

Summarised inspection findings

Sgoil Dhalabroig - Daliburgh School

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

23 September 2025

Key contextual information

School name: Sgoil Dhalabroig – Daliburgh School
Council: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
SEED number: 6203434
Roll (2025): 73. Gàidhlig – Gaelic Medium Education 50; English Medium Education 23.
There are no children in P3 and P6 of English Medium Education.

Sgoil Dhalabroig is a rural and remote school on the Island of South Uist. Sgoil Dhalabroig is a Gàidhlig status school. It offers Gàidhlig and English Medium Education. The numbers in Gàidhlig Medium Education are increasing. In August 2025, all P1 are enrolled for Gàidhlig Medium Education. To embed the Comhairle's Gaelic First Policy, the class for English Medium Education is named as Gaelic Learners. Children in English Medium learn Gaelic (Learners) as their first additional language.

An executive headteacher has strategic overview of primary sgoiltean in Uist. The leadership of the sgoil has not been stable of late. In August 2024, the executive headteacher was assigned to the 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) role of acting headteacher at Sgoil Dhalabroig until June 2025. The acting headteacher does not have a teaching commitment. The post is supported by a principal teacher. This post was filled on a temporary basis for a while too. The principal teacher has a teaching commitment for 0.8 FTE. There were a few other temporary staffing arrangements in place.

Almost all staff at Sgoil Dhalabroig speak Gàidhlig, or are learning the language. All remits are taken forward in Gàidhlig. This is an important consideration for a Gàidhlig status school.

Sgoil-Àraich Dhalabroig - Daliburgh School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months. Therefore, the Comhairle and the acting headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the Comhairle and sgoil that the sgoil-àraich is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- In Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, the acting headteacher and staff have created a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. Children and staff have positive, nurturing and trusting relationships. As a result, children feel safe, supported and secure in their learning. Children demonstrate high standards of behaviour and use strategies appropriately to cope with changing situations. They are polite, friendly and respectful. Children encourage each other in their learning and while socialising. Children's respectful approaches are recognised by them achieving a national award at a high level. The sgoil vision, 'A' gabhail a h-uile cothrom còmhla - Taking on every opportunity together' supports children's shared understanding of how their sgoil is part of the community.
- Almost all children engage effectively in lessons. Staff and children develop 'Balla Ionnsachaidh - Learning Wall' that outlines well what children's learning looks like across a range of situations. Children work well both independently, in pairs and in groups. Staff are very encouraging of children in completing tasks. Across stages, teachers should ensure children influence further their learning by having more choice in how they take forward their learning. For a majority of the time, children would benefit from more challenging learning tasks and a brisker pace of learning.
- Children's learning in Gàidhlig Medium Education is based on high-quality total immersion. Teachers are aided very well by support assistants who work effectively with individuals and groups of learners. This is helping children to make better progress in their learning. All staff involved in total immersion are very fluent speakers of Gàidhlig. This is impacting positively on children's standards of fluency. Staff foster children's sense of pride in the Gàidhlig language and belonging to a community of speakers of Gàidhlig. Teachers use the singing of local songs to promote children's fluency and connect them to their identity. Children should be encouraged to socialise more in Gàidhlig. The older children should consistently talk in Gàidhlig more often when learning independently of the teacher. As a next step, teachers should include Gaelic immersion and language learning in the guide they have produced on what constitutes 'excellent learning' at Sgoil Dhalabroig. Teachers should continue articulating their learning policies to immersion.
- Across English and Gàidhlig Medium Education, teachers use clear explanations. Almost all teachers share clearly the purpose of learning with children. Teachers are still developing high-quality discussions with children on how they recognise their successes. Teachers in Gàidhlig Medium Education should be clear on the grammar children are learning. Across English and Gàidhlig Medium Education, teachers ask children questions to check recall. They should now continue to use effective questioning techniques to develop learners' deeper understanding and independence in learning. Teachers need to have higher expectations of how well children can be achieving. Teaching should continue to be underpinned by embedded

comprehensive and strategic planning of learning across the curriculum. This should include a greater focus on differentiation, pace and challenge in meeting the needs of learners.

