been no measurable progress in taking forward any priorities for improvement. Local authority officers need to ensure that improvement priorities for the school are developed as a result of robust self-evaluation with the involvement of children, parents and staff. They need to take urgent action to ensure there are specific, time measurable plans in place to take forward identified areas of improvement. Local authority officers must ensure that there are key priorities identified for Gàidhlig Medium Education. They need to support staff fully to work towards achieving these targets.

- At the end of session 2023/2024, all teachers engaged in professional review and development meetings with the substantive headteacher. Due to the lack of school improvement activities, staff have not had any opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Local authority officers need to ensure that all staff engage in professional review and development meetings. They need to help all staff identify areas of personal strength and areas for personal, professional development. Local authority officers need to work collaboratively with all staff to identify leadership opportunities for all staff. This could help staff to take ownership of school improvement work and feel included in taking forward the work of the school.
- In previous academic sessions, children were involved in a range of leadership groups, such as reading leaders and children's rights leaders. Children speak very positively about these experiences and how much they enjoyed them. Older children say they would like very much for leadership groups to restart. A few children say they would like to run lunch clubs for their peers. This session a few children in P7 have taken on the role of house captain, of which they are rightly proud. They enjoy taking visitors on tours of the school and collating house points at assembly. The house captains are keen to take a much more active role in the life and work of the school. Local authority officers should support staff to reinstate leadership opportunities for all children.
- All teachers know the social and economic context in which children and families live. The acting headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide a few activities for a few children who require additional support. For example, a few children engage in skiing, outdoor learning and a programme to support emotions. There is not a clear plan with measurable targets for the use of PEF. Moving forward local authority officers must ensure they ask all parents and children for their views on how to use PEF. They must ensure that they use data gathered to inform the development of a clear plan that focuses on closing the poverty-related attainment gap and improving outcomes for children.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

