

**Study into the
Iarrtas airson Foghlam tron Ghàidhlig
~
Demand for Gaelic Medium Education**

CR11-11

FEScott

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The consultants would like to thank all those who gave their time and support to assist with this research. They include Directors of Education who gave their support and approval for the research to be carried out. Head Teachers and members of their teaching staff in schools across the ten local authority areas under consideration. Officers from the local authorities and representatives of stakeholder groups. Finally we are most grateful to the parents who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire.

Note: For simplicity and ease of reading, the consultants have used the term “parents” to represent those who are parents, guardians or carers of children in education.

Abbreviations and Glossary

Throughout this document the following abbreviations have been used

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Gaelic Medium Education | GME |
| Gaelic Learner Education | GLE |
| English Medium Education | EME |

Glossary

Gaelic Medium Education is education wholly, or mainly, using Gaelic as the primary language of communication in the classroom and in schoolwork.

English Medium Education is education wholly using English as the primary language in the classroom and in schoolwork.

Acquisition of a second language and bilingualism. There is a distinction between the acquisition of a second language and bilingualism. Bilingualism is defined as being able to speak two languages with the facility of a native speaker. Having a second language is defined as being able to competently speak another language but without the facility of a native user.

Note: Throughout the research and responses from parents, it was clear that many respondees regarded bilingualism and the acquisition of a second language as the same thing.

GME School – For clarity refers to a school with GME stream/minority, a GME school with minority English stream and a school with full Gaelic ethos.

n = the base from which all percentages are calculated in the examples shown.

Executive Summary

In June 2012, FEScott Associates Ltd was commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to undertake research which would provide information on:

- The demand for Gaelic Medium Education (GME), in ten local authority areas across Scotland, amongst parents currently not accessing Gaelic Medium Education;
- The reasons for parents choosing or not choosing Gaelic Medium Education;
- The support and information parents need to inform them about Gaelic Medium Education (GME) and Gaelic provision in their area.

The research was to establish if parents are aware of GME provision in their area; if they had chosen or not chosen to register their children in GME why they had done so; would having more information have changed their decisions; what factors influence their decisions; is more support needed and if so, what kind of support; what level of interest is there in registering for GME and finally what could local authorities do to promote GME.

The methodology (Section 1) chosen was a combination of desk based research, face-to-face and telephone interviews, emailed question sets and a large-scale, incentivised, qualitative and quantitative questionnaire.

Consultation took place with Head teachers/ staff members in GME and EME schools (see Sections 3.1 and 3.2); with stakeholders (see Section 3.6) and with parents (see Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5).

The questionnaire was sent to parents of pupils in Primary 1 in schools based in 10 local authority areas across Scotland.

The local authority areas were chosen to give a wide geographic spread and a combination of areas where GME is already available and areas where it is not. The local authorities were: Aberdeenshire Council, Argyll & Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Dumfries & Galloway Council, Fife Council, Glasgow City Council, The Highland Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Perth & Kinross Council and South Ayrshire Council.

The schools consulted provide a combination of GME, GME with English Medium Education (EME) and EME. English Medium schools form part of the research to establish whether any demand for GME exists in their area and also to find out whether parents of children in EME know about GME and if those parents would choose GME if it was available.

- **657 sets of parents of pupils in Primary 1 in the ten local authority areas were sent questionnaires. 38 responses were received from GME schools (24%) and 68 from EME schools (13.6%). An overall response rate of c16%.**

In EME - 14 non-GME schools were consulted and 420 questionnaires sent. The decision to survey more EME parents was taken as it was expected that response levels would be lower from this group, so to obtain enough responses to be significant more were surveyed.

The full outcome of the responses to the questionnaires is at Section 3.4. but a short summary concludes that:

- 94% of parents do not speak Gaelic, yet 53% show an interest in Gaelic. This suggests a latent interest which, with development, may drive increased demand.
- 45% were aware that, where available, they could have chosen to have their child educated in Gaelic Medium. A surprisingly low statistic.
- In several cases, comments were made that parents knew there was a Gaelic school but did not know its name or exact location. Suggesting poor promotion locally.
- 84% said more **information** about GME and its benefits **would not** have had an impact on where they chose to educate their child. (Note: Responses from The Highland Council area indicate that if more information had been available, parents **would** have considered changing their minds.)
- 81% said more **advice** for parents about GME and its benefits **would** have had an impact on their decision. The outcomes of this question suggest there is a demand for more advice which is currently unmet.
- 72% said even if **support** for parents was available, they **would not** have considered registering their child/children in GME, suggesting that support may not be as important a driver as might have been thought.
- A key point is the desire for bilingual education. Parents highlighted this would be a factor in their choice of school. It is important to note that, in some cases, languages such as French or Spanish would be preferred. There is no information on whether parents have made schools aware of their desire for bilingual education.

In GME - 6 GME schools were consulted, including GME schools where EME is also available. 237 questionnaires were sent (79 pupils in EME and 158 pupils in GME).

The full outcome of the responses to the questionnaires is at Section 3.5 but a short summary concludes that:

- 63% of parents spoke Gaelic in the home. 82% did not live in an area where Gaelic is commonly heard.
- Parents identified three areas as the main deciding factors when choosing GME. In order of importance they are: Acquisition of a second language, continuation of Gaelic culture and Bilingualism. For many parents, the acquisition of a second language outweighs the actual language being acquired.
- The most important **information** sources used by parents to enable them to make a decision about GME were via their local Gaelic school, the internet or by word of mouth. The consultants expected routes of via the Council, leaflets etc to rank higher than was experienced. This suggests future promotion should be focused on online information and

the schools. The main drivers are informal routes such as speaking to other parents, word of mouth and family and friends.

- The most important source of **advice** used by parents was their local Gaelic school.
- The main issue parents thought their child would face in continuing to develop Gaelic throughout their education, including in Secondary school, was the lack of Gaelic speaking teachers and Head Teachers, specifically at Secondary level.
- 47% thought other parents in their area were interested in registering their children in GME, with only 34% thinking they would not. If parents were given the correct information, specifically about the value of bilingualism and GME educationally, they were generally interested.
- Another key outcome of this question was the emphasis on a need to increase promotion of GME at an earlier stage (0-3years). This response suggests the existing promotion of GME may be slightly mis-targeted: if it is promoted as bilingualism, the uptake may be significantly higher. Whilst Bòrd na Gàidhlig has had a campaign which they believe has focused on bilingualism – the responses from parents suggests it has not met its target.
- The need for more information - specifically online links and promotional materials would encourage other parents to consider GME.
- Classes (including those online) for parents to allow them to learn Gaelic and help children with homework was the main area of **support** identified by parents to help them to support their children. Again although Gaelic4Parents offers support for homework that is aimed at helping parents over the internet it appears that there is low awareness.
- Transport, emerged as a key requirement to accessing GME by many parents.

26 Head Teachers, Heads of Department or other staff members were consulted in 11 GME schools (5 Primary & 6 Secondary) and 15 EME schools (13 Primary & 2 Secondary).

Note: During the research, the terms of reference changed and Secondary school parents were removed from the questionnaire research. It was agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig that Secondary school Head Teachers and staff responses already collated would continue to form part of the outputs of this research.

The full outcomes of the responses is at Sections 3.1 and 3.2 but a short summary concludes that:

- The Head Teachers in EME suggest there is no latent demand for Gaelic from parents in their areas other than that already being provided.
- The key issues highlighted by the GME Head Teachers consulted are staffing, language skills, supporting pupils with learning difficulties and transport.
- The main reasons staff move are: permanent contracts (30%) and for personal reasons such as getting married and moving home to raise a family (30%).
- 70% have experienced staff moving to teach in other Gaelic schools and 60% believe this trend will increase.
- It was noted by many that an active parents group could increase the numbers of pupils entering GME.

Stakeholders in Gaelic Education were also consulted. One question set was sent to 26 Directors of Education and Council Officers with responsibility for Gaelic across the ten local authority areas. A second question set was sent to 12 organisations which support Gaelic.

