

Summarised inspection findings

Bun-Sgoil Shlèite

The Highland Council

7 October 2025

Key contextual information

Bun-sgoil Shlèite is a small, rural Gàidhlig – Gaelic Medium school with an English Medium Unit. The bun-sgoil - primary is situated on the Isle of Skye, serving the Sleat peninsula. A catchment area is set for its English and Gàidhlig Medium provisions. The bun-sgoil provides Gàidhlig and English Medium Education. The bun-sgoil roll is 53, with 41 in Gàidhlig Medium Education and 12 in English Medium Education. There are three Gàidhlig Medium classes and one English Medium class. Children in the English Medium class learn Gàidhlig as their first additional language.

The headteacher has been in post since October 2024. He is a teacher of Gàidhlig Medium Education. The headteacher post is a 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching post. The bun-sgoil faces challenges with recruiting staff. Since taking up the post, the headteacher has taught a class for 0.8 FTE to support learning through Gàidhlig. The remaining 0.2 FTE of this class time is taught through English on a long-term temporary basis. All other classes have permanent teachers in post.

To support the headteacher with the increased teaching time, an acting principal teacher has been assigned the responsibility for managing the sgoil-àraich - nursery. Additionally, she takes forward some bun-sgoil management responsibilities.

Almost all children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile six.

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, children benefit from a positive, nurturing and caring climate. Staff have strong, supportive relationships with children. This helps children feel safe and secure in their learning. Children behave very well. They are polite, friendly and support one another's learning well. Children use positive strategies effectively to manage challenges and resolve disagreements. The bun-sgoil has had a successful focus on supporting wellbeing. The bun-sgoil motto, 'A' toirt taic dha chèile gus ar dìcheall a dhèanamh - Supporting each other to achieve our best,' reinforces the strong sense of belonging to a community.
- Staff help children improve their understanding of the bun-sgoil's values. Children know how these values should influence their actions. The value of 'coimhneas – kindness' is clearly evident. Staff and children should increase the influence of 'cùltar – culture' and 'cruthachalachd – creativity' on learning. Children in English Medium Education have very limited access to learning Gàidhlig, despite this being their first additional language for learning. This impacts on implementing the values and how well all children use Gàidhlig to socialise in shared spaces of the bun-sgoil. Across Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, children have begun to learn about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children should focus on rights related to their community and Indigenous language.

- Most children experience high-quality total immersion for most of their time in bun-sgoil. A high proportion of teaching and support staff are fluent in Gàidhlig, which supports immersion. However, challenges in recruiting and retaining staff over time impacts on the quality of learning experiences and on children's fluency in Gàidhlig. Staff audit the quality of learners' experiences in Gàidhlig regularly. They should now aim to increase total immersion in children's experiences.
- The majority of children in Gàidhlig Medium Education speak Gàidhlig very fluently to each other as they learn. The headteacher should continue to focus on why the older children speak to each other in English when taking forward activities directed through Gàidhlig. In both English and Gàidhlig Education, children concentrate very well when working on their own and with adults, in pairs and in small groups. For a majority of the time, children would benefit from more challenging learning tasks, a brisker pace of learning and more meaningful situations in which to apply their learning.
- Across English and Gàidhlig Medium Education, teachers explain concepts clearly and share learning purposes well. Teachers are still developing consistently high-quality discussions with children on how they recognise their successes. Teachers in Gàidhlig Medium Education should include children's grammatical accuracy as part of recognising successes. Teachers ask children questions to check recall. They should continue to use effective questioning techniques to deepen children's understanding and independence in learning. Teachers should have even higher expectations of how well children can achieve, particularly for those who are higher attaining. This will ensure teachers plan to meet the needs of all children more effectively.
- Across Gàidhlig and English Medium Education, teachers plan effective targeted support to help children make better progress in their learning. They are assisted very well by support assistants who collaborate effectively with individuals and groups of learners. Partners provide very specialist input for children as appropriate. For a few children, specialist support could be in place more timeously. Senior leaders should ensure that all support plans are updated and monitored regularly. Staff should consider if approaches for meeting some particular needs should be integrated into the bun-sgoil's way of working. As a result, all children would benefit from such approaches to support needs such as dyslexia. Teachers should continue with plans to collaborate with colleagues at the secondary stages on meeting additional needs. This is to promote continuity and access to the curriculum over time.
- Across English and Gàidhlig Medium Education, children engage in a few purposeful outdoor learning activities. They grow food and use the grounds for nature-based learning. The staff team should continue planning outdoor learning. Children work with a range of partners in motivating contexts where they deepen their understanding of language, culture, heritage and the local area. Staff are still to have a structured overview of how well children's skills are developed in such activities, including fluency in Gàidhlig.
- Across English and Gàidhlig Medium Education, younger children have regular time to play in the classroom. Children access independently a range of writing and mathematics activities to consolidate their learning. Teachers should plan more play opportunities outdoors, with ample adult interaction to develop children's fluency in Gàidhlig. Staff are at an early stage of developing purposeful play pedagogy in both Gàidhlig and English. Previously, teachers used more play pedagogy but are assessing its impact on attainment. Going forward, staff should ensure they evaluate new changes as they are being implemented.
- Across English and Gàidhlig Medium Education, teachers use digital technology well to support learning in all classes. For example, teachers use video content to stimulate children's writing

