

Summarised inspection findings

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis

The Highland Council

19 September 2023

Key contextual information

Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis is an all-Gaelic immersion bun-sgoil (school) in the city of Inverness. The bun-sgoil caters for sgoil-àraich (nursery) to C7 (This is an abbreviation of the Gaelic word for class, or primary stage.) All senior leaders, teachers and support staff are specialist teachers and speakers of Gaelic.

Children who attend Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis live in Inverness and the surrounding areas of the city. The annexe, known as the Roinn na Tràth-ìrean (early years department) opened in 2019. Currently the Roinn na Tràth-ìrean accommodates the sgoil-àraich and C1 classes. The roll has increased significantly since the bun-sgoil opened. At the time of the visit there were 223 children across eight classes in the bun-sgoil. There are two playrooms in the sgoil-àraich and a large outdoor area for children.

The bun-sgoil has had a significant number of changes in senior leadership since it opened in 2007. There are currently four senior leaders for the bun-sgoil, a ceannard (headteacher), leas-cheannard (a deputy headteacher) and two part-time prìomh thidsearan (principal teachers, one of which is an acting position). At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for two weeks.

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

- Staff at Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis provide a positive, nurturing and welcoming ethos. This underpins the bun-sgoil's approach to total immersion and reflects their values: Coibhneas (Kindness), Dòchas (Hope), Spòrs (Fun), Deònach (Willing) and the focus on children's rights. Children are very proud of their bun-sgoil and interact well with each other, staff and visitors. Senior leaders and staff show strong leadership of Gaelic Medium Education.
- Across the bun-sgoil, almost all staff provide high-quality immersion experiences through Gaelic that are relevant, and well matched to children's needs and interests. All teachers have a strong knowledge of the principles of immersion and use appropriate strategies. This is supporting children's confidence in understanding and developing fluency in Gaelic. Staff should continue to make good use of the 'Advice on Gaelic Education' and explore further ways to support children's use of the language in social situations. This will help children to lead and take further ownership of their own immersion.
- Children are confident, articulate, polite and contribute positively to the life of the bun-sgoil and wider community. They represent the bun-sgoil's motto of 'Gaisgich Òg na Gàidhlig' (young Gaelic heroes) very well. Children from C2-7 have the opportunity to lead and contribute to committees including Eco, Rights Respecting Group and Life Skills through Gaelic. Within these groups children's views are sought, listened to and acted upon. As a result, older children lead football clubs for younger pupils and suggestion boxes have been introduced in

all classes to further enhance pupil voice. The established buddying system between sgoil-àraich and C6 provides opportunities for children to further develop their leadership skills, and support language acquisition and transition into C1. Children have a strong understanding of their rights and the national wellbeing indicators. They can apply them across a range of contexts and, as a bun-sgoil, are working towards gold level national accreditation for right-based learning.

- Almost all children are active participants in their learning. They are enthusiastic and work very effectively in pairs and groups. Across the bun-sgoil, children are responsible for many aspects of their learning. They have regular opportunities to exercise choice, including what and how they learn through Gaelic. Children understand very well the purpose of their learning and often lead the learning of their class, for example setting up 'Café Matamataig' as an outdoor classroom, and older children starting their own enterprise companies.
- Teachers motivate children very well by planning exciting, relevant and challenging activities that enable children to develop their Gàidhlig literacy skills and demonstrate creativity. This includes very good use of the outdoors and local community. Children show high levels of engagement when learning in the outdoor environment. They work very well with Gaelic-specific businesses, organisations and partners. Teachers know all children well as individuals and plan effectively to meet their needs. They give clear instructions in lessons and use questioning very well to enhance children's understanding. Pupil support staff work skilfully with the children to support both Gaelic and wellbeing. Teachers should continue to develop and provide targeted support and challenge that helps all children to achieve their full potential.
- At the early stages of the bun-sgoil, teachers are developing approaches to play-based, active learning. They should now plan for total immersion to be a key driver in these approaches. At the early stages, teachers are beginning to develop approaches to total immersion play. They should use the 'Advice on Gaelic Education' to strengthen regular interactions with children and ensure they hear and use Gaelic throughout play, both indoors and outdoors. Staff should support all children in their use of Gaelic across the day so that they maintain total immersion experiences.
- All teachers use digital technology as a key tool for enhancing learning and teaching. By C7, children are highly skilled in using tablet computers to access learning and use a variety of functions such as word processors and movie making. Children also use online books to access reading in Gaelic. This is an embedded part of how they learn in class. Teachers use assistive functions on computers to make learning more accessible for children with additional needs. Staff should build on very good practice by fully implementing a digital skills progression framework to ensure skills are connected across all curricular areas. The bun-sgoil community is working towards national digital accreditation.
- At all stages, children are clear about what they are learning and why. There is a strong focus on teaching the skills children will require as they grow, develop and move on to be successful in the world of work. Children apply these skills well in a variety of real-life, current contexts across the curriculum, and in supporting activities in the local community. This includes many links with the world of work specific to Gaelic.
- All teachers' long-term and medium-term planning is well linked to experiences and outcomes, using helpful progression frameworks. Detailed medium-term planning is shared with parents. This provides a helpful overview of what children are learning and how parents can support and reinforce this at home. Children are becoming increasingly involved in planning their learning with their teachers.

