

Advice on Gaelic Education

February 2015



Transforming lives through learning



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1. Introduction

1.1 This Advice provides important information on the national context, and describes best practice to support practitioners and local authorities in evaluating and planning for improvement in Gaelic Education.

1.2 This Advice is based on evidence from inspections, reviews and validated self-evaluation, covering all sectors of Gaelic Education; and other engagements with a wide range of stakeholders over the period 2012-14. Education Scotland will use the Advice in inspections; to support professional dialogue and learning when engaging with practitioners; and as an agenda for discussion with partners.

1.3 Education Scotland is committed to working in partnership with stakeholders to achieve high-quality provision for Gaelic Education. Key areas to focus on will be the need to ensure suitably qualified teachers, and resources to support learning and teaching. The Advice will continue to be updated and added to over time. Education Scotland will continue to add information about Gaelic to Parentzone so that parents are also aware of what they can expect from Gaelic Education.

1.4 Education Scotland's Gaelic Language Plan, *Creating an ambitious future for Gaelic Education*, defines Gaelic Education as having three inter-related components. These are:

- Gaelic Medium Education (GME);
- Gaelic Learner Education (GLE); and
- the promotion of Learning about Gaelic Language and Culture (LAGC) as part of Scotland's identity.

2. Gaelic Education: legislation

2.1 Legislation and measures have been put in place which have extended and strengthened the development of Gaelic Education. These have included: **The Education (Scotland) Act 1980; Specific Grants Regulations; and The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000**. The 2000 Act gives parents an entitlement to have their children educated in accordance with their wishes.

2.2 The Council of Europe adopted **The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** in 1992 to help protect and promote Europe's lesser-used indigenous languages. The Charter aims to ensure that regional or minority languages are used in education and in the media, to permit and encourage their use in legal and administrative contexts, in economic and social life, for cultural activities and in trans-frontier exchanges. The UK Government signed the Charter in 2000 and ratified it in 2001 in respect of Gaelic and Scots. The Charter sets out a series of eight core principles and objectives upon which signatory states are encouraged to base their policies, legislation and practice, and which are regarded as providing the necessary framework for the preservation of the languages concerned.

2.3 The **Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005** aims to secure the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to the English language. The Act builds on existing measures to support the rights of Gaelic and other lesser-used languages, including: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992); the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992); Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities (1995); and clauses relating to Gaelic in education, media, civil courts andcrofting legislation of the UK and Scottish Parliaments.

2.4 Under 2005 Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has a function to promote and facilitate the use and understanding of Gaelic language, education and culture. The Act requires Bòrd na Gàidhlig to prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers a National Gaelic Language Plan every five years. As such, the National Gaelic Language Plan has legal status. It identifies the main priorities for Scotland to take forward to enable Gaelic to secure a sustainable future for the language with an increase in the number who use it for communication. As part of its function in implementing the National Gaelic Language Plan for Gaelic, Bòrd na Gàidhlig in partnership with authorities, has set out a National Gaelic Education Strategy. Bòrd na Gàidhlig also supports local authorities in preparing and implementing Gaelic Language Plans. Bòrd na Gàidhlig may prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers guidance in relation to the provision of Gaelic Education and the development of such provision.

2.5 The principal purpose of the **Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010** is to update and strengthen the statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. The Act also specifies that Bòrd na Gàidhlig is to be consulted when a proposal affects the provision of Gaelic Medium Education such as when

Gaelic Medium Education is to be established or discontinued, or should there be a change to a catchment area that effects Gaelic Medium Education.

2.6 The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 mean that each local authority must develop a three-year plan that outlines how Community Learning and Development will be delivered. Local authorities have to consult with partners in drawing up these plans, evidencing the assessment of need, including those of young people. The first of these plans will be in place by September 2015.

2.7 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 aims to increase the provision of early learning and childcare to improve outcomes for children, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds; to support parents to work, provide economic security for their families and routes out of unemployment and poverty; and to support parents with the costs of early learning and childcare. The Act and its associated statutory guidance also applies to early learning and childcare, day care and out-of-school care that is available through the medium of Gaelic as part of Gaelic Medium Education.

2.8 The Scottish Government's Programme for Government (November 2014) states that the Scottish Government will introduce an Education Bill which will promote children's and parental rights, including in relation to Gaelic Education. The Education Bill will further progress the Scottish Government's support for Gaelic Education and its commitment to recognising, respecting and promoting children's and parental rights. Specifically, the Bill will make provision on entitlement to, and promotion of, Gaelic Medium Education in schools. The Scottish Government has recently completed a consultation on this new legislation. This may result in the Scottish Government issuing statutory guidance on Gaelic Education. It is intended that this Advice, and other work done by Education Scotland, will support the creation of any statutory guidance on Gaelic Education.

3. Gaelic Education: policy

3.1 Curriculum for Excellence aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3-18. The curriculum includes the totality of experiences that are planned for children and young people wherever they are being educated. The implementation of Curriculum for Excellence needs to lead to high-quality experiences of learning Gaelic and learning through Gaelic. The development of the four capacities is also an important feature for Gaelic. We are educating young people to be successful learners to achieve as highly as possible, responsible citizens who participate in and contribute effectively to their society, confident and assured young people who know that they have skills, values and a contribution to make.

3.2 Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, the continued **development of the senior phase**, *Insight* and **16 plus Activity Agreements** present new opportunities for schools, colleges, businesses, Skills Development Scotland to collaborate effectively to increase learning through the medium of Gaelic with coherence from the broad general education into the senior phase. The senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence is reliant on effective partnership working with a range of providers in a range of learning settings. Community Learning and Development and the youth work sector have a significant role to play in Curriculum for Excellence. They are important delivery partners, offering young people valuable opportunities for learning and personal development, both in and out of school.

3.3 The report, *Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach* sets an ambitious framework for the future delivery of language learning in Scotland's schools. It describes a framework for learning based on the mother tongue and two additional languages in the broad general education leading to awards and qualifications in the senior phase. Both Gaelic Learner and Medium Education are central to this framework.

3.4 Youth organisations are key partners in taking forward learning for sustainability, which includes outdoor learning, sustainable development education and global citizenship. The report *Learning for Sustainability*¹ aims to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and take decisions, which are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society.

3.5 Generations Working Together² has a focus on intergenerational practice, which is inclusive, building on the positive resources that young and old have to offer each other and the community at large. Youth organisations and young people can promote greater use of Gaelic between generations and contribute to building learning that is more cohesive.

3.6 The Scottish Government's **Programme for Government (November 2014)** outlines a commitment to maintain a strong support for Gaelic, through support for Gaelic Education, Gaelic broadcasting and Gaelic arts. The Scottish Government

¹ [Learning for Sustainability](#) (Scottish Government Dec 2012)

² [Generations Working Together](#)

recognises that the only way to create a secure future for Gaelic in Scotland will be by increasing the numbers of those learning, speaking and using the language, and Gaelic Education in particular has a key role in achieving this aim. There has been encouraging growth in Gaelic early years and primary in some areas and the 2011 Census recorded an increase in the numbers of young people between the ages of 3-19 who speak Gaelic.

4. Gaelic Medium Education

Key messages:

- Gaelic Medium Education is based on the principles of immersion with children accruing all the benefits of bilingualism.
- The early stage of learning through the medium of Gaelic, and where no other language is used, is referred to as 'total immersion'. This is followed by an 'immersion phase' up to and including the senior phase.
- Children and young people need to be equally confident in the use of Gaelic and English and able to use both languages in a full range of situations within and outwith school.
- All Gaelic Medium Education provisions, whether in free-standing provision known as Gaelic schools or Gaelic Medium schools or when delivered alongside English medium, have as an underlying foundation the principles of immersion.

4.1 Gaelic Medium Education, based on the principles of immersion with its resultant fluency, is recognised as the best way of achieving a sustainable future for the Gaelic language. Children in Gaelic Medium Education accrue all the benefits of bilingualism. For some, acquiring fluency in Gaelic begins in the home with children benefitting from hearing and using Gaelic as part of their family life and upbringing. For others, they are dependent on learning situations being created for them to develop their fluency. This may be through attendance at 0-3 play provision, for example. Gaelic Medium Education begins in early learning and childcare settings and progresses through primary and secondary school. Learning in this way is available to all children and young people in 14 of Scotland's 32 local authorities. There are also some partnership arrangements between neighbouring authorities which increases access to Gaelic Medium Education. Learners do not have to be from homes where Gaelic is spoken. They begin to learn through the medium of Gaelic, preferably in early learning and childcare settings or in P1. Children and young people also have opportunities to use and develop their language skills in a range of contexts beyond learning in school, and to continue having their learning and achievement recognised with awards and qualifications.

4.2 The HMI report *Gaelic Education: Building on the successes, addressing the barriers (2011)* defined **two outcomes for Gaelic Medium Education 3-18**. These are that children and young people:

- are equally confident in the use of Gaelic and English; and
- are able to use both Gaelic and English in a full range of situations within and outwith school.

