



NATIONAL GAELIC EDUCATION STRATEGY

GAELIC-MEDIUM EARLY YEARS STRATEGY 1 2013-16



1.0 National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17 - Background and Context

1.1 The 2001 National Census showed that the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland had decreased since 1991 but that the rate of decline had slowed down. The number of young Gaelic speakers had increased, a rise in no small part due to the expansion in Gaelic Education in Scotland. The National Gaelic Language Plan 2012 - 2017 places particular emphasis on the need to build on the success of Gaelic Education, particularly Gaelic-medium education, to secure a sustainable future for the language. The Plan specifies a doubling in the number of children entering P1 Gaelic medium education by 2017 (from 400 to 800), and a year-on-year expansion in the number of pupils learning Gaelic as a subject within English-medium schools as key targets. Continuity of Gaelic-medium and Gaelic learner provision at the secondary school stage is also highlighted as a priority. This strengthening of the infrastructure of Gaelic education would require both (i) a coordinated approach by local authorities, the Scottish Government and other agencies to plan for growth in access to Gaelic-medium education and Gaelic learner education across Scotland, through a programme of capital investment and workforce planning and (ii) a strengthening of the infrastructure of Gaelic-medium teacher education to support the recruitment and retention of a confident, appropriately trained workforce in order to service the expansion of Gaelic-medium education. This Gaelic-medium early years working group was charged with the development of Gaelic-medium early years strategy to ensure that the growth aspired to in the National Plan can be achieved.

1.2 The overarching strategic priorities highlighted in the national language plan for Home and Early Years are:

- Raising awareness about Gaelic-medium Education
- Acquisition and Usage of Gaelic Language
- Availability and Quality of Provision

1.3 The working group was tasked by the National Gaelic Education Steering Group (NGESSG) to develop a Gaelic-medium Early Years Strategy (0-8). The group incorporated key stakeholders in Gaelic-medium early years in Scotland. In developing a strategy (outlined in Section 2), the working group engaged with key national policies and recommendations, and with existing frameworks for Gaelic educational developments, for example, The National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17; Gaelic Language Plans; the Scheme of Specific Grants for Gaelic; 1+2 Languages Strategy; The Early Years Framework; Gaelic Education: Building on the successes, addressing the barriers.



The strategy will result in:

- An increased numbers of children entering Gaelic-medium early years education
- An increase in the acquisition and use of Gaelic by young people in the home and in Gaelic-medium settings
- An increase in the availability and quality of Gaelic-medium provision and resources.

2.0 GAELIC-MEDIUM EARLY YEARS STRATEGY 2013-2017

2.1 The strategy is divided into three sections with specific priorities and outcomes for each section. An action plan outlines the steps needed to implement each section of the strategy. In each section outcomes, actions and a lead organisation identified to take forward the recommendations. The Gaelic-medium early years working group will monitor and review progress outlined in the strategy. The National Gaelic Education Strategy Steering Group will have overall responsibility in ensuring its implementation.



Priority 1: Raising awareness about Gaelic-medium Education

- Gaelic organisations and public authorities providing information on Gaelic-medium education.
- Gaelic-medium education Parental Advisory Scheme linked with Gaelic-medium learning communities to establish and sustain contact through the use of social networking and marketing campaigns.

Priority 2: Acquisition and Usage of Gaelic Language

- Parents enrolling their children in Gaelic-medium education to be informed of the methodology and philosophy underpinning Gaelic-medium education and language immersion.
- Raise awareness of existing resources available to support parents.
- Resources developed specifically aimed at Gaelic for the Family.
- Information on Gaelic classes for adults coordinated and easily accessed by all stakeholders.

Priority 3: Availability and Quality of Provision

- Develop training and CPD specifically for Gaelic-medium early years education.
- Increase the number of children continuing with Gaelic-medium learning at key transition stages.
- Raised awareness of self-evaluation to improve the provision in the 0-3 Gaelic-medium sector.
- Continue to source and realign existing funding streams to support the Gaelic-medium early years voluntary sector and statutory Gaelic-medium education.