- The bun-sgoil's assessment policy and calendar ensures assessment is integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Formative assessment strategies are consistently used in all classes. Teachers are embedding strategies for self, peer and teacher assessment which provides effective feedback and suggested next steps in learning for children. As a result, almost all children are aware of their individual targets. The breadth of their learning is recorded in 'learning profiles' and by using apps which are accessed regularly by parents.
- Teachers make effective use of local authority frameworks when assessing children's progress. They use diagnostic information well from standardised assessments in both Gaelic and English. Teachers use robust baseline assessment evidence to support their professional judgements and plan for next steps. This includes assessments bespoke for Gaelic Medium Education and for specific learning difficulties. Senior leaders use assessment information well to support and direct improvements in learning and teaching. Senior leaders should now work with staff to streamline assessment to prioritise key information required.
- Senior leaders provide opportunities for moderation of children's progress linked to the National Benchmarks, including with colleagues in other local schools. This is supporting staff to become more confident in applying national standards when making professional judgements. Teachers work with stage partners to moderate children's writing in Gaelic. As planned, senior leaders should extend the moderation process to include other Gaelic medium bun-sgoiltean (primary schools).
- Senior leaders and teachers hold useful termly meetings. These focus on children's progress and planning for learning, teaching and assessment. Cluster school colleagues are supporting staff to fully embed a more detailed and comprehensive tracking system. As a result, staff are monitoring more effectively and in more detail children's progression and attainment in literacy through Gaelic and English and in numeracy. Throughout this work, children's stage of immersion is considered. As planned, staff are developing this tracking approach across other curricular areas. Staff are now using the information gathered to evaluate more robustly the effectiveness of interventions and supports. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to work together to ensure a shared understanding of progression and expected standards for individuals, groups and cohorts.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The bun-sgoil 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

very good

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 bun-sgoil'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, literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, across the school, children's progress and attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig, literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics is very good. By the end of C7, almost all children are confident in the use of Gaelic and all in the use of English. They are able to use both languages in a range of situations within and outwith bun-sgoil. At each level, a few children are exceeding nationally expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Senior leaders can evidence that when children face barriers to learning, they make good progress in their targeted areas of support and a few meet nationally expected CfE levels at key milestones.

Attainment in literacy in Gàidhlig and literacy, and literacy and English

Listening and talking

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in their understanding and use of Gaelic language. At total immersion level, most children successfully follow instructions and can use Gaelic terminology. At first and second levels, almost all children listen well in classes, take turns to speak and respond to staff in Gaelic. Children contribute to discussions in a meaningful way by answering questions appropriately, sharing information and offering opinions. By the end of second level, almost all children can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions. A few children revert to using English in group tasks and situations. Children should continue to lead their immersion learning in pair and group situations to develop their skills in oral Gaelic. At each stage, there are children with well-developed fluency who need more challenging contexts in which to extend their specialist vocabulary and idiom.