The full outcome of the responses is at Section 3.6 but a short summary concludes that:

- Respondee from local authorities with GME were satisfied that parents' awareness of GME was growing. Two areas that offer GME noted an increase in demand for GME at the Early Years' stage.
- The support offered to parents of children in GME to help them in educating their child varies across local authority.
- In some areas, Primary and Secondary growth is continuing. The constant challenge of meeting demand aligned with the issues around sourcing teachers was mentioned by many. Plans are in hand to develop more Gaelic teachers.
- Respondee suggested the main drivers for choice of GME were familial connections, Scottish culture and heritage and bilingualism. Interestingly, this is the reverse order identified by parents, who led on bilingualism.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A full set of conclusions and recommendations can be found at Section 5. A short summary of the main outcomes (within identified groups) is shown below.

Future Demand for Growth, including targets

The targets in the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012–2017, considered in Section 2 show a need to increase numbers of children in Gaelic Medium Education Primary 1 by 2017 from 406 to 800. (i.e.,

double the number currently enrolling). The Plan also targets expanding those transferring into Secondary GME. Section 5.1 demonstrates how the targets may be achieved.

Primary numbers are being driven upwards by the resurgence in Gaelic over the last five years and this increase in Primary pupils has not yet transferred to Secondary GME. It is expected that, from academic year 2014/15 onwards, Secondary GME numbers will begin to rise, so increasing total GME numbers further.

The research has shown there is growth in 80% of the GME Primary schools consulted. No schools consulted (Primary or Secondary) show a drop in numbers. The percentage increase varies from school to school.

There are three large urban areas where drivers of GME demand are increasing substantially. Those areas are: Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. Within highly populated areas, it is expected that a cycle of demand will be established where there are more parents and more widespread word of mouth recommendation develops, thereby driving further demand. Word of mouth was seen as a key information route by parents seeking advice or information about GME.

The table in Section 5.1 demonstrates that if: - existing GME schools achieve a 10% increase in numbers year on year; there is an addition of new, already approved, schools being opened by 2017 and, those schools also achieving a modest 10% increase in numbers year on year after opening - the target for doubling numbers of pupils entering Primary 1 as set by the National Plan for Gaelic may be achieved.

Statistics show a 20% drop off rate between Primary and Secondary. The key reasons given by parents were: Subject choices being more limited in Gaelic; lack of knowledge about Gaelic and the fluency of teachers.

There is a need to increase P1 intake and reduce the drop off in P7/S1. In addition, some consultees noted that pupils often moved from GME around P4/5. Reasons for this are not fully documented but suggestions have been made that parents want to move children to other primary schools which feed into specific secondary schools.

Pupil numbers in rural areas are generally dropping, but numbers in GME in rural areas are increasing. There has been a significant increase in numbers in some areas meaning that the overall proportion in GME is increasing.

A key issue to retaining staff was thought to be the ability to offer permanent contracts.

Second Language/Bilingualism

The vast majority of parents with children currently in EME and GME who responded to the questionnaire, recognise the benefits of bilingualism but do not perceive other factors as of equal or higher importance. The factors of Scottish culture, national heritage etc, which are often mentioned in GME promotion are far less important to parents than expected.

The research suggests that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should promote GME as the only available state funded bilingual education in Scotland.

Data Capture - Enquiries

It was anticipated that local authorities would capture the number of enquiries regarding enrolling children into GME, but stakeholder responses suggest they do not. This appears to be a major omission in determining demand as, if enquiries are not captured, no follow up will happen and opportunities are, potentially, being missed.

If enquiries are made, there should be a mechanism in place, as a central clearing point, to follow up those enquires and they should be shared with other local authorities and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure that if cross border education is, or can be, offered, the enquiry is not lost.

Data Capture - Statistical Data

Some local authorities use data captured by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to assess growth and demand.

The data captured by Bòrd na Gàidhlig has recently changed its parameters. In some cases, particularly in nursery, it makes comparisons of previous years difficult.

The consultants understand that data sought and held by Bòrd na Gàidhlig now includes anticipated total year intake figures for nursery in addition to the number of pupils in GME at all levels (pre-school, nursery, Primary and Secondary) and this data will continue to be collected and collated.

Latent demand

Parents of children in EME, although unable to comment on latent demand, are strongly interested in bilingual education which suggests a potential missed opportunity. In some cases, these parents are unconcerned about the second language offered. This provides an opportunity for those driving education in Gaelic to present GME as the bilingual option.

National projections on the EME figures within this research, suggest there is a potential available pool of pupils for bilingual education of around 37% of all pupils providing **all other conditions** regarding transport, staff supply and local provision can be met.

Promotion

The research suggests that any future promotion of GME leads on bilingualism and the benefits of acquiring a second language. Promotion should be made across all geographic areas and outside the 'normal' Gaelic areas to reach those who may have a latent interest in bilingual education but who may not recognise the benefits of learning Gaelic as a route to a bilingual education.

A national campaign, rather than a local authority led campaign, would reach areas not currently served by GME but which may have a latent demand for bilingual education. The outcomes of this research have demonstrated that such an interest in bilingual education exists and this should be developed further.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should carry out a marketing audit of all materials used by schools, local authorities and Gaelic support groups to establish best practice, reduce duplication and streamline delivery.

This research has shown there is a need for a consistent, strategic approach to increase demand for GME and this approach should be across all year groups (0-18 years) and to parents on a national level, rather than focusing on local delivery. This is already beginning to happen.

It is recommended that any new GME promotional materials developed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Gaelic support organisations should be market tested on non Gaelic speaking parents before they are widely adopted.

Current promotional routes may not be reaching latent demand, i.e. parents outside the existing Gaelic speaking sphere. This is particularly important when considering the importance of word of mouth information and advice to parents.

Additional promotional strategies should be put in place at transition to Secondary, where information should be made available to parents **and** pupils on the benefits of Gaelic as a Secondary school subject or through continuing to attend GME in Secondary if it is available.

The central interactive website www.gaidhlig.org.uk should be further developed and more widely publicised to allow parents to swiftly locate their nearest Gaelic Medium school; assess how wide the local Gaelic Medium provision is; find out whether that school takes placing requests from outside its local authority area and also whether the 'home' local authority area provides transport. It could also provide information on what GME is and what it entails.

Whilst information is available on the www.gaidhlig.org.uk website indicating where all the GME provision is available, maps, information on bilingualism and FAQs, there is very low awareness of it amongst those consulted.

The website could also allow enquiries to be captured across the country thereby increasing the information gathered on potential and latent demand.

Some consultees believed that, with more information on GME, parents would automatically choose it. This belief has not been supported by the research outcomes.

Training Programme

A programme of Peer Educator support could be developed and delivered to all age groups – e.g. 0-3 years, parent & toddler groups, pre-school groups including nurseries, Primary and Secondary education.

Peer Educators would be encouraged to develop a small interactive drama or play that would demonstrate the benefits of GME from a pupil's point of view. The drama would be presented to parents of children not in GME or at transition, reassuring parents in particular, about the benefits of a GME education.

The programme could also be presented to pupils who may be considering leaving the Gaelic language in Secondary but may be more willing to continue if they have a positive role model to follow.

There are also benefits to the Peer Educators who will improve their existing presentation skills.

Parents support

Schools could use parents who are fluent in Gaelic to provide support for other parents who may not have the language skills themselves to enable them to help their own children. This is particularly important for parents who have chosen Gaelic specifically for a bilingual education and may influence the increased demand of GME in the longer term.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig could consider the development of a toolkit to enable schools to facilitate this opportunity.

The use of parents may also help to address comments made by some GME parents about a lack of local support or classes at times which suited working parents.

Homework

In all parts of the research, the issue of dealing with homework, particularly by parents who do not speak Gaelic, is significant and seen as a barrier to entry.

Many referenced the importance of parents learning Gaelic to a standard that would allow them to support their children with homework along with the deployment of a mechanism to allow them to do so.

A national online programme, delivered through You Tube or webinars, which parents could join **at any time** could be developed to assist in this area. This would go some way to addressing the issues of classes being oversubscribed or at inconvenient hours. It would also widen access to Gaelic to other non-speakers who could join in too. This is already available through Gaelic4Parents but is not widely publicised as parents consulted were unaware of it.

