

Summarised inspection findings

Glenurquhart Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

30 May 2023

Key contextual information

Glenurquhart Primary School (Bun-sgoil Ghlinn Urchadain) serves the village of Drumnadrochit and surrounding area, offering Gaelic and English Medium Education. The school roll is 145 children. The headteacher is supported by a principal teacher.

Attendance is in line with the national average. In September 2021, 11% of pupils were registered for free school meals. No pupils live in the 20% of the most deprived datazones in Scotland. In September 2021, the school reported that 43% of pupils had additional support needs.

During the inspection week, all children were engaged for a day in remote learning as a consequence of bad weather.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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, there is a welcoming culture, strongly based on children's rights. Children can explain clearly how school values are part of every day life in school and how they link to their own learning. Nurturing relationships across the school community underpin a positive learning environment, which supports children's motivation and fosters resilience. There is a strong focus on enabling a 'can do' attitude. This also supports the value of learning through being willing to make mistakes and persist. Children and staff are very proud of their school. They share their successes and achievements in a wide range of ways and have earned national recognition for aspects of their work.
- Children contribute very effectively to the life of the school and wider community through valuable leadership roles. These groups are well supported by the local community, which values highly the school's contribution in diverse areas such as the historical society. Children are active participants in improvement groups, including enterprise and eco committees. They take a key role in organising whole-school events, including leading assemblies.
- Across the school, almost all children engage very well in their learning. Almost all children work well in pairs and groups. Children are skilled at working with others to achieve success in a range of learning activities. They are respectful of each other and participate enthusiastically in class discussions. In a few lessons, teachers could increase the pace of learning.
- Teachers use a learning toolkit, developed in conjunction with children and parents. This provides structure for lessons across the curriculum. It is designed to ensure agreed approaches and standards lead to consistently high-quality learning experiences across the school. Teachers have consistently high expectations of all learners. They share the purpose of lessons very effectively and support children to understand how to be successful in their

learning. Staff provide learning experiences which develop and encourage children's creativity and independence. Teachers use a range of questioning techniques to check for understanding, extend children's thinking and develop effectively their curiosity. Staff use praise well and this encourages children's responses.

- The school's approaches to learning through play at early level are well developed and support a smooth transition from nursery into P1. Children's experiences are planned well. At early level, almost all children are engaged, with children carrying out tasks responsibly. This is further developed through highly effective approaches to checking children's understanding of learning. Across the early level, adults support learning well as children play. They extend children's learning well through effective questioning and commentary. As planned, staff should continue to review and evaluate the impact of play-based learning.
- Staff make effective use of digital technologies across almost all areas of the curriculum to enrich children's learning experiences. Staff have undertaken collegiate activities to share skills and ideas in digital technology and are working towards achieving Digital Schools Award accreditation.
- Staff link a wide range of learning activities across the curriculum very effectively to real-life contexts in a variety of settings. Skills development is embedded in this work. Children are aware of the key skills for learning, work and life they are developing. They link these to their learning which uses links across different subjects. They have frequent opportunities to apply these skills.
- Across the school, staff promote outdoor learning opportunities. They make positive use of the local environment to support learning beyond the school grounds, working closely with partners in the community. Commendably, they also ensure that children receive accreditation for their work, including John Muir awards, recognition of work with the Woodlands Trust and with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- Teachers' planning is informed by a range of valid assessment information. This includes standardised assessment activity and teachers' professional judgement. In almost all cases, teachers ensure that assessment approaches are sufficiently matched to the individual learning needs of children. These approaches support children to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Staff work collaboratively sharing informal and formal assessment practices. They have developed key assessment tasks which are used by all teachers at identified times in the year. Teachers have opportunities to moderate the effectiveness of these tasks and work closely with colleagues from the associated schools group. Moderation for this session is focusing on planning the assessment of writing. Assessment is integral to the planning process and informs next steps in learning.
- Across the school, staff use feedback very effectively to support improvement in children's learning. Children set targets within their learning profiles and are supported by their teachers to reflect on their progress. Children are provided with a range of valuable oral and written feedback which supports them to identify their next steps in learning. Learning conversations helpfully support children to reflect on their strengths and areas of development.
- The headteacher has developed a whole-school tracking system. She takes a comprehensive approach to monitoring the quality of children's experiences, as well as the progress they are making. She works closely with teachers to use data in a highly effective way to identify and target additional support where required. This includes evaluating how effectively the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) meets the needs of a few children. Pupil support assistants work closely with class teachers and provide high-quality support to individual children, as well as

whole-class support. The headteacher provides high-quality feedback to teachers, including guidance on what to do next to improve their practice further.