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

- Across the school, almost all children are polite, friendly and well behaved. There are positive relationships between almost all children and staff. A few children require one-to-one adult support to regulate their behaviour. At times, a few children find it upsetting when others display dysregulated behaviour. As a result, they become anxious and display dysregulated behaviour also. Most children demonstrate well 'more kindness' in their interactions with each other. Children and staff work together well to create class charters to support positive relationships and better behaviour. Most children can explain how the class charter helps to support the school values. However, children's experience and understanding of children's rights is at a very early stage. A majority of children can explain how staff ensure children's rights are protected and supported. For example, a majority of children explain that they have a right to water, and they are allowed water bottles in class.
- Across the school, the majority of children are eager to learn. They carry out predominantly textbook and worksheet tasks well. In most lessons, teachers plan activities which are task based and do not meet the needs of all children. Children learn in too many whole class lessons which do not take enough account of the learning needs of individuals and groups. Local authority officers need to support all staff to develop a shared understanding of what high-quality learning and teaching looks like. They should work with teachers to ensure prompt action to plan and deliver learning that is stimulating, engaging and focussed on meeting the needs of every learner. All teachers need to ensure that all lessons provide the correct balance of support and challenge. A significant minority of children report that learning is too easy.
- In most lessons, the pace of learning is too slow. As a result, most children are passive in their learning and are overly reliant upon teacher direction. Local authority officers need to support teachers to plan learning experiences which support children to work collaboratively and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Recently, teachers supported all children well to set their own targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers display these in all classes and the majority of children refer to these to identify their targets. Although still in the early stages of development, these targets are beginning to have a positive impact on helping children know what they need to do to improve further.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers give clear and helpful instructions and direction. Almost all children follow instructions well. Most teachers make children aware of the purpose of the task at the start of most lessons. As a result, most children understand what they need to do to complete tasks. However, almost all children are unable to describe what they are learning and the skills they are developing. Teachers need to ensure they help children to identify the skills they are developing and how they will know if they have been successful. This should help children understand better the purpose of their learning and support children to identify better their next steps in learning. Most children need more opportunities to apply and use the skills they have learned.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers use questions to check children's understanding of how to complete tasks. In a few lessons teachers use questions well to extend children's thinking. Local authority officers must support teachers to develop their understanding of high-quality questioning to extend children's learning.
- Children in the early stages do not yet benefit from high-quality play experiences. Teachers across the school are eager to improve this area of practice. Local authority officers should support teachers to develop a shared understanding of quality play spaces, experiences and interactions that children should experience when playing and learning. Local authority officers and teachers should refer to national guidance to ensure children experience an appropriate balance of child-led and adult-led approaches as part of play-based learning.
- Teachers use a range of end of unit assessments and standardised assessments, including National Standardised Assessments for Scotland, to assess children's progress and attainment. They gather examples of children's work as evidence of attainment. However, teachers recognise that current assessment procedures do not offer robust or reliable information needed to plan better learning for children. Teachers use assessment that is focussed too heavily on whether children can complete tasks. They need to use assessment in which children demonstrate how well they can apply their skills and knowledge in new and relevant contexts. There is a lack of consistency across the school regarding what information teachers collect and record, the agreed time frame and the purpose of assessment information. Teachers are in the early stages of using assessment information to plan a few appropriate interventions to support children to make better progress. Local authority officers need to support teachers to develop a high-quality, purposeful approach to assessing children's learning. They should support teachers and support staff to use assessment information more effectively to plan engaging and purposeful learning. Local authority officers need to support teachers to moderate their professional judgment of children's attainment and progress. This could help to improve the reliability of teachers' professional judgements.
- The acting headteacher has reintroduced attainment meetings to track children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. During these meetings, teachers and the acting headteacher identified children who were not making sufficient progress. They identified children who require additional support and have developed individual child's plans for these children very recently. It is too early to identify the impact of these meetings or plans. Local authority officers must ensure all children who are identified for targeted support are supported appropriately. Teachers need to make better use of data to plan better learning opportunities for individuals, groups and specific cohorts as they progress through the school. As the school develops the curriculum offered to children, teachers should track attainment and achievement across all curricular areas.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- All teachers use local authority progression pathways in literacy and numeracy linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes to help them plan children's learning. Teachers do not currently use progression pathways for other areas of the curriculum. They use an overview of CfE experiences and outcomes across all the other curriculum areas to demonstrate areas they have taught. Local authority officers need to support teachers to review and refresh the curriculum urgently. As they do so, they should ensure that all children receive their entitlement to a progressive broad, general education. This should be through immersion approaches for those in Gàidhlig Medium Education.
- All children in P6 and P7 have access to individual digital devices. Across the school all other children access shared digital devices. All children enjoy accessing online quizzes and games which check their knowledge. A few children enjoy making digital presentations about their chosen topic which they present to their class. All children need more opportunities to use digital technology to develop their digital skills progressively. Teachers are beginning to use technology effectively to support a few children to use helpful assistive technology to support their learning. For example, older children use talk to text features to support their writing. All teachers need to make better use of a wider range of digital technology as a tool for children's learning.
- Children do not yet experience their full entitlement to a 1+2 approach to modern languages. Children in P1-7 learn French in English medium classes and English as a second language in Gàidhlig medium classes. As outlined in the local authority's Gàidhlig Language Plan, staff should consider the learning of Gàidhlig as a third language for children learning in the English medium. Across the school, children learn religious and moral education about Christianity and world religions and participate in religious observance.
- All children experience two hours of high-quality physical education weekly. They are developing their skills progressively as they progress through the school.
- All children have the opportunity to engage with instrumental lessons through a partner provided music programme. Younger children enjoy weekly singing sessions shared with nursery children. These experiences, and especially Gàidhlig singing, are helping children to learn about their culture and heritage.
- Across the school, children do not have regular opportunities to learn outdoors. Local authority officers need to support staff to use the local environment as a context and learning space for high-quality outdoor learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- A majority of parents have expressed concern about the continued instability in the leadership of the school. Parents and staff have appreciated the stability provided by the recently appointed acting headteacher. Parents of children learning in Gàidhlig Medium Education are concerned about the lack of continuity of staffing in Gàidhlig classes. As a matter of urgency, local authority officers need to take urgent action to ensure secure, long term, effective, leadership of the school. They also need to ensure all children in Gàidhlig Medium Education receive their full entitlement to total immersion education.
- The Parent Council raises funds effectively to support school outings and events. For example, they have committed to funding transport costs for educational visits. This is beginning to help school staff take a few steps to addressing the cost of the school day.
- All staff recognise the need to improve communication with parents. Parents appreciate information shared via letters and newsletters. They welcome the recent parent information event about their child's learning. There is considerable scope to work together with parents to share and support children's learning. Local authority officers need to fully involve parents in shaping the school's improvement priorities.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

unsatisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Most children say staff treat them fairly and with respect. Most children say they feel safe in school and identify with confidence an adult who can help them if they have any concerns. As a result, almost all children are calm and happy in school, in class and in the playground. Across the school, most children engage confidently with visitors to talk about their experiences in school.
- Very recently, the acting headteacher has been discussing children's rights with children during whole-school assemblies. Older children identify a few rights, such as the right to an education, and describe what that means for themselves and children across the world. However, staff do not use the language of children's rights regularly throughout the day. As a result, a significant minority of children do not know if other children treat them fairly and with respect. Local authority officers need to support all staff to embed the language of children's rights in the life and work of the school. This could help all children to understand better their own rights and the rights of others.
- All children self-assess their wellbeing across all areas of the wellbeing indicators at the start of each academic year. Older children say they like doing this as it helps them to think about their own wellbeing. All teachers review these assessments and identify areas where children have identified their wellbeing is not strong. Children welcome the individual discussions they have with teachers about these areas and how teachers can help them to improve. However, teachers and children do not revisit these assessments throughout the year or compare data from previous years. As a result, teachers do not have robust data about children's progress in developing their wellbeing. Local authority officers must ensure that teachers use effectively the data gathered in wellbeing assessments to identify actions and provide support to improve children's wellbeing.
- Most staff have engaged in professional learning about trauma informed practice, de-escalation techniques and restorative discussions. However, a minority of staff need to develop this learning further to embed the use of such strategies in their daily interactions with children. As a matter of priority, local authority officers need to ensure all staff revisit this training. Working together, all staff need to develop agreed approaches to use when children are having challenges managing their emotions. Local authority officers need to support staff to share this knowledge with parents and children to help them to understand the strategies being used in school. Local authority officers need to ensure that agreed approaches are used consistently across the school.
- All staff know and understand their statutory duties and responsibilities with regard to child protection. However, all staff need to develop a greater understanding of statutory duties relating to wellbeing, inclusion and equalities. Supported by the local authority, all staff need to develop their understanding of their own role in meeting children's needs. A few staff would like

better communication about strategies identified in individual child's plans. Local authority officers need to ensure that all staff are clear about strategies identified in plans to support children who require additional support. This could help to provide higher quality in approaches used to support children with their learning and behaviour.

- The majority of children say they have never experienced bullying, or that the school deals with bullying well. Staff need to review and update the school relationships and anti-bullying policy. They need to involve all parents and children in this review process. As part of this review, it will be important that staff support parents and children to develop their understanding of bullying, and the approaches used to mitigate this in school.
- The acting headteacher has developed a clear overview of children who require additional support with their learning. This includes detail about children's individual needs and steps being taken to support children, such as individual child's plans. Staff have worked together very recently to develop individual child's plans for children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing. It is too early to identify the impact of these plans on outcomes for children. All staff need to ensure all identified targets are specific and time measurable. As a next step, local authority officers should support staff to ensure children and parents are involved fully in the review and development of these plans. Local authority officers need to closely monitor the quality of these plans, that regular reviews are in place, and the impact on outcomes for children.
- Older children are developing well their understanding of diversity and equality through their reading programme. They demonstrate empathy and describe with understanding the needs of people facing adversity due to the culture and global circumstances in which they live. They are less clear of aspects of racism and how to tackle discrimination. All staff need to ensure they demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of diversity and equality in their interactions with children. Local authority officers need to support staff to review and refresh the health and wellbeing curriculum. In doing so, they need to consider how staff will develop children's understanding of diversity and equality.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

unsatisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised small cohorts of children at each stage. As a result, children's attainment and progress is expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children at early, first and second levels achieve expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. However, a majority of children across the school are capable of achieving considerably more.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, most children learning in the medium of English make insufficient progress in literacy and English.
- The acting headteacher has very recently developed plans for children who require additional support. It is too early to identify their progress against their individual targets.