Transport

Transport is seen as a barrier to access by many and transport links are seen as very important especially for parents sending children to Secondary in areas outwith their immediate local authority area.

The availability of transport from one local authority area to another or within a local authority may be a deciding factor in some parents choosing GME. Specific examples were evidenced during this research.

Transport policy is a local authority decision, but it is recommended that Bòrd na Gàidhlig continues to have a dialogue with local authorities where cross border movement already exists or has the potential to exist, to encourage provision of transport and thereby drive up demand.

A central, interactive portal could indicate whether transport was or was not available in each local authority area.

1 Background & Methodologies

In June 2012, FEScott Associates Ltd was commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to undertake research that would provide information on:

1. Identification of the demand for Gaelic Medium Education, in ten areas across Scotland, amongst parents currently not accessing Gaelic Medium Education;
2. Identification of the reasons for parents choosing or not choosing Gaelic Medium Education;
3. Identification of the support and information parents need to inform them about Gaelic Medium Education and Gaelic provision in their area.

The Study takes into account:

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig's National Gaelic Language Plan's aims and targets.
- The growth rate in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) across Scotland.
- The views of Scottish citizens, policy makers and educators, within and outwith the Gaelic speaking community, including relevant public and private sector partners and stakeholders.
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig's stated commitment to the development and promotion of Gaelic through existing institutions, relevant public & private sector partners and stakeholders.
- The Irish Gaelic, Breton & Catalan models, assessing how they work and how they are funded.

The outcomes of this study will contribute to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's strategic approach to the effective development of Gaelic education across Scotland by ascertaining future demand for growth; identifying potential resources to enable any projected growth to be supported and by recommending realistic targets based upon these findings.

In order to meet the aims of Bòrd na Gàidhlig as contained in their National Plan, local authorities across Scotland must adopt realistic targets for GME provision. There is, therefore, a need for strategic,

realistic and achievable targets based on sound research. Bòrd na Gàidhlig needs to identify potential for growth in Gaelic education by ascertaining the demand for GME across Scotland, and to establish how this demand might be resourced and implemented.

The research had the following objectives:

- To establish if parents are aware of Gaelic Medium Education provision in their area.
- If parents have chosen to register their children in GME, what were their reasons for doing so.
- If parents were aware of GME and have chosen **not** to register their children in Gaelic-medium education, what were their reasons for doing so.
- If they had more information available regarding GME, would this have an impact on their decision.
- What factors would encourage parents to consider choosing GME for their children.
- What support would parents need if they chose to register their children in GME.
- Is there an interest in registering in GME?
- What could local authorities do to promote GME?

1.1 Methodology

The methodology used was through a combination of desk based research; face-to-face and telephone interviews; emailed question sets and a large-scale, incentivised qualitative and quantitative questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to parents of pupils in Primary 1 in the selected local authority areas across Scotland.

The areas selected were chosen to give a broad geographic spread, an urban/rural mix and a combination of areas where GME is already available and those where it is not, so giving a balanced picture. Bòrd na Gàidhlig was consulted on, and subsequently approved, the areas and schools chosen.

The local authorities and Education Departments in the selected areas were contacted by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to request the support of schools in taking part in the research.

The local authorities selected were:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Aberdeenshire Council | Glasgow City Council |
| Argyll & Bute Council | The Highland Council |
| Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar | North Lanarkshire Council |
| Dumfries & Galloway Council | Perth & Kinross Council |
| Fife Council | South Ayrshire Council |

Prior to the live research taking place, data coding matrices were set up. These were completed using live responses. Solid statistical analysis on hard numerical data collected from the research was collated and analysed.

Softer data collected through interviews and other personal aspects of consultation is very valuable. This information is often harder to analyse but previous experience shows that common themes emerge which, in turn, allows the collation of soft information with the hard information to present a fully rounded report. Cross checking of data and other quality procedures were applied to ensure the robustness of data.

The data analysis generated a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators which were used as a baseline. The outcomes provide a set of indicators and recommendations to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

1.1.1 Face-to-Face and Telephone Interviews

In order to access the opinions of key stakeholders, and others, ensuring a representative sample was obtained, we undertook face-to-face and telephone interviews with those identified by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, its partners and others whose names were suggested as being relevant.

Meetings and face-to-face or telephone interviews were held with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the Scottish Government, local authorities, educators in Gaelic Medium and in English Medium, representatives of Gaelic support organisations and parents' groups, key stakeholders and others to ascertain their views.

When key stakeholders were unavailable during the live research period, telephone interviews were diaried to ensure responses were gathered from all consultees.

The consultants note that interviewing Head Teachers was particularly challenging due to the pressures on their time availability. Each telephone interview took approximately 30 minutes and the consultants are very grateful for the amount of time afforded to us.

Many stakeholders, particularly those in universities or further education, preferred to be emailed question sets and then respond at a time more convenient to them. This approach is not the consultants normal way of working but, under the circumstances, and to ensure the views of as many stakeholders as possible were captured, two sets of questions were sent to stakeholders by email.

1.1.2 High Volume Questionnaire to P1 Parents

The views of as many parents as possible was key to assessing the current demand for GME. An incentivised high volume questionnaire was sent to over 650 sets of parents/guardians across Scotland.

The high numbers consulted was particularly important when gauging the views of parents who have NOT chosen GME.

The questionnaires were incentivised to increase the number of responses received. This was particularly critical for parents of children in EME where issues of the relevance of GME were experienced.

The questionnaire sent to parents had questions which gathered as much information as possible on the key questions set out by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The consultants used open questions, which are exploratory and not explanatory, grounded in a strong theoretical position.

To reduce the time and effort required by teaching staff to distribute questionnaires to pupils, the questionnaire was posted, via a reply paid envelope, which could be returned direct to the consultants. This also preserved anonymity as parents would be free to make comments which they may not have made had the questionnaire been returned to their child's school. This approach also reduced the inconvenience to parents, an important factor in increasing the responses.

The incentive to complete a response was entry into a prize draw to win one of four sets of Tesco vouchers to a value of £25. Tesco vouchers were chosen as these were the most accessible for the majority of parents to use.

The outcomes of the questionnaire research are shown in Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

1.1.3 Schools contacted

Prior to the research starting, Bòrd na Gàidhlig sent a letter to all the selected local authorities' Heads of Education explaining the remit of the study and asking for their approval to contact the chosen schools in their areas.

Once consent had been established, the consultants contacted schools in the 10 local authority areas.

All Head Teachers at the schools selected were contacted by email to appraise them of the research work and to seek their assistance. The Head Teachers were unanimously positive and helpful and the consultants would like to thank them for their time and assistance. They would also like to thank Council Officers in the local authority areas who were very helpful in liaising with schools and, in some cases, with certain key stakeholders.

The research required the consultants to contact parents of children in GME and in EME in the 10 areas. It was initially agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig that the most appropriate year groups for research were Primary 1 and Secondary 1. These are the year groups where parents have recently made decisions about their child's education and, if GME was an option, why they did or did not choose GME.

Areas with Gaelic Medium delivery were included in the selection as well as areas where no GME is currently being delivered.

657 questionnaires were sent out. The EME numbers were significantly increased (approximately 2x that of GME) as it was believed response rates from EME parents would be significantly lower than those from GME parents. This belief came from the consultants' previous work in surveying parents with children in GME. More EME questionnaires were needed to give a statistically significant response rate. It is important to note that the subsequent analysis of returns maintained the GME/EME split mentioned previously.

In the initial stages, 40 schools were selected, four in each local authority area (two Primary and two Secondary).

If the area already has GME delivery, the selection was one GME Primary and one GME Secondary; the balance being one Primary and one Secondary EME.

During this phase all 40 schools were contacted and, in the vast majority of cases, short interviews conducted with the school and pupil numbers in Primary 1 and Secondary 1 collected. The original proposal was that 500 questionnaires would be distributed. It rapidly became clear that the numbers of pupils in the Primary 1 and Secondary 1 year groups far exceeded the numbers anticipated - being more than **sevenfold**. It was also clear that, if pupils had not attended GME in Primary, they could not select GME in Secondary.

