

Summarised inspection findings

Sgoil Àraich Ghàidhlig Àth-Tharracail

Acharacle Primary School Nursery Class

The Highland Council

14 March 2023

Key contextual information

Sgoil Àraich Ghàidhlig Ath-Tharracail is situated in Acharacle Primary School. It provides 1140 hours of total immersion for Gaelic. The setting is registered for up to 18 children to attend at any one time. The provision is for children between the age of three and those not yet attending school. At the time of the inspection, 14 children attended sessions throughout the week in the eco-friendly purpose-built playrooms. There are separate entrances from the playroom to enclosed gardens.

There is a recently re-established English nursery class. Numbers attending are small.

The manager is a cluster headteacher for Acharacle Primary School and a neighbouring school. The school and nursery have experienced significant recruitment challenges for staff. As a result, practitioners did not have access to a principal teacher at the time of the inspection. The principal teacher has a supportive role for planning learning within the nursery.

Comments contained within this report are expressed as combined statements, rather than separate references to English and Gaelic nursery settings. This is due to the small number of children attending the provision.

At the time of the inspection, the school was awaiting a Care Inspectorate visit to update the registration for both Gaelic and English Medium Education. Officials from the council have approved the playroom.

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

- There is a strong, welcoming and nurturing ethos within the nursery. Practitioners, children and families enjoy very positive relationships. Children feel valued and respected. Practitioners get to know each child very well as an individual. Children new to the playrooms settle quickly due to practitioners' support and care. Children demonstrate a high level of motivation. They concentrate very well for extended periods while leading their own immersion play. Practitioners within the sgoil àraich should continue to provide more adult-initiated learning experiences. This is an important aspect of total immersion to increase further the Gaelic that children will hear and learn.
- Within the sgoil àraich, practitioners use singing, speaking of Gaelic, repetition and reinforcement effectively to develop Gaelic as part of total immersion. On a few occasions, interactions in Gaelic could be more regular and effective to extend children's learning of Gaelic. Children interact well within carefully planned environments. They are curious, independent and confident while learning through immersion play. Children make choices as they play. They are imaginative in role-plays at the sgoil àraich shop. Practitioners should ensure that all children are developing their skills in numeracy and mathematics in these

situations. Children engage well with outdoor play equipment. Their regular visits to the local woods are enriching experiences, while developing their knowledge of the local area and the wider community. Children's problem-solving skills should be developed further through practitioners' effective questioning. Practitioners should make more use of the "The Advice on Gaelic Education" to guide their approaches to total immersion.

- Children plan their learning experiences with adults using an online platform. They also discuss their individual online learning journals with practitioners. Children should reflect more and talk about their learning. Practitioners have correctly identified the benefits of reinstating the use of floorbooks for this purpose. This should be targeted at increasing further children's ownership of and involvement in their learning.
- Practitioners continue to use and extend new approaches to technology from the pandemic. They use an online platform for planning learning. Practitioners also share helpful information with parents each week through email. Importantly, this enables parents of children within the *sgoil àraich* to support their child's Gaelic language at home.
- The headteacher and staff have developed effective approaches for recording children's individual progress and engagement in their learning. Practitioners observe children as they play and learn. They use these observations to identify relevant next steps in learning for individual children. As planned, practitioners should continue to develop this work to show what progress children are making in understanding Gaelic language.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 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 good progress in communication and early language skills in both playrooms. Within the total immersion playroom, almost all children can understand well Gaelic used in routines, such as snack and at lunch. Most children use Gaelic words or phrases to request their snack choices. Children having snack together is helping develop group communication skills. Children listen to each other's contributions well. Children's circle time, "Àm Cearcall" provides an opportunity to develop communication skills in a group. Almost all children join in singing songs to aid their learning of Gaelic. They are confident when joining whole-school events to perform. Practitioners' increased use of drama and role-play would support further total immersion. Across both mediums of learning, a few children enjoy mark-making in different contexts. Staff should provide more real-life experiences to develop early writing skills. Almost all children can recognise their name during self-registration. A few children can copy their name. Children's interest in books is developed through a focus on "Book of the Week." Practitioners should encourage further children's access to books in different areas of play. Children should visit the school's library more often, including for listening to stories.
- Across both mediums of learning, children are making satisfactory progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Within the role-play shop area, children use and count to five using coins. A few understand the process of exchanging money for goods and that change may be given. They have yet to recognise that coins have different values. Children are developing their knowledge of the days of the week and the seasons through routines. They sort colours and count objects up to ten. In the English Medium setting, children's language of measurement is developed well through play. There is scope to extend further children's understanding of language of mathematics and measure in Gaelic. Children could extend their number and colour recognition through routines such as snack.
- Children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They show care and consideration for their friends, including by sharing resources. Most children are developing independence as they get ready for outdoors and as they wash up after snack. Children's views about playing happily and safely are sought by practitioners. A few children have developed an awareness of fairness. Children's physical skills are developing well through experiences such as outdoor play, regular visits to the woods and shinty sessions led by volunteers.
- Practitioners record children's progress using learning journals and developmental overviews. They are checking how well children engage with learning and aspects of wellbeing. Practitioners in the sgòil àraich should record greater detail of individual children's

understanding and use of Gaelic by using early-stage experiences and outcomes. Practitioners should continue to look at ways to share information with partners for children who attend other early year provisions for part of the week.

- Children are becoming increasingly confident and independent because of their nursery experiences. Their achievements are recorded within their learning journals. These show that they are making good progress in their learning. Parents are encouraged to add their children's achievements to the journals. Practitioners praise children for their achievements and award stickers. Children are proud that their achievements are recognised and displayed. Children participate in events for the local community, such as cèilidhs.
- Practitioners ensure equity across the playrooms. There is a strong sense of community where everyone is valued and included. Practitioners know children and families well. They provide guidance and support to families where required. The support provided to families in relation to targeting Gaelic language makes a positive difference to children's learning.

Other relevant evidence

- 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. They also make meaningful links to the culture, music and heritage of Gaelic as an important feature of their local area. Staff are making a strong contribution to increasing the use of Gaelic and numbers of speakers of the language.

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.