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PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

Priority 1: Raising awareness about Gaelic-medium education

| Outcome: Gaelic organisations and Public Authorities with Gaelic Language Plans providing information on Gaelic-medium education. | | | | |
|---|--|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
| Link with local Early Years Collaborative (EYC) to determine how Gaelic can contribute to aims and ambition of EYC. | Lead: Local Authorities through Community Planning Partnerships and Statutory Gaelic Language Plans Partners: Scottish Government; Bòrd na Gàidhlig | Dec 2013 | Staff input | |
| Map all Gaelic-medium settings and activities connected to Gaelic-medium education. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig | Dec 2013 | Staff input | |
| Collate information on the benefits of Gaelic-medium education and bilingualism including current research on Gaelic-medium education. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Comann nam Pàrant; Local Authorities; Stòrlann | Nov 2013 | Staff input | |
| Audit accessibility and accurateness of information about Gaelic-medium education and the benefits of bilingualism on corporate websites. | Lead: Public Authorities Partners: MRG; Gaelic Organisations | May 2014 | Staff input | |
| Update information on the availability of Gaelic-medium education and publish on corporate websites. | Lead: Public Authorities, Partners: Gaelic Organisations | June 2014 - | Staff input Web development | |
| Develop a referral pathway to signpost parents to the continuum of Gaelic-medium provision across the early years sector. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Public Authorities; Gaelic Organisations | May 2014 | Staff input Dedicated budget | |

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Outcome: Gaelic organisations and Public Authorities with Gaelic Language Plans providing information on Gaelic-medium education.

| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
|---|--|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Promote Gaelic-medium education and Gaelic-medium activities through national and local initiatives. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Local Authorities; Comann nam Pàrant | April 2014 | Staff input | |
| Through staff induction, officers with Gaelic in their remit to have access to information on Gaelic-medium education and the benefits of bilingualism. | Lead: Public Authorities Partners: Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Gaelic Organisations | April 2014 | Staff input | |

**“...ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON
GAELIC-MEDIUM EDUCATION AND
THE BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM.”**



GAELIC-MEDIUM EARLY YEARS STRATEGY 2 2013-16

Outcome: Gaelic-medium education Parental Advisory Scheme linked with Gaelic-medium learning communities to establish and sustain contact through the use of social networking and marketing campaigns.

| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
|--|---|------------|--|-----------------|
| Review on strategic and operational Parental Advisory Scheme plan. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partner: Comann nam Pàrant | Jan 2014 | Staff input | |
| Develop clear strategic and operational targets for the Gaelic-medium Parental Advisory Scheme. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Scottish Government; Comann nam Pàrant | May 2014 | Staff input | |
| Engage with Local Authorities regarding the aims of the Parental Advisory Scheme to ensure closer partnership working to achieve the main aspirations in the National Plan around increasing the number of children in GME . | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Public Authorities; Comann anm Pàrant | May 2014 | Staff input | |
| Identify areas where Gaelic-medium education Parental Advisory Scheme should be established and work in partnership to realise this. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Local Authorities; Comann nam Pàrant | March 2014 | Staff input | |
| Provide training for Gaelic-medium education parental advisors. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Comann nam Pàrant; Local Authorities | June 2014 | Dedicated budget Staff input Development of toolkit for Parental Advisors Development of training | |
| Include promotion of Gaelic-medium education as a high level aim of all Statutory Gaelic Language Plans. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: The Scottish Government | Nov 2013 | Staff input | |