Therefore, after discussion and in agreement with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the terms of reference were amended to researching Primary 1 year groups only. The Secondary 1 option was not pursued further.

Consequently, 657 questionnaires were distributed to 20 Primary schools across the 10 selected areas. Experience suggested a response rate of between 8-15% depending on the contact route. The final response rate achieved was c16%.

The distribution route was through posting the questionnaires in bulk to the schools, who then distributed to the appropriate pupils to take home to their parents. Completed responses were posted directly back to the consultant. The rationale was that this approach was more convenient for parents, and that it kept responses confidential as no one at the school would be able to view the parent's comments. Additionally, it made response times faster.

2 National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 enshrined Gaelic as an official language in Scotland; the only language in Scotland with such status.

There are currently over 90,000 people in Scotland with some ability in Gaelic and almost 60,000 who speak it with a degree of fluency.

In the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17, two key areas are focused on:

- *The need to 'increase the number of people learning, speaking and using Gaelic In Scotland' and*
- *The need for more partnership working with local authorities, communities and individuals working together to develop Gaelic.*

The need to increase demand for Gaelic has been recognised by Bòrd na Gàidhlig as has the recognition that the largest increase in Gaelic speakers is amongst young people.

However, this position does not mean further progress is not needed. Indeed, the Plan clearly highlights that, if the language is to have sustainable growth, more work must be done to increase the number of Gaelic speakers and in “developing initiatives such as Gaelic medium education and in ensuring the use and development of Gaelic continues in communities”.

Research into the benefits of learning Gaelic (taken from the National Gaelic Language Plan) shows that:

- Through bilingualism, “children learning through the medium of Gaelic achieve on an equal footing with their peers in English medium education in curricular subjects such as science and mathematics and usually perform better than their peers in English-medium education in reading and writing English”.

- Through having a second language, there are health benefits, such as for example, the delayed onset of mental health problems, such as Alzheimer's.
- The economic benefits of Gaelic have been well documented especially "in areas of low population and increasingly as young people educated bilingually find opportunities to use their Gaelic skills in employment and further and higher education".

The National Gaelic Language Plan focuses on six key development areas, all of which have a vital contribution to make in increasing the numbers of people learning, speaking and using Gaelic in Scotland. The six areas are:

1) Home & Early Years

This is a **key priority** within the Plan and there is recognition within the Plan that more emphasis must be placed on this area as it forms a key pipeline to generate future Gaelic speakers. 'Activity and resources will be directed to initiatives that promote Gaelic in the home and early years'.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have stated within the Plan that, as part of their strategic priorities, they will:

- Raise awareness of the importance of the home for acquiring Gaelic and encouraging more parents to choose Gaelic education for their children
- Ensure practical support, resources and advice are available for passing Gaelic on to children in the home and in Gaelic Early Years' education
- Ensure the links are strengthened between the use of Gaelic in the home and Gaelic Early Years' provision
- Improve the quality and availability of voluntary-led Gaelic pre-school activities and statutory early years education.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig, through Service Level Agreements with Gaelic organisations and community organisations offering Early Years' services, will support parents and families engaged in intergenerational transmission of Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig's strategy will also form part of Single Outcome Agreements and will ensure its inclusion in the Gaelic Language Plans of appropriate authorities. This will be particularly important as Gaelic 0-3 education is delivered largely on a voluntary basis and it is important local authorities support Gaelic Early Years' services to ensure continuity and smooth transition into statutory 3-5 provision.

2) Education: Schools & Teachers and Post-School Education

The future of Gaelic in Scotland requires increased support for Gaelic education at all levels and in all sectors, leading to greater promotion, support and expansion.

As another key priority, the Plan identifies the following targets:

- Increase in the number of children enrolling in Gaelic Medium Education, by doubling the current annual intake to 800 by 2017.
- Increase in the number of pupils engaged in Gaelic Learner education (GLE) in both Primary and Secondary schools.
- Expansion of Gaelic Medium subjects in Secondary schools.

Gaelic language learning, at all levels, is vital for the future of Gaelic in Scotland. Both GME and GLE have the potential to create new Gaelic speakers. For those who have learned Gaelic from an early age, Gaelic Medium Education reinforces and expands their language skills and it is important that it continues for

as long as possible. This development area will be prioritised and activity and resources will be directed to initiatives that promote Gaelic in school education.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have stated within the Plan that, as part of their strategic priorities, they will:

- Increase initiatives to promote, establish & expand GME and GLE at Primary and Secondary.
- Ensure adequate attention is given to the recruitment, retention, education, support and development of GME and GLE teachers.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities for young people in both GME and GLE to engage in activities that enhance their Gaelic skills through greater use.
- Ensure that all steps are taken to secure the quality of both GME and GLE through National Guidance and other means.

The Bòrd will provide a lead in many projects e.g. the preparation of National Guidance on Gaelic Education and the identification of capital and revenue funding requirements. They will also assist Scottish Ministers with their commitment to secure a legal entitlement to Gaelic education, as well as advising in what circumstances it might be appropriate for Gaelic Medium Education alone to be available within certain schools.

The Bòrd has a key role in Gaelic teacher recruitment. It will co-operate to improve workforce planning, recruitment and education of Gaelic teachers and will work with the Scottish Government and local authorities to make incentives available to teachers considering working in GME and to ensure teachers are placed and retained in agreed posts.

The Bòrd will also encourage its strategy to be included in Single Outcome Agreements and in Gaelic Language Plans prepared by local authorities.

Education: Post-school & Adult Education

The Plan highlights this area as a priority as it aims to increase the number of adults acquiring Gaelic from the current total of c2,000 learning Gaelic at present, to 3,000 by 2017 and enhanced language skills among fluent Gaelic speakers.

Gaelic education in the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors and adult learning of Gaelic delivered independently are vital for the future of Gaelic in Scotland as Gaelic learning has the potential to increase the numbers of people speaking and using Gaelic.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have stated within the Plan that, as part of their strategic priorities, they will

- Extend access to, and participation in, a wide range of Gaelic learning opportunities for adults and so increase the numbers progressing to fluency.
- Ensure opportunities for the continuity and progression of literacy and other language skills for adults learning Gaelic and for fluent speakers.
- Ensure good resources are available to support adults learning Gaelic.
- Strengthen the unique capacity in FE and HE to enrich the profile of Gaelic in Scotland.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig will take a key role in supporting Gaelic education provision outwith FE/HE to adults in Scotland. The Bòrd will also encourage its strategy to be included in Single Outcome Agreements and in the Gaelic Language Plans prepared by local authorities.

3) Communities

The future of Gaelic in Scotland requires increased support for communities using Gaelic, for networks of speakers of Gaelic and for community initiatives which have the purpose of expanding the use, and learning, of Gaelic. There are, therefore, more opportunities for communities and networks of Gaelic speakers of all kinds to use Gaelic and increased use of the language in community activities and services.

4) Workplace

Bòrd na Gàidhlig will expand the use of Gaelic in places of work leading to an increase in employment opportunities where Gaelic skills are required in order to enable service delivery in the language.

5) Arts & Media, Heritage & Tourism

The Plan focuses on the development of Gaelic arts and media as a means of promoting the language, attracting people to it and enhancing their commitment through opportunities to learn, use and develop Gaelic. There will be an increased profile for Gaelic in the heritage and tourism sectors, and increased use of Gaelic in the interpretation of Scotland's history and culture.

6) Corpus

There will be a focus on initiatives focusing on terminology, translation, orthography and place-names to help Gaelic develop and have higher visibility.

In summary, whilst all areas of the Plan are relevant to this research, there are key areas which influenced the rationale underlying the questioning. Other areas are directly impacted by the need to assess demand for GME.

The key areas are: Home & Early Years; Education and Communities.

Specific targets such as doubling the intake to GME by 2017 and the increase of further education to 3,000 are clear targets which will influence all other aspects of the development of Gaelic.

3 Research Outcomes

Before the questionnaire distribution base was changed to Primary 1 only, interviews with Head Teachers and teaching staff in Secondary schools took place. The information generated was relevant and so has been included in the following analysis.

