

Bun Sgoil Innis an Uillt



Gaelic Learning and Teaching Policy

Updated February 2015

Rationale

Language and literacy are of personal, social and economic importance. Our ability to use language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. Language is itself a key aspect of our culture. Through language, children and young people can gain access to the literary heritage of humanity and develop their appreciation of the richness and breadth of Scotland's literary heritage. Children and young people encounter, enjoy and learn from the diversity of language used in their homes, their communities, by the media and by their peers.

(Principles and Practice, Gàidhlig and Literacy)

Children's earliest language is acquired in the home and in pre-school groups. This language will be varied but it will mirror the diversity of the community the school serves and will contribute to learning in the classroom. The school will build on the linguistic skills the child has already acquired in either Gaelic or English. These skills will be handled with sensitivity by teachers so as to meet individual needs, encourage confidence and make learning a pleasurable experience.

Aims of Gaelic Medium Education at Bun-sgoil Innis an Uillt

- To develop pupils' Gaelic language skills and knowledge so that they can understand Gaelic and communicate effectively.
- To support pupils' personal development through Gaelic culture and literature, including intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and moral development enabling them to become confident individuals.
- To develop positive attitudes towards Gaelic language and culture enabling them to become responsible citizens.
- To develop inter-relationships with the Gaelic community.

Total Immersion P1 -P3:

In Gaelic medium classes learning and teaching is wholly through Gaelic during the immersion phase from P1 to P3. English language is then gradually introduced through the medium of Gaelic, with Gaelic remaining the predominant language of the classroom in all areas of the curriculum. An emphasis needs to be placed on listening and talking at all stages to allow learners to practise, use and enrich their Gaelic. Understanding by teachers of the stages of oral language acquisition will help to ensure a clear understanding of when and why Gaelic language and grammar is taught in a structured way. (*Principles and Practice, Gàidhlig and Literacy*) Initially, greater emphasis will be placed on talking and listening, with reading and writing being introduced as the child's knowledge and understanding progresses.

Talking and Listening:

Teachers will use Gaelic as much as possible, supporting children in their understanding. The meaning of new words and phrases will be indicated through visual cues, such as gesture, mime and pictures rather than through explanation in English. Songs including action and repetition, language games, structured play and visual materials will be used extensively in the early stages of Primary 1.

Children should be encouraged to use Gaelic as much as possible, firstly with isolated words and phrases and then with more open-ended talk. Children will begin to use Gaelic words in English sentences progressing to Gaelic sentences with English words as they progress from the latent to the active phase in acquiring their language. When a child wants to talk about an experience but can only express it in English they should be permitted to do so but the teacher can sensitively retell the story in Gaelic.

The exceptions to the total use of Gaelic include comforting a child who is distressed, for an emergency situation or for explaining issues connected to health, safety and well-being. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*)

Children should hear Gaelic from a variety of sources e.g. from their own teacher, other staff members, visitors, older children, class monitors, buddies, class/school trips and from radio, internet and TV programmes. Children will be stimulated, encouraged and given enthusiastic praise in their efforts to build upon their new language acquisition.

The development of Gaelic grammatical structures, syntax and phonology are the responsibility of early years and primary practitioners and of Gaelic departments in the secondary. Teachers in all curriculum areas will reinforce accuracy in the use of the Gaelic language. (*Principles and Practice, Gàidhlig and Literacy*)

Resources:

Cluinn is Cluich

Èisd is Dèan

Dè Thuirt Thu? (Dearg)

Èisteachd Is Labhairt: Leasachadh Cànan: Tràth gu Treas (P. MacLeod 2013)

Various audio websites which can be found on - *LearnGaelic.net - Early Years & Primary*

Gaelic4Parents - Audio Books

Literacy:

Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*. (*Principles and Practice, Gàidhlig and Literacy*)

Reading:

Reading skills will initially be acquired through class talking and listening activities as the children are introduced to the key vocabulary they will encounter in their reading books and the first common words lists. Children will begin Gaelic reading books once they have covered sets 1 to 10 in the Gaelic phonics scheme *Facal agus Fuaim* and are able to blend most words from these sets. This will typically be in Term 3 of primary 1. More able readers who require challenge should start reading books in Term 2. P1/2 children should experience a paired reading session with P6/7 once a week.

