

Inspection Advice on Gaelic Education Comhairle air Foghlam Gàidhlig

Key Messages

The Advice on Gaelic Education provides important information on the national context, and describes best practice to support senior leaders, practitioners and education authorities in evaluating and planning for improvement in Gaelic Education. It is based on evidence from inspections, reviews and other statutory functions, covering all sectors of Gaelic Education; and other engagements with a wide range of stakeholders.

HM Inspectors use the Advice to support scrutiny activities.

Gathering quantitative and qualitative data

The Advice on Gaelic Education and Statutory Guidance should be used with the [suite of quality frameworks How good is our ..?](#) to contextualise these to the Gaelic sector.

These frameworks set out the standards we use to evaluate and report on quality and improvement in Scottish education. They incorporate key legislation and policy

Inspection Advice note (June 2022)



Reflecting the COVID-19 context in early learning and childcare (ELC) and school inspections from August 2022

This inspection advice note provides details on how HM Inspectors will reflect the COVID-19 context in inspections from August 2022.

We recognise that the pandemic has had an impact on all communities. We will listen and talk to you about how the current context of your school/setting has changed as a result of COVID-19. We will want to learn about the specific impact COVID-19 has had on your school/setting, how you have adapted to address challenges as a result of the pandemic, and the impact this is having on learners.

During inspections, we will use your self-evaluation as the starting point to help us understand your context and setting. We will listen to what senior leaders and staff tell us about current priorities and ongoing challenges. We will also listen carefully to the views of learners, parents, partners and staff and use these views along with a range of evidence to reach our judgements. We will continue to provide evidence for the National Improvement Framework.

We will be sensitive to the pressures and challenges leaders, staff teams and your wider community face. Inspections will take place in person. Learning from our approaches to engagement with schools/settings during the pandemic, some of our activity may take place online where this is appropriate. For example, we may have initial discussions virtually with the headteacher. It may also be appropriate to hold meetings with parents or partners online. We will discuss with headteachers the most appropriate approaches for your setting.

We will continue to be proportionate and responsive as we gather our evidence. We will focus on the experiences of all learners and will want to understand how well their learning and wellbeing needs are being met. We will continue to promote children's rights as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We will listen with care, and act on the views of children and young people.

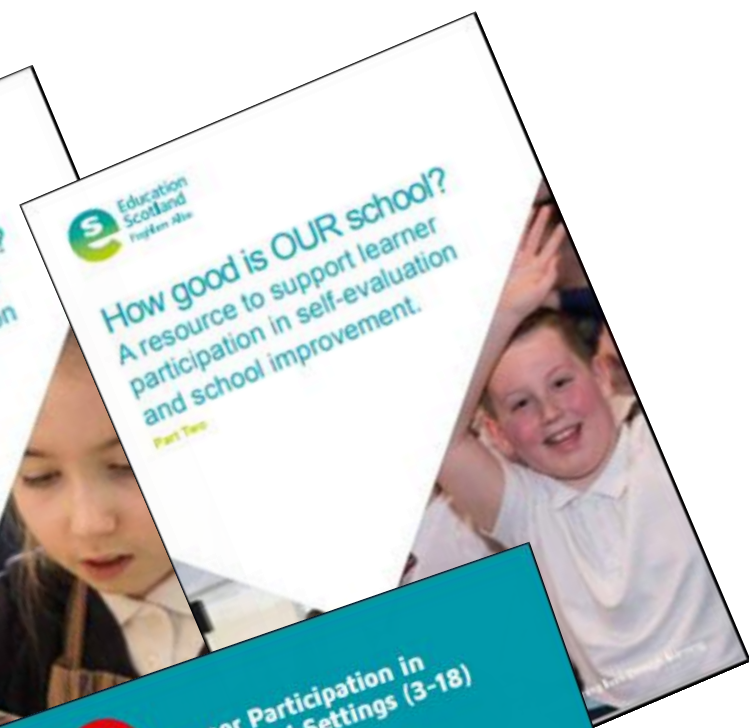
We are, first and foremost, interested in the learning experiences and achievements of children and young people, and how the school/setting is ensuring these are of the highest quality. We want to see the school/setting in action and learn from staff, learners, parents and partners about what is working. We aim to carry out inspections in a way that seeks to minimise burden on staff and keep paperwork required to a minimum. We will ask for your self-evaluation in advance of the inspection. There is no need to update all policies before an inspection.

Inspection frameworks

We will continue to use the quality improvement frameworks *How Good Is Our School?* (16th Edition) and *How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?* as the focus for our inspections. We are not replacing or rewriting the existing quality indicators (QI) you currently use for self-evaluation activities. We have outlined below how we will reflect the current context for each QI.

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Quality frameworks How good is our..?