- 26 Head Teachers, Heads of Department or other staff members were consulted.
- 11 GME schools (5 Primary & 6 Secondary), 15 EME schools (13 Primary & 2 Secondary) took part in the research.
- This number includes 8 Secondary schools which were to form part of the parental consultation but subsequently did not.

The views of Secondary Head Teachers were important because they, in the majority of cases, deal with a different set of issues when delivering Gaelic Medium Education, to those experienced by Head Teachers in Primary. Examples being: limitations of subject choices; lack of subject specialist Gaelic speaking staff and managing the expectations of parents whose children have attended full immersion in Primary but do not have that option in Secondary school.

3.1 English Medium Education – Head Teachers/ Teaching Staff

Of the 15 Head Teachers consulted in EME schools, (13 Primary and 2 Secondary), 14 interviews were conducted. The final school was unable to make an interviewee available.

Research was carried out using semi structured interviews, against a standard question set. The Head Teachers were offered the opportunity to widen the discussion on topics falling out of the questioning.

Of the 14 interviews, the following responses were recorded:

When asked if there had been any interest in having Gaelic at their school, they responded:

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|-----|----|----|
| 3 | 21* | 11 | 79 |

*Numbers are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number throughout.

Of those who answered “Yes”,

- 1 school had had parents who were Gaelic speakers and who were interested in having Gaelic at the school. They have now moved. The school has no Gaelic speaking teachers but one teacher is interested in learning.
- 1 school has 2 Gaelic speaking pupils who have just started at that school.
- 1 school has a Gaelic speaking teacher who is keen to offer Gaelic to staff & pupils. It has been tried, is very popular, so there is definitely an interest.

It was noted that some schools have very high numbers of non-English speakers – languages mentioned included Latvian, Lithuanian and Portuguese.

When asked if the school could accommodate a Gaelic class, they responded:

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 6 | 43 | 8 | 57 |

Of those who answered “Yes”:

- 1 noted that they have increasing numbers on the school roll. Whilst they may have space at present, this may not last.
- 1 was a new school and, therefore, had space available.
- 1 noted the problems they believed they would face with timetabling although ‘2 teachers on staff have some Gaelic and could deliver the language’.

When asked if there is GME progression available in the local area, they responded:

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 4 | 28 | 10 | 71 |

Of those who said “Yes”, the GME progression schools named were:

- Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, Sgoil a' Bhac and Greenfaulds. Charleston Academy was also named but ceased to offer a formal provision in 2011/12.
- One school noted that across Aberdeenshire, there is one Primary teacher who is spread across several Primary schools -but there is still no GME in Secondary.

When asked if pupils had moved to Gaelic delivery in the local area, they responded:

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|---|----|----|
| 1 | 7 | 13 | 93 |

- The school answering “Yes”, stated that only one child has gone into Gaelic delivery in last 10 years.
- One Primary School answering “No” said they have had some pupils transfer to them from Bunsgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis, as parents wanted their children to attend a more local school to their home.

When asked if the school had ever experienced teachers moving to Gaelic medium education, teachers responded:

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % |
|-----|---|----|----|------------|---|
| 0 | 0 | 13 | 93 | 1 | 7 |

- The “Don't Know” response was due to the Head Teacher having only recently taken up post.

A question was then asked to ascertain whether the consultees knew if Gaelic speaking teaching staff moved to areas where Gaelic is widely spoken and where living costs may be lower than in major cities.

This question was included as anecdotal reportage suggested Gaelic speaking teachers moved to areas such as the Western Isles and the Highlands for these reasons. However, the outcome of the questioning was somewhat different as outlined in the table below. The only consultee who had had teachers move noted that they had moved to Glasgow and Inverness respectively, neither of which could be regarded as low cost areas.

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % |
|-----|---|----|----|------------|----|
| 1 | 7 | 5 | 36 | 8 | 57 |

Following on from this question and, again in response to anecdotal reportage, the question was posed as to whether the demand for Gaelic speaking teachers in other areas was taking teachers away from their immediate area:

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % |
|-----|----|----|----|------------|----|
| 2 | 14 | 4 | 29 | 8 | 57 |

Comments:

- *There is a need for Gaelic speaking teachers in the area which has a very strong sense of Gaelic but many may move to Glasgow etc.*
- *There is not a big turnover of GM staff in the Islands. Permanent contracts are the most important in the Islands.*
- *There was interest in Gaelic in the area which ended due to financial reasons.*

Finally, when asked if they believed that their school would likely lose more staff to Gaelic in the future, the vast majority (12 – 86%) had no opinion.

3.2 Gaelic Medium Education – Head Teachers/Teaching Staff

- 10 schools were contacted (6 Primary and 5 Secondary schools of which one is a combined Primary/Secondary). For the purpose of the scoring the base is 10.

There are a limited number of schools in Scotland which are wholly GME. A more widely established model is two streams – one EME and the other GME – occupying the same school premises. The initial question was to establish the structure of the schools being consulted.

All deliver GME, while two schools also referenced GLPS in their English stream. One stated that there is a GME composite nursery school with “some GME delivery” feeding into the school.

The format of Gaelic delivery in the schools consulted was:

| Format of delivery | Number | Count | School name | Council Area |
|--|--------|-------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Stand-alone GM school | 2 | 1 | Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu | Glasgow |
| | | 2 | Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis | Highland |
| As a class / department within a school (Delivery varied between P1-7, S1&S2, and in one instance where social subjects continued in 3 rd and 4 th years.) | 6 | 1 | Goodlyburn Primary School | Perth & Kinross |
| | | 2 | Rockfield Primary School | Argyll & Bute |
| | | 3 | Greenfaulds High School | North Lanarkshire |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|-------------------|
| | | 4 | Inverness Royal Academy | Highland |
| | | 5 | Perth Academy | Perth & Kinross |
| | | 6 | Nicolson Institute | CnES |
| A new school, as part of a new campus, predominantly Gaelic with minority EME | 1 | 1 | Sgoil an Taobh Siar | CnES |
| School offers GME & EME* | 1 | 1 | Condorrat Primary School | North Lanarkshire |

*where the school has a higher proportion of GME to EME.

Consultees were asked whether growth in GME had been seen. If it had, they were asked to quantify that growth.

Establishing the growth rate over the last five years (in terms of class size) proved difficult for some to comment on. This was due to either the consultee being new in post or being in a temporary post and so lacking in-depth knowledge of the history of that particular school.

Growth rate in last 5 years (in terms of class size):

| Large Increase | % | Steady Growth | % | No growth | % | Drop in numbers | % |
|----------------|----|---------------|----|-----------|----|-----------------|---|
| 1 | 10 | 7 | 70 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 |

- The largest increase is from 22 to 50 pupils in one year - a significant increase of over 100%.
- In one case, pupil numbers have quadrupled since 1999.
- Another school has had steady growth with fewer pupils in EME each year.

Consultees were asked if they believed that growth had been constrained by physical facilities or other reasons.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 4 | 40 | 6 | 60 |

The main issues are:

- The lack of classrooms and the number of suitably qualified Gaelic speaking staff at all levels to accommodate growth.
- Numbers are, in some cases, directly linked to those moving from the local GME Primary School into GME Secondary.
- Lack of local authority funded transport for pupils outside the immediate school area was a key issue.

Consultees were asked the number of GME pupils who transfer to GME at the S1 stage.

As 5 schools were Secondary schools, only 5 responses were collated. The Head Teachers gave their responses in broad percentages.

| Number of schools | Percentage transfer to S1 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 | 100% |
| 1 | 98% |
| 1 | 80% |

Comments:

- We rarely have pupils leaving GME. In 20 years teaching, only one child has left and moved to English medium. He struggled with both languages and we did not have a learning support teacher with Gaelic. This is still an issue today. There is currently no teacher with Gaelic to provide learning support locally.*

To help support parents with children in GME, a question was posed as to why parents withdraw their children from GME.

