

Summarised inspection findings

Sgoil Àraich Chille Mhoire

Kilmuir Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

2 May 2023

Key contextual information

Sgoil Àraich Chille Mhoire is situated in purpose-built accommodation within Kilmuir Primary School - Bun-sgoil Chille Mhoire on the Isle of Skye. It provides 1140 hours of early learning and childcare provision through the medium of Gaelic during term time.

The sgoil-àraich is registered for up to 15 children aged between two to those not yet attending school. At the time of the inspection, three children attended the sgoil-àraich.

The manager is a cluster headteacher for Kilmuir Primary School - Bun-sgoil Chille Mhoire and Bun-sgoil Stafainn and Sgoil-Àraich - Staffin Primary School and Nursery Class. A cluster nursery teacher provides management support during fortnightly visits. A team of five part-time practitioners and a support worker currently work on a rota system and share early learning and childcare responsibilities throughout the week.

Practitioners and children in the sgoil-àraich have access to a spacious outdoor area.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

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

- The headteacher and practitioners recently reviewed the vision, values and aims of the school and sgoil-àraich. They involved the children and parents in this review. The refreshed vision and values are evident in practice. Practitioners interact well and totally immerse children in Gaelic language. Practitioners should continue to refer regularly to the vision, values and aims and share them with the children in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way.
- The headteacher and part-time nursery teacher provide effective support and clear guidance to practitioners. They have introduced a range of processes for monitoring and reviewing aspects of practice. These include use of national self-evaluation frameworks along with 'The Advice on Gaelic Education'. There is a strong culture of reflection within the nursery. Practitioners contribute their views to bring about further improvements. Practitioners are aware of the school improvement plan and engage in key priorities relevant to sgoil-àraich. For example, they have increased opportunities for parental engagement and family learning. Practitioners have made recent improvements to the use of spaces within the playroom. They now plan to develop further the outdoor environments to enhance children's learning experiences.
- The sgoil-àraich has experienced some staffing changes in recent months. This has involved staff who normally provide support within the primary classes taking on practitioner roles within the nursery. Practitioners demonstrate resilience and enthusiasm as these changes take place. They highlight the benefits of working across stages. The headteacher should now consider how practitioners' roles could be developed further to provide regular play experiences for children across the early level. This should support further children's transition into P1 and interactions in Gaelic as part of a larger group.

- The headteacher, nursery teacher and practitioners are committed to delivering a high-quality service. As a team they work well together to improve their practice to make a positive impact on learning outcomes for children. Practitioners should continue to access a range of training opportunities and engage in professional collaborative learning within the cluster to share ideas and effective practice. Practitioners are ready to take on meaningful leadership roles within the setting. They should make greater use of digital technologies introduced during the pandemic, for example, to support family learning in Gaelic.

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 warm and welcoming environment where children enjoy learning through total immersion. Children are happy, safe and secure as they play both indoors and outdoors. They concentrate very well for extended periods with play that they themselves choose. Practitioners are skilful in providing well-timed interventions to extend children's learning and interactions during play. They provide a range of language-rich contexts and learning experiences. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences.
- Practitioners use total immersion approaches effectively. These include commentary, songs and role-play. Practitioners engage very well in adult-to-adult conversations to enable children to hear the language. They utilise routines at snack and lunch to encourage the children to use the Gaelic language that they are acquiring. Practitioners ensure that children are developing their skills in numeracy and mathematics through play and routines.
- Children are curious, independent and confident while learning through total immersion play. They are imaginative in role-play as they create a den outdoors. Children's problem-solving skills are developed through practitioners' effective questioning. Practitioners make use of 'The Advice on Gaelic Education' to guide and review their approaches to total immersion.
- Practitioners observe children as they play. Practitioners record children's learning and progress in learning journals. Children enjoy discussing these to share their learning story. Practitioners use floorbooks to plan learning using children's interests as a basis for themes to explore. They are introducing new approaches to record episodes of responsive planning which take place. Practitioners record relevant next steps in learning for individual children. They should now use the National Benchmarks to make more focused observations of what children can do and understand.
- Practitioners should use and extend new approaches to technology that were introduced during the pandemic. They should use digital technology more frequently in the sgoil-àraich. This would provide a means for children to link online and to share their learning with nursery children within the cluster. Practitioners should collaborate with nursery practitioners in other settings to develop moderation as part of reliable and valid assessment and a shared understanding of children's progress.
- The headteacher and practitioners have developed a system for recording children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Practitioners should continue to develop this work. A more robust system to track children's understanding of Gaelic is needed to monitor the progress children are making at the early level over time.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and developmental pathways

- The curriculum has a clear focus on the development of Gaelic through total immersion. Practitioners understand the learning needs of children and reflect this through responsive planning. They provide stimulating environments and play-based experiences both indoors and outdoors. These contribute to enriching children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum. Children have regular opportunities to be creative and to explore and problem solve in these contexts, for example while creating a den.
- The curriculum in the sgoil-àraich takes account of children's interests and national guidance. Practitioners should work with staff across the early level to support progression and continuity in learning. Practitioners should continue to make use of the National Benchmarks to support their knowledge of progression across the early level.
- Children's transitions into the sgoil-àraich are well planned. Practitioners make effective use of 'All About Me' documentation to support a smooth transition for all. Children are supported well when moving into P1 by regular visits to the class. Practitioners should consider developing this further, with a curricular focus across the early level that extends across the school year prior to children starting in Clas 1.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement

- Practitioners have established very positive relationships with children, parents and families. They keep parents well informed through daily dialogue at drop off and pick up times. Parents are regularly asked for their views and these views are acted upon. Practitioners invite parents to share in their child's learning during well attended monthly stay-and-play sessions. Parents comment positively on these experiences.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's learning and progress through an online platform. They regularly contribute to their child's learning journals. This supports children's progress. Practitioners are proactive in signposting parents to Gaelic resources which can support Gaelic language development at home. They also support parents in their use of core Gaelic vocabulary by including common phrases within the sgoil-àraich handbook. There is scope for staff to share more information about total immersion and play pedagogy within the sgoil-àraich handbook.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their 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 each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Children experience very strong, caring relationships in the sgoil-àraich. Practitioners model kindness and respectful interactions that promote wellbeing, which children in turn show towards their peers. Practitioners know each child and their personal circumstances well and are highly attuned to their individual needs. As a result, they provide appropriate and sensitive support for children and their families.
- Practitioners are aware of the link between children's health and wellbeing and successful learning. They support this through providing daily physical play outdoors for children. The outdoor area is well resourced and provides a real-life setting for learning to take place. Practitioners enable children to access the outdoor area at different times of the day. Children often choose to play outdoors but they do not have free-flow access to learning outdoors.
- Practitioners have made a positive start to using the wellbeing indicators with children within the sgoil-àraich. They now need to continue to build on this practice regularly to make these more meaningful for the children. Practitioners value the views and opinions of children. They need to continue to encourage children to be aware of their rights and involve them in the whole school's rights-based approaches. Children are developing an awareness of diversity as they recognise and celebrate a range of events in the calendar year. A greater awareness of diversity and equality should be explored in this way.
- 'Àm Greimeag' (snack) and 'Àm Dìneir' (lunch) times provide social experiences and increase children's independence skills. Children act as helpers as they set up, prepare snack and help to tidy things away. They are developing their skills in hygiene, for example, by hand washing prior to snack. Staff enable children to enjoy a sense of responsibility as they engage in risky play outdoors. Staff should continue to develop children's leadership skills within the sgoil-àraich.
- Practitioners are clear about their statutory duties and understand the importance of keeping children safe. Practitioners have attended appropriate training to ensure they understand procedures and policies. They ensure that personal plans are reviewed with parents at least twice a year.
- Practitioners are aware of procedures to follow where a child may benefit from support with their learning or input from other agencies. Increasing awareness of additional support needs is an area staff plan to explore within the school improvement plan. This would further promote and support inclusion. Practitioners should continue to plan family learning activities to support Gaelic fluency at home.

- Staff are making good progress in taking forward the 'Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, (2017)' by providing 1140 hours of learning and play through total immersion. All staff are fluent Gaelic speakers.

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

- Children are making very good progress in communication and early Gaelic language skills. They are understanding well the Gaelic used by practitioners as they engage in their play. Children engage in role-play and join in singing songs to aid their learning of Gaelic. Having snack and lunch together is helping children to develop group communication skills. Children name items of food and describe size and colours. Children show an interest in stories that are read aloud to them. They access texts across the contexts in which they play and enjoy sharing their learning journals with their friends. All children recognise their name. This should be developed further through self-registration routines. Children develop early writing and mark-making skills using chalk outdoors. There is potential for staff to increase the opportunities for children to apply their developing skills in a wider range of meaningful and exciting contexts.
- Children are making good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. They count to 10 and develop their number recognition through daily routines and experiences such as baking. A few children count back from five to zero. Children would benefit from support to develop further their understanding of number values in meaningful, real-life contexts, such as an awareness of money. As children play, they use appropriate mathematical language, for example when building with blocks or creating long road tracks. Most accurately sort pictures of vehicles by type and colour. A few children are developing an awareness of phrases relating to times in their daily routines in sgoil-àraich.
- Overall, children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. All children are happy and settled in sgoil-àraich. They are caring towards one other as they share and take turns in their total immersion play. Children are developing well their physical skills and their understanding of risk through being outside. They are developing well their hygiene skills through toothbrushing and hand washing. Children make snack choices and talk about foods which are healthy. They are building their independence in preparing and serving themselves snack. Practitioners should implement emotional check-in conversations, using their wellbeing display. This should support children to share how they are feeling and to develop a language of wellbeing.
- All children are making good progress in sgoil-àraich. Practitioners record children's progress within developmental overviews. They provide evaluative comments within children's learning journals. Practitioners record children's use of Gaelic words and phrases in a newly introduced

online tracker. With further development, these would provide staff with a more coherent record of children's progress over time.

- Staff capture children's achievements within their learning journals. Children enjoy sharing these with parents during monthly stay-and-play sessions. An online platform provides a helpful way for staff to share achievements with parents. Practitioners should continue to promote regular engagement to help support parents with their child's learning. They are aware of the need to ensure equity for all children and to take account of any barriers to learning that may exist.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- Staff are making good progress in taking forward the 'Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, (2017)' by providing 1140 hours of learning and play through total immersion. Children are making good progress with their fluency in Gaelic, supported well by a committed team of part-time practitioners. All staff are making a strong contribution to increasing the use of Gaelic through their regular interaction with children and the range of language rich approaches they provide both indoors and outdoors. A few practitioners work across nursery and primary stages. This ensures smooth transitions and allows for clearer progression within children's learning at early level. Effective teamwork and collaboration among staff provide consistent high-quality learning experiences for children within the sgoil-àraich. Their clear focus on self-evaluation also supports continuous improvement. There are plans to extend further monitoring approaches across the cluster.

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.