Listening and talking

- Most younger children listen carefully and follow a short set of verbal instructions well. They recount their recent experiences and share their feelings with their peers. A few younger children need to develop further their confidence in talking in groups beyond their peers or with unknown adults. Across the school, most children take turns in group discussions and use eye contact and body language appropriate to their age and stage. Most older children enjoy sharing presentations of their learning to their peers. They share relevant information and ideas about their chosen subject. Across the school, children would benefit from developing their skills in expressing their feelings or opinions.

Reading

- Most younger children identify rhyme in words and generate their own rhyme. They read a familiar text aloud and answer questions about events in the text. Most younger children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. They are unsure when reading words that do not follow the usual letter patterns. Children in the early and middle stages need to develop their knowledge of author and illustrator. Older children explain with confidence the content of their chosen text and the thoughts and opinions within it. They identify how the writer may use specific words or phrases to influence the readers feelings. For example, they identify the use of emotive language to help them empathise with characters. Across the school, a minority of children need to develop their skills in fluent reading with expression appropriate to their age and stage.

Writing

- Younger children form most letters correctly. They are beginning to spell familiar words correctly and use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell simple words. They write from left to right when copying text written by the teacher. They now need to develop their skills in writing a simple sentence independently. Older children make effective use of adjectives and start sentences with a range of vocabulary to enhance their writing. They write to recount their experiences well and are beginning to use techniques to persuade the reader, such as sharing their opinions. Children working towards second level need to write more extended pieces of writing more regularly. They need to make better use of ambitious vocabulary to enhance their writing. Across the school, children need to improve their presentation of their writing, especially in day-to-day tasks and activities.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children learning in the medium of English are making insufficient progress in numeracy and mathematics.
- The acting headteacher has very recently developed plans for children who require additional support. It is too early to identify their progress against their individual targets.

Number, money and measure

- Most younger children count on and back confidently within 20. They recognise the value of a missing number on a number line and can carry out simple subtraction within 10. Most younger children can count confidently to 100 in groups of five. Most children at the middle stages add and subtract confidently two and three-digit whole numbers. They read and order numbers to 1000. They describe the value of a digit in numbers up to 10,000 and order larger numbers. They need to practise mental calculations, particularly multiplication facts, to improve speed and accuracy. Most older children understand the value of whole and decimal numbers. They read, order and write numbers to 1 000 000 accurately. The majority of children describe the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and use this knowledge to solve simple calculations. Children at second level require more experience of solving more complex word problems. Across the school, children need to develop how they use their mathematical skills in real life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children identify confidently simple two-dimensional shapes. They draw symmetrical patterns using one line of symmetry. They understand the language of half and quarter turn and apply this to their learning. They use the language of time confidently and describe the days of the weeks, months and seasons with ease. Older children read and write analogue and digital time confidently. They use compass points to describe position and direction. They identify three-dimensional objects, including more complex shapes. They require further experience to use correct mathematical language to describe the properties of three-dimensional objects.

Information handling

- Younger children carry out surveys of children's favourite foods and sports. They record this information using tally marks and create pictograms. As children progress through the school, they create simple bar and line graphs using collated data. Older children need to develop their skills in handling data in more complex forms, including using digital technology. They are not yet confident interpreting information from pie charts or Venn diagrams. Across the school, children should have further opportunities to use information technologies to support information handling tasks and activities.