Reading Resources:

Gaelic Common Words

Facal agus Fuaim words

Rannan Gòrach

Storyworld Scheme

An Sgaoth

Gaelic Blooms resources on Staff Area

Gaelic Big Books

Writing:

Writing skills will initially be developed through class talking and listening activities with a great deal of teacher support. Opportunities will arise to develop sentence structure at news time, active learning and in conveying and carrying out instructions.

Teachers will begin to scribe the children's stories until their oral competence, reading skills and phonics development are secure enough to enable them to write independently.

Writing will then be taught and assessed following the guidelines and criteria from the CFE early and first level writing along with the school's own success criteria for writing.

Resources:

Easy Learn Writing Scheme

VCOP - Write to the Top

Gaelic Common Words

Gaelic Writing Pyramids

Gaelic Personal Spelling Dictionaries

Moderation of Writing Criteria

P3-P7 - The Immersion Phase:

In term 4 of P3, pupils will become familiarised with English blends and phonics, paying particular attention to letters and sounds they did not encounter in Gaelic. They will begin to follow an English reading scheme initially and writing should be phased in towards the end of term 4. Great care must be taken in a composite 2/3 situation that English is not introduced or taught in the class situation to protect the oral development of primary 2 who are still at the immersion phase of Gaelic language development.

In cases where classes are multi-composite, the total immersion experience may be extended to P4 which will enable younger children to develop their early fluency in the Gaelic language without possible interference from English in the classroom. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*)

As English is the dominant language in the children's lives you may notice that once English is introduced, children may revert to using English in the classroom situation. Every effort should be made to encourage and reward the development of oral Gaelic with class incentives and positive reinforcement.

English Resources:

English Common Words

Nelson Spelling

Master your Spelling

Literacy Links Reading Scheme - Home readers

Literacy Links Guided Readers - P4 class readers

Literacy Evolve - (able pupils)

All Aboard - P3 class readers

Additional Support:

If a child has received support throughout the total immersion stage and continues to require support at the beginning of the immersion phase, a decision should be made about the way forward in consultation with the child's parents and in the best interests of the child.

Switching from Gaelic medium to English medium education, as is practice in some schools is not a solution to meeting the learning needs of some pupils. All staff need to be responsible for planning suitable programmes of learning for all children and young people regardless of individual abilities, to enable all learners to receive their entitlement to an education that meets their needs. Across stages, schools should not assume that children and young people who need support in their learning are not required to learn through the medium of Gaelic. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*)

ASN English Resources:

PAT Phonological Awareness Programme

Rainbow Readers

Toe by Toe (Late P4/P5)

Rapid Readers

Doorway Online

Talking and Listening:

Talking and listening should continue to be assessed along the Curriculum for Excellence guidelines in Gaelic only. Discussions arising from English texts will be discussed in Gaelic. To extend the children's vocabulary every opportunity should be taken to hear as much Gaelic from as wide a range as possible. **P3-P5 should have 45 minutes of standalone grammar lessons** a week based on the *Èisteachd Is Labhairt* plan. A variety of teaching approaches should be used to develop the pupils' oral language and grammar skills.

Resources:

Dè Thuirt Thu? (uaine)

Èisteachd Is Labhairt: Leasachadh Cànan: Tràth gu Treas (P. MacLeod 2013)

Reading and Writing:

Gaelic

The continuous development, orally, of sentence structure and vocabulary greatly benefits the pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils will continue to develop reading and writing following guidelines as laid down in the CFE first level (1.2 and 1.3) and second level.

Resources:

VCOP Write to the top

Gaelic VCOP Pyramids

Gaelic Common Words

Lorgan Litreachaidh 1

Gaelic Personal Spelling Dictionaries

Pupils' higher order thinking skills will be developed at all stages and through all curricular areas from early to second level using Blooms resources. The language from the *Gaelic Blooms Skills Pathways in Action* should be used. This can be found on the 'Staff Area' under 'Blooms' - 'Gaelic Blooms'.

Resources:

Gaelic Blooms Skills Pathway in Action - Gaelic Blooms -Staff Area

Various resources can be found in the Staff Area - Blooms Folder - Gaelic Blooms Folder.