4.3 As children and young people work towards these outcomes, they need recognition of their progress and achievement through:

- on-going use of assessment;
- monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement by teachers; and
- accreditation such as awards and qualifications which span all aspects of the curriculum.

4.4 Typically, **most children now entering Gaelic Medium Education do not speak Gaelic as their first language**. As a result, staff in schools and other settings have a key responsibility for developing learners' fluency in Gaelic. However, they cannot do this on their own. In best practice, they are supported by fluent speakers, other schools, colleges, community learning and development, families and Gaelic organisations. This makes Gaelic Medium Education a responsibility for all, and recognises that learning does not take place only in the classroom. However, children and young people do spend a substantial proportion of their time learning in schools. During this time, they have an entitlement to receive high-quality experiences as part of Gaelic Medium Education. Central to this experience is children's and young people's learning in Gaelic Medium Education being based on the **principles of language immersion**.

4.5 The early stage of learning through the medium of Gaelic, and where no other language is used, is referred to as **'total immersion'**. Total immersion is developed within the context of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 where immersion is taken forward in a caring and nurturing environment. The exceptions to the total use of Gaelic includes comforting a child who is distressed, for an emergency situation or for explaining issues connected to health, safety and wellbeing. For some children, their learning in Gaelic Medium Education is alongside English medium provision. For others, the context is a free-standing Gaelic Medium early learning and childcare setting or school. In the former, total immersion is more challenging to achieve outwith the classroom although this should not prevent schools in striving for this. Learning in the total immersion classroom is enhanced by opportunities to hear and use Gaelic in contexts outwith the classroom.

4.6 The next stage of learning in Gaelic Medium Education is the **'immersion phase'**. In this phase, the curriculum in its entirety continues to be taught through the medium of Gaelic across all four aspects of learning, as defined in *Building the Curriculum 3*. Teachers' monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement should confirm that children now have a secure base in Gaelic language which they can transfer to developing reading and writing skills in English language. English is taught through medium of Gaelic. The immersion phase starts in P3/P4, as evidenced by teachers' monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement, and continues into secondary school. During the immersion phase, there will be occasions when children and young people return to total immersion experiences. This will be to address lapses in fluency and to ensure challenge, breadth and depth in learning.

4.7 Those schools who are not able to comply fully with these approaches to immersion as part of Gaelic Medium Education, due to shortages of staffing for example, need to be able to show that they are working towards its implementation.

Total immersion leads to total fluency. **Alternative models lead to the dilution of fluency** and are as such non-compatible with the development of strong and sustained Gaelic Medium Education. Some schools and local authorities refer to the phase after total immersion as a bilingual stage and allow English to be too dominant in the learning process. This results in children not being as fluent as they can be. There needs to be a clear understanding that bilingualism is an outcome of Gaelic Medium Education and not a learning and teaching approach. The total use of Gaelic as part of immersion helps achieve the benefits of bilingualism. These benefits and expected outcomes need to be kept to the forefront in the promotion and debates about the development of Gaelic Medium Education. A few schools talk about their approach as being that of partial immersion. There is a substantial and convincing body of evidence from inspection that partial immersion is not effective in developing fluency.

4.8 Gaelic Medium Education can be delivered in free-standing provision known as **Gaelic schools or Gaelic Medium schools**. In other cases, Gaelic Medium provision is delivered **alongside English medium provision under the leadership of the same headteacher**. In some of these schools, the majority of children are learning through Gaelic rather than in English. Following consultation with parents, these schools have been designated as Gaelic schools that will also retain English medium provision as long as there is a requirement for it. The advice in this document about Gaelic schools or Gaelic Medium schools also applies to these schools which are designated as having the status of being Gaelic schools but offering English medium too.

4.9 All types of Gaelic Medium Education provision have as an underlying foundation the principles of immersion. They strive for the appointment of high-quality practitioners and speakers of the Gaelic language to a full range of posts within the school. Such staffing is essential if children and young people are to develop high-quality fluency in Gaelic. Non-teaching staff also play an important role in Gaelic Medium schools and their contribution to developing the fluency of children's language is also valuable. Ensuring adequate levels of staff able to speak Gaelic is very challenging, especially at the secondary stages and in promoted posts. Where learning in GME is alongside English medium provision, total immersion is more challenging to achieve outwith the classroom. However, this should not prevent schools from striving for this. 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.

4.10 In some cases, particularly in rural areas of Scotland, children benefit **from learning Gaelic in early learning and childcare centres**. Others enjoy exposure to Gaelic in the home or the community. In best practice, children's prior learning is taken into account when they move on to the primary stages, whether into Gaelic

Medium or Learner Education, so that they can make continued progress in developing fluency.

4.11 Throughout this Advice on Gaelic Education all references to planning children's and young people's learning needs to take account of meeting the needs of groups of learners throughout the 3-18 curriculum. As children embark on Gaelic Medium Education some children may have begun to acquire **fluency from home and be able to converse in the language**. Learning in the playroom and the classroom should now add to their fluency by extending their use of Gaelic to wider contexts, for example, those connected to school. These children will still need to be totally immersed in the language but will be able to use Gaelic across the curricular areas and contexts at a brisker pace than those who are complete beginners. They will also be able to begin to develop skills in reading and writing Gaelic sooner. This is also a stage in learning where those who embark on the early level of Curriculum for Excellence with some fluency will, if necessary, increase their accuracy of spoken Gaelic and add depth to their learning by hearing authentic and idiomatic Gaelic. The experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence should be used to plan learning which is suitably challenging.

4.12 Children in the Gaelic Medium playroom and classroom also begin to develop skills for learning, life and work within total immersion. Those children who have acquired some fluency from home should also have opportunities to develop such skills. Tasks set for learning should, for example, **encourage independence and taking more responsibility in learning**. However, using this group of learners too often as "teachers" for other children may lead to learning which is lacking in challenge. In some cases, based on teachers' monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement, it may be that this group of learners join those at the immersion stage for some of their learning. Some parents show a commendable commitment to supporting their children's fluency in Gaelic. Schools need to value this commitment by ensuring that they too are developing children's skills in Gaelic in a progressive way.

5. Gaelic Medium Education: engagement with parents

Key messages:

- Early engagement with parents to inform them of the benefits of Gaelic Medium Education and its link to the benefits of bilingualism is essential in securing the future of the language.
- Children's fluency in Gaelic is enhanced by using the language outwith school. Parents need to have clear information on how to support their children's education.

5.1 Early engagement with parents to inform them of the benefits of Gaelic Medium Education and its link to the benefits of bilingualism is essential in securing the future of the language. The children who enter Gaelic Medium Education at this early stage of learning and development are the ones who will learn through the medium of Gaelic in P1 and beyond. They are also the ones who will determine the numbers in Gaelic Medium Education through the broad general education and into the senior phase. This presents an important need for very focused and effective promotional activity with parents. Bòrd na Gàidhlig promotes Gaelic Medium Education at key points, including where there is recognised capacity to increase numbers. *Comann nam Pàrant*³ also do commendable work. They organise events and visits to parents to address queries relating to Gaelic Education. They assist parents in setting up Gaelic Medium provision. In the most effective practice, Gaelic organisations will work with local authorities to promote the benefits of Gaelic Medium Education to parents from an early stage. They will support parents to enrol their children in early learning and childcare centres. Parents expect Gaelic Medium provision that is of the highest quality, with tangible and transparent benefits for their children.

5.2 Gaelic Medium Education is open to all and it is important that parents who are not fluent in Gaelic are aware that they are instrumental in supporting their children's education through the medium of Gaelic. Children's fluency in Gaelic is enhanced by using the language outwith school. If parents wish, they need to have clear information on the various pathways to learning Gaelic so they too can learn Gaelic with their children.

³ [Comann nam Pàrant](#) is the national organisation that advises and supports parents/carers of those in Gaelic Medium Education (GME),

6. Gaelic Medium Education: career-long professional learning (CLPL)

Key messages:

- Teachers need to have access to high-quality career-long professional learning (CLPL) to support them with Gaelic Medium Education.

6.1 High-quality teachers are the most valuable asset that Scotland has for securing a sustainable future for the Gaelic language. Teachers need to be continually valued and supported in this crucial role and responsibility. In turn, teachers need to take advantage of the support that is made available for them. Teaching Scotland's Future⁴ recognises that teachers need to have access to high-quality **career-long professional learning (CLPL)**. This includes specialist support in such areas as Gaelic Medium Education. Teachers need to be supported in meeting the needs of a range of learners by working with those who can assist with delivering a full curriculum through the medium of Gaelic. Recognition also needs to be given to the on-going commitment required for teachers of Gaelic Medium Education to be updating continuously their knowledge of specialist vocabulary, language and to be planning a full curriculum.

