**Early Literacy Environment Assessment for Gaelic Medium Education**

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| **Aspects of Literacy Development** | **Where Are We Now?** | **Where We Want to Get To** | **Action required** |
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| Vocabulary development: Gaelic language acquisition.Practitioners may wish to refer to the [Advice on Gaelic Education](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/comhairle-mu-fhoghlam-gaidhlig-advice-on-gaelic-education/) which details the use of total immersion approaches and describes best practice for Gaelic language learning.***Sound Identification and Letter Naming***1. Do staff give all children opportunities to explore, discuss and identify the Gaelic single letter sounds and the sounds made by a combination of letters in a variety of formats?
2. Do staff support the children’s learning and understanding of Gaelic through a range of visual resources?
3. Do staff provide a range of opportunities to increase the children’s Gaelic vocabulary?
4. Do staff help all children to link phonemes to the written equivalent (graphemes)?
 |  | **A Gaelic language rich environment** * The evidence based programme in place uses a multi-sensory approach to identify and apply knowledge of lower and upper case letters, their corresponding sounds, phonemes appropriate to the stage and their corresponding graphemes.
* Staff use a range of appropriate resources and strategies to aid comprehension in the total immersion setting, such as visual prompts, expressive gestures and modelling.
* Staff use a range of contexts to develop fluency, including the use of stories, rhymes, songs, drama and role play. Opportunities for social interactions are planned for, such as snack time, circle time, collaborative play and games.
* The classroom environment (walls/display areas) reflects this approach and is stimulating, referred to daily and changed on a regular basis to sustain motivation.

(See appendix 2 for further ideas). |  |
| 1. Do staff explicitly teach all children the Gaelic alphabet in lower and upper case letters?
 | * Through a variety of well planned activities, children are given many opportunities to see, hear and discuss lower and upper case letters, phonemes and graphemes appropriate to their stage of learning.
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| ***Phonological Awareness***1. Do staff help all children to identify and manipulate phonemes in spoken words?
 |  | * Through a variety of well planned activities, children are given many opportunities to identify and manipulate phonemes in spoken words; initially with the class teacher, the classroom assistant and then with a partner/group children will engage in activities such as:
* I Spy
* Picture cards, pairs begin with same initial sound and ending with the same sound
* ‘bh’, ‘mh’, ‘ch’ game
* Picture cards – same medial sound
* Phoneme substitution – l/ar/c/ar
* Using a selection of magnetic letters, children repeat given word and then make the 2, 3 or 4 letter word and read it.(See appendix 2 for further ideas)
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| **Phoneme Decoding**1. Do teachers provide systematic progressive phonics teaching on a daily basis, where by children learn the major letter-sound correspondence using evidence-based methodologies?
 |  | * Phonics is taught daily. It is active and engaging with plenty of opportunities for physical manipulations of sounds (to make and break words). Low level passive tasks are avoided and the multisensory approach is supported by appropriate resources e.g. magnetic letters, whiteboards and pens, sand writing. May also include [Factaraidh nam Fuaimean](https://fnf.lasadh.co.uk/) or games on [Lasadh website](https://www.lasadh.co.uk/fonaigs/). The pace is appropriate to the level of the children’s Gaelic fluency and should support the [principles of total immersion](https://education.gov.scot/media/zqqazljv/gael3-7total-immersion.pdf). Consolidation periods are used to support learning. The pace should enable opportunities for the children to apply their phonic knowledge, new and prior, in reading and writing.
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| 1. Do staff give all children opportunities to analyse and blend simple words?
 | * During the daily phonics lesson the children are given opportunities to blend sounds in words. The word attack strategies form a part of our homework programme to inform parents/carers and assist them when reading at home. In order to enable parents/carers to interact with their children while reading Gaelic texts it is imperative that support is made available through signposting to websites, such as [Gaelic4parents](https://www.gaelic4parents.com/), [Go! Gaelic](https://go-gaelic.scot/) and [Lasadh](https://www.lasadh.co.uk/) and planned activities within school and local contexts, for example Parent/Carer Workshops.
* While reading with children, teachers model word attack strategies for children to consider and eventually apply them appropriately.
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| **Phoneme Decoding**1. Do staff help all children to use phoneme knowledge to help them begin to spell simple words?
 |  | * Staff recognise that having knowledge of phonemes in itself is no guarantee of spelling ability. Children are successful spellers when the link between word attack strategies, phonics and spelling has been made by the class teacher. Teaching children to use sound spelling knowledge is the most important word attack strategy. This can be achieved using teacher ‘think aloud’ when modelling writing and reading.
