

Gaelic Language Plan: progress report

Delivery of the commitments of the Gaelic Language Plan during the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

25/06/2026

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Introduction

This report provides a summary of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education's (HMIE) progress in delivering commitments for the Gaelic Language Plan during the academic year 2024 to 2025.

It evaluates the delivery against the planned actions across inspection, building capacity, supporting improvement, influencing policy and corporate responsibilities.

Evidence of progress is from internal monitoring and progress data, as well as stakeholder evaluations from questionnaires and discussions.

The statutory basis for this report

A progress report is required under [Section 6 of the Gaelic Language \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). This enables [Bòrd na Gàidhlig](#) to request a report on the extent to which HMIE has implemented the measures set out in the plan.

The aims of the plan are integral to the inspectorate's statutory inspection functions. Objectives set out how inspection reflects and evaluates the distinctiveness of Gaelic education. HMIE aims to ensure that equal respect for the language is embedded across methodologies and reporting. The aims of the HMIE Gaelic Language Plan align with [national priorities for Gaelic](#).

Gaelic has increased significance within the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2025](#). Section 33 of the Act formally establishes the office of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.

This places explicit statutory duties on the Chief Inspector to advance and protect the interests of learners receiving Gaelic Education. Section 43 specifies that the Chief Inspector must have regard for “those who are receiving, or wish to receive, Gaelic Learner Education, Gaelic Medium Education, and the experience of persons providing teaching or training in a relevant educational establishment”.

Executive summary

In the 2024 to 2025 academic year, HMIE continued to deliver substantial inspection and improvement activities for Gaelic Medium Education, Gaelic (Learners), and the wider connected, interdependent educational system. HMIE recorded positive progress in several areas, notably:

- strengthened assurance and public accountability
- deployment of specialist inspectors
- reporting of progress
- evidence-based contributions to national policy development.

The [Advice on Gaelic education](#) continues to support self-evaluation successfully for the Gaelic sector. It also supports transparency in how we inspect the Gaelic sector alongside other sector frameworks, such as the [How good is our series](#).

We published a [national report of analysis of inspection findings on Gaelic](#) in January 2026.

Delivery of plan commitments

Our [Gaelic Language Plan](#) is part of HMIE's corporate planning. It links to Scottish Government priorities through the National Performance Framework, National Improvement Framework and the National Gaelic Language Plan. These plans articulate a sustainable future for the language, as well as achieving excellence and equity for all learners in Scotland.

The Gaelic Language Plan was prepared prior to the announcement of the educational reform in Scotland. HMIE recognises that the plan must therefore be iterative and responsive, enabling relevant and proportionate adaptation throughout its lifetime.

In delivering our vision for Gaelic in Scotland, HMIE aligned our high-level educational commitments to the Inspectorate's purpose. These high-level aims are:

- publish inspection evidence relating to the Gaelic sector, including on issues bespoke to the sector, including at events
- share inspection evidence with senior leaders, teachers and partners
- Ensure that the Gaelic sector is part of the ongoing programme of thematic inspections
- deliver a national thematic report on Gaelic education during the lifetime of the plan
- support inspection and self-evaluation for improvement in the Gaelic sector
- ensure continuing transparency in how we inspect the Gaelic sector

We will update our document, [Advice on Gaelic Education](#), based on good practice in inspection findings and our inspection frameworks, as appropriate.

HMIE also has corporate high-level commitments that support the National Gaelic Language Plan's aim of increasing the learning, use and promotion of Gaelic. This is achieved by:

- having staff with qualifications and skills in Gaelic
- a communication strategy
- Gaelic resources on our website
- professional learning for staff, for example.

In so doing, we will strive to reduce gaps to play our part in achieving excellence, equity and equality for the Gaelic sector.

Assurance and public accountability

In 2024 and 2025, in line with the annual inspection plan, HMIE delivered an agreed programme of inspections across early learning and childcare, primary and secondary schools and Gaelic sectors. Successes included:

- 22 inspections of Gaelic Medium provisions
- 24 inspections for Gaelic (Learners)
- 4 further inspections for the Gaelic sector

[Published reports](#) on inspection findings for the school sector provide clear actions on how to improve practice. Almost all published inspection letters found at least one area of strength and an action point to support improvement.

Almost all published reports on inspection findings were available in Gaelic on the same day as English versions. Post-school inspections report on Gaelic where appropriate. Currently, there are no routine inspections of community learning and development (CLD) taking place.

A [national thematic inspection evaluated how well local authorities support schools to improve](#). The inspection evaluated local authorities' support for Gaelic in a few local authorities. HMIE delivered professional learning to a local authority network based on the national thematic report findings. This report identifies strengths and important ways in which Gaelic can be improved in local authorities.

Promoting improvement, building capacity and sharing effective practice

HMIE continues to promote improvement across the Gaelic sector by identifying, synthesising and sharing effective practice drawn from inspection findings. Progress in this area during 2024 and 2025 was positive, with several notable achievements in promoting improvement by identifying and [sharing effective practice](#).