Priority 2: Acquisition and Usage of Gaelic Language

| Outcome: Parents enrolling their children in Gaelic-medium education to be aware of the methodology and philosophy of Gaelic-medium education and language immersion. | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
| Collate and distribute key messages on the methodology and philosophy of Gaelic-medium education and language immersion. | Lead: Education Scotland Partners: Scottish Government; Public Authorities; Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Gaelic Organisations | Oct 2014 | Staff input | |
| Publish National Guidance on Gaelic Education. | Lead: Education Scotland Partners: The Scottish Government; Bòrd na Gàidhlig | Oct 2014 | Staff input | |
| Schools with Gaelic-medium education to include information on Gaelic-medium education as a central part in the school's/centre's philosophy, in the information they provide to parents. | Lead: Local Authorities Partners: Schools and centres; MRG | Aug 2014 | Staff input | |



| Outcome: Resources developed specifically aimed at Gaelic for the Family. | | | | |
|--|---|------------------|---|------------------------|
| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
| Audit availability and suitability of classes for parents in areas with Gaelic-medium education provision and identify gaps. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Local Authorities; Clì; MGAlba (Learn Gaelic) | Oct 2014 | Staff input | |
| Develop and make available through a range of sources, resources aimed at supporting parents learn and use every day Gaelic. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig/ MGAlba(Learn Gaelic) Partners: Local Authorities; Clì; Stòrlann | Dec 2014 | Dedicated budget for development on required on an annual basis. Staff input | |
| Identify sources of funding for family learning weeks and family activities through the medium of Gaelic. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Clì; Local Authorities | Sept 2015 | Staff input | |
| Develop a level/achievement framework and map Gaelic classes for adult learners. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: SCQF | Oct 2014 | Staff input Dedicated budget | |

“...FAMILY LEARNING WEEKS AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF GAELIC.”

Priority 3: Availability and Quality of Provision

| Outcome: Develop training and CPD specifically for Gaelic-medium early years education. | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---|-----------------|
| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
| Include workforce planning and recruitment for the Gaelic-medium early years sector in the Gaelic-medium teacher recruitment strategy. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Local Authorities; Scottish Government | June 2014 | Staff input | |
| Develop modules for Gaelic-medium early years practitioners on Gaelic language immersion methodology. | Lead: ITE Universities/FE Colleges Partners; Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Scottish Government | Aug 2015 | Dedicated budget to develop resources. Staff input | |
| Develop CLPL routes to Gaelic to identify and support a pathway for learning and/or improving Gaelic language skills. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Universities; Colleges | Aug 2015 | Staff input | |

| Outcome: Increase the number of children continuing with Gaelic-medium learning at key transition stages. | | | | |
|--|---|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
| Share information collected from the 0-3 Gaelic-medium sector to ensure Local Authorities are geared to meet increases in numbers. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Local Authorities | April 2014 | Staff input | |
| Review the existing structure for Gaelic-medium 0-3 and ensure that it meets the needs of the sector. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Scottish Government; Local Authorities | May 2014 | Staff input | |
| Map Gaelic-medium provision and community activity nationally from 0-18, and identify areas for development. | Lead : Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Local Authorities | Dec 2014 | Staff input | |

GAELIC-MEDIUM EARLY YEARS STRATEGY 2 2013-16

Outcome: Raised awareness of self-evaluation to improve the provision in the 0-3 Gaelic-medium sector.

| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
|---|--|------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Develop self-assessment toolkit for 0-3 groups with specific support for language learning and total immersion methodology. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig Partners: Scottish Government; Local Authorities; Education Scotland | April 2015 | Dedicated budget Staff input | |

Outcome: Continue to source and realign existing funding streams to support the Gaelic early years voluntary sector and statutory Gaelic-medium education.

| Action | Responsibility | Timetable | Resource Implications | Progress Update |
|---|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Following review of the Gaelic-medium 0-3 sector identify other sources of funding for Gaelic-medium early years education and wraparound care. | Lead: Bòrd na Gàidhlig | April 2016 | Staff input | |



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PRIORITY 1 - RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT GAELIC-MEDIUM EDUCATION