Attainment over time

- Teachers have information about children's achievement of a level in literacy and numeracy at P1, P4 and P7 over time. However, this is not yet sufficiently thorough or reliable. As a result, children's attainment over time is not clear. Local authority officers need to take urgent action to support teachers to measure and record more accurately the progress children make as they progress through the school.
- All teachers use local authority progression pathways and national Benchmarks to plan learning in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Local authority officers should support teachers to re-engage in moderation activities, both across the school and with other schools, both locally and nationally. This could improve the reliability of attainment data and teachers' professional judgements and ensure more effective planning to meet children's needs.
- In June 2024, school attendance was 89.75%. This is below the national average. Children's attendance at school has declined steadily over the last three sessions. Currently, 24.3% of children have an attendance rate lower than 90%. The acting headteacher has made contact with all families where children have attendance lower than 80% in line with the local authority attendance policy. They have liaised with parents to identify how the school can support better attendance. It is too early to identify the impact of these interventions. Local authority officers should ensure all families are contacted as soon as a child's attendance drops below 90%. They must ensure plans are put in place to support increasing a child's attendance. The school follows procedures rigorously to ensure the safety of children who do not attend school at the start of the school day.
- A few children are experiencing part-time timetables. Very recently, the acting headteacher has developed clear plans to support these children. Local authority officers must ensure these plans are reviewed every six weeks to increase a child's time in school in line with national guidance.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- A majority of children benefit from a range of sporting and musical activities. These activities are organised by local organisations rather than the school. A few children access instrumental tuition through partnership with the local authority. For example, a few children are learning to play the chanter, clarsach and drums. Very recently, a few older children represented the school at a regional general knowledge competition. House captains speak confidently of their role recently in organising the school's houses and rewards system at assemblies. In recent weeks, the school has re-established procedures to celebrate children's wider achievements out with school. These include attractive wall displays and the sharing of children's success during school assemblies. Local authority officers must take urgent action to help staff to provide achievement opportunities for all children. They should track and monitor children's participation and provide support to those at risk of missing out to ensure all children have opportunities for achievement. Moving forward, local authority officers should support staff to track and monitor the skills children are developing as a result of their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- All staff understand the socio-economic context of the school. Recently, the acting headteacher collated attainment data to identify gaps in attainment between a few cohorts of children. Local authority officers need to support staff to develop a clear plan for the use of PEF to improve outcomes for children and close the poverty-related attainment gap. Local authority officers need to support staff to collect and analyse data about children's attainment regularly to measure improved outcomes for specific children and cohorts.

Context

Over time, there has been steady increase in uptake for Gàidhlig Medium Education at Bun-sgoil Bhail' Ùr an t-Sleibh – Newtonmore Primary School. The school has experienced challenges for staffing in Gàidhlig classes this session. Supply cover for the older children was through the medium of English for a term. This has had a negative impact on older children's fluency in speaking Gàidhlig.

Leadership of change

- Local authority officers need to support teachers to increase the promotion of Gàidhlig across the school to help all children connect with the language and culture.
- The school improvement plans over time do not detail action points bespoke to Gàidhlig. The acting headteacher and staff are not collectively using national advice and guidance such as the Advice on Gaelic Education, to support improvements. As a priority, local authority officers must ensure that future improvement plans detail key priorities for improvement in Gàidhlig Medium Education.
- All children should have opportunities for developing leadership skills through the medium of Gàidhlig. This should include involvement in pupil groups, participation at school assemblies and organising events, for example during Seachdain na Gàidhlig. The local authority need to support teachers to promote a more positive Gàidhlig ethos, increasing children's fluency as well as other skills for learning, life and work.
- The recently appointed staff team delivering Gàidhlig Medium Education have worked well together to ensure that all children in Gàidhlig Medium Education receive total immersion in Gàidhlig for almost all of the week. It is too early to identify any impact on children's progress or attainment. Teachers have identified strong advocates for Gàidhlig in their community. Local authority officers should support teachers to engage with Gàidhlig partners and organisations to support them in their role in raising further children's fluency in Gàidhlig. This could help teachers to develop their own leadership skills.
- Staff for Gàidhlig Medium Education understand the importance of professional development. They have recently collaborated with other Gàidhlig Medium providers to extend their professional learning. It is too early to identify the impact of this professional learning.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Children learning in the medium of Gàidhlig enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other most of the time. Overall, younger children demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning. All teachers and support staff in classes for Gàidhlig Medium Education extend children's fluency in the language through positive and warm interactions. They speak and model Gàidhlig well. Staff's use of singing, commentary and repetition is helping younger children to develop Gàidhlig well as part of total immersion. Teachers should make more use of play and role-play in immersion approaches to support further children's language learning.
- Children have the opportunity to engage with instrumental lessons as well as Gàidhlig singing through a local music partner provided programme. This is helping children to learn about their culture and heritage.
- Teachers are beginning to plan for learning across different areas of the curriculum. They are beginning to meet the needs of most children, including those who require further challenge.

The pace of learning is too slow. As a matter of urgency, local authority officers need to support teachers to develop approaches to planning, tracking and assessment. This should help to ensure that programmes of study are relevant and match all children's needs. Teachers need to develop progression pathways in all curricular areas, including Gàidhlig, to support their planning for learning. Local authority officers must ensure that high-quality planning reflects the distinctive elements of Gàidhlig Medium Education.

