

Agenda Item	<b>6</b>
Report No	<b>HC/13/25</b>

# The Highland Council

**Committee:**           **Gaelic**

**Date:**                   **27 August 2025**

**Report Title:**       **Gaelic Education Update**

**Report By:**           **Assistant Chief Executive - People**

## **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the recent key areas of improvement and development within Gaelic Education, including:
- Sgoil Chiùil's (the Centre of Excellence for Scottish Traditional Music) leadership of Gaelic ethos across their curriculum to create a positive and inclusive experiences for Gaelic across the school;
  - An overview of pupil numbers in Gaelic Education as a percentage; and
  - A geographical overview of Gaelic Education provision in Highland.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the report;
  - ii. Agree to recognise the leadership shown at Sgoil Chiùil to grow interest and foster Gaelic as part of the ethos in the school
  - iii. Note the areas of growth in pupil numbers across 3-18

## **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource  
For the financial year 2025/26 the Council submitted a Gaelic Specific Grant (GSG) application for £1.3M against total projected expenditure of £8.3M and was awarded £940,000.

The funding provided by the Scottish Government through the GSG provides invaluable support for a wide range of projects that assist the Council in delivering its commitments under the Gaelic Language Plan with the majority dedicated to the delivery of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner Education.

In addition to core Council funding and the GSG, the Gaelic budget also secures additional funding through project-specific bids to Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and the Strategic Gaelic Plan Fund (GPF).

- 3.2      **Legal**  
The Highland Council has a statutory duty to implement its Gaelic Language Plan in terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005. Section 15 Education (Scotland) Act 2016 imposes a statutory duty on all Education Authorities to promote and support Gaelic Education.
- 3.3      **Risk**  
There are no risk implications arising from this report.
- 3.4      **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)**  
There are no Health and Safety implications arising from this report.
- 3.5      **Gaelic**  
The report supports Gaelic Education development within The Highland Council area and the implementation of The Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan and the National Plan.

#### **4.      Impacts**

- 4.1      In Highland, all policies, strategies, or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2      Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3      This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

#### **5.      Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd (The Centre of Excellence for Scottish Traditional Music, Plockton).**

- 5.1      Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd is the only Centre of Excellence in Scotland dedicated to Scottish Traditional Music.

Sgoil Chiùil offers high quality tuition and an all-round, in-depth experience in traditional music which includes individual tuition, groupwork, workshops and masterclasses, performing, recording, and the history and background of the music. The Centre's tutors are all top-class professional musicians, and their expertise and the vocational nature of the curriculum ensure that all our leavers have what it takes to succeed in a musical career. All pupils have access to Gaelic medium or Gaelic learner pathways.

- 5.2      The school is currently part of the Plockton 3-18 Education Campus, which contains Plockton Primary School, Sgoil Araich, and the Sgoil-Chiùil National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music.

The associated primary schools for Plockton High School are currently Plockton Primary, Loch Duich Primary, Auchtertyre Primary, Glenelg Primary, Kyle Primary, Lochcarron Primary, Applecross Primary and Kyleakin Primary School.

2 of the associated primary schools offer Gaelic Medium. All the associated primary schools offer a Gaelic learner pathway.

- 5.3 On Thursday 19 June, at Eden Court in Inverness, Sgoil Chiùil celebrated 25 remarkable years of music, mentorship, and community.

Through an evening of vibrant performances from current students, esteemed alumni, and special guests, the school paid tribute to the artistry, dedication, and resilience that have defined the Centre since its founding.

#### [Sgoil Chiùil at 25 – Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd](#)

- 5.4 The Highland Council has submitted a bid for £20,000 to Scottish Government Gaelic Capital Grants to support with improving facilities at Sgoil Chiùil. The bid, if successful, will improve facilities, refurbish sound proofing, and provide a new purpose-built recording studio. The award is expected to be communicated in early autumn.

## **6. Pupil numbers in Gaelic Education 2024/25 as a percentage of all pupils**

- 6.1 The table below provides an update on 2024/25 pupil numbers and their percentages against the total number of pupils in Highland through the monitoring of in gathering data from schools.

<b>Academic Year 24/25</b>	<b>Total Pupils</b>	<b>GLE</b>	<b>GME</b>	<b>%</b>
% Gaelic Learner Secondary Pupils	12791	2065		16.14
% Gàidhlig Secondary Pupils	12791		460	3.6
% GM Sgoil àraich (ELC) Pupils	3600		356	9.89
% GM Primary Pupils	16022		1092	6.82

Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) – a 1 % rise in percentage from 23/24 indicates a trend towards growth in pupil numbers engaging in the S1-S6 GLE curriculum.

