

Summarised inspection findings

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghleann Dail

Glasgow City Council

25 April 2023

Key contextual information

Bun-sgoil Ghleann Dail is an all-Gaelic immersion school in the city of Glasgow. The school caters for C1 to C7 (This is an abbreviation of the Gaelic word for class, or primary stage.) All senior leaders, teachers and support staff are specialist speakers of Gaelic. The majority of non-teaching and partnership inputs are through Gaelic. Teachers' non-contact cover time is provided through the medium of Gaelic.

The leadership team comprises a ceannard (headteacher) and two prìomh thidsearan (principal teachers). Staffing comprises 9.6 full-time teachers. The school report that they have had challenges recruiting and retaining staff. There has been a very high turnover of teaching staff in the last few years. The headteacher has provided teaching cover during this time. Staff report challenges in maintaining children's immersion in the first remote learning period during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The school roll in September 2021 was 179, with 97 boys and 82 girls. Children reside across all levels of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). A very small percentage of children reside at SIMD levels one and ten. In 2020-2021, attendance was above the national average.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Children and staff are caring and kind to each other. Staff are hardworking and place a high value on increasing the number of speakers of Gaelic in Glasgow. They know children learn best when they are being immersed in the Gaelic language, with children themselves using Gaelic as their language of learning. Some children speak Gaelic to non-teaching staff out with classrooms. This is for real purposes as part of their immersion experiences. Children can join after-school clubs where they are immersed in the language. They have an option of getting assistance with homework. A few children are in a choir where they sing fluently and with clear pronunciation of Gaelic. These children access the culture and heritage of Gaelic through song. More children should be encouraged to apply the Gaelic they learn in songs in other situations. In these immersion experiences, children are developing good fluency. They can use specialised vocabulary and dialogue across areas of learning. While some children experience high-quality immersion across stages, this is not sufficiently consistent.
- The majority of children engage well in their learning. Most children are confident and respectful. In most classes, children are clear of the purpose of learning and how to be successful. They enjoy working with peer partners to discuss their learning. In a majority of cases, children are challenged suitably and have relevant tasks to help them make appropriate progress. A few teachers need to ensure that children engage fully in their learning. Children lose interest when activities lack sufficient pace and challenge. On these occasions, a few

children are needing more support with their Gaelic skills, based on the principles of immersion.

- Children are beginning to focus on their rights. Staff take forward a rights-based approach, with external accreditation. Children's awareness should be raised of their rights as those who are learning a unique language of Scotland. All children are involved in committees with their peers across stages. This gives them an opportunity to be part of decisions to improve their school. Teachers need to discuss further with children how such opportunities enable them to review, suggest changes and make decisions on improving the school. This would increase children's engagement with learning and strengthen further their relationships with staff.
- Staff have put in place an effective range of one-to-one and small group additional support to close gaps in children's learning. This support is possible from specific funding for Gaelic. The support is planned well using information from assessment. Children have personalised targets. Staff also make use of the digital platform, e-Sgoil to support children's skills through Gaelic. This range of support is increasing children's confidence and improving their language skills. A minority of children have significant gaps in their fluency in Gaelic. Staff should continue to provide more focused total immersion where there are dips in children's progress. Children must speak Gaelic to take forward their learning and fluency. At P7, it would be useful to have extended curriculum transition arrangements in Gaelic to prepare children for moving to the secondary school. This should build on recent improvements to transition arrangements.
- Teachers need to have high expectations of what children can achieve by setting challenging and open-ended activities. These activities should stimulate creativity, curiosity and problem-solving skills while learning in classrooms and beyond, and with staff and partners.
- Staff and children increased their use of technology during the pandemic. Children understand how learning online increases their choices. Children at the older stages have access to class learning and teaching resources online to foster independence. The older children have their own tablets, with others accessing shared resources. Children use applications to support their writing, including to convert voice to written text.
- Teachers are using new approaches to learning. Their play-based approaches are planned well to have close connections to children's whole-class immersion. Children consolidate learning through play in exciting and relevant spaces. An additional adult in the room with the teacher increases children's opportunities to use and hear high-quality interactions on a regular basis during play. Teachers should continue to check that children are hearing and absorbing sufficient Gaelic during play sessions for effective immersion. Teachers' new approaches to improving writing are raising attainment at some stages. Teachers have correctly identified that they should revisit teaching approaches for numeracy and mathematics, as part of the school's planning for improvement. Children have increased opportunities to learn in the outdoors. The headteacher is using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively so partners can work with small groups of children in the outdoors.
- Some aspects of approaches to immersion need to be much stronger. In a few situations, teachers are themselves using too much English. They should avoid simultaneously translating Gaelic to English for children. On a few occasions, too many of the inputs and scaffolding around tasks are in English. Teachers should share practice in using language-rich contexts for project-based learning that supports raising attainment in Gaelic. The headteacher needs to ensure that all immersion and language learning approaches are based on national advice, researched well for the school's context and monitored more robustly. Staff should also increase their knowledge and use of the "Advice on Gaelic Education". The headteacher should articulate the school's policies to immersion to guide staff in ensuring high standards in Gaelic Medium Education.