1.1 Parents across Scotland are becoming aware of the proven benefits of bilingualism. The Pàrant is Pàiste groups provide a fun language-learning environment for young children to physically and emotionally bond with one another on a regular basis while allowing parents the opportunity to meet other parents interested in Gaelic-medium education. Two pieces of research recently commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on Comparison of Support for Parents in Schools where Learning is through a Minority Language and on Demand for Gaelic Medium Education highlights some of the reasons that parents choose Gaelic-medium education

Parents are attracted to Gaelic-medium education for a variety of reasons. These include:

- acquisition of a second language
- continuation of Gaelic language and culture
- access to the benefits of bilingualism

1.2 The Benefits of Bilingualism and Gaelic-medium Education

Some of the benefits of bilingualism and Gaelic-medium education include:

- Being bilingual helps children become more aware of language itself and how it works. A child speaking Gaelic will know that some nouns are masculine and feminine. This makes it easier to learn languages such as French and Spanish where the same rules apply.
- Having two languages offers many career opportunities.
- Bilinguals are better readers, and generally find it easier to learn other languages.
- Children in Gaelic-medium education (GME) can be fluent in two languages with advantages learning other ones.
- Having two languages can access different literatures and more ways of thinking and acting.
- Bilinguals have a better understanding of the wider cultural identity.
- Children exposed to different languages at an early age tend to be more focused at 'multitasking', than children who speak one language.
- Research shows that children educated through Gaelic are on par with or outperform children educated in one language.

1.3 Sgeama Comhairleachaidh Phàrant / Gaelic-medium education Parental Advisory Scheme

This scheme aims to encourage more parents to choose Gaelic-medium education for their children and raise awareness of the importance of the home for acquiring fluency in Gaelic. The aim of the parental advisory scheme is to increase the number of children accessing Gaelic-medium education (GME). The scheme also has a role to play in ensuring parents have a firm understanding of GME, and the expectations on them to support their child once they have committed to this route of learning for their child. In addition to promoting the benefits of bilingualism parents are informed about broader Gaelic language and culture. Gaelic-medium education as a medium to increasing the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland is explained. Parents need a clear explanation of the methodology of language immersion education, and an understanding of the commitment they are making to Gaelic and the support which is available to them e.g. Gaelic classes for parents, homework support, Gaelic-medium provision from 0-18 in an area, out of school extra-curricular activities etc.

1.4 The aim of the scheme is to ensure that advisors are trained and operating in all areas with Gaelic-medium education, and to expand the scheme to Local Authorities where Gaelic-medium education is not yet available. All Gaelic-medium education parental advisors have a sound knowledge and personal experience of GME for themselves/their children. Parental advisors receive one day initial training with an annual follow-up event which all parental advisors are invited to attend.

1.5 The training and preparation for the task needs to be responsive to differences in local situations and prepare advisors to deliver in a variety of circumstances which are most likely to be:

- Pre-school groups
- Open days at schools/community
- Promotional stands at events
- Responding to enquiries from individual parents



1.6 Local Authority involvement in the Parental Advisory Scheme can achieve co-ordination of efforts and achieve the goals set out by the scheme. Each regional network, and each group of local advisors, plan a distinctive set of activities for their area. Parental Advisors provide information on Gaelic-medium education and on Gaelic-medium activities in their local area. Where the parental advisory scheme operates most effectively there is partnership working with the local authority, Bòrd na Gàidhlig early years workers, Comann nam Pàrant, playgroup leaders, learning establishment and Gaelic development officers. The follow-up day offers the opportunity to discuss progress and to meet with other parental advisors. The information gathered at these days is used to inform further training events and to allow the scheme to evolve and improve to fit the needs of local school communities.

1.7 Parents interested in Gaelic-medium education for their children receive information booklets and leaflets through the parental advisory scheme (appendix). Follow-up information on Gaelic-medium education is available through a number of websites, mainly Gaelic4Parents and Comann nam Pàrant. Social media is important for dissemination of information about Gaelic-medium education. A number of Local Authorities provide information on Gaelic-medium education prior to school and nursery enrolments. This is considered best practice. In some areas the information will only be available through the scheme. Some local authorities, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and parental advisors have been working in partnership to promote Gaelic-medium education, particularly in areas where there is potential for growth without putting additional strain on resources.