- Children in English Medium Education learn Gàidhlig as an additional language. They use some phrases and vocabulary in contexts for learning and routines. Children take part in singing Gàidhlig and a few activities out with school. This includes the Mòd and cèilidhs at a local music and culture centre. Children should learn Gàidhlig in a more progressive and structured way, based on their prior fluency. This would help learners be more active users of Gàidhlig in and beyond class. Children should be encouraged to contribute to creating a culture for Gàidhlig for their peers in Gàidhlig Medium Education. Teachers need a more skilled way of teaching phonics in Gaelic (Learners).
- Children in English and Gàidhlig Medium Education engage in purposeful outdoor learning using the school's extensive grounds and community spaces. They work with a range of partners in motivating contexts where they deepen their understanding of language, culture, heritage and local area. Children develop specific skills through 'Dubhlain Dihaoine – Friday Challenge' where children choose from a range of activities, including kayaking and cycling. Staff are still to have a structured overview of how well children's fluency in Gàidhlig and skills are developed from such activities.
- Children in Gàidhlig Medium have daily time to play in the classroom. They play outdoors, during which they develop their imagination well. Teachers use regular interactions to support children enhance their fluency. Play pedagogy is at an early stage of development in English Medium Education. Across the school, children need more real-life examples in which to apply their understanding of numeracy and mathematics.
- In Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, teachers use digital technology well to support teaching. For example, teachers use video content to stimulate children's writing. The staff team should now develop a more progressive approach to developing children's knowledge and skills in digital literacy.
- The staff team plan assessments across the year. Teachers measure children's progress and attainment only in literacy and Gàidhlig, literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. They should use the results of assessment more effectively to support children's learning, inform planning and address barriers to learning. Children need to be much clearer on their strengths and next steps in learning. Teachers moderate children's work in listening, talking and numeracy to ensure that their professional judgements are as accurate as possible. The acting headteacher has correctly identified the need to review the school's assessment policy which, at the time of the inspection, was in draft form. This will support all teachers aim for a consistent approach to assessment across the school and support effective transitions from stage to stage. The staff team should review at pace how over reliance on a writing intervention is curbing children's creativity in writing significantly much longer pieces of writing.
- Across Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, teachers are beginning to develop more confidence in interpreting and responding to attainment data. The acting headteacher has recently adopted a new approach to tracking children's attainments and achievements. Teachers and the acting headteacher increasingly focus on interrogating data to ensure that all planning and assessment meets the needs of all children. Staff, working with the acting headteacher, have identified that there is a need to ensure a consistent approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment that builds firmly on assessment information. This will support better progression and continuity in learning and teaching as children progress through the school. Staff are adopting progression pathways from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for all curricular areas.

- Teachers plan learning across different timescales, both termly and weekly. They use a range of learning pathways to plan across the different curricular areas. Teachers plan for learning across the curriculum using a series of big questions created by children. Senior leaders should ensure that there is greater consistency within planning that links the curriculum across all classes. For example, across the sgoil, children have had limited experiences of gathering, collating and analysing information using a range of graphs and different scales. Teachers plan well for individuals and groups of learners, including those with additional support needs. Staff providing additional support to children within the classroom ensure that children are overtaking their targets. Specialists in learning support work very well with staff to support them to plan appropriately to meet children's individual needs. They ensure that plans are evaluated effectively to inform next steps. Teachers should now consider their approaches to differentiation in their classrooms to ensure that the needs of all learners are met all the time, including those who require challenge in their learning.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised small cohorts of children across Gàidhlig and English Medium Education. As a result, children's attainment and progress is expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups.
- Overall, children make good progress in literacy and numeracy in both the classes for Gàidhlig and English Medium Education. Most children are on track to achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels by the end of June 2025 at key milestone stages. Across the school, children make good progress, with a few children exceeding expected levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and Gàidhlig and, as appropriate to immersion, literacy and English

Listening and Talking

- All children listen actively to the use of Gàidhlig in their learning through total immersion approaches. Children talk confidently in Gàidhlig to each other and adults in small group and paired activities. The younger children initiate accurate conversations. They use Gàidhlig very fluently to learn across the curriculum. Children express well their ideas and opinions. They add well to their range of specialist vocabulary and idioms. Children should develop more independent skills in debating, in which they justify and challenge others' views. Their fluency in Gàidhlig would be enhanced further by avoiding occasional use of English in continuous Gàidhlig communication. Children gain skills in talking to big audiences through community events where they develop language, music and cultural skills. Teachers should help children articulate better how these skills are important to their immersion education. They should also be clearer on the bilingual and career-related benefits of Gàidhlig Medium Education.