skills. The staff team should now develop a more progressive approach to developing children's knowledge and digital skills to prepare them to be confident in digital worlds.

- Teachers have been developing well their approaches to literacy and numeracy through the mediums of Gàidhlig and English. They have tried new approaches to teaching phonics, which are better linked to reinforcing reading texts. Their approaches to writing are based on children developing stimuli to write through talking. Teachers miss opportunities to formally assess children's talking skills with this approach. Children are not writing often enough across a broad range of genres. Staff should review the policy on learning, teaching and assessment to reflect the bun-sgoil's context, including effective immersion. As part of this, the policy should be clear on children's high-quality total immersion experiences. This should ensure opportunities for immersion are not diluted or compromised. Across the bun-sgoil, children need more real-life examples in which to apply their understanding of numeracy and mathematics.
- Across the bun-sgoil, teachers use a range of appropriate formative, summative and standardised assessments. Teachers use these to identify accurately gaps in children's learning and inform planning to raise attainment. Senior leaders are beginning to develop thorough systems to gather evidence and data. Teachers should continue to use assessment information to plan further support and challenge to ensure children achieve their expected targets.
- Teachers provide children with some feedback to improve their learning. This varies in quality. Children assess their own progress. Parents are kept informed of children's progress from teachers' use of a digital platform. Teachers should strengthen the link between next steps and national Benchmarks. They also engage in moderation with neighbouring schools, particularly in moderating writing. Teachers should now include listening and talking in moderation activity, to support both immersion and the 1+2 Approach to Languages.
- Teachers plan with increasing impact for children's learning in literacy and numeracy over different timescales. They use well local authority progression pathways in literacy and numeracy in the bun-sgoil. Teachers plan for teaching Gàidhlig grammar. Teachers should ensure they plan effectively for all curricular areas and subjects and across different contexts. Senior leaders and teachers have termly attainment meetings. Teachers should set targets for when children are expected to achieve particular experiences and outcomes. This will help develop a brisker pace of progress. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to use the local authority tool for tracking attainment, alongside teacher professional judgements to support thorough attainment conversations.

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

satisfactory

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 bun-sgoil 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 satisfactory progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy across Gàidhlig and English Medium Education. A majority of children are on track to achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels by June 2025 at key milestones. However, there are clear stages at which children's progress is weak. Children have potential to attain much better. Children who are higher achieving should be encouraged to meet and exceed expected levels of attainment, including in literacy and Gàidhlig.