PRIORITY 2 - ACQUISITION AND USAGE OF GAELIC LANGUAGE

2.0 Young children pick up languages easily. They don't think about the languages they are learning. They just do it as naturally as learning other skills and don't worry about making mistakes. They want to get their message across. Young children may also learn two languages at the same time. For example one parent may speak Gaelic to the child and the other parent may speak English. Both languages are learned alongside one another. Other children may acquire one language first and the other a little later on. For example they may speak English at home and learn Gaelic at a Pàrant is Pàiste, Croileagan or Sgoil Àraich. They will be surrounded by Gaelic in these groups and will learn the language without realising through play, singing, storytelling and lots of other fun activities.

2.1 Children aged 0-3 years have the opportunity to experience, hear, learn and use Gaelic at parent and child groups or through Croileagan groups (2-5 early years groups where

parents don't attend). Although these groups have a focus on playing and learning together through Gaelic, parents are encouraged to learn and use Gaelic with their children. The extended family is also well placed to support the learning and usage of Gaelic.

2.2 Gaelic4Parents

Gaelic4Parents is a website for parents and children interested and involved in Gaelic-medium education. During term-time live online homework help is available from Monday up to and including Thursday, from 5.30pm -7.30pm. There is the option of leaving a question on the forum page which will be answered once online support is available. The service also offers audio versions of reading books and story books. Online support for homework is being used successfully to support children in Gaelic-medium education with homework when parents lack confidence in the language or do not speak Gaelic, which sometimes is of concern to parents. This was highlighted in the recent research on Support for Parents of children in Gaelic-medium education and other minority languages. Information about Gaelic-medium education, the benefits of Gaelic-medium education and bilingualism are readily available through the Gaelic4parents website.

2.3 Learning Gaelic for Adults

There are a range of choices and opportunities available for adults to learn Gaelic in post-school education. There are numerous higher education institutes and organisations which offer adults the chance to learn Gaelic, from full-time and part-time courses to distance learning. If parents want to learn Gaelic or improve their Gaelic within their own community, there are opportunities to do so. LearnGaelic.net provides information on classes and where they are available. Classes are run by organisations such as local authorities, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Clì Gàidhlig and Ùlpan and community groups.

2.4 Family Learning Week

The Family Learning Week is designed for parents who have children in Gaelic-medium education and gives them the opportunity to learn Gaelic which will help support children with school homework and create a Gaelic environment for children. The family week provides parents who have an interest in learning Gaelic the opportunity to learn the language at a variety of levels, in a relaxed, supported environment, and also to take their children who can practice speaking Gaelic to other children from all over Scotland. While parents participate in Gaelic classes, children under the age of five go to Fàs Mòr, the child-care facility based at the College, and children between the age of 5 and 12 go to Sleat Gaelic Primary School where they participate in different fun activities, taught through the medium of Gaelic.

The Family Learning Week is a partnership between Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and The Highland Council, with help from Glasgow City Council, North Lanarkshire Council and Inverclyde Council, with funding from Community Learning and Development (CLAD).

PRIORITY 3 - AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF PROVISION

3.0 The toolkit for 0-3 early years Gaelic-medium groups provides groups with guidance on best practice on how to establish, run and develop a Gaelic-medium parent and child group or a play group. There is guidance available from other organisations on how to run such a group however there are specific elements related to the running of a Gaelic group that need to be developed. Along with guidance on how to establish, run and develop a group, there is information on Gaelic language acquisition and development from an early age; examples of activities to support language learning; activities for parents and children to do at home; examples of research on Gaelic-medium education and bilingualism to share with parents. The toolkit provides indicators that will highlight varied benchmarked levels of practice so that group can self-assess and evaluate their progress. As part of the development training will be made available across the country.