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Effective self-evaluation

The driving force of a successful improvement strategy is self-evaluation. An organisation that has the capacity to examine all that it does critically in the light of genuine evidence - including data on pupil performance - and sets targets for its own developments, will be an improving one"

Michael Fullan

Effective self-evaluation underpins the work of any successful establishment. At the heart of self-evaluation there are three questions:

- **How are we doing in our Gaelic provisions?**
- **How do we know?**
- **What are we going to do now for Gaelic?**

Gaelic Medium Education

Key messages

- Gaelic Medium Education is based on the principles of immersion with children accruing all the benefits of bilingualism.
- The early stage of learning through the medium of Gaelic, and where no other language is used, is referred to as 'total immersion'. This is followed by an 'immersion phase' up to and including the senior phase.

Gaelic Medium Education

Key messages

- Children and young people need to be equally confident in the use of Gaelic and English and able to use both languages in a full range of situations within and out with school.
- All Gaelic Medium Education provisions, whether in free-standing provision known as Gaelic schools or Gaelic Medium schools or when delivered alongside English medium, have as an underlying foundation the principles of immersion.

Gaelic Medium Education: engagement with parents

Key messages

- Early engagement with parents to inform them of the benefits of Gaelic Medium Education, and its link to the benefits of bilingualism, is essential in securing the future of the language.
- Children's fluency in Gaelic is enhanced by using the language out with school. Parents need to have clear information on how to support their children's education.

Gaelic Medium Education: career-long professional learning

Key messages

- Teachers need access to high-quality career-long professional learning (CLPL) to support them with Gaelic Medium Education.

Gaelic Medium Education: total immersion, including assessment

Key messages

- Children and young people need to experience high-quality **total immersion as part of Gaelic Medium Education until they have a secure foundation in the language and a level of fluency that will enable them to build on the progress made in Gaelic.**
- Teachers' monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement needs to ensure that children have received sufficient total immersion.

Gaelic Medium Education: total immersion, including assessment

Key messages

- A range of approaches are used in total immersion to enable children to hear and absorb high-quality Gaelic.
- In delivering learning in the total immersion playroom and classroom, staff need to make use of the principles of curriculum design to ensure **learning which is progressive and coherent.**
- The **Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks for literacy and Gàidhlig** have a key role in helping children to demonstrate their progress with the curricular levels for literacy and Gàidhlig.

Gaelic Medium Education: the immersion phase (immersion in the Broad General Education from end of P3/beginning of P4 onwards)

Key messages

- In the immersion phase, the curriculum in its entirety continues to be taught through the medium of Gaelic across all four aspects of learning.
- In the immersion phase, children begin to **read and write skills in English language** and to learn at a quicker pace across the curricular areas and contexts.

Gaelic Medium Education: the immersion phase (immersion in the Broad General Education from end of P3/beginning of P4 onwards)

Key messages

- Teachers plan children's learning to develop vocabulary, phrases and syntax connected to the different areas of the curriculum, language skills, grammar and an appreciation of bilingualism and Gaelic language and culture.
- In the immersion phase **teachers lead learning in all curriculum areas, including the newly introduced English, through the medium of Gaelic.**
- When Gaelic Medium Education is being delivered successfully, **the immersion phase is planned progressively** to operate throughout primary and into secondary.

Gaelic Medium Education: the immersion phase (immersion in the Broad General Education from end of P3/beginning of P4 onwards)

Key messages

- In secondary, Gaelic immersion pathways are taken forward within a broad general curriculum, up to the end of S3 as a minimum entitlement, leading to qualifications in and through Gaelic.
- There is a high expectation that young people will continue in Gaelic Medium Education to achieve awards and qualifications in and through Gaelic in the senior phase leading to post-school positive destinations in the Gaelic sector.

Gaelic Medium Education: secondary stages

Key messages

- The **rationale** for the curriculum needs to be based on a shared understanding of Gaelic Medium Education and bilingualism.
- Staff, young people, parents and partners need to be clear on the purpose and value of Gaelic Medium Education.
- The Gaelic Medium curriculum from S1 to S3, and into the senior phase, remains one **based on the principles of immersion**.

Gaelic Medium Education: secondary stages

Key messages

- Young people need to experience a continuum of learning pathways in the broad general education and the senior phase, with opportunities to develop their fluency across all four contexts of the curriculum.
- To allow progression in immersion, schools need to aim to deliver **a sufficient proportion of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic.**

Gaelic Medium Education: secondary stages

Key messages

- Gaelic Medium Education needs to be a compulsory part of the broad general education up to the end of S3, after which learners move into the senior phase from S4-S6 that offers a range of qualifications and awards in and through Gaelic.
- The “1+2 Approach to Language Learning in Scotland” should be used in schools with Gaelic Medium provision to enable all young people in English medium education to learn Gaelic as an additional language. This includes celebrating Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, and the rationale for collective ownership of its promotion and protection, along with its associated culture and heritage.