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| **Word Recognition**1. Do staff promote accurate and fluent word reading, which includes tricky words (e.g. chaidh, seo) using a range of strategies?
 | * Word attack and comprehension strategies are modelled by the class teacher, using ‘think aloud’ to promote the importance of accurate and fluent word reading. Children are taught how to predict using illustrations or contextual clues. Tricky words (e.g. chaidh, seo) are taught early on in our spelling programme because of their occurrence in all reading materials.
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| **Reading and Book Availability**1. Do staff give all children repeated opportunities to engage with texts in class using a variety of texts; audio, visual, animated etc.
2. Do staff explore the meaning of texts through the use of visuals, drama and role-play?
3. Does the learning environment provide a range of written language through labels, wall displays, routines, charts etc.?
 |  | * Children are exposed to a wide range of texts across a variety of genre to support Gaelic fluency, word recognition and de-coding strategies.
* Children take their reading book home on a regular (sometimes daily) basis and have regular access to a lending library. Parents/carers are aware of the support available through Gaelic4Parents online service.
* Children have opportunities to build and develop Gaelic vocabulary through the use of traditional tales, familiar stories e.g. Storyworlds, Sgeulachdan Traidiseanta, Scottish Book Trust stories
* The learning environment is clearly labelled in Gaelic and is visually accessible to all children.
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| 1. Are electronic books (e-books, iPads and laptops) in use by all children to access texts such as [‘Giglets ann an Gàidhlig’](https://www.storlann.co.uk/giglets/index.html)?
2. Do children experiencing barriers to their learning have access to voice assisted technology such as [Ceitidh Guth na Gàidhlig](https://www.thescottishvoice.org.uk/home/)?
 | * Staff are aware of the types of digital technologies available to support learning, teaching and assessment in GME.
* Training opportunities are available to staff to enable the effective use of technology.
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| **Assessment**1. Do staff track and monitor children’s progress in key skills (e.g. auditory discrimination, sound letter knowledge; blending and segmenting; vocabulary; comprehension; fluency) on a systematic and frequent basis and adjust learning goals accordingly?
 | * Staff make appropriate use of assessment resources as diagnostic tools, such as [Emerging Literacy](https://highlandliteracy.com/2016/08/29/phonological-awareness-assessment-gaelic/), to assess the children’s progress in literacy.
* Progress in key skills is monitored on a daily basis – through observation during phonics lessons and through readiness of application within reading and writing tasks.
* The needs of each child are addressed and support provided when necessary.
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| **Language Comprehension**1. Are staff able to adapt their interactions and the learning environment to take account of individual children’s Gaelic language development? Is the use of the visual prompts promoted? Can they support children to understand and respond to language of increasing complexity? Further details on [total immersion](https://education.gov.scot/media/zqqazljv/gael3-7total-immersion.pdf).
 |  | * Staff are fully aware of the need for differentiation and the importance of keeping all children involved and motivated with their learning of Gaelic. Staff model high quality Gaelic and provide a variety of opportunities for children to use their Gaelic skills in fun and interesting situations. A Gaelic language rich environment is essential.
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| 1. Do staff engage all children in discussions about word and text? For example:

 a) By encouraging children to seek out and offer new words for discussion? b) By introducing and modelling new vocabulary relevant to the learning context?c) By encouraging all pupils to use them in spoken and written language? | * As part of total immersion teaching, staff model high quality Gaelic to children. Children are encouraged to take part in any discussions arising from new vocabulary or more challenging texts. Staff encourage the use of Gaelic through the sensitive/appropriate and consistent handling of errors. Staff make links, through specific questioning, to children’s own knowledge and experiences.
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| 1. Do staff and children ask who/why/what/how questions about stories and encourage all children to respond?
 |  | * While reading to children, staff should stop at planned points in the text and ask themselves appropriate questions in order to monitor understanding of the text using ‘think aloud’. Start with who, when, where, what happened heading to why and how questions. Modelling re-reading and a variety of strategies to clarify any misunderstanding is what successful readers do. (See appendix 2 for more ideas).
* Children are given opportunities to ask questions of one another about the text.
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| 1. Through questioning, do staff explore whether all children can predict in simple stories?
 | * Having modelled the importance of monitoring comprehension through questioning, staff make the link from this to predicting what might happen based on prior knowledge.
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| 1. Do staff support children to retell simple stories, encouraging the use of supportive resources such as, sequencing cards, pictures, puppets etc?
 | * While reading, staff model story structure by stopping and summarising what happens at the beginning, the middle or the end. Children internalise this practice which helps them to retell the story and demonstrates understanding.