HMIE published [5 case studies](#) illustrating highly effective practice, with a further 3 scheduled for publication in 2025 and 2026. These case studies contribute to deepening sector understanding of effective Gaelic Medium and Gaelic (Learners) delivery. This is enabling settings to plan for strengthening immersion approaches, support fluency development and enhance the overall quality of learning experiences.

These case studies contribute to a growing and more coherent body of professional knowledge across the system.

HMIE built capacity by sharing inspection findings on early years, primary and secondary practice at national networks and discussions. This supported staff by illustrating what constitutes highly effective Gaelic Medium and Learner Education. For the early years sector, there was an intentional clarifying of how Gaelic relates to the new shared [quality improvement framework](#) with the Care Inspectorate for early learning and childcare. [Advice on Gaelic Education](#) continues to be used on inspections. These engagements help strengthen practitioners' understanding of what constitutes strong provision and key priorities for improvement across the Gaelic sector.

HMIE continues to strengthen capacity through the role of [Associate Assessors](#) (AAs). AAs are educators and senior leaders in schools and local authorities recognised for their best practice. They inspect with HMIE on an occasional basis. Progress is evident in both recruitment and professional learning. Currently, HMIE has its biggest team of AAs to date.

HMIE demonstrates progress against national targets for the use of Gaelic by finding roles for which Gaelic is essential and conducting interviews for Assistant Assessors through the medium of Gaelic, led by specialist inspectors. This approach enables HMIE to assure itself that candidates have the required level of fluency in Gaelic alongside their professional competence.

During this reporting period, the [Advice on Gaelic Education](#) was updated through oral delivery rather than through a refreshed written publication.

This advice is valuable in supporting self-evaluation and informing inspection activity. It continues to promote consistent, high-quality understanding of the distinctive pedagogies associated with Gaelic Medium Education and Gaelic learners.

The views of stakeholders for Gaelic are sought and considered in developing new quality and improvement frameworks and for future approaches to inspection. Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comann nam Pàrant are part of our stakeholder engagement strategy in co-designing quality improvement frameworks. HMIE has worked proactively with the Gaelic sector, including children and young people, to ensure that their views are considered on Gaelic Medium and Gaelic (Learners). This was achieved through the medium of Gaelic.

Informing educational policy and practice

HMIE continues to make a significant strategic contribution to national policy development by providing independent, evidence-based evaluations derived from the direct observation of practice across Gaelic Medium Education, Gaelic (Learners) and Learning about Gaelic Language Culture. This role is still central to ensuring that policy formation is based on evidence from classrooms, early years settings and local authorities.

In addition, HMIE contributed ongoing evaluative evidence to major national policy processes, including the [Scottish Languages Act 2025](#) the Education (Scotland) Act 2025 and the [Statutory Guidance on Gaelic Education 2017](#).

Informing our people and corporate strategy

HMIE progressed corporate commitments that set out how HMIE should increase the use and learning of Gaelic within its day-to-day operations and with the public. These commitments play a vital role in raising the profile and visibility of Gaelic.

HM inspectors can take part in training on inspecting Gaelic. This helps inspectors support consistent evaluative practice, particularly the linguistic and pedagogical distinctiveness of Gaelic Education. All new HM inspectors are offered induction and professional learning in Gaelic Education. Our new branding is available in Gaelic and English, with the option of using Gaelic first.

Strategic outlook for 2025 to 2026

HMIE is making strong progress towards the next reporting year linked to its core functions. HMIE supports improvement by individual establishments covering 3-18 through inspections. Collectively, these developments show positive progress as HMIE moves into the next reporting cycle.

Conclusion

HMIE has made strong progress in meeting the outcomes of the Gaelic Language Plan. The organisation has also responded to feedback from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and continues to strengthen its commitment to ensuring equal respect for Gaelic and English across the majority of areas of work.

A major milestone in this period was the January 2026 publication of the national report [Evaluating the Quality of Gaelic Education](#).

This report provides insight into the quality of provision and establishes a coherent evidence base to guide future development. It is already helping to shape sector understanding of effective practice, highlighting persistent challenges and informing strategic decision-making across the system.

In December 2025, HMIE hosted a very well attended national seminar to share inspection findings, with 3 settings sharing highly effective practice in Gaelic. Practice represented 3 to 18 Gaelic Medium Education.

In addition, HMIE met statutory functions in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 by undertaking a full assessment of need to establish Gaelic Medium primary provision within a local authority. This assessment represents an important step in strengthening local and national systems for responding to parental demand for Gaelic Medium Education.

Engagement and communication have increased significantly. Through a new approach, HMIE has had positive social media promotional campaigns around:

- [Evaluating the Quality of Gaelic Education](#)
- sharing effective practice through case studies
- a national online seminar sharing inspection findings
- initiatives such as Gaelic week (Seachdain na Gàidhlig)

Our postings on social media are in Gaelic and English. The frequency of postings has increased significantly. HMIE also published a media release on the national report.

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