6.2 Effective career-long professional learning meets the requirements of The General Teaching Scotland Professional Standards and retains a focus from initial teacher education on equipping teachers with the skills, knowledge and understanding for delivering high-quality Gaelic Medium Education in a 3-18 curriculum. A **suggested focus for career-long professional learning** includes:

- immersion and pedagogy for language acquisition;
- teaching of grammar and specialist vocabulary;
- developing literacy through Gaelic across the curriculum;
- assisting those who need support in their learning;
- developing a full curriculum for Gaelic Medium Education;
- maximising and contributing to information communication technology for delivering Gaelic Medium Education;
- learning, teaching and assessment approaches for developing language with different ages and stages 3-18, including in multi-level classes and
- equipping teachers to deliver a range of subjects and contexts that develop progressive learning of Gaelic. This includes all teachers, both language and subject, having an input on the components identified earlier in this paragraph and in subjects such as health and wellbeing, personal and social education,
- entitlement to support, religious and moral education, and delivering awards through the medium of Gaelic such as the John Muir Awards.

⁴ [Teaching Scotland's Future](#) Graham Donaldson, December 2010

6.3 The programme *Streap*⁵ by the University of Aberdeen is developed in partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and is fully funded by Scottish Government. Stakeholders identify it as being successful in enabling teachers to acquire the terminology and confidence to teach specific subjects through the medium of Gaelic. Its continued development will encourage participation from teachers, language and support assistants, support teachers and senior managers.

6.4 Through professional review and development, practitioners identify their specific professional learning needs which can be supported through such events as the Scottish Learning Festival⁶, *An t-Alltan*⁷, Senior Leaders' Conference⁸, Conference for Newly-Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and Glow⁹. This should include sharing emerging best practice in Gaelic Education, including the practice described in this Advice, in order to develop expertise, share and access resources and impact on raising young people's attainment. The Education Scotland Audit of CLPL, 2015 is enabling the profession to identify the professional learning needed to continue to inspire better learning, teaching and leadership of Gaelic provision.

6.5 In developing and evaluating **the curriculum for Gaelic Medium Education**, reference should be made to all relevant publications, in particular, the series on *Building the Curriculum* and the *Inspection Advice Notes* which set expectations for implementing national guidance on the curriculum.

⁵ [Streap](#) Aberdeen University

⁶ [Scottish Learning Festival](#) organised every September by Education Scotland and associated outreach event

⁷ [An t-Alltan](#) is organised by [Stòrlann](#) on an annual basis to provide career-long professional learning for those delivering in 0-18 Gaelic Education

⁸ Annual conference organised by [Bòrd na Gàidhlig](#) for senior leaders in schools and education authorities who have provision for Gaelic Education.

⁹ [Glow](#) Scotland's "national schools" intranet

7. Gaelic Medium Education: total immersion

Key messages:

- Children and young people need to experience high-quality **total immersion as part of Gaelic Medium Education until they have a secure foundation in the language and a level of fluency that will enable them to build on the progress made in Gaelic.**
- Teachers' monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement needs to ensure that children have received sufficient total immersion.
- A range of approaches are used in total immersion to enable children to hear and absorb high-quality Gaelic.
- In delivering learning in the total immersion playroom and classroom, staff need to make use of the principles of curriculum design to ensure **learning which is progressive and coherent.**
- The **'significant aspects of learning' and associated progression statements for literacy and Gàidhlig** have a key role in helping children to demonstrate their progress with the curricular levels for literacy and Gàidhlig.

7.1 Children and young people need to experience high-quality **total immersion as part of Gaelic Medium Education until they have a secure foundation in the language and a level of fluency that will enable them to build on the progress made in Gaelic** while, at the same time, acquire skills in reading and writing English. In the most effective practice, this is determined by teachers' tracking of progress and achievement to take account of each child's learning and development needs. In most situations, total immersion continues until late in P3. Through professional judgements, based on robust assessment and moderation, teachers can assess children's progress in total immersion. This needs to be confirmed further by the arrangements for monitoring and tracking at whole-school level. In cases where classes are multi-composite, the total immersion experience may be extended to P4, for example, to take account of class arrangements. This enables younger children more time to develop their early fluency in Gaelic language without possible interference from English in the classroom.

7.2 During total immersion, there is a clear emphasis on **developing fluency in Gaelic** first and foremost within the framework of Curriculum for Excellence to enable children to experience a broad education that develops key skills for learning, life and work. There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and the development of active and healthy lifestyles at the early stages of total immersion. To achieve this, learning will firstly have a very strong focus on listening and talking in Gaelic through a play-based curriculum, which is widely evidenced to be the most appropriate approach for the development of young children's early learning. Adults in the play and learning room have a key responsibility to use high-quality Gaelic to each other and to the children, both within the play and learning and beyond. Staff model high-quality Gaelic to children and play alongside the children as an effective approach to learning, while at the same time speaking Gaelic all of the time. Staff have many roles in the Gaelic Medium playroom and classroom: care and nurture, model Gaelic, play, acting and using prompts to aid understanding, learn and teach. Staff are important role models for children and create an environment where Gaelic is valued

and used all of the time. As children play, staff need to be working alongside and interacting with children to enable them to develop their knowledge and skills in Gaelic language while also following their interests, being creative and curious.

7.3 There is also a key role for **planning and delivering group sessions** in the early level to ensure language is being developed in a progressive way. This may be centred around, for example, singing, games, including those to develop language, telling and discussing a story, using pictures, role-play, routines such as snacks and checking in activities. In this, there is an important emphasis on **developing children's social language** so that they can begin to speak Gaelic for real and purposeful reasons. Staff need to build children's confidence in the use of Gaelic by encouraging them in making requests and the use of social language at snack time, for example. This is done alongside the development of academic language so that they are also accessing learning across the curriculum. The development of social language helps develop language which can be used in the home. By encouraging parents to be involved in play sessions, they can be supported in knowing what language may be used at home. It is also recognised in Gaelic Medium Education, while advisable and to be encouraged, that not all parents are able to speak Gaelic to their children.

7.4 **Through play, children will access all areas of the curriculum, building their knowledge and skills through the medium of Gaelic.** The regular changing of contexts for play, both indoors and outdoors, ensures that children's language and vocabulary is being extended. While children are free to play, adults interact with them, also playing and developing lines of imagination while building vocabulary and phrases through the use of the Gaelic language. Staff talk constantly in as much Gaelic as they can, ask questions, explain what they are doing in everyday routines and when engaging in activities with children such as arts and crafts. They are aiming to enable children to hear language all of the time to help them absorb Gaelic. Children will initially listen a lot to build their understanding and respond in their mother tongue. It is also helpful to model Gaelic. In other words, repeating to children in Gaelic in a sensitive way what they are saying in their mother tongue to help them learn Gaelic.

7.5 The role of **reading stories aloud, sound files, singing, group games and the use of rhymes** is very important in the immersion early learning and childcare centre. These should be used as part of group activities and for children to access independently. This helps children learn set phrases, which they absorb and then apply on a more independent basis. Children should be encouraged to watch, listen and interact with programmes on radio and the internet where they will hear Gaelic. It is also useful to be discussing these programmes with children. While listening to programmes is encouraged, this is not to be an approach which encourages learners to be passive. Children should be encouraged to retell stories, talk about illustrations and make up their own stories.

7.6 Initially children who enrol in early learning and childcare centres with no previous knowledge of Gaelic will devote a lot of time to **listening and absorbing Gaelic**. At the early stages, children will not immediately understand all that is said

to them through the medium of Gaelic. Their understanding is developing and should be aided with good language techniques such as prompting, rephrasing, acting and the use of pictures. They then start using common phrases and Gaelic which is heard in structured activities such as singing. Children will still initially express their feelings and thoughts in English with staff using a lot of repetition and prompting, and modelling in Gaelic of what children say in English.

7.7 It would be easy to adopt the ineffective practice of translating from Gaelic to English for a child who is learning through immersion. However, this is only denying children an opportunity to learn. In this situation, children are just learning that by waiting they will receive a translation rather than do the working out themselves. Having written text through the medium of Gaelic displayed around the school is also useful to developing fluency and creating an ethos for Gaelic. As the children develop skills in reading, bilingual text also denies an opportunity to learn. In this situation, children are likely to read the English version of the texts rather than do the working out for themselves.

7.8 In delivering learning in the total immersion playroom and classroom, staff need to make use of the principles of curriculum design to ensure **learning which is progressive and coherent**. The planning for learning involves grouping Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes together to give opportunities firstly to listen to, understand and then talk in Gaelic. Learning approaches prioritise opportunities for children to hear and use Gaelic. The modelling of high-quality Gaelic language by adults is important in enabling children to absorb the language. As learners master these skills, they will then be introduced to reading and writing in Gaelic at the primary stages. As children become comfortable with being immersed in the language their learning broadens to the outcomes of other curricular areas, such as mathematics and the expressive arts. Over time, as learners become secure in their fluency of Gaelic, all skills will be developed together in an integrated way, using grouping of Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes across the curriculum. This will include a range of approaches to learning and teaching, for example, play, projects, learning outdoors and role-play.