3.1 A Review of Gaelic Medium Early Education and Childcare

Commissioned by The Scottish Government in 2010 provided a detailed account of the provision in Gaelic early years. The review audited provision in the 3-5, 0-3 wraparound care and child-minding provision. The recommendations for action from the review were to:

- improve the initial and career-long professional learning and training level of practitioners in GME provision and develop effective mechanisms for sharing knowledge and practice
- support GME provision through improving the supply of GME resources, extending provision for GME childcare and developing mechanisms to extend the opportunities that children have to use Gaelic at home and in the community
- grow the market for GME provision through a national promotion strategy focusing on the benefits of GME education and including access to a regularly maintained database and map of provision
- conduct further research into the outcomes for children, including their development of Gaelic as a result of attending GME early years provision and the efficacy of the various models of language development in operation
- conduct a Scotland-wide survey of parents to establish the nature of any unmet demand for GME provision.

3.2 Developing Gaelic Language in the Early Years

3.2.1 Parent and Child Groups

Most Gaelic parent and toddler groups employ Gaelic speaking play leaders who will have a dual purpose of play leader, language assistant / language advisor. It will be their responsibility to prepare activities which not only focus on play development but will also focus on Gaelic language total-immersion and language development. Some play leaders will be building on fluency from home, with planning needed to ensure progression in the development of children's language skills. Some of the parents will be learning Gaelic with their children therefore the play leader will need to ensure a balance between play and language development. Some groups may have children from age 0-3 with a range of language abilities.

Feedback from practitioners suggested a need for further support with Gaelic language development and progression; play activities that promote language learning and Gaelic language improvement for practitioners. At the An t-Alltan Beag conference in October 2012 CLPL specifically for Gaelic-medium early years practitioners was requested. This was the first time 0-3 practitioners had been included in a Gaelic-medium education practitioners' conference. The opportunity to participate adds value to their role and also allows them to network with practitioners from the wider Gaelic-medium education sectors.

3.3 Curriculum for Excellence Early Level

3.3.1 Curriculum for Excellence Principles and Practice for Literacy and Gàidhlig, Professional learning resource: Assessing progress and achievement in Gàidhlig and HMIE's report Gaelic education: Building on successes and addressing the barriers provide clear guidance on the expectations in a Gaelic-medium learning situation at Early Level. The HMIE Report, Gaelic Education: Building on the successes, addressing the barriers describes the principles of immersion as being a continuum of learning from 3-18. This 3-18 continuum of learning is referred to as Gaelic-medium Education can take place in standalone Gaelic-medium schools or operate alongside English-medium provision. The initial stage of immersion is defined as total immersion in which learners are immersed in Gaelic. This will begin, depending on the learner's access to Gaelic-medium education provision, in early years provision or in P1. Total immersion will continue to the end of P3 or P4 by which time the learner will be secure in the early and first curricular levels of Literacy and Gàidhlig. The duration of total immersion and the timing of assessment are dependent on learners developing a strong and secure base in fluency of Gaelic. During total immersion, learning will firstly have a very strong focus on listening and talking in Gaelic.



This involves grouping experiences and outcomes together to give opportunities firstly to listen to, understand and then talk in Gaelic. As learners master these skills, they will then be introduced to reading and writing in Gaelic. In doing this, groupings of experiences and outcomes will be revisited to include developing reading and writing. Over time, as learners become secure in their fluency of Gaelic, all skills will be developed together in an integrated way, using grouping of experiences and outcomes. This will be reflected in assessment practice.

3.4 Early Years Framework

3.4.1 On 10 December 2008, The Early Years Framework was launched, signifying the Scottish Government and COSLA's commitment to giving all children the best possible start in life. An update on progress was published in January 2011: Early Years Framework - Progress So Far.

