

The Highland Council

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| Agenda Item | 10 |
| Report No | G/10/26 |

Committee: Gaelic

Date: 3 June 2026

Report Title: Gaelic Education Update

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

This report provides an update on recent developments and impact of Gaelic Education in Highland.

The report shares an update with Members on key priorities and outcomes of the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) achieved towards Gaelic Learner Education in primary schools in the North Area.

The report provides information and an overview on current Gaelic pupil numbers across Highland for 2025/26 and shares information on actions contributing to the strategic priorities to progress outcomes within the Highland Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Agree to welcome the continued expansion of Gaelic Education in the North Area;
- ii. Agree to recognise the growth across sectors for Gaelic pupil numbers; and
- iii. Note Seachdain na Gàidhlig activities and commitment from schools to contribute and participate in the annual initiative.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

For the 2025/26 financial year, the Council submitted a Gaelic Specific Grant (GSG) application of £1.3M and received an award of £940,000.

Funding from the Scottish Government through the GSG continues to play a vital role in enabling projects that help the Council deliver its commitments under the Gaelic Language Plan. A significant proportion of this support contributes directly to the ongoing development and delivery of Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learner Education.

Alongside core Council funding and the GSG, the Gaelic budget is further strengthened through successful project specific bids to Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Strategic Gaelic Plan Fund (GPF), helping to enhance and expand Gaelic-related opportunities across the Council area.

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 The Highland Council as Education Authority to promote and support Gaelic Education

3.3 Risk

There are no specific risk implications arising as a result of this report.

3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)

None

3.5 Gaelic

The Highland Council Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) 2024-29 has 2 key priorities for Gaelic Education;

- Deliver continued promotion and growth in GME and GLE at all levels including delivery of Gaelic as a modern language with 70% of primary schools providing Gaelic as an L2 and L3 to increase the provision of Gaelic across the authority.
- Expand the delivery of GME with increased secondary subject delivery creation of new standalone schools and new early years, primary and secondary provision.

Our GLP also includes interdependent communities and home, economy, culture, and heritage outcomes to support these priorities for Gaelic Education.

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. Gaelic in the North Project

5.1 **Fèisgoil - Blasad Gàidhlig aig Tuath** – preparation and delivery for The Highland Council by Fèisean nan Gàidheal's formal education service, Fèisgoil, of Gaelic support sessions for schools where children are learning Gaelic as an additional language.

Cost: £17,213 funded through the Gaelic Specific Grant award from the Scottish Government.

Time-frame: Preparation began in April 2025 with delivery commencing in early September, coinciding with the launch of the Blas Festival. The sessions are staggered between early September and mid-December 2025.

Number of sessions, schoolchildren and school staff directly involved: The anticipated number of sessions delivered during the **Blasad Gàidhlig aig Tuath** series is **176** and we expect that **over 350** primary-aged children, the majority of them second level, will have participated in the weekly sessions. At least **24 staff members** will have had direct weekly input from the progressive sessions, with the opportunity to engage as learners alongside the children in their classes.

Tutors: the preparation and delivery of the sessions will have allowed for regular work for **5 Fèisgoil tutors**, contributing to them staying and working locally.

Material covered: Fèisgoil tutors involved are encouraged to follow the Blasad Gàidhlig progressive lesson plans, compiled by Fèisgoil with over 70 progressive lessons available. Subjects of learning are linked to songs and games related to the specific subjects being taught each time and language and lesson overviews are available for class teachers as additional support.

Feedback from schools has been very positive and we aim to build on this by sharing our CLPL offering for 1+2 Gaelic, with these schools, next session. We hope that schools will continue with their Gaelic L3 learning through this.

5.2 Farr High School Update and Action Plan

- Reintroduced Gaelic learners in S1 and S2 at Farr High School.
- All 3 feeder primaries are now L2 Gaelic schools.
- The whole campus takes part in word of the week.
- Created a language overview on one page so teachers can pop it on their walls.
- We have had whole campus topics in Gaelic around Halloween, Easter etc
- Created work packs for ELC'S, P1-3/4 AND P4/5-7 and support guides for teachers
- There is a lot of fresh enthusiasm which is lovely to see, and I am so hopeful that we will secure a permanent Gaelic teacher to progress things even further.