Withdrawals often take place before transfer to Secondary school, meaning there is no anomaly with the results from the previous question.

| Response | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| None to date/ Not applicable | 4 |
| Provision of bus transport varies in some local authority areas. Proximity to home can be an issue. | 2 |
| Learning difficulties | 2 |
| Switch to local Secondary where GME is not offered | 1 |
| No answer | 1 |

A hypothesis was put forward that parents withdrew children because there was no progression to Secondary in their local area. This hypothesis was tested and the following results were seen. This gave a very clear indication the hypothesis was not correct.

| Yes, no progression is an issue | % | No, no progression is not an issue | % | Not applicable* | % | No answer | % |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------|----|
| 0 | 0 | 5 | 50 | 3 | 30 | 2 | 20 |

**Those who answered Not Applicable did so as there was no progression available in their area.*

A secondary question to determine, geographically, where the nearest progression was to the school being surveyed, reinforced transport to the school as being a real issue for parents.

Of the Primary schools surveyed, all but one has a direct feed to a Secondary school which offers some GME. Levels of GME at Secondary vary and pupils may have to travel a considerable distance to a Secondary school.

The question posed ‘Is this distance too far for pupils to travel?’ then becomes more relevant. However, it must be remembered that Primary pupils, outside urban areas, regularly have to travel and, in some cases, these distances may be considerable.

| Yes | % | No | % | Not applicable* | % | No answer | % |
|-----|----|----|----|-----------------|----|-----------|----|
| 4 | 40 | 3 | 30 | 2 | 20 | 2 | 20 |

**Those who answered Not Applicable were schools based in urban areas.*

Comments:

- *Location can impact on the numbers who stay in the area, with some moving back to their local Secondary.*
- *One noted a definite resurgence in young people’s interest in Gaelic – There are ‘more jobs, so they come back to the language’ The consultee has had more placements through this route.*

Subject Choices

A further hypothesis was that Secondary education through the medium of Gaelic did not offer a broad enough spread of subjects and this discouraged some parents from choosing GME. The consultants ascertained the number of subjects offered.

In all five Secondary schools consulted, a range of subjects was available through the medium of Gaelic: those being Gaelic, Geography, History, Modern Studies, RE, Mathematics, Home Economics and Science (Biology, Physics and Chemistry). Not all subjects are offered in all Secondary schools. Additional subjects were noted in some schools such as Music, Drama, Computing, PSE and Art.

The breadth of subjects available appears suitable for most university choices. The main issue found with subject choices in Secondary was that not all subjects were available in the medium of Gaelic to Higher level. Comments were made that identifying suitably qualified science teachers with Gaelic had proved challenging.

Consultees were asked, where a GME Secondary was available, if the range of subjects was too narrow or was wide enough.

Commentary from other research on why parents choose or do not choose GME, indicates that the number and depth of subjects in Secondary school offered through the medium of Gaelic is a strong driver when parents decide on a Secondary school for their child.

Consultees were asked to give their opinions on this commentary.

Only 40% of those consulted believe there are enough subjects available in Gaelic. However it is important to note that this was not always a full endorsement, as in some cases schools are unable to offer a full range of subjects (e.g. both arts and sciences) due to, for example, the restrictions of timetabling.

Respondee comments gave the following comments:

Comments:

- *Cost cutting is a recognised problem.*
- *Staffing is a huge problem.*
- *There are not enough Gaelic speaking teachers in chemistry, graphics, technology, craft & design, music and art. Skills are lacking.*
- *Home Economics teachers are difficult to find in EME let alone in GME.*
- *Maternity leave creates problems.*
- *The main issue is that pupils are withdrawn from other subjects to attend classes in Gaelic. They should be standalone and have an entitlement.*
- *Parents are disappointed that there is no progression to Secondary locally.*

NOTE: The assessment of future demand and its impact on premises and staffing led to a question on whether the school had a waiting list. None of the schools consulted had a waiting list, however, the schools in Inverness and Glasgow (particularly at Primary) are approaching capacity and waiting lists or school expansion is planned for the near future.

Consultees were asked to comment on what they believed were the main limiting factors to servicing future demand.

| Response | Number of responses | % |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----|
| Staffing/ Sourcing teachers | 8 | 80 |
| No factor identified | 2 | 20 |

Staffing and staff-related issues were the only areas identified, no other factor was mentioned. Eight out of ten respondees said staffing was a challenge and the remaining two schools described themselves as “too small” for this to be an issue at present.

Specific issues noted were:

- *Staffing – this is a nightmare. Not enough Gaelic teachers and we are increasingly worried we will run out of teachers.*
- *The quality of Gaelic - they must be fluent and the quality needs to be high – we need a native speaker.*
- *Ùlpan is not good enough. The children deserve good quality.*
- *Sourcing staff is a serious problem. Some staff have fluent Gaelic but lack the confidence to teach in it.*

Further to the comments above on Gaelic language skills, the researchers asked which option would the consultee see as more important, the language skill or the subject. This is of particular importance at Secondary level.

| Subject first | % | Language Skills first | % | Equally important | % | No comment | % |
|---------------|----|-----------------------|----|-------------------|----|------------|----|
| 2 | 20 | 4 | 40 | 3 | 30 | 1 | 10 |

In most cases, respondees took time to consider their answer. The outcomes of this question were very interesting due to the conflicting pattern of the answers across school type and location. They reflect a mixture of opinions and no real conclusion could be drawn about whether the amount of Gaelic embedded in the local community influenced this answer.

Of the Secondary schools, 3 put the language first, 1 put the subject first and 1 gave both equal prominence. Of the Primaries, 1 made no comment, 2 put subject first, 2 gave both equal importance and 1 the language first.

This is an interesting outcome, as it is the Primary schools that are embedding the language in their pupils.

Generally, pupils at Secondary, especially those in Secondary 3 onwards who are studying for national examinations, need specialist subject teaching staff. Previous research suggests situations can arise in Secondary where to teach a specialist subject through the medium of Gaelic, compromises have had to be made.

As noted elsewhere, the amount of fluency may depend on the subject. For example, there are fewer fluent teachers in subjects such as maths and physics than there are in music and the arts. The lack of science and technology subjects in Gaelic is not surprising as, historically, they were not taught in Gaelic.

Comments:

- *Need a convergence of best teacher, subject, and confidence to speak Gaelic in classes and they must live in the area.*
- *Subject has to come first, we don't want mediocre teachers but now the focus is more on the Gaelic and then the subject.*



The consultees were asked if they had experienced teachers moving to other geographic areas and what the reasons were for this movement. Consultees gave more than one reason.

| Reasons | Number of responses |
|--|---------------------|
| Personal reasons, including getting married and moving home to raise a family. | 3 |
| Permanent contracts | 3 |
| Young teachers are attracted to Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh. | 2 |
| School closures. | 1 |
| Don't know | 1 |
| Not applicable as no staff have left | 1 |

Comments

- *We may lose some teachers to the mainland because of lack of permanent contracts being issued.*
- *Many move but the job opportunities in Gaelic are always permanent which is not the case in English medium.*
- *Fewer permanent places are available so staff go to Inverness or Glasgow. (This refers to Gaelic teachers of Gaelic and not those that teach other subjects).*

It is interesting to note the importance placed on permanent contracts. This was seen as critical to the relocation of certain staff members.

Relating to the outcomes of the previous question, the consultees were asked if they had experienced movement of staff to other Gaelic teaching schools and if so, where.

| Yes | % | No | % | Not applicable | % |
|-----|---|----|---|----------------|---|
|-----|---|----|---|----------------|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| 7 | 70 | 2 | 20 | 1 | 10 |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|

Comments:

- *There are more opportunities for promotion in Glasgow.*
- *The Glasgow school draws the most numbers of probationers. Once they get staff they hold on to them. They can offer permanent contracts and this means they have held on to their staff.*
- *We have had teachers leaving due to them being on temporary contracts and being able to secure permanent posts elsewhere.*
- *Although Glasgow recently had several positions available it hasn't impacted on us yet*

Consultees believe Glasgow offers more opportunities and, therefore, many staff move there. Again, the additional issue of permanent contracts was noted more than once.

When asked if they could give a reason for this movement, consultees responded:

| Family reasons | % | No Answer | % | Don't Know | % | Not Applicable | % |
|----------------|----|-----------|----|------------|----|----------------|----|
| 7 | 70 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 20 | 1 | 10 |

Consultees generally stated that “family reasons” were the most common prompts for moving. In these cases, “family” may relate to a number of factors including returning to look after a relative; moving to be closer to family; getting married; starting a family and needing family to help with childcare.