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

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 numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Staff recognise that the pandemic has had an adverse impact on children's progress in writing and in aspects of numeracy, particularly children's confidence. As a result, there is a focus on developing writing and a drive to increase children's belief in themselves as competent learners in mathematics and numeracy. This is led in part by the children themselves. Children's pace of learning in writing should be increased at all stages across the school to ensure that children are achieving their full potential. There is early evidence of the positive impact of play-based learning on children's progress and attainment, especially within mathematics at early level. Children with additional support needs are making very good progress towards their individual targets in learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Attainment in literacy and English is very good in listening and talking and reading and good in writing.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children across the school listen well for instructions and are keen to answer questions in class. At early level, children enjoy listening to stories. They listen well to each other and take turns during discussions. Children who have achieved first level can ask and answer questions articulately. They listen well for information and can recall key facts. At first level, almost all children take turns and listen carefully to the opinions of others. At second level, children can discuss a range of aspects of their learning and can express their views confidently.

Reading

- By the end of early level, most children are developing well their knowledge of initial and blended sounds. They read familiar texts with accuracy and use their knowledge of sounds and rhyme to decode unknown words. They retell confidently a story with detail. Children at first level are developing effectively their higher order reading skills to understand and interpret texts. Most children can name a variety of authors and can give reasons for selecting their favourite author and genre. At second level, almost all children can read confidently with fluency and expression. They have a clear understanding of the texts and can discuss the main ideas of the plot. They recognise technical language and can answer inferential questions.

Writing

- At early level, most children are starting to write independently. Most children can write with a capital letter and full stop. Staff need to ensure that standards in handwriting and letter formation remain a focus for development. There is scope to develop further children's writing through play. At early and first level, children are improving their skills in structuring their writing within a variety of genres. At first level, children write for a variety of purposes. At second level, most children are using punctuation and paragraphs to structure their writing. Most work is well presented and children have opportunities to use digital technologies for their writing. Writing is well structured and children are clear about the purposes of writing and the standards expected. By the end of second level, children can write for a range of purposes and audiences. They can write to convey information, describe and share experiences. Further opportunities should be provided to extend imaginative writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Staff have been successful in proactively researching and using strategies to raise attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, there is a strong focus on children learning to apply their learning in numeracy and mathematics across curricular areas and to everyday real-life contexts. Parents and partners speak to children about the importance of numeracy and mathematics in their work. Children explore financial education, such as the differences between debit and credit cards and working within a budget. They are developing very good numeracy skills for learning, life and work.
- At early level, children can count beyond 30. Almost all children can match numbers to pictures. They can write and order numbers to 20, add and subtract within 10, including use of digital games. At first and second levels, almost all children demonstrate brisk mental agility appropriate for their stage. Children at first level count confidently forwards and backwards in 2s, 5s, 10s and 100s. Most children can identify fractions and explain the fraction of concrete materials. At second level, almost all children add and subtract decimals confidently using mental strategies. They use their knowledge of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages to solve problems. Children across the school confidently identify and carry out calculations using money. Almost all children across the school can tell the time using 12-hour and 24-hour notation appropriate to their stage. Children have a very good awareness of the passing of time in daily routines.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, almost all children identify two-dimensional shapes and use them to create pictures. At first level, almost all children can name an increasing range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. At second level, children can identify right, acute and obtuse angles and calculate the perimeter of a shape. They can use appropriate mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles identified within shapes in the environment. Children work accurately with symmetry. They can calculate the area and perimeter of quadrilaterals confidently. Children work well with shapes and templates to create tessellated patterns and to make a template for cube nets.

Attainment over time

- Overall, the school's data shows high levels of attainment over a sustained period. Monitoring and tracking of attainment is particularly robust, including trends studied. The headteacher tracks children's attainment closely and can demonstrate the strong progress children make. Staff make effective use of assessment data and National Benchmarks to track and monitor

children's progress in their learning. Staff use a range of appropriate interventions to address gaps in aspects of learning.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are confident learners. They have a deep understanding of their rights, responsibilities and place as both local and global citizens. Staff celebrate children's achievements in classes, at assemblies and throughout the school community with newsletters and social media. They use class blogs effectively to share successes. This enables all parents and partners to access information about the life and work of the school.
- Children can identify the skills they are developing through the wide range of planned opportunities they have to achieve. These include confidence, leadership, responsibility and cooperative working in teams. They understand how their wider achievements link to their learning and discuss these within the profiling process and as part of regular learning conversations. Children also earn accreditation for many of their achievements. The school tracks and links the skills children are developing both within and out with the school, to support progression in learning.