7.9 Within the total immersion stage, **assessing literacy skills comes later** as learners become confident in their mastery of Gaelic. The processes involved in developing fluency in Gaelic embed literacy skills and, through time, learners will show readiness to demonstrate their progress in these skills.

7.10 The **'significant aspects of learning' and associated progression statements for literacy and Gàidhlig** have a key role in helping children to demonstrate their progress with the curricular levels for literacy and Gàidhlig. By the end of P1, children who have been immersed in Gaelic in early learning and childcare centres should be able to demonstrate their progress within the early level and by the end of P4 the first level. Due to the initial focus on language development, children learning through the medium of Gaelic will not be working at the same rate of learning and progress as their peers in English medium education through the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes across the curricular areas. They will demonstrate equal competency, if not better, by the end

of P7. The Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes for English and literacy are not at all covered during the total immersion phase.

7.11 *Building the curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*¹⁰ helps define the principles of ‘robust assessment’ on which to base monitoring and tracking of children’s and young people’s progress and achievement. It highlights that assessment practices should be seen from the perspective of the learner. Learners should be engaged in all aspects of assessment processes and be afforded an element of choice and personalisation in showing that they have achieved the intended outcomes. As learners move through the curriculum, they will experience a range of approaches to assessment. In some cases, local authorities use standardised assessments to measure performance. 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. In translating such assessments, a check also needs to be made on whether the assessments match to the developmental stage of concepts in Gaelic. Direct translation in itself is not sufficient and does not automatically lead to parity of assessing knowledge, skills and understanding through Gaelic and/or English. This, however, is not to replace the correct use of assessment in Gaelic Medium Education.

7.12 When **Gaelic and English Medium provision are together in the one school, all children need to have an opportunity to learn Gaelic and learn about Gaelic culture and heritage as part of Scotland’s identity.** The 1+2 Approach to language learning presents such opportunities for learning Gaelic. Gaelic needs to be heard and visible all of the time within classrooms, beyond the classroom and outdoors. Those doing Gaelic Learner Education also practise their Gaelic to help develop their fluency and to give real-life opportunities to apply their Gaelic. Gaelic is used in whole-school events and venues. Gaelic is visible, for example in signage and in communications such as letters and emails. This embeds Gaelic outwith the classroom.

¹⁰ [Building the Curriculum 5](#) (2011)

8. Gaelic Medium Education: the immersion phase (immersion in the Broad General Education from end of P3/beginning of P4 onwards)

Key messages:

- In the immersion phase, the curriculum in its entirety continues to be taught through the medium of Gaelic across all four aspects of learning.
- In the immersion phase, children begin to **read and write skills in English language** and to learn at a quicker pace across the curricular areas and contexts.
- Teachers plan children's learning to develop vocabulary connected to the different areas of the curriculum, language skills, grammar and an appreciation of Gaelic language and culture.
- In the immersion phase **teachers lead learning in all curriculum areas, including the newly introduced English, through the medium of Gaelic.**
- **When Gaelic Medium Education is being delivered successfully, the immersion phase is planned to operate throughout primary and into secondary.**
- In secondary, Gaelic immersion is taken forward within a broad general curriculum up to the end of S3 as a minimum entitlement.

8.1 In the immersion phase, the curriculum in its entirety continues to be taught through the medium of Gaelic across all four aspects of learning. As such, the approaches detailed above continue to apply to the immersion phase, articulated to children's improving fluency and being age- and stage-appropriate. Teachers' monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement should confirm that **children now have a secure base in Gaelic language to transfer to developing reading and writing skills in English language** and to learning at a quicker pace across the curricular areas and contexts.

8.2 In the best examples, staff show a very strong commitment to **ensuring that the curriculum is delivered totally through the medium of Gaelic.** They transform all learning into opportunities for children to hear and use Gaelic with an initial emphasis remaining on listening and talking. They use creative ways to enable children to learn the language with ease and in situations that they enjoy. This includes a planned approach to grammar but one which is not overt to children. This will be taken forward in collaborative, fun-type activities and through memorisation of songs and set phrases. Staff work with others to support children and parents to develop and use the language at home and in the community.

8.3 In best practice, in the immersion phase **teachers lead learning in all curriculum areas, including the newly introduced English, through the medium of Gaelic.** They enable children to develop vocabulary connected to the different areas of the curriculum, language skills, grammar and an appreciation of Gaelic language and culture. They have clear plans and strategies in place to support them in doing this. Across the curricular areas, as teachers set outcomes for learning they also set ones connected to developing children's learning of Gaelic. The children themselves also have a role in setting these outcomes for language based on the feedback that they are receiving on their work. Non-contact time for teachers of

Gaelic Medium provision is covered by staff who speak Gaelic. Teachers need to be supported by support staff for Gaelic who speak high-quality Gaelic. Their deployment needs to be planned with them to maximise their impact, both within the classroom and beyond. School leaders need to have a clear rationale on how they are ensuring that the balance of teaching through the medium of Gaelic is kept in favour of Gaelic. **When Gaelic Medium Education is being delivered successfully, the immersion phase is planned to operate throughout primary and into secondary.** In secondary, Gaelic immersion is taken forward within a broad general curriculum up to the end of S3 as a minimum entitlement.

9. Gaelic Medium Education: secondary stages

Key messages:

- The **rationale** for the curriculum needs to be based on a shared understanding of Gaelic Medium Education and bilingualism.
- Staff, young people, parents and partners need to be clear on the purpose and value of Gaelic Medium Education.
- The **Gaelic Medium curriculum from S1 to S3 and into the senior phase remains one based on the principles of immersion.**
- Young people need to experience a continuum of learning in the broad general education and the senior phase with opportunities to develop their fluency across all four contexts of the curriculum.
- To allow progression in immersion, schools need to aim to deliver **a sufficient proportion of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic.**
- Gaelic Medium Education needs to be a compulsory part of the Broad General Education up to the end of S3, after which learners move on into the senior phase from S4-S6.
- The “1+2 Approach to Language Learning in Scotland” should be used in schools with Gaelic Medium provision to enable all young people in English medium education to learn Gaelic as an additional language.

9.1 This Advice applies both to dedicated **Gaelic Medium provision or where Gaelic and English provision operate alongside each other.** Other Education Scotland documents on the curriculum also apply to Gaelic Medium Education including the Inspection Advice Notes, Building the Curriculum series and Curriculum for Excellence Briefings.

9.2 The Advice in this section may also be useful to the broad general education at the primary stages, including for transitions. At the secondary stages, Gaelic Medium Education is still at a very early stage of development. Of the 38 schools currently offering Gaelic Medium Education in some form, only 14 are providing subjects other than Gaelic through the medium of Gaelic. These subjects are generally available from S1 to S3, but only a few schools provide continuity through to the senior phase. **Subjects available** in the broad general education include French, Gàidhlig, geography, home economics, history, mathematics, modern studies, personal and social education, physical education, religious and moral education and science. At the senior phase, qualifications are generally undertaken in geography, history, mathematics and modern studies.

9.3 Ideally, all subjects and contexts of the curriculum are delivered through the medium of Gaelic. Teachers need resources and career-long professional learning to support them in the delivery of this aim. Teachers of Gaelic have an important role to play at the secondary stages in **teaching specialist terminology and vocabulary** so that young people can continue their learning through the medium of Gaelic. In addition, all teachers of Gaelic Medium Education have a role to play in the development of children’s and young people’s fluency and specialist vocabulary, as part of the development of literacy.

9.4 The **rationale** for the curriculum needs to be based on a shared understanding of Gaelic Medium Education and bilingualism. Staff, young people, parents and partners are clear on the purpose and value of Gaelic Medium Education. They are aware of their role, irrespective of whether they can speak Gaelic, in being positive and supportive to Gaelic Medium Education. This is augmented further with the design of the curriculum for those in English medium education being able to learn Gaelic as part of the framework for Gaelic Learner Education, which leads to awards and qualifications. There needs also to be regular opportunities for all to learn of the value and contribution that Gaelic language and culture makes to Scotland's identity.

9.5 The **Gaelic Medium curriculum from S1 to S3 and into the senior phase remains one based on the principles of immersion**. Gaelic Medium Education needs to be a compulsory part of the broad general education up to the end of S3, after which learners move on into the senior phase from S4-S6. Its purposes span all the key aspects of a young person's learning and development, as expressed in the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. Young people still need to experience a continuum of learning in the broad general education and the senior phase with opportunities to develop their fluency by:

- studying Gàidhlig as a subject;
- studying other subjects through the medium of Gaelic;
- engaging in interdisciplinary learning;
- engaging in opportunities for personal achievement; and
- using Gaelic to participate in, and contribute to, the life and ethos of the school.

9.6 To allow progression in immersion, schools need to aim to deliver **a sufficient proportion of the curriculum through the medium of Gaelic at the secondary stages to enable young people to continue to develop their fluency in Gaelic through immersion**. An exact proportion is not, at this stage, specified. However, it has to be sufficiently substantial to impact on young people's fluency. Secondary schools associated with all Gaelic Medium schools need to aim to continue to build on fluency by providing substantial learning, teaching and assessment through the medium of Gaelic. To ensure equality of access to Gaelic Medium Education, all secondary schools need to be ambitious in aiming for a substantial proportion of the curriculum being delivered through the medium of Gaelic.