- Local authority officers must support teachers to provide more opportunities for children to use Gàidhlig outside of school.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Children learning in the Gàidhlig Medium Education benefit from a supportive and caring environment. Staff in Gàidhlig Medium Education have positive relationships and interactions with children. Almost all children are polite and well-mannered. Children in the Gàidhlig Medium Education feel treated fairly. Most children in Gàidhlig Medium Education say they are happy in school. They enjoy learning through the medium of Gàidhlig.
- Working together, teachers and the acting headteacher have developed child's plans for those who require them. Local authority officers need to support teachers to ensure that they identify specific, time measurable targets for children and that plans are reviewed regularly. Local authority officers must ensure parents and children are fully involved in the development of such plans.
- The Statutory Guidance for Gaelic is not being met well. The local authority should put arrangements in place, so all children continue to learn through the medium of Gàidhlig. This could be supported further by having appropriate staffing in place long term.
- Going forward, local authority officers need to promote further information about Gàidhlig Medium Education on the school's website and within school documentation, including referencing the benefits of bilingualism.

Raising attainment and achievement

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised small cohorts of children at each stage. As a result, children's attainment and progress is expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.

Attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig, and literacy and English, as relevant to immersion

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig and literacy and English is satisfactory. A minority of children are on track to achieve expected levels by the end of P4 and P7. Children at early level are exceeding national expectations in literacy.
- Overall, younger children in Gàidhlig Medium Education are making good progress in literacy and Gàidhlig, and literacy and English. Older children are making insufficient progress in literacy and Gàidhlig, and literacy and English. Their progress in Gàidhlig has been interrupted due to periods when they have not received total immersion learning in Gàidhlig.
- The acting headteacher has very recently developed plans for children who require additional support. It is too early to identify their progress against their individual targets.

Literacy and Gàidhlig, and literacy and English, as relevant to immersion

- Most younger children listen well and show their understanding during listening and talking activities. They sing and memorise songs to aid their language acquisition. Older children are not engaging consistently with Gàidhlig while working within groups. Most need to reduce their

use of English in Gàidhlig communication with peers and adults. Children should continue to extend their skills in talking through discussion in groups and presenting their points of view.

- Across classes, most children are confident in reading aloud as relevant to immersion. Children at early level use their knowledge of phonics well to read common phrases. They share books they enjoy from the class library. Older children explain their choice of favourite books and authors. They need to access more non-fiction texts to research information and develop further skills in analysing texts.
- Most younger children recount events and create new stories about characters using different approaches to writing. These are often related to personal news or their reading books. Older children need to continue to focus on punctuation, spelling and accuracy of Gàidhlig grammar in their writing. They are not writing regularly enough in Gàidhlig and English for a full range of purposes.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics in Gàidhlig Medium Education

- Overall children's attainment in numeracy and Mathematics in Gàidhlig Medium is weak. Children are making insufficient progress in numeracy and mathematics across the school.
- The acting headteacher has very recently developed plans for children who require additional support. It is too early to identify their progress against their individual targets.
- Children in Gàidhlig Medium Education are not yet confident in their use of Gàidhlig specialist terms for numeracy and mathematics. Younger children apply some strategies such as counting on or using a number line to add and subtract. Younger children are not yet confident in rounding numbers to the nearest 100 and working with equivalent fractions. Across Gàidhlig Medium Education, children are not yet confident in using the language of time such as half-past, quarter past and quarter to.
- Older children need to strengthen their knowledge of the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals. They are not yet confident in calculating simple fractions of a given quantity or simple algebraic equations. Across Gàidhlig Medium Education, children need to develop further their skills in solving a range of real-life problems, including use of units of measure. Overall, children identify accurately a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Children identify accurately where shapes can be found in the environment. Older children identify lines of symmetry in a variety of two-dimensional shapes, and they demonstrate an understanding of three-dimensional objects and their nets.
- Across Gàidhlig Medium Education children identify bar graphs and pictorial graphs and use these to present and analyse data. Younger children ask and answer questions to extract key information from a range of simple charts. Across classes, children need to continue to develop their data handling skills through collecting, organising and displaying data accurately in a variety of purposeful contexts. All children need to develop further their skills of mathematical terminology in Gàidhlig.

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.