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) GME Secondary – 0.4% rise from 3.2 in 23/24 indicates an increase in pupil numbers in GME secondary, influenced partly by increasing numbers transitioning from primary to secondary in the standalone primary schools associated school groups.

GME Sgoil-àraich – 9.89%, the highest percentage enrolled in GME Highland ELC to date, an increase of 0.6% from 23/24. The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2018-2023 had a target of 10% pupils in GME Primary. During the GLP 2018-23 consultation, 6.27% were enrolled in GME Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). This includes 17 partner nursery pupils.

GME Primary – small increase of 0.1% in total primary from 23/24, continuing upward trend of enrolment in GME P1 due to transition of increased GME ELC numbers.

In 2025/26, The Highland Council will be marking 40 years of Gaelic Medium Education. Further information on actions and activity to make the milestone will be shared at the next Gaelic Committee.

- 6.2 An infographic to support an understanding of the geographic spread of Gaelic Education (in gathered data, April 2025) has been created, see **Appendix 1**.

The infographic provides insight to trends in pupil numbers in ELC, primary and secondary GME and GLE. The time period selected for tracking Gaelic pupil numbers in each school spans from 2017/2018 to 2024/2025.

A RAG rating highlights trends in pupil numbers. Where numbers decline, local context, such as the percentage of school roll, is considered to understand the change. If not linked to overall roll decline, planned targeted support is provided through 0–3 activities and promotion of Gaelic Education and awareness in those areas.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