6. Gaelic Medium Pupil Number update 2025/26

6.1 At Gaelic Committee, an overview of Gaelic Medium pupil numbers was provided to members. [Gaelic Committee - 25 February 2026](#)

Appendix 1 provides a more detailed overview for 2025/26 using a Geographical Gaelic pupil number data approach. This also includes Gaelic Learner pupil numbers.

6.2 The following table gives an overview of pupils number trends across each sector.

| Description | Plan | Academic Year | Total pupils | GLE | GME | % |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------|-----|--------|
| % Gaelic Learner Secondary Pupils | CP1.11 (Gaelic Language Plan 04) | AY 25/26 | 13375 | 1948 | | 14.56% |

[GLE – This is a small percentage decrease of -1.29% or - 0.19 percentage points from 14.75% in last AY.](#)

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| % Gàidhlig Secondary Pupils | CP1.11 (Gaelic Language Plan 04) | AY 25/26 | 13375 | | 507 | 3.8% |
| GME Secondary – This is a rise of 18.75% or 0.6 percentage points, from 3.2% in last AY 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. | | | | | | |
| % GM Nursery Pupils | CP1.11 (Gaelic Language Plan 04) | AY 25/26 | 3384 | | 352 | 10.4% plus 17 PVI nursery |
| GME ELC – 10.4%, the highest percentage enrolled in GME Highland ELC to date, a percentage increase of 5.16% from last AY or 0.51 percentage points. 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 ELC. | | | | | | |
| % GM Primary Pupils | CP1.11 (Gaelic Language Plan 04) | AY 25/26 | 15657 | | 1076 | 6.9% |
| GME Primary – small increase of 1.62% or 0.11 percentage points from 6.79% total primary from last AY, continuing upward trend of enrolment in GME P1 due to increased GME ELC numbers. | | | | | | |

This information is collated and used to evidence commitment to growing Gaelic education in Highland when reporting to Scottish Government as per terms of the Gaelic Specific Grant and to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Increasing pupil numbers are evidence towards progress within the strategic commitments for Gaelic Education in the GLP as shared in 3.5

Appendix [2425_2526 Gaelic GME Infographics.pptx](#)

7 Seachdain na Gàidhlig – Education Update

- 7.1 Seachdain na Gàidhlig 2026 was launched with a visit to Spean Bridge Primary, that has Gaelic as their L3 language. Joy Dunlop spent the day with pupils supporting them with their Gaelic singing and talking about how they use Gaelic as part of the school's daily routines. Joy was very impressed with how well the pupils were using Gaelic and enjoying their Gaelic learning.
- 7.2 Many schools across Highland took part in Seachdain na Gàidhlig again this year, where they organised a number of activities for pupils, such as designing Gaelic t-shirts, say a Gaelic phrase, as well as taking part with online lessons led by Joy Dunlop and Calum Maclean, such as Eigg Primary. Lochcarron Primary set up and ran a Gaelic Cafe and invited members of the local community to come in. Ullapool High School organised a Gaelic Sports Day for other Secondary schools to attend and compete in. Raasay Primary worked with the National Library of Scotland and designed artwork featuring Gaelic words and idioms. Tobar an Dualchais visited Secondary schools during Seachdain na Gàidhlig and ran workshops, looking at their new interactive map and how to use it to find resources from the local area. Staffin Primary held a Gaelic Cultural event, funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, which included a visit from Donaidh Barker, a local musician.

8 Gaelic-medium Secondary Education: Assessment and Recommendations for Improvement - A Research Report for Bòrd na Gàidhlig

- 8.1 This report presents an detailed review of Gaelic-medium secondary education (GMSE) in Scotland, examining its historical development, the extent of current provision and key challenges, and offering a wide range of recommendations for improvement.
- 8.2 Researchers have highlighted within the report the work happening between Highland Council and Argyll and Bute. This is the only example of its kind impacting on GMSE raised by officers across 23 Local Authorities. Inter-authority, funded cooperation like this is relatively rare and has potential good practice reverberations across Scottish Education. Jim Whannel cited this as an example of national good practice in an

interview for BBC Alba and Radio nan Gaidheal on the 19th of March (on the publication of the report) with the aim that awareness of the partnership working will gradually become more widespread and of course it's great to see Gaelic-medium practice at the forefront of developments.