Respondee were asked if they believed the movement would increase over time:

| Yes | % | No | % | Not applicable | % | Don't know | % |
|-----|----|----|----|----------------|----|------------|----|
| 6 | 60 | 2 | 20 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 10 |

Comments:

- *Because the number of pupils are going up, more staff are needed. There are not enough (staff) available and the quality is not always good.*
- *Growth rates in some areas will be a problem - standards of teachers and language competence is still an issue e.g. parents nights where Gaelic parents can't communicate with the Gaelic teacher.*
- *The situation will get better as more people are qualified.*
- *Due to lack of funding. There is very little spare money available*
- *Having more teachers will make it better and this is certainly beginning to happen.*
- *Primary quality is bad and fluency poor. Secondary is better.*

Suggestions to overcome these challenges included:

| Suggestions | Number of responses |
|--|---------------------|
| Improve quality of fluency/competence | 5 |
| No answer | 2 |
| Further training required to fill gaps in delivery and reduce movement | 1 |

Additional comment linked to this point included:

- *Further training - need more fluency specific to 'school language'.*
- *We already know who the Gaelic speakers are via word of mouth etc. We have a Primary teacher learning Gaelic who now covers classes.*
- *If staff indicate an interest in speaking the language, the Council could support them to improve their language skills.*
- *There should be an audit of teachers who don't have permanent contracts, they are raising expectations in Primary that cannot be maintained or delivered in Secondary.*

It was noted by consultees that, whilst there may not be any formal incentives for teachers to train in the language, there may be additional incentives dependant on the location of the school, e.g. island allowance etc.

Comments:

- *The incentive now is that you are doubly employable.*
- *We are already seeing staff wanting to do Ùlpan to make them more employable.*
- *There should be no incentives as this is vocational.*
- *Streap Course, funded by the Scottish Government, CPD training available at SMO.*
- *There was an access course available at Primary level with Lews Castle College for women who had no qualifications, but this was not tied down to teaching well enough. Must make sure they can deliver as well as speak the language.*
- *Should offer a refresher course as there are lots of job opportunities.*

The consultees were asked to estimate the percentage of parents with children at their school who were fluent Gaelic speakers. The following results were captured.

| 0-5% | 6-10% | 11-25% | 26-50% | 51-79% | 80- 100% |
|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

Only eight of the ten consultees answered this question, the two who did not respond were new to post and had no knowledge of the likely percentage.

It is important to note that the 80%+ band is wholly represented by the Western Isles where the language of the streets is Gaelic. There is also a notable urban/rural split with higher numbers of Gaelic speaking parents in rural areas.

In one school where the number of pupils has risen, the number of Gaelic speaking parents has fallen in recent years.

The percentages above are not entirely unexpected as the outcomes of the parents' questionnaire clearly highlights a wider demand for bilingualism regardless of language from parents (who may or may not speak Gaelic) which, in Scotland, is serviced through GME.

Comment:

- *The original attraction for some parents was smaller classes. This is not the case now. Some enrol because they have bright children; some have family ties to the language or a strong sense of cultural heritage.*

The Head Teachers were asked to list what they believed to be the main benefits to learning Gaelic. Consultees noted more than one benefit.

| Benefits | Number of responses | %age |
|---|---------------------|------|
| Cultural | 6 | 60 |
| Bilingualism | 5 | 50 |
| Cognitive skills | 4 | 40 |
| Confidence through Mods etc. | 2 | 20 |
| General language skills* | 2 | 20 |
| Exposure to Gaelic music | 2 | 20 |
| Small classes, though less so now | 1 | 10 |
| Integration of all faiths | 1 | 10 |
| Ability to converse with older members of community | 1 | 10 |
| Employability | 1 | 10 |

*Teaching staff used the term 'language skills' to describe the ability to use language.

The comment below relates to a school where GME and EME are taught. The Head Teacher referred to challenges faced in that school, as numbers increased and cliques of children began to form.

Comments:

- *When there are larger numbers, cliques begin and they often don't mix, so the school has to take steps to resolve this.*

Additional areas discussed:

Parents' Classroom Support

Consultees were asked if Gaelic speaking parents were ever asked to provide classroom support. 60% of consultees stated that they would only ever do so on a voluntary basis and it was noted that all parents were Disclosure checked, as is required under law. Those schools were in Primary education.

Schools who use parents' skills to underpin classroom work stated that those skills were generally in music, drama classes, arts and writing. One school noted that although they do have Gaelic speaking parents, they do not use them; rather they use other agencies or organisations for trips away, etc.

Support Groups

Other research and anecdotal evidence has highlighted the importance of Gaelic support groups including parents' groups in attracting and maintaining the interest of local families to Gaelic Medium Education. One school noted the importance of Comann nam Pàrant and made the analogy that having an active Comann nam Pàrant leads to higher numbers.

In order to establish the support groups available to parents, where they could either become more deeply engaged with the school or be supported in their own Gaelic learning, the question was asked about the types of support group available in the area. (Note: in some areas, more than one group was available).

- In the majority of cases (50%), Parents' Councils are the most visible support groups. Of the sample of ten schools – three schools (30%) do not appear to have any support groups in place at present, whilst one (10%) is currently working on establishing a support group.
- Of the remaining seven schools, three, (30%) have Parents' Councils only.
- One (10.0%) belongs to a local authority wide Comann nam Pàrant.
- The remaining three schools (30%) have both Parents' Councils and a Comann nam Pàrant supporting the school. Of these three schools, two are wholly Gaelic speaking schools. There is no information as to cross over membership between the two support groups.

Progression to Secondary

To ascertain the progression available to Secondary schools from those consulted, two reverse questions were asked. The Primary schools were asked where the Primary 7 pupils progressed to for continuation in GME. The Secondary schools were asked where their GM pupils came from.

- Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu has pupils feeding into it from other local authority areas and occasionally these pupils may switch to a more local Secondary school which, invariably, is not GME.
- Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis feeds to Inverness Royal Academy.
- Goodlyburn Primary School feeds into Perth Academy.
- Rockfield Primary feeds into Oban High School.
- Condorrat Primary School feeds into Greenfaulds High School with some progressing to Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu.
- Sgoil an Taobh Siar feeds to the Nicolson Institute.
- The Nicolson Institute has a number of Gaelic Medium feeder schools including Stornoway Primary School, Laxdale Primary School, Sandwick and Knock.

The information above suggests that there is progression available in the majority of areas consulted.

Additional comments:

- *I began a pilot scheme at our school this year, which was hugely supported by our own local authority. I asked for extra staffing so that I could enable P1 pupils going into Gaelic to have complete immersion on their own. There was a range of fluency. The pupils will not have any formal reading or writing until they are fluent in Gaelic and are confident enough to converse with peers and adults. We have an extra teacher for 3 days which has a great benefit for oral skills. [Text amended to remove personal data.]*
Sgoil an Taobh Siar

In summary, Head Teachers in schools which already are teaching in Gaelic believe demand for GME is growing, but they are concerned about how to service that increased demand as suitably qualified and experienced staff are difficult to source. A key issue to retaining staff, they believe, is the ability to offer permanent contracts.

The majority of Gaelic schools show low numbers of parents with fluent Gaelic. This may indicate parents are choosing Gaelic for the benefits of bilingualism.

Head Teachers believe the main benefit of GME is cultural (60%) followed by the benefits of bilingualism (50%).

Parents' Councils are now more prevalent. It was noted by many consultees that an active parents group with a Gaelic specific remit could increase the numbers of pupils entering GME.

The main issues highlighted by the GME Head Teachers consulted are staffing, language skills, supporting pupils with learning difficulties and transport.

Contrary to the belief of some non-Gaelic speaking school comments, there is no automatic additional funding available for schools that teach in Gaelic. Any additional funding must be applied for.

3.3 Volume Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed and distributed across the 10 local authority areas to parents of children in Primary One in Gaelic Medium schools and English Medium schools. For completeness of response, the Gaelic schools at which pupils were surveyed are the same schools whose Head Teachers formed part of the consultation.