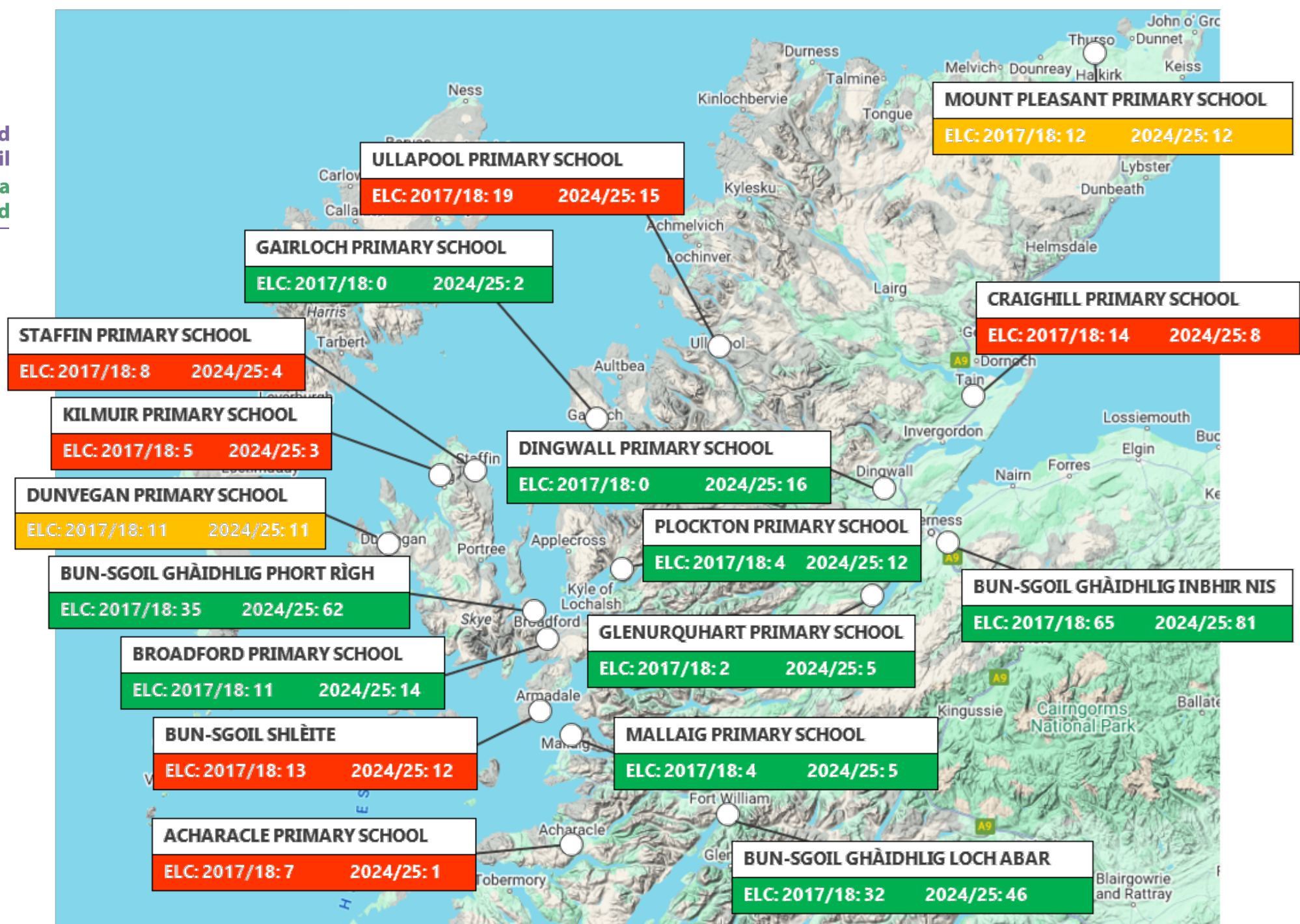
Date: 08 July 2025

Author: Lena Walker, Education Support Officer

Background Papers: n/a

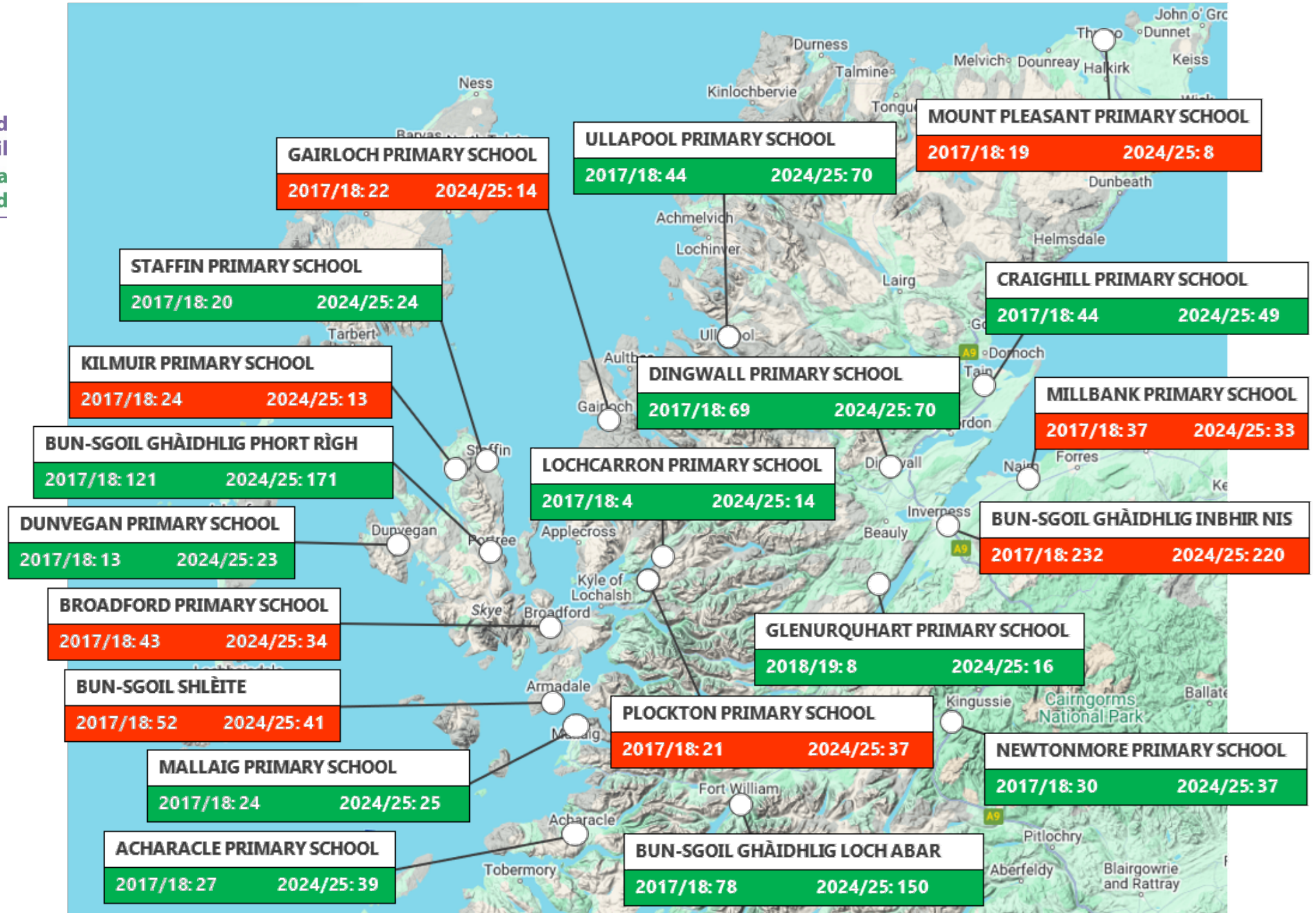
Appendices: Appendix 1 – Gaelic GME Infographics April 2025

# 2024-25 ELC





# 2024-25 PRIMARY



# 2024-25 SECONDARY