English Writing:

Pupils will continue to develop reading and writing in English following guidelines as laid down in the CFE guidelines first level (1.2 and 1.3) and second level. **English writing will be assessed from primary 5 onwards.** Our writing policy recommends that we do 3 Gaelic writing lessons to 1 English lesson in primary 4 and increase this gradually to alternative weeks by P6/7.

Resources:

English Common words

Nelson Spelling

Master your Spelling

Literacy Links Reading Scheme

Moderation of Writing Materials

In the case of English language, the performance of children in Gaelic Medium Education should not be compared with that of their counter parts in English medium education before the end of P7. By this stage in Gaelic Medium Education children will have studied enough English language for comparisons to be drawn. It also means that other assessments, such as those for numeracy, may need to be made available through the medium of Gaelic so that English is not a language barrier for children and young people in demonstrating their skills, knowledge and understanding. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*)

Maths:

The Gaelic stream adopts the whole school policy for maths, using the Gaelic Heinemann scheme throughout the school and the Heinemann Active Maths resources, translated to Gaelic where necessary. Pupils should use Gaelic textbooks in P6/7 and English textbooks should only be used as a teaching guide.

Social Studies, Technologies, Sciences, Health and Well Being:

The Gaelic department adopts the whole school policy interdisciplinary learning approach to these topics. **Gaelic classes should ensure they choose 1 topic a year which takes into account Gaelic culture, history or heritage.** Gaelic staff are encouraged to use Gaelic resources as much as possible especially making use of Gaelic speaking visitors or outings. The home learning grid in P1, 2 and 3 should take into account the total immersion policy at this stage.

Expressive Arts:

Whilst the policy in the Gaelic department is in line with the whole school policy, teachers should ensure that Gaelic culture and tradition are given a high profile in music, drama, dance and storytelling.

Religious and Moral Education:

The policy in the Gaelic department adopts the whole school policy and from p4 up (the immersion phase), utilises any Gaelic materials wherever possible ensuring that where most available resources are in English, the teaching of concepts will be delivered through Gaelic.

Positive Attitudes:

The atmosphere and ethos of Meadowburn Primary should positively promote the status of the Gaelic stream and Gaelic language.

- The school sign, welcome, information notices and school newsletter will be bilingual
- Gaelic will be taught to children in the mainstream classes
- Achievements by children in the Gaelic festivals will be celebrated at whole school assemblies and in the local press
- Mainstream children will get the opportunity to perform with the Gaelic children at concerts or at the Mod
- Mainstream pupils will be encouraged to take part in Gaelic activities

In best practice, children in English medium provision have opportunities to learn Gaelic using the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes for Gaelic (Learners) as their first or second additional language. They also have an opportunity to develop their understanding and knowledge of Gaelic language and culture as part of Scotland's identity. Such an approach to the learning of Gaelic by all children means that the Gaelic language can be used and integrated across the school by staff and children. This gives relevance to the learning of Gaelic and assists in creating an ethos that is centred on Gaelic. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*)

Inter-Relationship with Gaelic Communities:

The Gaelic stream children will be encouraged to experience the following:

- The annual Glasgow Gaelic Drama Festival
- Local and National Mods
- East Dunbartonshire concerts
- Gaelic television and radio appearances
- Gaelic traditional music tuition (P5-P7)
- Annual Gaelic educational outing to Edinburgh (P4-7)
- Regular Gaelic Assemblies where older pupils are seen as language role models for younger children
- Links with schools who teach through the medium of Gaelic or offer Gaelic as a subject

Planned Next Steps:

- Development of moderation materials in collaboration with staff from other Gaelic schools
- Development, implementation and adaptation of the Gaelic Grammar Plans 'Tràth gu Treas'

It is important that schools continue the practice of having a policy on how to correct children's and young people's language errors so that these errors do not become the norm. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*) Schools need to have a clear framework for developing grammar, which shows progression and coherence. (*Advice on Gaelic Medium Education February 2015*)

- A completed bank of Gaelic assessment materials to use during assessment weeks.
- To establish a link at pupil level with a Gaelic medium unit or school.
- Develop additional Gaelic success criteria in order to assess writing.