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

Listening and Talking

- All children listen attentively to the use of Gàidhlig in their learning through total immersion approaches. A majority of children talk confidently in Gàidhlig with adults. Children need to take more responsibility for using Gàidhlig independently in small group and paired activities for a majority of the time. Children are sufficiently fluent to use Gàidhlig for their learning across the curriculum. By P7, children express their ideas and opinions well. They debate issues of interest to them. Children need to articulate better how skills in learning through Gàidhlig are important to their immersion education. They should also be clearer of the bilingual and career-related benefits of Gàidhlig Medium Education.

Reading

- Children read fluently in Gàidhlig and English, as appropriate to their age and stage. Children use pace well when reading. They should now develop greater expression, particularly when reading in Gàidhlig. Older children describe well why they enjoy reading books. Younger children are developing a thorough understanding of sounds and patterns to read and understand words in Gàidhlig. They interpret illustrations well to support understanding. Older children should continue to strengthen their skills in notetaking, scanning, skimming and summarising.

Writing

- By P7, children produce good personal writing in both Gàidhlig and English. Across the bun-sgoil, children use a variety of verbs to start sentences, showing improved grammatical accuracy. However, they do not always use verbs accurately when responding to questions. There is a noticeable dip in the quality of writing at the middle stages. Across levels, children are clear on the correct use of punctuation. Children now need to take greater responsibility for

reviewing and improving their own writing and that of others. Children are ready to write for a broader range of genres. They should be given more opportunities to choose how to structure and present their work for different purposes. By P7, children should write at greater length. This will help children develop plot, character, setting and persuasive techniques more effectively. Across Gàidhlig and English Medium, the headteacher should ensure teachers gather evidence of children's writing to show range, length and creativity. This is necessary to demonstrate achievement of CfE second level.

Attainment in literacy and English in English Medium Education

Listening and talking

- Almost all children enjoy talking about their learning. They retell stories and share their views confidently. Children contribute well to group and whole-class discussions. They speak clearly and audibly, taking turns appropriately. Children should continue developing their talking skills by engaging with a wider and more diverse range of audiences.

Reading

- Children at early level know the sounds that most letters make. By the end of the second level, children read aloud fluently and should continue to work on reading with expression. Children working at first and second levels know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and detail all parts of a book. Children know how to choose books using the blurb to guide their reading for enjoyment. Older children identify some techniques used by writers to engage and influence the reader. At second level, almost all children summarise key information and make predictions about different texts.

Writing

- Almost all younger children are learning to form letters legibly. Children organise their ideas well using paragraphs. They apply punctuation accurately. As children progress through the bun-sgoil, children's spelling becomes increasingly accurate. Children should continue to access strategies to support their writing for a range of purposes in relevant and real-life contexts. Children should write for a wider range of purposes, and have responsibility for monitoring this themselves.

Attainment in Gaelic (Learners) in English Medium Education

- Children are not making sufficient progress in Gaelic (Learners). They speak only a few phrases of the language. Children are not able to articulate Gàidhlig used in shared areas and events, such as assemblies. The headteacher needs to have higher expectations of children's use of Gàidhlig. Children's progress in Gaelic (Learners) should be checked regularly by staff, so that children are accelerating their progress to achieve the second CfE level outcomes by the end of P7.

Numeracy and mathematics in Gàidhlig and English Medium Education

- Overall children's attainment and progress in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. This is through the medium of Gàidhlig and English.

Number, money and measure

- In both Gàidhlig and English Medium, at early level, almost all children have a good understanding of number. They identify, recognise and recall numbers to 20. At first level, a few children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. Children solve addition and subtraction problems with three-digit whole numbers. Older children round whole numbers to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. They order accurately whole numbers to one million. At second level, children need to focus further on rounding decimal fractions to one and two decimal

places. Children do not use knowledge of equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages to solve problems.