9.7 Teachers monitor and track children's progress in **developing fluency across the four contexts of learning**. The curriculum offers sufficient flexibility to enable any lapses in fluency to be addressed through planned opportunities and events for total immersion. Such total immersion experiences also enable young people to apply their learning of Gaelic to achieve breadth, depth and challenge. Young people who have discontinued their learning of Gaelic at transition points need also to be offered these total immersion experiences so that they have opportunities to maintain and extend their fluency. Such total immersion experiences are part of children's and young people's entitlement to Gaelic Medium Education. These total immersion opportunities are based on groupings of Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes from the curriculum areas. They provide relevant,

challenging and enjoyable learning experiences and stimulating contexts to meet the learning needs of children and young people learning through the medium of Gaelic.

9.8 Learning through immersion at the secondary stages is developed in an **ethos** of understanding and respect to the young people who are developing bilingualism through Gaelic Medium Education. The ethos of the school needs to support the learning of Gaelic as detailed in this Advice. The *1+2 Approach to Language Learning in Scotland* needs to be used in schools with Gaelic Medium provision to enable all young people in English medium education to learn Gaelic as an additional language. A key feature of an ethos which supports the learning of Gaelic is when all young people have an opportunity to learn Gaelic as part of Gaelic Learner Education if they wish. Such situations present interesting possibilities for making connections across learning. These include embedding Gaelic within shared areas and activities such as assemblies, dining room routines, classroom instruction. In making connections, the principles of immersion should be carefully adhered to. Gaelic Medium Education is a compulsory part of the Broad General Education up to the end of S3, after which learners move on into the **Senior Phase** from S4-S6. The purpose of Gaelic Medium Education spans all the key aspects of a young person's learning and development, as expressed in the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. The senior phase now presents schools with more flexibility to meet better the needs of all learners to improve learners' achievements in Gaelic and through Gaelic. Gaelic Medium Education needs to be included in the senior phase.

9.9 Long-term planning for progression in Gaelic Medium Education needs to ensure that curriculum designers are **using all of their staff, partners and Gaelic organisations to deliver and support young people's learning**. The obvious curriculum context is to have teachers delivering their subjects through the medium of Gaelic. However, to have a sufficient proportion of the curriculum delivered through the medium of Gaelic also requires a planned approach to the place of Gaelic across all four contexts of the curriculum. This includes awards for personal achievements through the medium of Gaelic. Schools should aim for there to be at least a daily input where young people in Gaelic Medium Education hear and use their Gaelic language in purposeful and meaningful situations.

9.10 Features of **curriculum design** such as specialisation, enrichment courses, electives and master classes need to be used to increase the proportion of the curriculum to be delivered through the medium of Gaelic. In the immediate term, schools need to be matching the availability of teachers who are fluent in Gaelic to the delivery of discrete subjects and interdisciplinary learning through the medium of Gaelic. All schools should know their curriculum partners for Gaelic Medium Education and be using them to build coherent and progressive learning. They need to be mapping existing partnerships and developing new ones with different providers including parents, Gaelic organisations, colleges, community learning and development, and others in the wider community including local employers and businesses to assist their staff take forward the other contexts of the curriculum.

The report on **Developing Scotland's Young Workforce** gives new impetus to learning taking place at relevant, real-life settings with 16+ learning pathways being through the medium of Gaelic.

9.11 Teachers of Gaelic routinely deliver Gàidhlig as part of young people's entitlement to a Gaelic Medium Education. Their flexibility in teaching across the curriculum from S1 to S3 is highly recommended. There are many highly effective examples of teachers already doing so. The **flexibility of teachers of Gaelic**, or teachers able to speak Gaelic, is already evidenced through teaching religious and moral education, religious education and health and wellbeing/personal and social education across stages. In turn, teachers need to be supported with high-quality key resources in Gaelic and their non-contact time needs to recognise that they are teaching across curriculum areas and need extra time to plan.

9.12 Teachers of Gaelic have a role in devising a strategy for the development and assessment of **literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing through the medium of Gaelic**, which links to its development through the medium of English.

9.13 In many schools, young people's entitlement to **universal and targeted support** is being implemented as a daily or weekly planned time with a teacher, sometimes as part of registration. In some schools, this is delivered by a named person, registration teachers, tutor or mentor. For those learning in Gaelic Medium Education, this may present an opportunity for the support to be delivered through the medium of Gaelic. In some schools, this is achieved by having a multi-age group.

9.14 Schools need to be developing a framework for **interdisciplinary learning** through the medium of Gaelic to ensure that young people experience their entitlement to a sufficient proportion of learning through the medium of Gaelic. This can help to ensure that interdisciplinary learning is planned around young people's needs and makes use in another context of the combined language skills of curriculum partners. Interdisciplinary learning provides a stimulating and self-motivating context for developing and applying fluency, while also being enjoyable and relevant. It leads to a better, more rounded understanding of important ideas and to an increased competence in using knowledge and skills in transferable ways. Staff will need to be clear about the connections across learning that they want young people to explore and understand. They will also know what young people have learned previously and how they will apply and develop this learning in new and different ways. Everyone involved will know which skills and ideas from different subjects or disciplines they are bringing together, and why. They will also know how interdisciplinary learning is building on and extending young people's fluency.

9.15 There needs to be much more flexibility and **cluster working** across primary and secondary stages with teachers seeing themselves as teachers of the broad general education and collaborating on delivering learning and teaching. **Schools with 3-18 provision** open up possibilities for teachers to be working across stages and with multi-age groups. The same can be done with primary and secondary schools working in cluster arrangements. The use and promotion of Gaelic at **whole-**

school events are also important. The Gaelic language should be included and embedded in these events to enable all to experience Gaelic. On other occasions, whole-school events such as assemblies will be delivered through the medium of Gaelic for young people in Gaelic Medium Education. This enables young people to develop literacy through Gaelic while also developing the outcomes of religious and moral education, for example.

9.16 Opportunities for **personal achievements** are an important context for applying language, building confidence and a range of skills for learning, life and work. A number of programmes such as the John Muir, Duke of Edinburgh and Saltire awards are already enhancing Gaelic Medium Education while also providing opportunities for learning in residential and outdoor. Events like An Deasbad Nàiseanta and Film G develop skills in Gaelic while also those associated with learning, life and work. Personal achievements need to be part of a planned process with partners collaborating closely with teachers in planning progression and coherence in learning. They should also, while respecting the confidentiality of children and young people, assist with meeting the outcomes of monitoring and tracking to build on fluency. It is also a national expectation that partners are involved in self-evaluation. Opportunities for personal achievement need to provide rich opportunities to develop further language skills and may include:

- after school clubs, summer camps, and excursions which focus on expressive arts, creativity, singing, debating competitions, making of films;
- support with homework and learning;
- sports and pastimes;
- links to other provisions which offer Gaelic Medium Education and other countries that develop learning through immersion; and
- development of personal achievements and awards.

9.17 Community learning and development and others need to continue to provide opportunities for learners to achieve **accreditation through the medium of Gaelic for skills for learning, life and work**. This needs to include sports coaching and leadership awards and a broad range of music, theatre and arts activities. Through these, learners build their own confidence and self-esteem, increase their creativity, and develop a range of skills leading to enhanced career pathways. It would also be useful to look at developing opportunities that encourage children's and young people's use of Gaelic at lunch time and after-school through clubs and other activities. Children need a catalyst to use Gaelic beyond the classroom. This is a contribution that partners, parents, volunteers and the community can have significant impact. In some areas, Active School Coordinators can help. Active School Coordinators also have a role in training young people to be leaders taking responsibilities for such activities. From September 2015, each local authority area will be producing a three-year plan that outlines how Community Learning and Development will be delivered. These plans need to clearly demonstrate how Gaelic Medium Education will be advanced. HM inspections need to check that the plans are showing how Gaelic will be supported in the curriculum.

9.18 A key principle for curriculum design at the S1-S3 stages is to ensure that all young people receive their national **entitlement to experience the full range of Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes at third level by the end of S3**. Schools should also aim to ensure that as many young people as possible go beyond to achieve success in relation to the fourth level Experiences and Outcomes. Until solutions are found to staffing issues, some of the national expectations for the curriculum will be delivered through the medium of English. Young people's learning in Gaelic Medium Education needs to ensure full coverage of national guidance and advice, be it through Gaelic or English. Young people learning through the medium of Gaelic need to have opportunities for personalisation and choice across many aspects of their learning throughout S1 to S3. These can include choices through learning, teaching and assessment approaches; topics or contexts; themes for interdisciplinary learning; the opportunities learners have to contribute to the life of the school as a community; and the activities they undertake for personal achievement. The activities which a young person chooses should build on their prior learning and provide progression through breadth, challenge and application. Many schools are planning their curricula so that young people will experience a degree of choice and specialisation in S3. The design needs to take account of coverage, as far as possible, being through the medium of Gaelic. Ensuring sufficient opportunities for learning through the medium of Gaelic is an important part of maintaining young people's motivation for developing their fluency in Gaelic. It is equally important that these opportunities are planned to enable learning which is progressive, coherent, challenging and is preparing them for progression into the senior phase and qualifications. Care needs to be taken, however, to avoid closing off options for progression in Gaelic Medium Education.

