

Summarised inspection findings

Sgoil Àraich Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis Nursery Class

The Highland Council

19 September 2023

Key contextual information

Sgoil-Àraich Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis is accommodated within Roinn na Tràth-ìrean (Early Years Department) of Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis. The sgoil-àraich provides 1140 hours of childcare and immersion learning through the medium of Gaelic during term-time. The nursery provision serves Inverness and surrounding areas. Children have access to two playrooms, a large hall and canteen and a self-contained outdoor area. Registration is for 76 children to attend at any one time. Children attend from the age of three until starting C1 (This is an abbreviation of the Gaelic word for class one, or primary one stage.) At the time of inspection, there were 78 children attending with a combination of full and part-time places. The depute headteacher of the school has overall management responsibility for the sgoil-àraich. She had been acting headteacher of the school for a number of weeks prior to the recent appointment of a new headteacher. She is supported by two senior early years practitioners and a team of part-time practitioners currently working on a rota system.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- Practitioners have created a welcoming and friendly ethos and community for children whose families select to learn Gaelic. Children have an important start to a pathway in Gaelic by attending Sgoil-Àraich Bun-sgoil Inbhir Nis. Children benefit greatly from the positive relationships with practitioners. They are happy in the sgoil-àraich and play cooperatively with their friends. Most children engage well with the range of total immersion play experiences indoors and outdoors. Practitioners provide a wide variety of natural objects and open-ended resources. This supports children to develop their play well. Practitioners understand the importance of using Gaelic as the core language of learning and play. Together as a team, they should continue to develop the consistent use of total immersion play approaches building on their best practice. Senior leaders should continue to support practitioners with regular professional learning based on 'Advice on Gaelic Education'.
- Practitioners lead and initiate a range of interesting activities to support children's progression in learning Gaelic. They should continue to develop these experiences further using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence early level. This will support breadth, depth and challenge further as children continue to learn Gaelic across an increasing range of contexts. Practitioners are developing approaches to create a well-balanced day. They provide children with regular opportunities to lead their own play in addition to high quality time in groups. Senior leaders should continue to work together with practitioners when evaluating these approaches to measure more rigorously their impact on children's progress.
- Most practitioners make well-considered and useful commentaries when interacting with children. They engage with children who are fluent in Gaelic well through extended conversations. For a few children, interactions in Gaelic could be more regular and effective.

Practitioners' use of singing supports language development effectively. They should continue to build on their use of stories and role-play to support repetition and reinforcement of Gaelic as children engage in their total immersion play. Practitioners should make increased use of their bank of high-quality digital resources created during the pandemic. This will support children with further opportunities to listen, absorb, and practise using their Gaelic.

- Each child has an individual learning profile that includes photographs, practitioners' observations and a few samples of children's work. Most practitioners use this information effectively to help them make judgements about children's progress in their learning. As a team, they should continue to share expertise in recording observations. This will support a consistent focus on identifying relevant next steps in learning for individual children.
- Practitioners plan learning with a focus on literacy, Gaelic language, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This includes identifying key Gaelic words for practitioners to introduce to children through play. Children contribute regularly to planning by sharing their ideas and interests. Practitioners use this to plan personalised experiences for individual children. They are continuing to review and streamline their process for planning for children's learning. As part of this work, they should more fully consider the needs of particular groups of children. For example, children moving into C1 will benefit from planned learning experiences which develop further their fluency in Gaelic and provide greater challenge.
- Practitioners track children's developmental milestones using a local authority tracker. Senior leaders and practitioners should work together to develop a format for the tracking of children's progress in Gaelic language. They should develop further approaches to check children's levels of understanding and their use of the Gaelic language in a more robust way.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Securing children's progress

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

- Overall, children are making appropriate progress in early literacy, language and communication within the total immersion environment. Most children are developing their skills in listening. They understand clearly the Gaelic used during routines such as daily emotional check-ins and snack. Most are able to name items of food and drink. Children have memorised songs to aid their language acquisition. They should be encouraged to apply the Gaelic they learn in songs in other situations. A few children who are fluent in Gaelic talk confidently in conversations with practitioners. Almost all children recognise their name through self-registration. Most children would benefit from listening to or having stories read aloud to them more regularly. Children enjoy a range of mark-making experiences.
- Children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. They develop their Gaelic as they count in routines, such as lining up for lunch. Children recognise numbers and count natural objects across contexts outdoors. Their learning profiles demonstrate individual children's developing skills in numeracy. Children can apply their numeracy skills in Gaelic to real-life contexts to support their learning. Most children identify and name basic shapes in Gaelic. Children are encouraged to measure through construction role-play.
- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are developing their awareness of feelings. They use Gaelic phrases well through daily 'emotional check-ins'. A few children talk about being safe and friendships during a session led by a partner. As a next step, practitioners could model conversations more often to help children understand the 'values characters' and wellbeing phrases in Gaelic. Most children show high levels of independence during their play. More care of resources and encouragement to tidy up is required. Children enjoy taking part in relaxed snack and lunch experiences, which develop their social skills and allows them to begin to speak Gaelic for real and purposeful reasons. Most children are developing good physical skills. They manage risk well as they negotiate obstacle courses in the outdoor area.
- Information gathered on children's learning demonstrates that most children continue to make progress in their learning since joining the sgoil-àraich. Practitioners have identified the need to track children's progress in Gaelic over time more robustly. There is a role for delivering group immersion experiences to ensure language is being developed in a more progressive way. For example, a few children who are fluent would benefit from using Gaelic in focused, challenging contexts of learning.

- Practitioners recognise and display children's achievements in the sgoil-àraich. Children enjoy receiving certificates and celebrating their achievements during circle time. They contribute well to the life of the wider community, such as visits to a local care home where they hear residents speaking Gaelic.
- All practitioners know individual children well and take very good account of the differing circumstances of children and families. They provide sensitive interventions to effectively meet the needs of individuals. Practitioners understand their role in promoting equity.

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.