Equity for all learners

- Through development and use of the comprehensive tracking and monitoring system, the headteacher has highly effective systems in place to monitor attainment and target interventions. This is reducing attainment gaps and accelerating progress. This includes detailed and thorough strategic tracking of different needs throughout the school. Key areas include attainment over time of children affected by challenges such as rural isolation and poverty, aspects of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis or particular needs. The headteacher and staff are proactive in ensuring the curriculum is accessible by all children, using PEF to fund additional support which facilitates highly effectively the attendance of a few children. Staff support children with barriers to learning very effectively to ensure they can achieve success across the curriculum.

Context

Bun-sgoil Ghlinn Urchadain (Glenurquhart Primary School) has an established Gaelic Medium provision for children at the primary stages. It first opened in 2011 and re-opened following two years of children travelling to Bun Sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis, the school for Gaelic Medium in Inverness. There is one multi-composite class. In March 2022, a total immersion Sgoil-Àraich (nursery) was opened. All staff are fluent Gaelic speakers.

The school has a strong drive for languages. Gaelic (Learners) is also offered in P5 to P7 English Medium classes. Across the school, children, staff and parents show a strong commitment to learning and using Gaelic.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- The school's vision, values and aims were created with all stakeholders in 2015. They have been updated to include children's rights and Gaelic. The school's vision, values and aims underpin their curriculum rationale. The class for Gaelic Medium is fully integrated in all aspects of school life, while ensuring immersion, inclusion and empowerment. Children are developing well as confident and responsible citizens who are polite, kind and respectful to each other and to adults. Staff and children are proud of their school, and of the merits of Gaelic Education.
- Staff and children enjoy positive relationships. Almost all children are eager learners of Gaelic. They are motivated and engage well in their learning. They interact well with staff and with each other. They contribute effectively to the life of the school within various leadership and citizen groups. Children have opportunities to lead learning in Gaelic in the classroom, in the Sgoil Àraich and at whole school assemblies. The Language Ambassadors take responsibility for leading at assemblies presenting a Gaelic 'Phrase of the Fortnight' to encourage the use of Gaelic throughout the school.
- Staff recognise the importance of total immersion and use appropriate strategies to support the children's understanding and developing fluency of the language. The children enjoy and respond to the active fun activities they engage in. Staff should also consider how they can encourage all children to talk more consistently and unprompted in Gaelic with each other as they develop their fluency. The younger children in the composite class are learning Gaelic vocabulary and skills from hearing the older children being taught by their teacher.
- Children are developing their independence in their learning. They stay on task well when working individually in a multi-composite class. Children at the early level have some opportunities to learn through play. The school has rightly identified the need to develop a play strategy for Gaelic Medium Education. This would enrich children's fluency and raise further attainment.
- Most children understand the purpose of their learning. Staff build on children's interests when planning learning and offer choice in project-based learning, in class tasks, and the novels they choose to read. Digital devices are used for research, to enhance children's learning and develop skills across the curriculum. Children are developing skills in using 3D printers and robots. Children's participation in FilmG develops their skills in script writing, film making, editing and the relevance to the world of work.

- Children enjoy learning in the outdoor environment. They work with various businesses and partners for Gaelic. There is a strong focus on the skills children will require as they grow, develop and move on to be successful. Children apply these skills well in a variety of real-life contexts across the curriculum. The school works with the local care centre to foster intergenerational links for Gaelic in the community.
- Staff have a systematic approach to the use of learning profiles as part of regular learning conversations. Children reflect on their learning and can identify targets on which they want to work. The profiles are shared with parents for their comment. This should be strengthened further by ensuring more evidence is written in Gaelic within profiles. Children self-assess their own work. Staff give children helpful oral and some written feedback on their learning. This should be further developed to provide a more consistent approach to written feedback. Bilingual class blogs are also used to share the children's learning with parents and provides further evidence of their learning.
- Assessment is integral to planning learning and teaching. Staff use standardised assessments, designed for learning through Gaelic and English. Staff use assessment data diagnostically to identify areas of improvement and plan targeted interventions where children need them. Staff meet with the headteacher regularly to moderate assessment decisions, agree interventions, ensure needs are met and progress is achieved. This practice should be developed further by establishing cross-school links for moderation in Gaelic. The headteacher's robust approach to tracking children's progress supports the regular review of targets and the impact of interventions on children's attainment and achievement.
- All children in English Medium Education at P5 to P7 learn Gaelic as an additional language through weekly lessons. They recognise the place of Gaelic in the school community and its relevance in future work opportunities. Children are making a positive start in the acquisition of Gaelic language.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- As there are small numbers of children at each stage, broad statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children.
- Children are making good progress in literacy and Gàidhlig and in their use of Gaelic across the curriculum. Staff track children's attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig, literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. A Gaelic language acquisition progression framework is used to plan learning and to extend fluency in Gaelic. Staff should continue to work with the local authority and other providers, to support Gaelic progression pathways.
- Staff recognise the difference the newly-opened Sgoil Àraich is already making in raising children's attainment in Gaelic. Children moving into P1 from the Sgoil Àraich are continuing to develop their very good prior progress in understanding and acquiring fluency in Gaelic. Across levels, children are developing good fluency and are confident in using Gaelic. They use Gaelic in a range of contexts, including adult-led situations, when working in pairs and groups and in out of school activities. This can be strengthened further by putting in place more strategies to minimise children's use of English vocabulary within their oral communication in Gaelic. Children are good at expressing their ideas and preferences. They listen well to others and take turns to speak.
- Children demonstrate they can read for understanding in both Gaelic and English as appropriate to their stage of immersion, using expression. Children are aware of the different types of text that they can access. They can talk about characters, setting and features of the