9.19 S3 marks an important milestone in young people's learning. This may well be their last experience of some curriculum areas or subjects. In the case of Gaelic Medium Education, it is an important to celebrate and to capture what young people have achieved, and to give clear direction as to where young people are with their progress in fluency and their next steps to improve further. A well-maintained and evidenced **S3 pupil profile** is a valuable record, which supports learners' future progress. For young people, the profile and the profiling process serves as an important document for transition with learning and progression beyond the broad general education to pathways such as the senior phase, future employment and training. The process of profiling and the Profile is very important in assisting young people who are learning through the medium of Gaelic recognise their achievements and next steps in developing their language skills. Dialogue between the learner and the teacher is at the heart of this process. This is a key process for reflecting on what has been achieved as well as the learning experienced. It needs to advise young people of how they will continue to experience learning through the medium of Gaelic both in classrooms and beyond.

9.20 At the end of **S4**, learners may be in school, college, with training providers, in the workplace, engaging in programmes offered by community and youth groups or in programmes offered in collaboration, such as those offered through school-college, school-employer, or school-university partnerships. They may be in full- or part-time programmes. They may be studying through a combination of face-to-face

classes and distance learning. As they move through **S5 and S6**, they may experience an increasing range of delivery and partnership arrangements, and be taking more and more responsibility for their own learning. The S3 profile and profiling needs to provide a platform to inform planning for these varied achievement pathways through the senior phase.

9.21 As the senior phase is being developed and different approaches emerge for learners from S4 to S6, schools will ensure that young people are studying courses leading to **National Qualifications** in Gàidhlig, Gaelic (Learners), and subjects delivered through Gaelic in sufficient numbers. Schools need to track trends in presenting young people for National Qualifications in Gaelic Education to ensure that the numbers presented are maintained and increased as appropriate. As part of monitoring and tracking of progress and achievement, schools and local authorities need to reduce the number of young people leaving 3-18 Gaelic Medium Education with no award or qualification in Gaelic/Gàidhlig or through Gaelic. Schools need to look at providing appropriate and challenging pathways for these young people to build more effectively on their fluency and avoid underachievement. The design of the senior phase opens up opportunities for better meeting of learners' needs.

9.22 In reviewing how well schools are delivering a curriculum through the medium of Gaelic, useful steps may be:

- checking to ascertain that staff who are fluent in Gaelic are delivering Gaelic Medium Education;
- checking to see if there may be more sharing of staff expertise between both primary and other secondary schools;
- checking to see if approaches to career-long professional learning is encouraging staff to learn and improve their fluency in Gaelic;
- working with primary schools to ensure that progression is not being hampered by switching medium of delivery;
- reviewing how well curriculum design such as specialisation, enrichment courses, electives and masterclasses are being used to increase the proportion of learning through Gaelic;
- reviewing how well interdisciplinary learning is used for Gaelic Medium Education;
- encouraging partners to deliver aspects of the curriculum in Gaelic;
- reviewing how well colleges, community learning and development and Gaelic groups contribute to Gaelic Medium Education, including with the use of blended learning approaches;
- reviewing how opportunities for personal achievements and accreditation can provide learning through Gaelic;
- using lunchtime and after-school clubs as an opportunity for young people to use Gaelic;
- checking to see if progression from the broad general education to National 4, 5 and Higher in any subject is feasible; and
- checking to see if progression from Higher to Advanced Higher is feasible.

10. Gaelic Medium Education: improving fluency with a planned programme for language, grammar and vocabulary

Key messages:

- During the **total immersion phase**, the development of grammar and specialist vocabulary is embedded within learning and play through the use of high-quality Gaelic all of the time.
- Later and at the **immersion stages**, children will become more aware of the development of particular language areas. Particular points of grammar and specialist vocabulary are planned in programmes and courses across the curricular areas and contexts of the curriculum.
- 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.

10.1 Approaches to learning and teaching of language skills for Gaelic have developed significantly over time. In the best examples, schools have agreed **well thought out approaches for developing children's and young people's knowledge and use of language**. Teachers are, for example, skilled in modelling accurate use of Gaelic for the children and young people without diminishing their confidence in using the language. They intervene sensitively and effectively to correct and model the correct use of language. The learner, in turn, sees the intervention and their repetition of the correct language as a natural part of the learning process. Teachers spontaneously create other situations for children and young people to hear and use accurate language. In doing this, they draw on good approaches for teaching and assessing.

10.2 During the **total immersion phase**, the development of grammar and specialist vocabulary is embedded within learning and play through the use of Gaelic all of the time. Throughout the total immersion phase, children are exposed to high-quality language with accuracy in grammar. Children hear, absorb and learn this without thinking about grammar. The teacher will include activities and tasks, for example, a particular rhyme or play area as they recognise this as the next step in developing children's learning. On other occasions, staff will have noted from observations of learning that children's language needs support in a particular area.

10.3 Later and at the **immersion stages**, children will become more aware of the development of particular language areas. Particular points of grammar and specialist vocabulary are planned in programmes and courses across the curricular areas and contexts of the curriculum. In doing this, schools need to have a clear framework for developing grammar which shows progression and coherence. This also needs to identify significant aspects of grammar that children and young people should be conversant with by a certain stage. Planning for grammar will also include opportunities to use and apply grammar on a more independent basis across curricular areas and contexts. The planning for the development of grammar needs to work very closely with monitoring and tracking of children's progress and achievement. Teachers will use assessment to check children and young people

have mastered particular aspects of language development and return to it as necessary to consolidate and extend grammar. They should also use this information to review and improve their practice and planning of grammar as part of improving the curriculum. This will ensure on-going improvements in practice and in the accuracy and fluency in children's and young people's Gaelic. There needs to be a particular focus on embedding key grammar in the total immersion phase that may be considered more challenging to develop later as a discrete lesson in grammar. It is also helpful with the older children and young people to gradually introduce grammatical terms to help them make connections with other languages.

10.4 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. Left uncorrected, language errors become more challenging for children and young people to address. Across stages, teachers need to have a consistent approach to the correction of errors in what children and young people write and say. Teachers need to have clear plans for developing fluency in a progressive and coherent way.

10.5 At the **secondary stages**, teachers who are specialists in Gaelic need to be coordinating this aspect of literacy and supporting those who are subject specialists, but not necessarily specialists in teaching languages. One approach may be that specialist teachers of Gaelic have a key role in promoting and/or teaching the language, specialist vocabulary and grammar required in curricular areas. They need also to be involved in tracking and monitoring children's and young people's language skills across all curricular areas. Teachers in Gaelic Medium Education are teachers of curriculum areas and subjects, and also teachers of language development.

11. Gaelic Medium Education: Transitions

Key messages:

- Schools and partners need to collaborate in planning learning 3-18 for Gaelic Medium Education to ensure continuity and progression in learning across all curriculum areas particularly into P1, between P7 and S1 and from the broad general education into the senior phase.

11.1 Transitions are the moves children and young people make from home to nursery, from stage to stage (and through the Curriculum for Excellence levels), from primary to secondary, between schools, and from secondary to further and higher education and employment. It is essential to have effective transition arrangements in place for children and young people learning through the medium of Gaelic as they move from stage to stage. The National Gaelic Language Plan sets out an ambitious target for increasing the numbers enrolling in P1 by 2017. To create a sustainable future for the language, the target set needs to be sustained throughout the broad general education leading to awards and qualifications in the senior phase.

11.2 Schools and partners need to collaborate in planning learning 3-18 for Gaelic Medium Education to ensure continuity and progression in learning across all curriculum areas particularly into P1, between P7 and S1 and from the broad general education into the senior phase. Increased account needs to be taken of the early level of Gaelic Medium Education beginning at age three with continuity into P1.

12. Gaelic Medium Education: A 1 + 2 Approach to Language Learning

Key messages:

- A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning in Scotland children will firstly be immersed in Gaelic using the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes at the early and first levels.
- At P3/P4, children will begin to address the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes relating to literacy and English.
- Children will learn a second additional language, L3, no later than P5.

12.1 A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning in Scotland gives a vital framework for increasing the learning of Gaelic across the country. The report on a 1+2 Approach recognises that Gaelic Medium Education is a highly effective example of language learning.