Reading

- As appropriate to their age and stage, children read fluently in Gàidhlig and English. Children use pace and expression well when reading Gàidhlig. Children describe a few reasons for why they enjoy reading books. Children's next step is to be more analytic in describing appealing features of a text. Children at the younger stages are increasing their knowledge of sounds and patterns to read and understand words in Gàidhlig. They are clear on how illustrations convey messages. The older children should continue to develop skills in scanning, skimming and summarising.

Writing

- By P7, children's shorter pieces of writing in Gàidhlig and English are good, with increased accuracy in grammar. There is a dip in writing at the middle stages. Across levels, children use a range of verbs to begin sentences. They are clear on punctuation. Children are independent

in knowing how to review their writing and that of others. Children are ready to have a wider range of writing targets. They should choose how to present their writing and use structure, presentation and communication to suit a much wider purpose for writing. By P7, children should write at more significant length to develop plot, character, setting and persuade the reader. The acting headteacher should ensure that the current approaches to children writing shorter pieces of writing regularly is not restricting the range, length and level of creativity required to demonstrate the achievement of CfE second level.

Attainment in Gaelic (Learners) in English Medium Education

- A majority of children should make faster pace progress in Gaelic (Learners). They are reluctant to speak Gaelic, only using a few phrases. Children's progress in Gaelic (Learners) should be checked regularly by staff, so that children are accelerating their progress in the second CfE level outcomes by the end of P7.

Attainment in literacy and English in through the medium of English

Listening and talking

- At early and first level, almost all children enjoy talking about their learning and retelling stories. Almost all children contribute to discussions clearly and audibly. They take turns appropriately during discussions. At second level, all children show respect for the views of others. They offer their own viewpoint as part of group and whole-class discussions. Children talk confidently in order to share their learning. They respect others' communications. Children across both Gaelic (Learners) classes should continue to explore talking to a wide and diverse range of audiences.

Reading

- Children at early level know the sounds that most letters make. Almost all children at first and second level read aloud fluently and continue to work on being more expressive. Children working at first and second levels know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They detail all parts of a book. Within reading for enjoyment, children choose books and authors' work using the blurb to guide them. Older children identify some techniques used by writers to engage and influence the reader. At second level, almost all children answer literal and inferential questions. They can summarise key information and make predictions about different texts.

Writing

- Almost all younger children are learning to form letters legibly. Children can organise and separate their ideas in paragraphs. Children use punctuation well. Children's spelling is accurate and shows an improving pattern as they progress through the school. At early level, most children write simple sentences with a capital letter and full stop. Children are developing their skills in writing for a range of purposes in relevant and real-life contexts. Almost all children at first level create texts using capital letters, full stops and conjunctions effectively and for a range of purposes. At second level, almost all children write for a range of purposes with increasing accuracy.

Numeracy and mathematics in Gàidhlig and English Medium Education

Number, money and measure

- In Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, most children are developing their understanding of number operations and application of strategies appropriate to their stage. At early level, most children add and subtract confidently within 10. At first level, children create calculations briskly with numbers up to 100. A few children need to develop quicker recall of multiplication and division facts. Most children working within second level apply this knowledge well in Gàidhlig Medium while finding equivalent fractions. They should continue to apply their

understanding of fractions to real-life situations. Across both mediums, children's understanding of money and finance is being developed. For example, children explore the cost of the school day. In English Medium, at second level, most children convert units of measurement successfully and actively investigate how to calculate volume using cubic centimetres. Most children at early stages tell the time using hours and half hours. Older children understand and accurately use 12- and 24-hour notation. In Gàidhlig Medium, children apply skills well when using timetables and competition programmes to plan a trip to a national Mòd.

Shape, position and movement

- In Gàidhlig and English Medium, most children at early level can identify simple two-dimensional shapes. They are not yet secure with the names of three-dimensional objects. At first level, most children confidently describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. Older children name compass points and understand the application of angles. They should revise regularly relevant terminology, for example area and perimeter of shapes. Children have yet to learn about the diameter, radius and circumference of circles at second level.