Reading

- At total immersion level, children listen to stories, use pictures and repetitive parts of the story to help and predict what is going to happen. Children can use their knowledge of sounds, letters, blending and patterns in Gaelic language to read and recognise words. At first and second levels, almost all children are making very good progress in Gaelic and English reading and can read with fluency, demonstrating an understanding of texts. At first level, almost all children discuss the features of fiction and non-fiction texts and explain the texts they are reading confidently. Children can read with good pace and tone and will benefit from further practice reading aloud with expression. At second level in Gaelic and English, almost all children understand the features of text, punctuation, and can explain why and when they are used. Overall, children's level of grammar is very good. Children describe their preferences for particular texts, authors and sources. To further extend their skills in Gaelic reading, children would benefit from reading more Gaelic novels and texts for enjoyment.

Writing

- Almost all children are making good progress in their writing, with a few children writing very high-quality texts of length using complex vocabulary. Across all stages, children write very well for a range of purposes and genres in Gaelic, including story writing, diary entries, leaflets and recipes. By the second level, almost all children write well in English. By the end of C1, most children can write a sentence independently and use a variety of strategies when spelling. They will benefit from practising further their drawing to support the early stages of the writing process. At first and second levels, children spell most words accurately in Gaelic and English. Older children use digital technologies well to check and edit writing to improve accuracy. At first and second levels, almost all children can use paragraphs and punctuation accurately. At first level, a few children write at length in Gaelic, beyond their expected CfE level. Within second level, most children can use an increasing range of punctuation and write more complex sentences in a grammatically accurate way. A few children are working beyond their expected CfE level and are engaging the reader very well using word choice and imagery. Across the bun-sgoil, a few children require further support with their presentation and handwriting.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Teachers provide interesting, relevant experiences which support children to develop their knowledge, grow in confidence and apply their numeracy skills in real life. Almost all children understand and use specialist terms for numeracy and mathematics in Gaelic. Across the bun-sgoil, a few children would benefit from further support to improve their presentation and layout.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children are developing a sense of size, experiment with units of measure and recognise an increasing range of numbers. Almost all add within 10 confidently and make good use of concrete materials and visual prompts to support their calculations. At first level, almost all identify accurately the place value of three and four-digit numbers and round to the nearest hundred. They make effective use of a wide range of strategies to complete calculations in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They would benefit from further practice with calculating change. By the end of second level, almost all children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their age and carry out multi-step calculations with speed and accuracy. Children can apply their skills very well and make connections across fractions, decimals and percentages. Practical, real-life experiences, such as household budgeting and profit and loss, regularly reinforce children's learning about money.

Shape, position and movement

- At early and first levels, most children identify and name an increasing range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using Gaelic terminology. At early level, children are beginning to explore simple language of position and direction. At first level, most children can tessellate two-dimensional shapes to create patterns and designs. By the end of second level, most children demonstrate, link and apply their knowledge and skills of angles and shape. They are confident applying their knowledge to calculate missing angles.

Information handling

- Across the bun-sgoil, children benefit from regularly applying their skills in information handling across a range of real-life contexts, for example a litter survey. At early level, almost all children use their knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort items. They use their early counting skills to answer questions about information they have gathered or from a simple display. Almost all children at first level use a variety of different methods well to display data, for example, as block graphs, bar graphs, tables and Carroll diagrams. By the end of second level, almost all children interpret information on a range of charts and graphs and