12.2 In implementing a 1+2 approach in Gaelic Medium Education, there are three languages to plan for in the curriculum, whilst recognising the principles of immersion. Firstly, children will be immersed in Gaelic using the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes at the early and first levels. At P3/P4, they will begin to address the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes relating to literacy and English. In this way, these children will have the opportunity to experience the benefits of bilingualism. As expected within the 1+2 approach, they will have the potential to develop skills, knowledge and an understanding of how languages work. These transferable skills will assist them in their learning of the second additional language, L3, to which children learning in GME will be introduced by P5. The pace of learning and progress should be monitored and tracked carefully to ensure learning that is challenging, sets high expectations and meets children's particular needs. During S1 to S3, young people should have opportunities to continue learning this second additional language, L3, along with English and Gàidhlig, as part of a progressive experience. Breadth, depth and challenge need to be key features of young people's learning of L3 to take account of the benefits of bilingualism.

13. Gaelic Medium Education: creating an ethos for Gaelic in Gaelic Medium schools and other settings

Key messages:

- All Gaelic Medium provision needs to aim to have a permeating ethos that is conducive to learning Gaelic. For this, all staff, children, young people and parents have a meaningful contribution to make.
- All members of a school's community need to have a positive and inclusive attitude to the Gaelic language and to those who speak it and are learning the language.
- When Gaelic and English Medium provision are together in the one school, all children need to have an opportunity to learn about Gaelic language, culture and heritage as part of Scotland's identity.
- Children and young people need to be encouraged to speak and use Gaelic for a range of purposes in the development of their learning across the curriculum and add to the ethos for Gaelic in a school.

13.1 All Gaelic Medium provision needs to aim to have a permeating ethos that is conducive to learning Gaelic. For this, all staff, children, young people and parents have a meaningful contribution to make.

13.2 An ethos for Gaelic is created with the **use of Gaelic for delivering all four contexts of the curriculum**. It is based on a sense of pride in Gaelic language, culture and a celebration of bilingualism.

13.3 All members of a school's community need to have a positive and inclusive attitude to the Gaelic language and to those who speak it and are learning the language. There needs to be a **common understanding of why Gaelic is important and its value to learning**. An ethos for Gaelic is caring, nurturing and respectful and one in which all staff, children and young people engage regularly in conversations through the medium of Gaelic. This makes Gaelic the language of the school. Additionally, all those connected to Gaelic Medium provision need to have an understanding of why they will hear Gaelic being spoken and used in the school. If they are not yet fluent in Gaelic, they need to be committed to using and learning some Gaelic, even basic everyday exchanges. Immersion is a particular way of learning. All should have an understanding of its rationale and associated practices. In Gaelic Medium provision, Gaelic is heard and visible all of the time within classrooms, beyond the classroom and outdoors. This helps develop children's and young people's fluency and gives children real-life opportunities to be applying their Gaelic. Gaelic is used in whole-school events and venues, for example at assemblies, at prize-giving, in making announcements, in visiting classrooms, in the dining room and in answering the telephone. Gaelic is visible, for example in signage and in communications such as letters and emails. This helps embed Gaelic outwith the classroom.

13.4 When **Gaelic and English Medium provision are together in the one school, all children need to have an opportunity to learn about Gaelic language, culture and heritage as part of Scotland's identity**. The 1+2 Approach

to language learning presents opportunities for learning Gaelic. All staff, children and young people need to have a shared understanding of the rationale for Gaelic. In situations where Gaelic and English Medium provision are together in the same school, Gaelic is heard and visible all of the time within classrooms, beyond the classroom and outdoors. Those doing Gaelic Learner Education also practise their Gaelic to help develop their fluency and to give real-life opportunities to apply their Gaelic. Gaelic is used in whole-school events and venues. It is visible, for example in signage and in communications such as letters and emails. This embeds Gaelic outwith the classroom.

13.5 Children and young people need to be encouraged to speak and use Gaelic for a range of purposes too in the development of their learning across the curriculum and add to the **ethos for Gaelic** in a school. This presents a great opportunity for children to be leaders of their own and other's learning and achievement. In developing the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, there are many opportunities for children and young people to be active and independent in enterprise, cultural, musical, sporting, and volunteering and leadership activities and events. In doing this, children's and young people's achievements should be recognised through profiling and with school, local and national awards and trophies. A responsibility for ensuring an ethos for Gaelic also extends to visitors to the school whether this may be as a partner, parent or a member of the community. They also need to play their part in enhancing the school's ethos for Gaelic with their commitment to the use of Gaelic.

The use of **information communications technology** and music should also be maximised to create an ambiance for Gaelic in schools. As visitors approach the school, there should be visible and audible signs that Gaelic is valued and used in the school.

14. Gaelic Medium Education: learners with additional needs

Key messages:

- Legislation places duties on local authorities, and other agencies, to provide additional support where needed to enable any child or young person to benefit from education.
- At this stage in the development of Gaelic Medium Education, while it is desirable, there are still **challenges in providing some of this support through the medium of Gaelic.**
- This may result in access to some identification of needs and support services being available through the medium of English but for there to be an awareness of the approaches to Gaelic Medium Education.
- The aims and goals of Curriculum for Excellence and the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* place a **responsibility on all staff to meet the needs of all learners.**

14.1 An area of specific need identified for Gaelic Medium Education is **assistance for children and young people who need additional support with their learning.** All children and young people from birth to 25 are entitled to support with their education. This may be on-going, day-to-day help from staff and needs to be caring and inclusive. Entitlement to additional support is linked to disability or health needs, social or emotional factors for short- or long-term periods which is tailored to the individual to help overcome any barriers to learning. Bòrd na Gàidhlig have commissioned an audit in this area with recommendations for action and an analysis of the professional learning needs of staff.

14.2 Legislation places duties on local authorities, and other agencies, to provide additional support where needed to enable any child or young person to benefit from education. For some children and young people, **targeted support** is required to meet additional needs. At this stage in the development of Gaelic Medium Education, while it is desirable, there are still **challenges in providing some of this support through the medium of Gaelic.** Early identification of barriers and subsequent support is key. Support to remove barriers that may restrict access to learning will ensure that every learner has every opportunity to achieve the best they can. This may result in access to some identification of needs and support services being available through the medium of English at this current time. For this to be successful, all those involved in supporting the full range of children and young people with targeted support need to be aware of the approaches to Gaelic Medium Education. It is not appropriate to use assessments to identify needs through the medium of English at a stage when children's learning is focusing on the development of the Gaelic language. It is highly inappropriate.

14.3 Policies for supporting learners in Gaelic Medium Education which take full regard of legislation are required at local authority and school level. This should lead to a stronger understanding and commitment that Gaelic Medium Education is suitable for all children and young people, including those who need support with their learning. Switching from Gaelic to English Medium Education, as is practice in

some schools, is not a solution to meeting the learning needs of children and young people.

14.4 The aims and goals of Curriculum for Excellence and the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* place a **responsibility on all staff to meet the needs of all learners**. This represents best practice in learning and teaching.

Personalised learning means tailoring learning and teaching to learners' needs. Staff do this by knowing learners well and building on prior learning so that all learners can participate, progress and achieve. Personalised learning focuses on the individual learner from the earliest level through to lifelong learning. Learners are involved in planning next steps in learning and also in deciding which qualifications to study for and at which level, taking into account opportunities for and entry requirements of further and higher education and employment, as well as strengths and interests. Personalisation means a broad range of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

14.5 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 study a language or able to learn through the medium of Gaelic.

15. Gaelic Learner Education

Key message:

- In a '1+2 Approach'¹¹ children may learn Gaelic as their first or second additional language in English medium schools. All efforts need to be made to include Gaelic (Learners) in a 3-18 curriculum.

15.1 Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) is an opportunity for children and young people to learn Gaelic as part of the curriculum. As part of planning for a '1+2 Approach'¹² children may learn Gaelic as their first or second additional language in English medium schools. Such opportunities currently exist and are referred to as Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS). At the secondary stages, national qualifications are referred to as Gaelic (Learners). Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) is used as an overarching term across all contexts of the curriculum for 3-18 and beyond. Both Curriculum for Excellence and a 1+2 Approach promote learning a language in the broad general education. The Education Scotland publication, The role of Gaelic Education 3-18 in 'Language Learning in Scotland: A 1 + 2 Approach'¹³ specifies that local authorities are encouraged to support their schools in delivering a coherent programme for GLE leading to awards and qualifications.

¹¹ [Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach](#) Scottish Government Languages Working Group: Report and recommendations May 2012

¹² [Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach](#) Scottish Government Languages Working Group: Report and recommendations May 2012

¹³ [The role of Gaelic Education 3-18 in Language Learning in Scotland A 1+2 Approach](#) Education Scotland 2014

16. Gaelic Learner Education: curriculum 3-18 and Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach.

Key messages:

- The standards for Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) 3-18 are based on the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes from early to fourth level and the specifications of the Scottish Qualifications Authority and other awards and qualifications.
- *A 1+2 Approach for Language Learning* affords an important framework for increasing the number of those learning Gaelic in English medium education.
- Both Curriculum for Excellence and a 1+2 Approach promote learning a Gaelic in the broad general education as a continuum of learning with opportunities for awards and qualifications in the senior phase.
- Effective transition links between the primary and secondary sectors are key to building on language learning which has taken place at the primary stages.
- The learning of an additional language, which might be Gaelic (Learners), is an entitlement for all as part of the broad general education up to the end of S3, within the languages curriculum area.