Jim Whannel welcomes an opportunity to contributing to Local Authority discussion on the report, if required.

Designation: Interim Chief Officer Primary and ELC

Date: 28/4/26

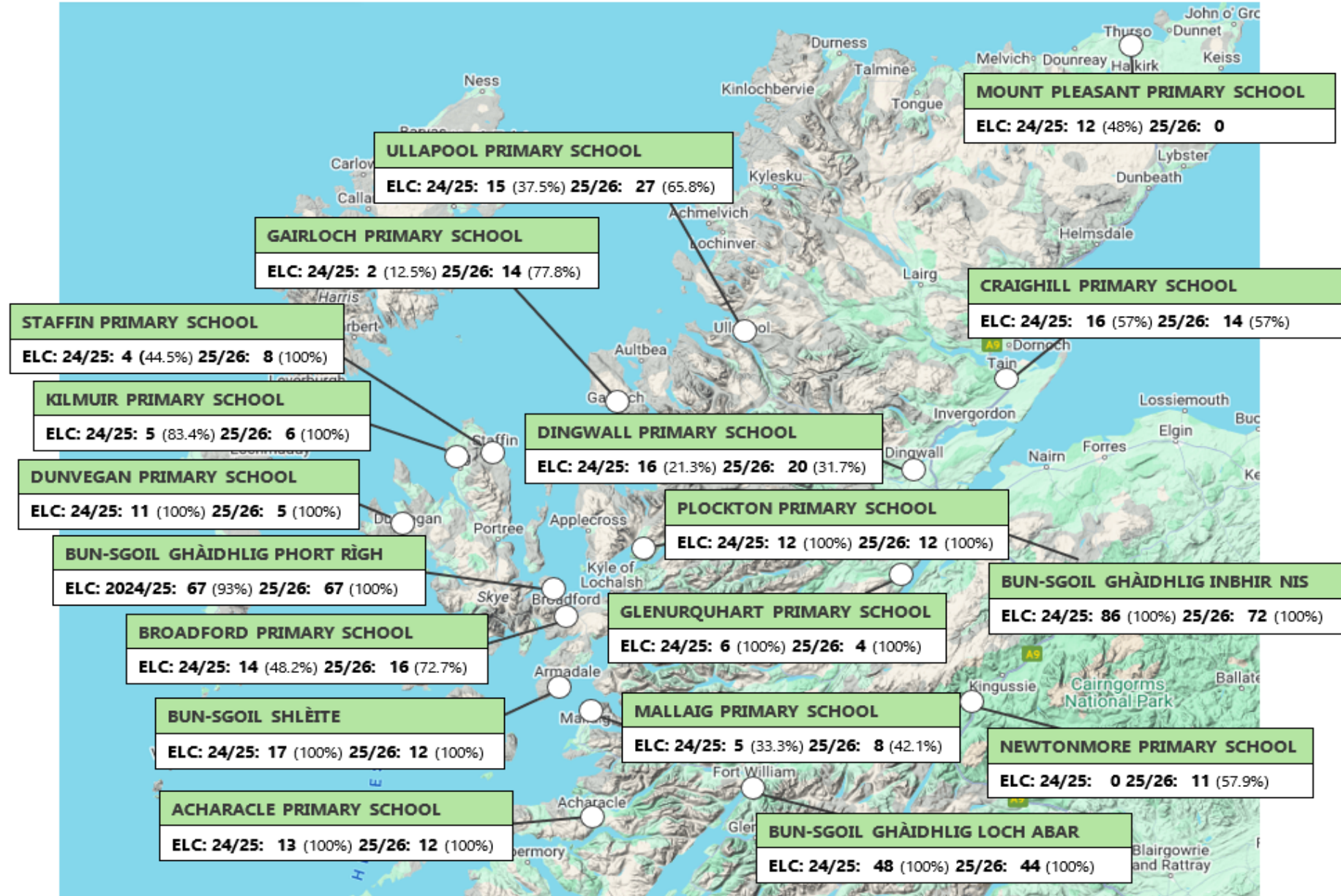
Author: Ruairidh Mackay, Gaelic Development Officer
Lena Walker, Education Support Officer