3.4.2 There is a wealth of evidence indicating that the earliest years of life are crucial to a child's development and future life chances. It is increasingly evident that inequalities in health, education and employment opportunities are passed from one generation to another. The Early Years Framework aims to break these negative cycles through early and effective intervention, together with the Scottish Government's other 2 social policy frameworks - Equally Well which focuses on addressing health inequalities, and Achieving Our Potential which aims to tackle poverty.

3.4.3 The Early Years Framework sets out 10 elements of transformational change, to be realised over a 10-year time horizon, and covers the period from pre-birth to age 8. There are a number of priorities for action set out under each of the 10 elements, with short, medium and long term outcomes for each. Key to achieving transformational change in the long term will be re-aligning services towards early intervention as opposed to crisis management. It is also vital that all relevant services work together to identify and meet the needs of individual children, in line with the principles of Getting it right for every child.

3.5 Early Years Collaborative

3.5.1 The Early Years Framework published in December 2008, signified an important milestone in encouraging partnership working to deliver a shared commitment to giving children the best start in life and to improving the life chances of children, young people and families at risk. The Early Years Taskforce shares this commitment.

3.5.2 The objective of the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is to accelerate the conversion of the high level principles set out in GIRFEC and the Early Years Framework into practical action. This must:

- Deliver tangible improvement in outcomes and reduce inequalities for Scotland's vulnerable children.
- Put Scotland squarely on course to shifting the balance of public services towards early intervention and prevention by 2016.
- Sustain this change to 2018 and beyond.

3.5.3 We have reached a point now where we have the commitment and the will to deliver in this area, and we have a strong evidence base about what works to make improvements. What we have lacked up until now is a method by which we can take our pockets of excellent practice to scale, and ensure that every baby, child, mother, father and family in Scotland has access to the best supports available.

3.5.4 The EYC is premised on the fact that we know there is strong evidence about costs and outcomes of current and desired practice, but much of this is not being used in daily work. Where we have taken on board the evidence, practice does not always reliably recreate what the evidence tells us, and there is inconsistency and patchy implementation. In other words, there is a gap between what we know works and what we do. The EYC will help organisations close that gap by:

- Creating a structure in which partners can easily learn from each other and from recognised experts in areas where they want to make improvements.
- Supporting the application of improvement methodology to bridge the gap between what we know works and what we do.

We need to work together to deliver this improvement and to assist us with this we have developed a unifying ambition to set out our high level aspiration, and a set of stretch aims that will draw us together and give us a collective focus for our work.

Appendix

Definition of terms used in this report.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| An t-Alltan Beag | An annual conference for staff in the 0-3 early years sector. |
| Bòrd na Gàidhlig | The statutory body charged with the responsibility of securing the future of Gaelic. |
| Clì | A Gaelic organisation that supports adult learners. |
| CPD | Continued Professional Development |
| Comann nam Pàrant Education. | Organisation to support parents with Gaelic Medium |
| Gaelic-medium Education (GME) | All education takes place through the medium of Gaelic. This begins with a total Gaelic immersion phase and is followed by an immersion phase. The aim of Gaelic Medium Education is to enable children and young people to be bilingual – to have equal fluency in both Gaelic and English. |
| Gaelic Learner Education (GLE) | The learning of Gaelic as a second language in English-medium education, often alongside another European language. |
| Gaelic4Parents | A website to provide information and support for parents of children in Gaelic-medium education. |
| Management Review Group (MRG) | National Group representing Local Authorities in receipt of Gaelic Specific Grant |
| SCQF | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework |
| SFC | Scottish Funding Council |
| Sabhal mòr Ostaig (SMO) | Scotland's Gaelic College which is part of UHI |
| Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig | The organisation charged with co-ordinating the production and distribution of Gaelic educational resources throughout Scotland. |
| Ùlpan | Gaelic course for adults |

**“YOUNG CHILDREN
PICK UP LANGUAGES
EASILY. THEY DON'T
THINK ABOUT THE
LANGUAGES THEY
ARE LEARNING.”**

The following documents and websites are relevant to this report.

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/>
- Curriculum for Excellence <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp>
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