16.1 The standards for Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) 3-18 are based on the Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes from early to fourth level and the specifications of the Scottish Qualifications Authority and other awards and qualifications. This Advice for Gaelic Learner Education needs to be read in conjunction with other relevant documents which include:

- Curriculum for Excellence guidance;
- The Role of Gaelic Learner Education in a 1+2 Approach;
- Assessing progress and achievement for Gaelic (Learners) and the associated progression frameworks;
- Guidance and Advice on 1+2 Approach; and
- Scottish Qualifications Authority awards and qualifications, including for those for N3 through to Advanced Higher.

16.2 Courses are available for young people in English medium to learn **Gaelic as a second language**. In primary, these courses are referred to as Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS) and in secondary as Gaelic (Learners). Gaelic (Learners) is available up to Advanced Higher level. In 2013-14, approximately 8000 children in primary schools were learning Gaelic as part of the GLPS programme. In the same academic session, approximately 3000 young people were learning Gaelic in secondary schools. All these young people are largely very interested and motivated by their learning experiences. There is now a body of best practice in learning and teaching across both primary and secondary to build upon in a 1+2 Approach to Language Learning.

16.3 *A 1+2 Approach for Language Learning* affords an important framework for increasing the number of those learning Gaelic in English medium education.

Children may begin to learn Gaelic as a first or second additional language in P1 or P5. These opportunities are being referred to as Primary Language Learning and specifically in relation to Gaelic, **Gaelic Language Learning (GLL) which is replacing the use of the term Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS)**. At the secondary stages, young people's entitlement to learning a language continues to be referred to as **Gaelic (Learners)**. There are opportunities for young people to demonstrate their progression through National Qualifications up to Advanced Higher. **Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) is an overarching term which spans 3-18 and beyond.**

16.3 Both Curriculum for Excellence and a 1+2 Approach promote learning a language in the broad general education as a continuum of learning. Currently, there are **challenges around the effective planning of GLE** as a continuum of learning. Delivery can be driven by whether suitably qualified staff are available and sometimes by the interests of the primary or secondary headteacher.

16.4 Effective **transition** links between the primary and secondary sectors are key to building on language learning which has taken place at the primary stages. Continuity for learners as they move from primary on to secondary school needs to be provided so that children can build effectively on their learning as they move on to S1 and beyond. This is particularly important for the language children will continue to study at S1. In most cases, this may be L2, the language studied from P1. Where continuity of L3 into the secondary school is possible, it offers additional progression in language learning. Ideally, therefore, the secondary school would be able to provide opportunities for further study of the same L2 and L3. This may be through master classes, through an option during the broad general education or through an additional qualification in the senior phase. At S3, master classes may also provide an opportunity for young people to achieve an SQA Languages for Life and Work Award and the Scottish Studies Award.

16.5 The advice in Education Scotland's Guidance the A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning applies to GLE also. However, it should be noted that **GLE has its own progression framework, Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes and associated resources.**

16.6 The Education Scotland publication, *Professional learning resource: Assessing progress and achievement for Gaelic (Learners)* and the associated progression framework give **advice on learning, teaching and assessment**. The progression statements identify key milestones that children and young people should be making at each of the curricular levels. GLE needs to be embedded across the curriculum in a planned, progressive and coherent way which is supplemented by discrete lessons in Gaelic to help children and young people connect all aspects of their learning. Schools need to have a clear plan and overview which sets criteria for success and ensures coherence in learners' experiences.

16.7 In developing a **rationale** for the curriculum, staff, young people, parents and partners need to be clear on the purpose and value of Gaelic Learner Education.

This can be contextualised by learning about Scotland's identity, with a focus on the value and contribution made by Gaelic language and culture.

16.8 All children and young people should have the opportunity to learn an additional language (L2) from P1 by 2020. Where English and Gaelic Medium provision are within the same school, it is helpful in developing a shared understanding and positive and inclusive attitudes if all children learning through the medium of English have opportunities to learn Gaelic as L2 or L3, or about Gaelic language and culture as part of Scotland's identity.

16.9 The learning of another language, which might be Gaelic (Learners), is an entitlement for all as part of the broad general education up to the end of S3, within the languages curriculum area. The study of English does not fully cover this curriculum area. All young people may not undertake a full course in a language from S1 to S3, if this is not appropriate to their needs. Language study should still be part of their curriculum, however. Schools should not assume that young people who need support in their learning are not required to study another language at all.

16.10 From S1 to S3, young people should be introduced to another language in addition to L2. **Gaelic (Learners) can be either L2 or L3.** L3 does not have to be the same language as was studied for L3 at primary school, although it may be. It may not be possible to study this language in the same depth as L2 but it needs to be a progressive experience going beyond the learning of items of vocabulary. Schools may choose to deliver this through interdisciplinary work, a short course or an elective, for example. In planning motivating learning experiences, staff should be mindful of the opportunity to attain Languages for Life and Work Award through the study of one or more languages and also employability skills. The Scottish Studies Award may also be considered.

16.11 Schools who do not have staff trained in teaching Gaelic as part of primary language learning should consider accessing programmes organised by Gaelic groups such as Fèis Sgoil. For more information, please see the *Further guidance on L3 within the 1+2 policy*.

16.12 Learning of Gaelic needs to promote a sense of **purpose and motivation** for language learning. Characteristics of this learning include learning independently; taking responsibility for learning; active learning; collaborative learning; and applying learning and the development of skills.

16.13 Staff need to ensure that **outcomes of learning are well-defined** and linked to tasks and activities. This in turn enables learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding, capabilities and attributes and have responsibility for reviewing their own progress. Learners progress at different rates and will require different levels of support for tasks and activities. Teachers also need to be mindful of children's and young people's prior learning and how this may have been variable.

16.14 Staff need to **build children's and young people's confidence** in the use of Gaelic by making high use of Gaelic in both formal and informal situations to

encourage learners themselves to also use Gaelic. The **'significant aspects of learning' and the associated progression statements** identify milestones in children's and young people's learning and achievement. Schools need to monitor and track children's progress and achievement in relation to Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes Gaelic (Learners), based on reliable assessment and moderation. These processes should confirm that learners are making well-paced progress. They also need to help learners know how to improve their work with staff acting on the results.

16.15 Learners' achievements will be recorded in the **P7 and S3 Pupils' Profile**. It is important to celebrate and to capture what learners have achieved, and to give clear direction as to where learners are with their progress in fluency in Gaelic and their next steps in learning. Well-maintained and evidenced pupil profiles are valuable records which help learners to make suitable progress. The profile serves as an important document for transition with learning and progression beyond the broad general education to pathways in the senior phase, future employment and training. Staff should also be mindful of the opportunity to recognise learners' achievements through the use of **awards** such as:

- Languages for Life and Work Award which entails the study of one or more languages and also employability skills; and
- The Scottish Studies Award which provides opportunities for learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of Scotland, in terms of its people,
- languages (for example Scots and Gaelic), society, culture, natural environment and heritage, and to make connections across the curriculum.

The National Certificate of Celtic Studies may present opportunities, especially through partnership working with colleges.

17. Learning about Gaelic language and culture

Key messages:

- Learning about the Gaelic language and culture is a central feature of learning about Scotland and helps children and young people connect Gaelic to their knowledge and understanding of Scotland.

17.1 An important feature of Curriculum for Excellence is its emphasis on learning about Scotland. *Building the Curriculum 3* states that children and young people are entitled to a broad general education. ‘Throughout this broad curriculum it is expected that there will be an emphasis on Scottish contexts, Scottish cultures and Scotland’s history and place in the world.’¹⁴ Learning about the language and culture of Scotland is an important feature of children’s and young people’s learning about their country and its identity. Learning about the Gaelic language and culture is a central feature of learning about Scotland and helps children and young people connect Gaelic to their knowledge and understanding of Scotland. This helps with creating informed attitudes to ensure equality and respect to Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, and frequently motivates children to learn Gaelic.

17.2 Learning about Gaelic language and culture may be achieved through learning in subjects, curricular areas, themed projects, planned interdisciplinary approaches, or through an elective or enrichment activity which runs for all or part of the session. The resource *Studying Scotland* opens up access to learning about Scotland’s language, culture, heritage, music, history, geography and literature. Partners, the community and Gaelic organisations also have a role in helping children to learn about Gaelic language and culture. Awards and qualifications such as Scottish Studies Awards, The John Muir Award, National Certificate in Celtic Studies and National Progression Awards can be used to recognise young people’s achievements. Reference should also be made to the publication, *Curriculum for Excellence Briefing, Learning about Scotland*¹⁵

¹⁴ [Building the Curriculum 3](#) A framework for learning and teaching (2008)

¹⁵ [CfE Briefing 9 Learning About Scotland](#)