Background Papers: n/a

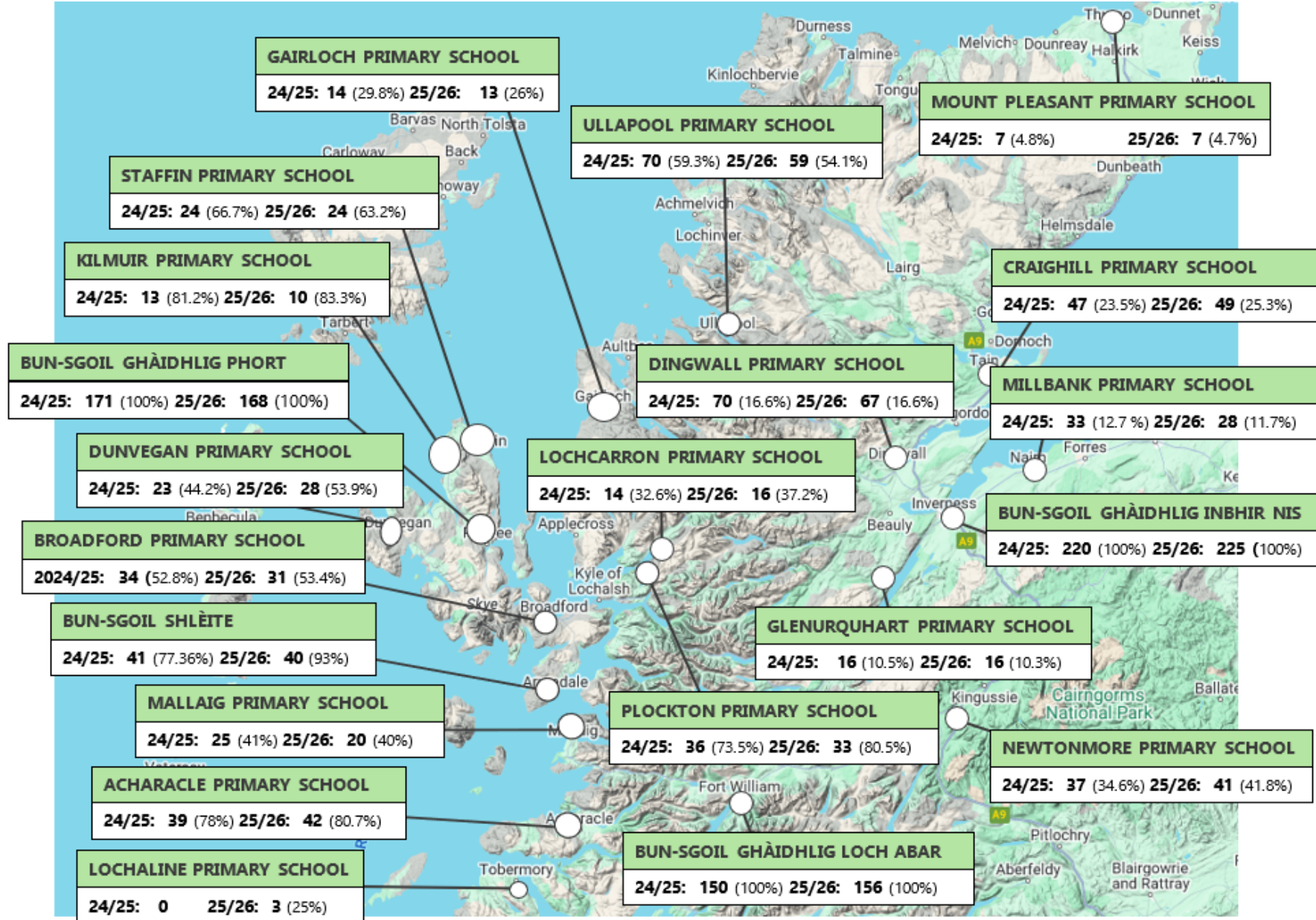
Appendices: n/a

2025-26