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| **Classroom Organisation**1. Where staff have children working in pairs or groups, is the grouping done thoughtfully and appropriately for the learners’ needs in different activities? Are groupings closely monitored for effectiveness and changed as required?
 |  | * Only when children fully understand the key literacy teaching point can they successfully work with a partner or within a group of equal ability. For this reason, groups are closely monitored and changed appropriately.
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| 1. Is the frequency with which staff change activity appropriate to individual learners’ needs?
 | * It is the needs of the individual which determine the frequency of any activity being changed. It is vital that all activities are monitored and adjusted accordingly.
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| **Encouraging Motivation**1. Do staff give enthusiastic and explicit feedback to all children on their learning and progress in Gaelic by way of formative assessment?
 | * Oral feedback is always specific and immediate. When giving feedback on any written work, children should be present. When this is not possible staff should ensure children understand any feedback given prior to starting a new piece of work. It is essential that this feedback should state how Gaelic language improvement could be achieved.
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| 1. Do staff encourage children to take risks in learning and be prepared to be wrong sometimes?
 |  | * Staff encourage children to ‘have a go’ based on any prior knowledge and effort is always rewarded. Being wrong is considered to be a learning experience.
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| 1. Do staff have high expectations for all children and set targets appropriately?
 | * High expectations for each child is a priority. High expectations is always based on prior learning in Gaelic and targets are set in consultation with the child/children.
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| **Inclusion, Differentiation and Support**1. Are staff aware of the participation levels in their class and do they ensure they support all children to speak and participate as fully as they can?
 | * Staff are aware of participation levels and encourage and support all children to participate in a way which suits each child. This process is ongoing within the classroom environment. If any child does not participate in his/her normal way, this would be investigated.
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| 1. Do staff provide differentiated learning experiences while ensuring that all learners develop higher order language skills?
 |  | * Whole class lessons well planned and paced to ensure that all learners have access to the same higher order language skills whilst differentiation of group tasks ensures the needs of each child are met.
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| 1. Is there additional effective support available for children requiring support with early literacy?
 | * Early intervention and support is the key in assisting children with literacy. The transition programme from nursery informs our literacy approach which starts as soon as possible, depending on the context. Staff have identified those children needing support early and target them appropriately. Parents are guided by the school and are provided with the information and tools to support their child at home. The child knows why they are receiving this support and the parents are happy to complete targeted activities at home which reinforce work given at school. Staff communicate with parents on a regular basis to discuss progress and decide on next steps. Parents are happy with this arrangement and appreciate being informed early of any difficulties their child may be experiencing. This should be in line with each school’s support policy.
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| 1. Is individual or small group instruction; in addition to normal whole-class instruction, supportive of children’s Gaelic language development?
 |  | * All children requiring reinforcement of any class lesson are targeted by the most qualified person – the class teacher.
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| 1. Are all or the least able children engaged in a small group direct instruction programme?
 | * As well as class lessons, all children work in differentiated groups. The least able children have their own programme and are taught no fewer than 3 times a week, since evidence shows this to be most successful. Early identification of barriers to language acquisition is key. Targeted Gaelic language approaches should be set to ensure every learner has the opportunity to achieve.
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| 1. Is a peer tutoring or literacy befriending scheme (probably with older children as helpers) operating in which partners are trained?
 | * Reciprocal reading plays a major role within our literacy programme however all pupils are trained in this prior to taking part in it. In total immersion staff should seek opportunities to utilise Gaelic speaking partners to aid Gaelic language development
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| 1. Is computer assisted instruction operating for all or the least able children?
 | * There are many computer based programmes operating within the classroom. Children have access to the most appropriate programme to suit their needs and reinforce any literacy component.
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| **Parental Involvement**1. Do staff involve the parents or carers of all children in a parent involvement scheme in home or school?
 |  | * All parents or carers are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s learning, through workshops, working parties and homework. Staff accommodate parents/carers when best suits them and they are very satisfied with the opportunities given to contribute to their children’s progress.
* All teaching staff attend training on literacy courses pertinent to their stage annually in order to update and refresh their literacy teaching. All staff have access to National, local authority and inter-authority professional learning events for Gaelic Medium Education. The use of technology should be considered as appropriate. Classroom assistants have the opportunity to participate in professional learning activities relating to their role.
* Staff in Gaelic Medium Education are given the opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues.
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| **Staff Support Development and Resources**1. Do staff (including classroom assistants) participate in adequate training on literacy?
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| 1. Do staff have access to appropriate resources and know how to use them appropriately?
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