writer's craft. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and can share their author preferences.

- Children would benefit from more regular routines for developing their writing skills in both languages, whilst mindful of stages of immersion. Staff should increase the pace of learning to ensure children are more secure in Gaelic reading and writing.
- Children participate actively in wider achievements both in and outwith school. All children benefit from leadership opportunities. This helps them develop confidence and consequently has a positive impact on their learning. Staff and children are proud of their successes in their work in Gaelic. These are celebrated on a regular basis through school blogs and website, achievement trackers and school displays. Through their recent participation in the FilmG competition, children enhanced their skills in Gaelic language, technology and film making. Pupils filmed and edited their FilmG entry themselves. They were shortlisted for best production in the under-12 category.
- Children contribute enthusiastically to the work of promoting and celebrating Gaelic in the local community through their social enterprise project. The Gaelic Medium class came runners up in the Social Enterprise Academy. They used this to create Gaelic t-shirts ('GMTs') that were sold to raise money to support the local care centre. They are proud to promote Gaelic in the wider community and across generations. All children in P5 to P7 Gaelic Medium and English Medium classes took part in a Developing the Young Workforce project with a focus on Gaelic in Employability. This developed their understanding of the key skills they are acquiring that will benefit them in their future careers.
- Children learn about the history and traditions of the area from partners, through use of traditional stories and customs, Gaelic songs and playing instruments. Participating in a school trip to Edinburgh enabled children to interact with peers across other Gaelic schools in Scotland. This helped them to see the relevance of Gaelic out with the classroom and develop further their confidence and appreciation of the language.

Other relevant evidence

- This provision will be strengthened further by using the “Advice on Gaelic Education” (2022) for self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Moving forward, the headteacher has put arrangements in place that will ensure children in the P1-P7 Gaelic Medium class continue to learn through total immersion in Gaelic for the majority of the week. This could be increased further by increased working with the Sgoil Àraich, secondary school, accessing national digital platforms and other primary Gaelic Medium Education schools.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The headteacher shows very strong leadership of Gaelic Education. She has been instrumental in taking forward a 3-18 provision in the community, working with parents, the secondary school and The Highland Council. She demonstrates a strong vision for strengthening Gaelic in the primary school. The headteacher has introduced a Sgoil Àraich delivering 1140 hours of total immersion. Staff work with colleagues in Glenurquhart High School to increase the provision of Gàidhlig in the curriculum. This is improving children's progression in learning and streamlining their transition experiences. The newly opened Sgoil Àraich is already raising children's attainment in Gaelic.

Children enjoy learning in the outdoor environment through working with various businesses and partners for Gaelic. There is a strong focus on the skills children will require as they grow, develop and move on to be successful. Children apply these skills in a variety of real-life contexts across the curriculum. Children contribute to the work of promoting and celebrating Gaelic in the local community through their social enterprise project. The class for Gaelic Medium were runners up in a Social Enterprise Academy competition. All children in P5 to P7 Gaelic Medium and English Medium classes took part in a Developing the Young Workforce project with a focus on Gaelic Employability, learning about how these skills support work. Commendably, the school was the first primary school in Scotland to achieve a Scottish Centre of Languages (SCILT) Gold Languages and Employability Award in Gaelic. This has enabled children and staff to share their work with a large number of partners in Scotland and internationally.

Staff are making good progress in implementing the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. They have increased the promotion and provision of 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education, while working with the local playgroup and parents. This is leading to an increase in the number of children and young people learning the language. There are very good partnerships supporting a seamless transition for children moving from the Sgoil Àraich into P1 and from P7 to S1. This provides a strong 3-18 progressive pathway in Gaelic Medium Education, which will lead to qualifications in the senior phase. Children and staff are ambitious. They work with the local care centre to foster intergenerational Gaelic links in the community. They are already competing successfully in national competitions, such as Education Scotland's Gaelic Education Awards.

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.