- Teachers are building their skills in using ongoing assessment to gauge the progress that children are making. Glasgow City Council's motivation and wellbeing profile is a key part of assessment. A majority of staff use quality questioning to help children demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The headteacher and staff have an overview of what should be assessed and when. This includes assessments in phonics, standardised assessments and key milestones. Teachers are reintroducing national standardised assessments for literacy and Gàidhlig (MCNG), following a two-year gap in their availability. Teachers should continue to plan a variety of assessments using their stated aim of “say, make, write and do.” Teachers continue to increase their knowledge of the National Benchmarks. Staff undertake moderation activities within the school, across the cluster and with other all-Gaelic schools in Glasgow. Staff have looked at listening and talking as a priority to improve children’s vocabulary and fluency in Gaelic.

- Staff use a range of progression pathways to deliver most of the curriculum. Senior leaders need to continue planning the curriculum strategically to the context of Gaelic Medium Education. The headteacher and staff monitor children’s progress termly. This is beginning to build into a whole-school current and long-term overview of children’s progress. Teachers make evaluative comments on children’s progress. They are developing strategies for improving feedback. Teachers should increase consistency in giving children verbal and written feedback from assessment, and individual targets to support children in their learning.

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 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

Attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig and literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig is satisfactory. As relevant to immersion, attainment in literacy and English is good. Children need to make more accelerated progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Most children across all stages are achieving expected levels in listening and talking in Gaelic and English.
- Most children are achieving expected levels in reading Gaelic at the early stages, and almost all at the first level within both languages. By the end of C7, a majority of children achieve expected levels in reading Gaelic.
- In writing, most children are attaining expected levels at the early stages, and in Gaelic and English in C4 and C5. Less than half of children are currently achieving these levels in Gaelic writing at first level. A majority of children achieve appropriate levels in writing in both languages by the end of C7.

Listening and talking

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking. At the total immersion stage, most children show their understanding by successfully following instructions. Most children at first and second levels, listen well in classes. Too many respond to Gaelic questions in English. Children at first and second level are not engaging consistently with Gaelic when responding to the ideas of others within groups. Across most stages, children need to reduce their use of English in Gaelic communication by building further on immersion.

Reading

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in reading Gaelic, and from C4 in English. Children working at early level are beginning to hear and say the different sounds made by letters. They enjoy stories and talking about books. By C2, most children can read common words using their awareness of phonics. Children are also building their knowledge of sounds in English at C4. Children at first level identify accurately key features of books. They read aloud fluently. Their knowledge of punctuation used within texts is limited. Most children at first and second levels can explain their choice of favourite author. They share stories they have read and make appropriate predictions. A few children need to be encouraged to read more texts in Gaelic for enjoyment. They need to access more non-fiction texts, including online texts, when reading for pleasure and in order to research information.

Writing

- Across the school, children are making satisfactory progress in writing Gaelic, and as relevant to immersion, from C4 in English. Almost all children at early level are beginning to form a few lowercase letters legibly. In C2, children are beginning to spell common words accurately using a range of strategies. They use words to describe characters in their writing. Children working at first level write confidently about personal experiences. By the end of second level, children write for a range of purposes in two languages. Children engage well while planning writing tasks and use storyboard approaches effectively to support improvements in their writing. A few children write extended imaginative pieces, using paragraphs to separate their thoughts and ideas. Children should be encouraged to set themselves higher expectations of standards of presentation. They also need to focus on spelling and accuracy of Gaelic grammar by engaging with regular teaching of grammar, as well as peer- and self-assessment of their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory, with a few aspects at good. Children at the first and second levels need to use specialist terms for numeracy and mathematics in Gaelic. They reply to questions asked in Gaelic too often in English at the first and second levels. Most children in C1, C4 and C7 make appropriate progress towards early, first or second levels in numeracy, with a few exceeding. Children's attainment has dips but is showing signs of improvement. At first and second levels, children need to be challenged further, with their skills used in different contexts.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, most children develop well their understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division appropriate to their stage. At the early level, most children can count beyond 20. Most children can recall and order the value of coins up to £2. Children can identify and create patterns with colours and shapes. At first and second levels, most children demonstrate brisk mental agility appropriate for their stage. They use their understanding of place value to perform calculations. Most children carry out calculations confidently and accurately. At first level, most children confidently round to the nearest 10 and 100. Most children can convert between pounds and pence. They can apply mental agility skills well to calculate the change in a shopping situation. Most children can use estimation skills well. The majority of children have a good understanding of time. Some are not yet confident in telling the time using 12-hour clocks and the link with 24-hour notation. Most children are confident in working with fractions. A few children exceeding second level can confidently work out algebraic equations.

