

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

GAELIC COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2009

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	G-02-09

GAELIC EDUCATION PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND NURSERIES

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

SUMMARY

This report provides details on current provision for Gaelic education in primary and secondary schools and in pre-school education provision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Gaelic Medium education provision in Highland has grown steadily since the introduction of Gaelic Medium education in Central Primary School 20 years ago.
- 1.2 There are now 20 primary schools providing Gaelic Medium Education. The most recent provision was opened in Nairn in 2006. All 20 schools have associated pre-school education available.
- 1.3 This session the authority wished to open a new provision in Thurso but was not able to do so due to recruitment difficulties.
- 1.4 Gaelic learners provision in the primary school (GLPS) was introduced during the 1990s. This followed sometime after the introduction of Modern Languages in the Primary School (MLPS) and resulted in a lower uptake for Gaelic than might have occurred if these developments had occurred simultaneously.
- 1.5 Gaelic learners courses in secondary schools have continued to rise with a significant increase in the last few years when Gaelic was made available to all pupils in S1 in Portree, Plockton and Lochaber secondary schools.
- 1.6 While the growth of Gaelic Medium in primary schools has been progressive over the last two decades the introduction and expansion of Gaelic Medium subject teaching in secondary schools has been difficult to progress. This is a main priority of the Gaelic Language Plan.

2. Gaelic medium pre-school and primary education

The number of pupils in Gaelic medium primary education in the current school session 2008-09 is **728** – an increase of 10 pupils on 2007/08 figures. It should be noted that enrolment to primary schools are generally declining. This total has increased gradually in recent years. Enrolment into P1 in August 2008 was 108, as compared to the previous annual average of just over 100. If this increase is maintained, the number of primary pupils may exceed 800 for the first time within the period of the current plan as classes in Nairn expand up to P7 and as new provisions are established. This will give a percentage increase broadly in line with the 10% growth target in the Gaelic Language Plan.

Across Highland there is a reduction in school numbers in pre-school and infant classes in some localities. In the current session the primary GM roll increased slightly in nine schools and decreased slightly in five schools.

Promotion of Gaelic in the home and in family settings is a key development priority within the Gaelic language plan. An appointment has now been made to the Family Resource Office post. The post holder will have a key role in supporting early engagement with children (pre-nursery) and with parents. In addition, an information pack has been compiled with the assistance of materials from Comann nam Pàrant and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The pack provides information on language development in the home and the family so that parents who may not be Gaelic speakers can better support their child's learning in Gaelic Medium education. The benefits of multi-lingual education are also highlighted noting that pupil's attainment in education in two or more languages compares very favourably and often exceeds the attainment of pupils in mono lingual education.

3. Gaelic Medium in Secondary Schools

The number of pupils in secondary Gàidhlig (i.e. fluent speaker) classes in 2008-09 is **350**, ranging from S1 to S6 with 41 students studying Higher Gàidhlig. The S1 intake in August 2008 was 79: the previous session's P7 total was 86, which shows only a slight fall between primary and secondary. The number of pupils taking Gaelic medium subjects in 2008-09, mostly in S1/2, is **152**. The S1 figure is 57, an increase of 9 on the previous year. .

The subjects taught through the medium of Gaelic in each secondary school are detailed below:-

School	Subject	Stage
Ardnamurchan High	History	S1
	Geography (online)	S1
	Modern Studies	S1
Dingwall Academy	Geography	S1-4
	History	S1-3
Gairloch High	Geography	S1
Inverness Royal Academy	History	S1-2
	Geography (online)	S1-2
	Mathematics	S1-2
	Art	S1-2
	PSE	S1-2
	Modern Studies	S2
Lochaber High	RME	S1
Millburn Academy	History	S3-4
Plockton High	History	S1-2
	Geography (online)	S1-2
Portree High	History	S1-4
	Geography (online)	S1
	Mathematics	S1
	Science	S1-2
	Home Economics	S1-2
	Modern Studies	S2
	RME	S1-2
Tain Royal Academy	Home Economics	S1-2
	Geography (online)	S1-2

There continues to be a promising start to the introduction of Gaelic Medium subject teaching in Inverness Royal Academy, now the base school for Gaelic Medium subject teaching in Inverness. Both Inverness Royal and Portree High achieve our goal for 5 subjects through the medium of Gaelic up to the end of S2.

This now requires to be expanded to S3 and 4 classes.

The further development of secondary subject teaching through the medium of Gaelic is a key priority of the plan.

4. Gaelic Learners in the primary school (GLPS)

39 primary schools are currently participating in GLPS (or a similar programme), involving a total of **1008** pupils. The schools involved are mainly the associated primaries of West Coast schools such as Portree, Plockton, Ardnamurchan and Gairloch High Schools.

Training for teachers new to GLPS has now begun and the course is being introduced on a phased basis to the associated primary schools of all secondary schools who provide Gaelic language courses. This development is now included within the priorities for school development planning for the current session 2008/09 and future years. This expansion will be supported and monitored by the Gaelic Education Development Officer to ensure a phased growth of access to learning Gaelic in all primary schools in due course.

5. Next Steps

The Gaelic Language Plan details proposals for the further expansion of Gaelic Medium Education in Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools. The plan also clarifies the way forward to expand Gaelic language provision both for learners and native speakers.

It will be essential to continue to progress the challenging recruitment of staff and training issues in collaboration with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Scottish Government and other bodies to ensure the planned growth of Gaelic learning in schools and nurseries is achieved.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Members are invited to note the current position with regard to Gaelic and Gaelic Medium provision and the proposals within this report to further expand provision as detailed in the council's Gaelic Language Plan.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Author: Donnie MacDonald

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Background Papers: Gaelic Language Plan available at:-

www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/gaelic/gaeliclanguageplan/

Gaelic Medium Primary 08-09

	Preschool											Total P1-P7 & Preschool
	Partner centre	School	Total	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	Total P1-P7	
Acharacle		6	6	4	0	2	7	5	0	6	24	30
Bonar Bridge		0	0	2	1	3	1	2	1	0	10	10
Broadford		13	13	9	7	2	10	5	4	4	41	54
BSGI		57	57	28	20	16	13	13	10	12	112	169
Craighill		5	5	4	7	5	4	10	7	6	43	48
Dingwall	17	10	27	10	10	10	6	5	6	10	57	84
Dunvegan		6	6	1	4	3	3	2	3	1	17	23
Ft William RC		12	12	9	14	8	9	8	11	13	72	84
Gairloch		6	6	3	3	1	4	0	6	6	23	29
Kilmuir		10	10	2	3	2	1	2	1	0	11	21
Lochcarron		0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	6	6
Mallaig		6	6	6	4	1	6	5	6	6	34	40
Millbank		0	0	3	5	2	2				12	12
Newtonmore		6	6	2	3	2	1	5	6	3	22	28
Plockton		3	3	0	3	3	2	2	1	2	13	16
Portree		26	26	14	17	12	10	15	15	16	99	125
Sleat		6	6	5	5	13	8	8	4	7	50	56
Staffin		5	5	1	5	3	2	10	7	4	32	37
Tongue		0	0	2	2	2	1	3			10	10
Ullapool		12	12	1	7	9	8	6	6	3	40	52
Ballachulish		13	13									13
Nairn	10		10									10
Roy Bridge	7		7									7
Thurso	11		11									11
Totals			247	108	120	100	98	106	96	100	728	975