- At the early level, children understand money well. They identify coins up to £2. By the end of second level, children calculate to determine best value for money in real-life situations. Older children record time in both 12- and 24-hour notation. They explain commonly used units of time and use problem-solving skills to calculate time durations. Children would benefit from more opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in real-life, relevant problem-solving contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, children name and identify common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and complete patterns in a sequence. Older children identify and classify 2D shapes and three-dimensional objects. They use mathematical language correctly to describe acute, obtuse and straight angles. They would benefit from learning more about reflex angles. Children would benefit from further work on properties of shapes, such as circles to extend their knowledge and skills in this area.

Information handling

- Younger children apply their knowledge and skills well to create simple graphs and charts. They interpret information from these. Older children use their knowledge of graphs and charts well to extract key information. Across all stages, children should increase their use of digital technologies to record data.

Attainment over time

- Children's attendance is 94.3%, which is in line with national averages. Attendance remains steady since 2021. The headteacher follows local authority's guidance on maximising attendance and improving outcomes. He works closely with a few children and families, with positive impact on attendance. A few children attend bun-sgoil on a part-time basis. The headteacher should continue planning for all children to be attending bun-sgoil for the recommended time. The headteacher is rightly identifying the impact of absences when children are not exposed to Gàidhlig at home. The headteacher should celebrate children's high attendance in bun-sgoil.
- The headteacher is monitoring children's progress closely over a two-year period. This includes literacy in Gàidhlig and English, numeracy and mathematics, and health and wellbeing. Attainment data is available over time. However, it varies too much and is not always recorded accurately across sources. The staff team should continue to implement strong strategies to raise attainment. This will help ensure children achieve their full potential. The headteacher should now extend tracking and monitoring to all curricular areas and contexts.
- Teachers and pupil support staff provide a range of effective targeted interventions that raise individual children's attainment across both English and Gàidhlig Medium. Children who need additional support with their learning make improved and good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children develop well their fitness and wellbeing through a range of activities, such as cycling courses, fun days and health weeks. They take part in a few after-school clubs, some of which are organised by parents. These include shinty, cross-country and football. A few children develop musical skills by learning to play the chanter and fiddle. A few children sang successfully at the local Mòd. Staff, in partnership with Gàidhlig groups, should now take a more strategic approach to planning cultural and musical experiences. This will help strengthen

children's understanding of how these activities support their language development. Senior leaders recognise the importance of tracking wider achievements and skills to ensure no child is missing out.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff know children and families well. They understand the social, wellbeing and economic contexts of the community. Staff are highly supportive of individual needs. They use Pupil Equity Funding effectively to close gaps in learning. Targeted interventions are well planned to help children make faster progress. Senior leaders promote equity through practical steps, such as a uniform swap shop. They show strong awareness of the cost of the bun-sgoil day.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher and staff are making positive progress with aspects of implementing the Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017. They have strong transition links with the sgoil-àraich and as children move to the secondary stages. As a result, almost all children continue with Gàidhlig at transition points. Children who move from the sgoil-àraich to the English Medium Unit need more effective progression in Gaelic (Learners). Currently, learning of Gàidhlig as an additional language is weak. There is scope to strengthen the promotion of Gàidhlig Medium Education with parents. The headteacher should continue engaging with families seeking to maximise the immersion approach. The bun-sgoil benefits from high-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments. A range of staff speak Gàidhlig. The bun-sgoil and local authority recognise that all classes in Gàidhlig Medium Education need to have all of their learning through the medium of Gàidhlig all of the time.
- The headteacher has had an increased teaching commitment as a result of staffing challenges. He now requires more dedicated time to lead the strategic development of the bun-sgoil. This should include improving the curriculum across areas and cross-cutting themes. There are missed opportunities to embed Gàidhlig Medium Education in its cultural, bilingual and economic context. Stronger links with curriculum partners, such as the nearby National Gaelic Language and Culture Centre, would support this. Children receive high-quality physical education and religious observance.
- Children have access to a new library area in Bun-sgoil Shlèite. This is an attractive space, which promotes reading for enjoyment well. The staff team should address the equity of more books being available to read in English than in Gàidhlig. They should also plan how children become acquainted with the valuable library resources at the nearby National Gaelic Language and Culture Centre.

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.