Shape, position and movement

- Children at the early level can identify two-dimensional shapes using Gaelic terminology. At the first level, most children can describe the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They recognise symmetrical pictures and designs. The majority of children at second level can name a range of angles and recognise them within shapes in the environment. Most children can calculate the area of quadrilaterals and have an accurate understanding of symmetry. They are less confident in working out the perimeter. Children have yet to learn about the diameter, radius and circumference of circles.

Information handling

- At the early level, children can sort objects by colour and shape. At the first level, most children can talk about the use of tally marks to carry out a simple survey. They present information by constructing a bar graph. At the second level, most children can talk about how they would carry out surveys, use graphs and pie charts to present and interpret information. There is scope for children to continue to apply their information-handling skills

across different contexts for learning to ensure depth, challenge and application. Children working at second level demonstrate some understanding of the concepts of certainty and chance.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher and staff check individual children's progress in health and wellbeing, numeracy, and almost all aspects of literacy through Gaelic and English over time. The school uses an authority-wide tracking system that does not enable all literacy skills to be identified through Gaelic and English. Children's skills in listening and talking need to be tracked formally. The headteacher and staff need to set specific targets to outline how children's progress and attainment will be accelerated. Staff are not yet at the stage of capturing progress across all curriculum areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are resuming their engagement with opportunities for achievements. They take part successfully in national events organised for Gaelic Medium Education as immersion opportunities. Children are also successful at local events. Recently, they performed at the festival, Celtic Connections to tell the story of Gaelic in Glasgow - Gàidhlig Ghlaschu. They found this to be a very special experience. Parents and partners contribute in very valuable ways to after-school clubs, for example, choir and shinty. Parents are keen to see more opportunities for their children to develop skills in music and song. Staff should explore further how Gaelic partners may support this to enrich further embedding Gaelic language, culture and fluency in children's experiences. Teachers check that children are attending opportunities for achievements. Children are at an early stage of describing the skills they develop through achievements.

Equity

- PEF is being used well to reduce gaps in health and wellbeing. Additionally, it is being used to close the gap for those who may face disadvantage. This includes by ensuring that their experiences are enriched with excursions away from home with their friends. The headteacher and staff have been successful in receiving additional funding specific to Gaelic. This is used for essential one-to-one and small group additional support to reduce gaps in children's fluency in Gaelic from the pandemic. This additional support is focusing on C7 and C6. As a result, children are becoming more confident in using Gaelic for their learning in the classroom. Children's engagement with learning through Gaelic would be increased further by having support like this at other stages too. Teachers should ensure consistency in children's experiences of high-quality immersion as a key driver of their school.

Other relevant information

- Parents appreciate the opportunity for their children to learn Gaelic and be bilingual. They appreciate the information received at school events. The Parent Council discusses a range of relevant topics relating to the school and Gaelic. Parents are requesting more communication on children's progress and curriculum. This should be taken forward in consultation with the headteacher and Parent Council without increasing bureaucracy. The school's website could be updated to help parents access information independently.
- The handbook on the school's website is dated 2021. The next version should contain information on the school's approaches to immersion.
- Children in C6 and C7 do French as a second additional language. Staff training for this has been affected by the high turnover of staff. Some children also teach Gaelic to children in the all-English school with whom they share the campus. This can still be more effective in increasing the use of Gaelic between children of both schools.
- Children have access to class and whole-school libraries. Staff update collections regularly to include texts relevant to topics that children are learning. Children access texts in Gaelic online through Giglets. Children would benefit from using more audio texts in Gaelic to strengthen immersion experiences.

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.