Information handling

- At the early stages, children are able to sort objects by size and colour. Older children would benefit from additional opportunities to develop further their information handling skills to display data in a variety of ways for real-life purposes.

Attainment over time

- In Gàidhlig and English Medium, children's attendance is 94.7% in 2023/24 and is above national averages. Attendance remains consistent in 2024/25 to the previous year. The acting headteacher follows local authority's guidance on maximising attendance to improve outcomes. All children attend school for the recommended 25 hours a week. The acting headteacher is tracking a few children's attendance. As part of this process, the acting headteacher collaborates with the local authority and parents. A minority of children have close to 100% attendance in sgoil. Some parents take family holidays out with sgoil holidays, when costs are perceived to be less expensive.
- The acting headteacher monitors individual children's progress with staff across literacy and Gàidhlig and English, in numeracy and mathematics, and health and wellbeing over time. The data is increasingly robust. The recently introduced authority tracking tool links well to progression pathways. The acting headteacher justifies variation in levels of attainment in recent years. The staff team recently engaged in listening and talking moderation activities within the cluster. This is supporting their immersion practice and children's language development in Gàidhlig. The acting headteacher should extend monitoring and tracking of progress over time to all curricular areas.
- Teachers and pupil support staff provide a range of targeted interventions that raise individual children's attainment across both English and Gàidhlig Medium. This includes an after-school homework support club through Gàidhlig and English. Children who need support with their learning are making good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children develop valuable personal and academic skills through their keen interest in taking part in regular opportunities for achievement. This includes a range of clubs within the school, developing skills in art and dancing, for example. Children develop competitive skills through attending events out with the school environment. Teachers formally track children's participation in these wider achievements across sgoil and home. They ensure that no child is missing out. Children's successes are celebrated in assemblies, within learners' 'Leabhar

Trang' books and 'Bòrd Òr' wall displays. Children and staff gained a range of national recognitions for the school. Children's leadership skills and voice are developed through House Captain meetings and activities they plan. This included planning a recent summer fayre. Staff should now support children to understand the skills that they are developing through taking part in these opportunities.

- Children develop skills and fluency from celebrating Gaelic language, music and culture through projects and initiatives. Children are keen to participate at the Mòd, both local and national, and at fèisean. Staff and parents engage well with partners to develop local skills, for example connecting to the community with shows and attending cidsin cèilidhs. These develop children's confidence, communication, singing and allows for links across generations. Staff should continue to plan activities through partnership working with a clearer focus on learning outcomes.

Equity for all learners

- The staff team understand very well the island context of their school. They have involved children in activities to investigate the cost of the school day. This has resulted in increasing children's awareness of financial challenges that could exist within their school community. Staff check that family circumstances are not a barrier to children taking part and included in learning. The school community, including the Parent Council and local businesses, support families with trips and provide outdoor clothing to allow all children to participate in outdoor activities. Their effective actions have reduced the cost of the school day for a few families.
- Staff use their knowledge of children's needs very well to deliver targeted interventions using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). They continue to measure the impact of how additional adult time increases children's engagement, interactions and attainment. This is benefiting the social and emotional needs of a few children and increasing fluency in Gàidhlig for others. Staff can evidence that targeted interventions are helping to close a gap in children's attainment.

Other relevant evidence

- The local authority should confirm with parents how they are taking forward arrangements for the permanent headteacher at Sgoil Dhalabroig.
- Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017: Almost all staff speak Gàidhlig, or are learning the language. All remits are taken forward through Gàidhlig. This is an important success in staffing for a Gàidhlig status school. Staff are making important progress with duties in promotion of Gàidhlig, taking forward a Gàidhlig status school, increasing the numbers enrolling in Gàidhlig and with approaches to Gàidhlig immersion. They should increase the pace of successful implementation of strategic approaches to Gaelic (Learners).
- Children did not get two hours of physical education (PE) during the inspection week. The acting headteacher should ensure children receive two hours of quality PE each week. Children receive required religious observance, religious moral education and religious education.
- Children need greater access to a range of library services to support Gàidhlig Medium Education.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.