clearly share their thinking. They can use their skills in digital technology to organise and display information, such as electronic spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders are establishing well-considered and robust approaches to predicting and checking children's individual and overall progress over time. This includes numeracy and all aspects of literacy through Gaelic and English. After disruption to learning and teaching, and periods of remote learning due to the pandemic, the bun-sgoil's data shows children's progress and attainment decreased. Children's confidence in using Gaelic language was particularly impacted. Senior leaders and staff identified this gap quickly and put in place interventions to support children's learning. Recently, bun-sgoil evidence shows improvements in literacy and numeracy across the bun-sgoil. Overall, across the curriculum, almost all children make good progress over time, building on prior skills and knowledge and a few are making very good progress. As planned, senior leaders and teachers should closely monitor and track attainment of individuals, cohorts and groups of children to inform and evaluate improvement.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Across the bun-sgoil, children develop independence, teamwork skills and learn to take considered risks during a wide range of outings and experiences. For example, children learn through loose parts outdoor play and activities set in Culduthel Woods. All children's achievements are shared and celebrated in a wide range of ways, such as an in-house TV display, class displays and 'Craobh Soirbheachais' (Success Tree). Adults recognise the important milestones and personal successes in children's lives very well. They value equally the skills children gain from hobbies, the community, representing the bun-sgoil and from organised clubs and local competitions. Children's achievements in Gaelic are particularly highlighted. Their Gaelic skills are regularly recognised with 'Tosgair na Gàidhlig' (Gaelic ambassador) certificates and they take part successfully in range of local and national events organised for Gaelic Medium Education as total immersion opportunities. A few children have received awards at the National Mòd. Parents and partners provide valuable support for children's learning and achievements through the medium of Gaelic such as after bun-sgoil clubs, for example, music, karate and shinty. Teachers support children to record their achievements through personal profiling. Children can describe the skills they develop through achievements and experiences. Staff, parents and partners are enriching and embedding Gaelic language, culture and fluency in children's experiences in the classroom and beyond.

Equity for all learners

- The bun-sgoil's Pupil Equity Fund allocation is used very well by senior leaders to support raising attainment for Gaelic and English literacy and to support wellbeing. Funding is used for additional teaching and support staff hours. Senior leaders and staff identify attainment gaps using a comprehensive range of information and plan appropriate interventions to support children who face barriers to their learning. Senior leaders can demonstrate with evidence how bun-sgoil staff have been successful in narrowing gaps in learning, such as improved phonics skills in Gaelic, listening and talking and readiness to learn. The bun-sgoil's approaches are reducing barriers to learning and impacting positively on progress and attainment for almost all targeted children. Senior leaders continue to plan for and address remaining gaps, such as writing.
- Senior leaders have arrangements in place to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for achievement. This supports all children to be included and improves wellbeing. Bun-sgoil staff and the Parent Council work together well to plan ways to reduce the cost of the bun-sgoil day for families, including a uniform swap and supporting C7 children to attend a residential outing. Bun-sgoil staff signpost financial support for families.

Other relevant information

Staff were early developers of all Gaelic immersion schools in Scotland. They are meeting well the objectives of Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education (2017) in providing a progressive 3-18 experience, in their delivery of immersion and in developing children's skills for work, including with technology. Senior leaders should continue to focus on recruitment and retention of staff to avoid interruptions to immersion. They should also ensure that staff's professional learning is specific to Gaelic Medium Education. Senior leaders and teachers should also continue to outline their approaches to immersion across all their written policies to further support and clarify their practice.

Practice worth sharing more widely

High-quality total immersion achievement opportunities for all children

Staff plan and provide children's opportunities for achievement using the principles of total immersion. They engage highly effectively with parents, partners and the community when planning and providing learning rich experiences for children which support them to accrue all the benefits of bilingualism across a wide range of contexts, including academic, cultural and social. Staff, partners and parents offer an extensive range of clubs and activities all through the medium of Gaelic which also help children to learn about Gaelic culture and heritage. These include music, arts and crafts, sports and play, as well as breakfast club and after school care. Annually, children compete in the local and national Mòd celebrating Gaelic literature, music and culture. In bun-sgoil, children's achievements in Gaelic are particularly highlighted, for example 'Tosgair na Gàidhlig' (Gaelic ambassador) awards and the 'Craobh Soirbheachais' display (success tree). Children speak enthusiastically about the skills and Gaelic language they develop and the confidence they gain through these experiences.

Learning about the world of work and focus on skills

Staff collaborate highly effectively through business, community and parent partnerships to deliver engaging and meaningful employability and skills learning through highly relevant contexts. This supports and enhances children's learning through the medium of Gaelic. Teachers plan well-considered approaches to support children to learn about the world of work and enterprise. This is embedded across the curriculum and classroom learning. With partners and visitors, children discuss key skills and the use of Gaelic in lives and jobs. As a result, children have a strong understanding of how bilingualism and a wide range of skills are important to their future lives, the local economy and Gaelic community.

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.