

Strategy Summary for Gaelic Implementation Group

Current situation at James Gillespie's High School (JGHS):

109 GME pupils, 1 Gàidhlig teacher.

Issues:

- How will it be possible to deliver Gàidhlig as a subject to all pupils throughout BGE, all in Nat5 courses, and all in SQA Highers and Advanced Highers?
- Concern about pupils sitting crucial Highers and with conditional university offers.
- No other certificated courses taught through Gàidhlig and concern for future of other subjects (Geography, Modern Studies) taught in S1 / S2.
- No capacity for supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs, discriminating against pupils with learning differences.
- Lack of strategic plan for GME development has resulted in Edinburgh being unattractive to GME staff.

Current situation at Taobh na Pàirce:

14 out of 23 teachers are fluent Gaelic speakers and able to deliver GME. This approximates at an average of 61% immersion, although in practice the upper years of the school receive a lower percentage of immersion to facilitate full immersion for infants.

Issues:

- GME pupils have an entitlement to 100% immersion throughout their primary years.
- Taobh na Pàirce has larger than average class sizes, when minority language schooling is best delivered in smaller classes.
- Delivering Gaelic to all classes requires significant teaching time from the Head Teacher and Depute Head, and significant team teaching.
- There is concern about a drop off in fluency in upper years. The effect of less than 100% immersion has been cumulative over the past few years.

Demand for GME continues to grow in early years and at primary. Numbers of GME secondary pupils will rise significantly in the next five years.

How do we meet the challenge of growing demand?

With a five year strategic plan for development. Certainty of pathway is a requirement for recruiting GME staff, and for ensuring GME pupils receive their entitlement to a high quality education.

Our expectation is that a five year plan will be proposed in outline by the May 2018 meeting of Education, Children & Families Committee, with the appointment of a strategic level senior Council officer underway to take ownership of the plan.

Outline proposed five year plan:

- March 2018 – recruitment of Deputy Head GME post at JGHS, with GME unit development as part of remit
- August 2018 – new Sgoil-àraich (GME nursery) provision to open at new site in the city
- August 2018 – all GME primary pupils to receive full immersion entitlement from August 2018
- December 2018 – site identified for dedicated GME secondary or campus model school
- August 2019 – new primary provision to open (at temporary or permanent site)
- 2018-23 – recruitment of four additional GME secondary staff per year
- 2018-23 – GME to be delivered as part of extended JGHS, while long term site acquired and refurbished / new build
- 2021 – beginning of transition planning (if staff targets are met)
- 2023 – transition to new secondary site.