Gaelic Medium Education: improving fluency with a planned programme for language, grammar and vocabulary

Key messages

- During the **total immersion phase**, the development of grammar and specialist vocabulary is embedded within learning and play through the use of high-quality Gaelic all of the time.
- Later and at the **immersion stages**, children will become more aware of the development of particular language areas. Teachers plan progression for points of grammar and specialist vocabulary in programmes and courses across the curricular areas and contexts of the curriculum.
- It is important that schools continue the practice of having a **policy on how to sensitively correct children's and young people's language errors** so that these errors do not become the norm.

Gaelic Medium Education: transitions

Key messages

- Schools and partners need to collaborate in planning learning 3-18 for Gaelic Medium Education to ensure continuity and progression in learning across all curriculum areas particularly into P1, between P7 and S1 and from the broad general education into the senior phase.

Gaelic Medium Education: A 1 + 2 Approach to Language Learning

Key messages

- A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning in Scotland children will firstly be immersed in Gaelic using the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes at the early and first levels.
- At P3/P4, children will begin to address the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes relating to literacy and English.
- Children will learn a second additional language, L3, no later than P5.

Gaelic Medium Education: creating an ethos for Gaelic in Gaelic Medium schools and other settings

Key messages

- All Gaelic Medium provisions need to aim to have a permeating ethos that is conducive to learning Gaelic. For this, all staff, children, young people and parents have a meaningful contribution to make.
- All members of a school's community need to have a positive and inclusive attitude to the Gaelic language and to those who speak it and are learning the language.

Gaelic Medium Education: creating an ethos for Gaelic in Gaelic Medium schools and other settings

Key messages

- When Gaelic and English Medium provision are together in the one school, all children need to have an opportunity to learn about Gaelic language, culture and heritage as part of Scotland's identity.
- Children and young people need to be encouraged to speak and use Gaelic for a range of purposes, in the development of their learning across the curriculum, and add to the ethos for Gaelic in a school.

Gaelic Medium Education: learners with additional needs

Key messages

- Legislation places duties on local authorities, and other agencies, to provide additional support where needed to enable any child or young person to benefit from education.
- At this stage in the development of Gaelic Medium Education, while it is desirable, there are still **challenges in providing some of this support through the medium of Gaelic.**

Gaelic Medium Education: learners with additional needs

Key messages

- Access to some identification of needs and support services may need to be accessed through the medium of English but for there to be an awareness of the approaches to Gaelic Medium Education.
- The aims and goals of Curriculum for Excellence and the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* place a **responsibility on all staff to meet the needs of all learners**.

Gaelic Learner Education

Key messages

- In a '1+2 Approach' children may learn Gaelic as their first or second additional language in English medium schools. All efforts need to be made to include Gaelic (Learners) in a 3-18 curriculum.

[Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach](#) Scottish Government Languages Working Group: Report and recommendations May 2012

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.

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

Key messages

- *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.

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

Key messages

- Effective transition links between the primary and secondary sectors are key to building on language learning that 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 curriculum area for languages.

Learning about Gaelic language and culture

Key messages

- Learning about the Gaelic language and culture is a central feature of learning about Scotland, and helps children and young people connect Gaelic to their knowledge and understanding of Scotland.

Sharing Effective Practice

[Sharing scrutiny evidence on Gaelic Medium Education – early learning and childcare total immersion | Practice exemplars | National Improvement Hub](#)

[Sharing scrutiny evidence on Gaelic Medium Education - secondary curriculum | Practice exemplars | National Improvement Hub](#)

[Developing a Curriculum for Gaelic in Secondary – Greenfaulds High School | Practice exemplars | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

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Challenge questions

To what extent are senior leaders and staff critically engaging with the Advice on Gaelic Education and [scrutiny findings](#) to improve their outcomes for children and young people?

How do we ensure that improving provision for Gaelic is central to self-evaluation activity and part of impactful strategic planning for improvement?

What are our approaches to raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap across all areas of the curriculum?

How do we use our understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school to inform and shape planning for improvement?

In what ways do we gather and take account of a range of evidence on the quality of immersion we provide?

Challenge questions

What actions are we taking to ensure learning and teaching is of a consistently high quality?

How effective is our use of digital technologies to enhance learning, deliver the curriculum and develop skills for learning, life and work?

What does equality and equity look like for the children and young people in Gaelic Medium and Learner Education?

The General Teaching Council for Scotland's Professional Standards apply in English and Gaelic Medium Education, with four bespoke references to Gaelic across standards. How will you embed their use in your setting?



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