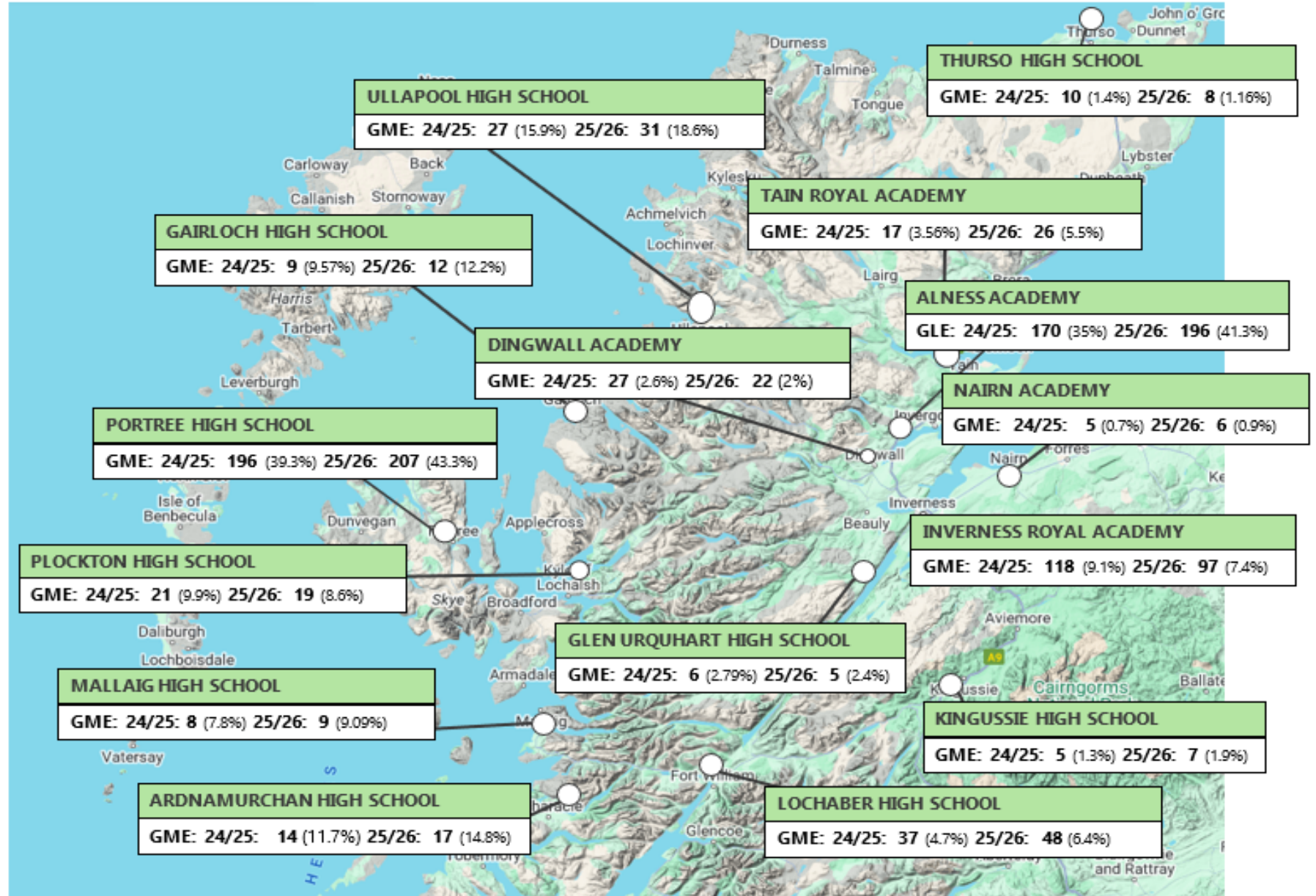
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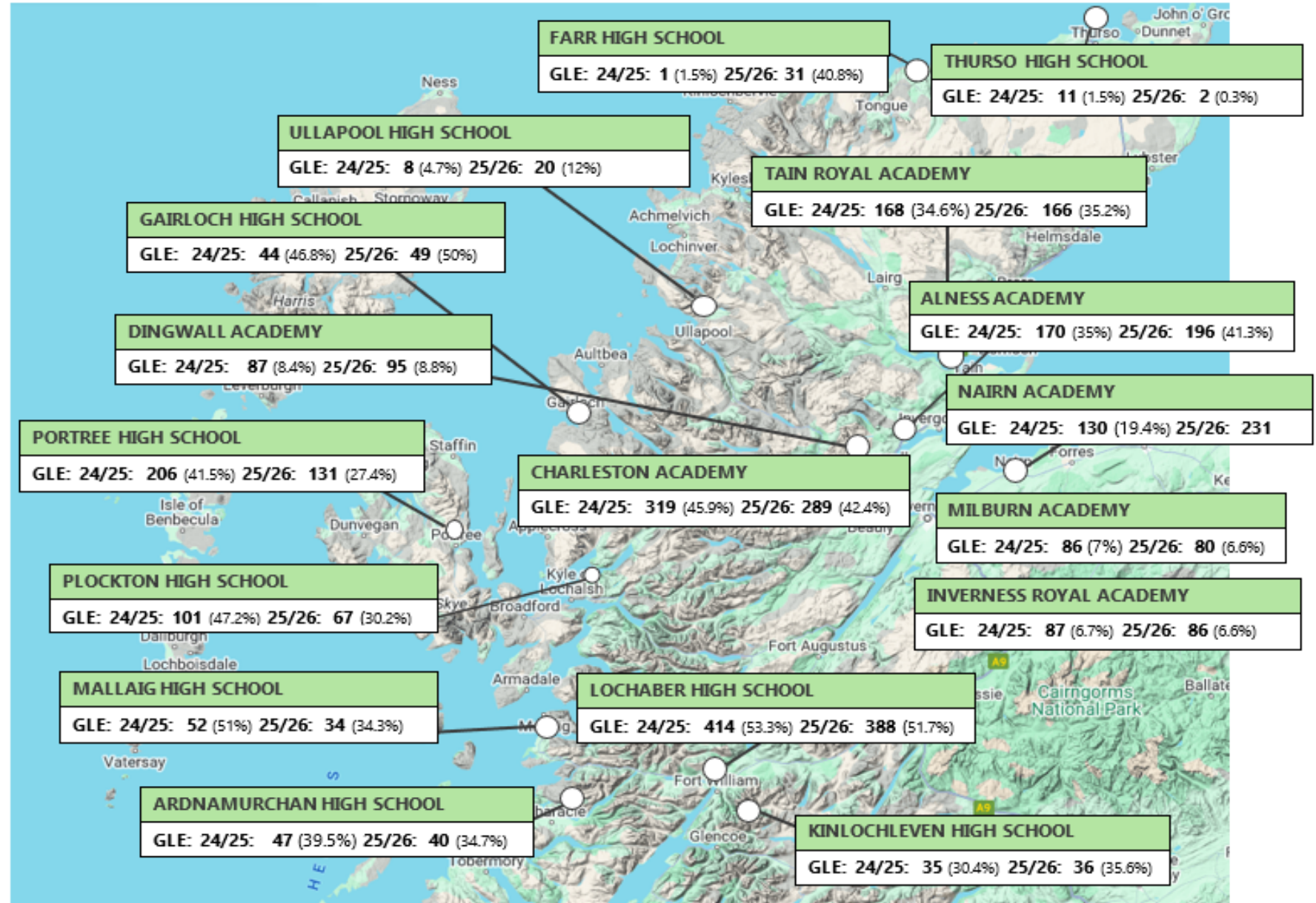
2025-26 PRIMARY



2025-26 SECONDARY GME



2025-26 SECONDARY GLE



2025-26

L2 L3