The EME schools forming part of the research were surveyed to establish whether any demand for GME exists in their area and whether parents of children in EME at these schools knew about GME and if they would choose GME if it was available. The outcomes from this part of the volume questionnaire give indicators to Bòrd na Gàidhlig as to the best methods of promoting GME outside those existing areas where GME is currently offered.

- 6 GME schools were consulted, including those GME schools where EME is also available, with a total of 237 questionnaires sent (79 in EME and 158 in GME).
- A total of 14 **non-GME** schools were consulted with a total of 420 questionnaires sent.
- Overall this gave a total of 657 pupils in Primary One in the ten local authority areas whose parents were sent questionnaires.
- As referenced above, the decision to survey more EME parents was due to the need for enough responses to be significant.

Note:

It became apparent from their responses that many parents see the acquisition of a second language and bilingualism as the same thing. However, the consultants had viewed them as separate skills and have logged them as such. (See Glossary)

3.3.1 GME Schools Questionnaire Response Numbers

| Responses | GME | EME | Overall |
|--------------|-----|-------|---------|
| At 01.12.12 | 38 | 68 | 106 |
| Overall %age | 24% | 13.6% | 16% |

158 questionnaires were sent to GME pupils parents in 6 GME schools across Scotland. An additional 79 EME pupils' parents were contacted in those schools where English Medium education was also available within the same school. For clarity, the total responses by local authority area from GME schools are in the table below.

| Council area | GME qu'aies sent | EME qu'aies sent | GME Responses rec'd | % rounded | Note: |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------|---|
| Argyll & Bute Council | 4 | 48 | 1 | 25 | EME responses are included in EME Table |
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar | 5 | 3 | 4 | 80 | EME responses are included in EME Table |
| Glasgow City Council | 78 | 0 | 15 | 19 | |
| The Highland Council | 29 | 0 | 8 | 28 | |
| North Lanarkshire Council | 31 | 9 | 6 | 19 | EME responses are included in EME Table |
| Perth & Kinross Council | 11 | 19 | 4 | 36 | EME responses are included in EME Table |
| | 158 | 79 | 38 | 24% | |

3.3.2 Non GME Schools Questionnaire Response Numbers (including EME responses from GME schools)

A total of 420 questionnaires were sent to English Medium schools across Scotland. In addition, 79 questionnaires were sent to the English Medium sides of Gaelic Medium schools. A total of 499 questionnaires were sent to parents of children in English Medium Education.

The following table demonstrates the wide variety of response numbers received from each area.

| Primary Non GME | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|--|
| Council area | EME qu'aires sent | Responses received | % rounded | Note: |
| Aberdeenshire Council | 41 | 5 | 12 | |
| Argyll & Bute Council | 26 | 8 | 11 | Includes EME responses from GME school in A&B |
| Comhairle nan Eilean Siar | 10 | 6 | 46 | Includes EME responses from GME school in CnES |
| Dumfries & Galloway Council | 72 | 9 | 13 | |
| Fife Council | 52 | 1 | 2 | |
| Glasgow City Council | 59 | 7 | 12 | |
| The Highland Council | 41 | 4 | 10 | |
| North Lanarkshire Council | 33 | 4 | 9.5 | Includes EME responses from GME school in NLC |
| Perth & Kinross Council | 38 | 11 | 19.3 | Includes EME responses from GME school in P&K |
| South Ayrshire Council | 48 | 8 | 17 | |

| | | | |
|---|-----|----|-------|
| Area Not Known - here responses were received which could not be allocated to an area under study | 0 | 5 | |
| | 420 | 68 | 13.6% |

In summary, the number of overall responses is well within the anticipated parameters, although it was expected that a higher level of responses would be received from GME parents. Certain local authority areas response rates were surprisingly low.

Overall, from a base of 657 questionnaires sent, 106 responses were received with an overall response rate of c16%.

3.4 EME Questionnaire Outputs

A questionnaire of 16 questions was sent to 420 parents of children in EME across Scotland in 10 local authority areas and 68 responses received.

The number of responses in each local authority area from parents of children in EME against base is shown below.

| Area | Number of responses | Number of questionnaires sent | % |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|----|
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 41 | 12 |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 26 | 11 |
| CnES | 6 | 10 | 46 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 72 | 5 |
| Fife | 1 | 52 | 2 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 59 | 12 |
| Highland | 4 | 41 | 10 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 33 | 9 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 38 | 19 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 48 | 17 |
| Not identified | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Parents were firstly asked if, prior to receiving the questionnaire, they knew what Gaelic Medium education was.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 38 | 56 | 30 | 44 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % |
|---------------------|----|-----|-----|----|----|
| EME only | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 2 | 23 | 7 | 77 |
| Fife* | 1 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|---|-----|---|----|
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 1 | 12 | 7 | 88 |
| EME in GME | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 6 | 75 | 2 | 25 |
| CnES | 6 | 6 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 4 | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 5 | 45 | 6 | 55 |
| Not identified | 5 | 2 | 40 | 3 | 60 |

**Note: The 100% response from Fife is an anomaly due to the small response rate and should therefore be taken into account when reading the tables throughout this section.*

There is a clear split in levels of knowledge. Areas with no GME show much lower awareness of GME than areas with GME, which is to be expected.

In the areas offering GME, the majority were aware of GME. However, the exception is Perth & Kinross where there is a slight bias towards not knowing about GME.

When asked if they were aware that, where available, they could have chosen to have their child educated in Gaelic Medium Education, respondees replied:

| | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Yes | % | No | % |
| 31 | 45 | 37 | 55 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % |
|---------------------|----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| EME only | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 100 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 100 |
| EME in GME | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 7 | 88 | 1 | 12 |
| CnES | 6 | 5 | 83 | 1 | 17 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 3 | 27 | 8 | 73 |
| Not identified | 5 | 2 | 40 | 3 | 60 |

The table above allows a conclusion to be drawn that promotion of Gaelic Medium Education in Perth & Kinross may be lacking as the awareness of availability of GME is significantly less than in other areas.

Parents were asked if they were aware of any schools local to them with Gaelic Medium classes.

| | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Yes | % | No | % |
| 40 | 59 | 28 | 41 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % |
|------|----|-----|---|----|---|
|------|----|-----|---|----|---|

| EME only | | | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|-----|---|-----|
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 100 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 100 |
| EME in GME | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 5 | 63 | 3 | 37 |
| CnES | 6 | 5 | 83 | 1 | 16 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 4 | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 2 | 18 | 9 | 82 |
| Not identified | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 |

The main schools noted were Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, Sgoil a Bhac and Condorrat Primary. In several cases, comments were made that parents knew there was a Gaelic school but did not know its name or its exact location.

Again it is interesting to note the high level of respondees who are unaware of GME classes in local schools in Perth & Kinross. Commentary may also be made about Argyll & Bute, but the differential is not as extreme.

Parents were then asked if they were in a position to have a choice of a school with Gaelic Medium classes.

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| 21 | 31 | 41 | 60 | 6 | 9 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| EME only | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 88 | 1 | 12 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 6 | 75 | 2 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| CnES | 6 | 4 | 67 | 1 | 16 | 1 | 16 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 4 | 57 | 1 | 14 | 2 | 28 |
| Highland | 4 | 1 | 25 | 2 | 50 | 1 | 25 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 1 | 9 | 10 | 91 | 0 | 0 |
| Not identified | 5 | 1 | 20 | 3 | 60 | 1 | 20 |

Again, Perth & Kinross and to a lesser extent Highland stand out as the GME area where little knowledge or awareness is seen.

Parents of children in EME (including those with children in EME at a GME school), were asked if they had considered sending their child to a school with Gaelic Medium classes.

| Yes | % | No | % | No answer | % |
|-----|---|----|----|-----------|---|
| 5 | 7 | 61 | 90 | 2 | 3 |

The percentages shown above are somewhat surprising given the number of schools consulted that offer EME within GME.

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % | No answer | % |
|---------------------|----|-----|----|----|-----|-----------|----|
| EME only | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 75 | 2 | 25 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 2 | 25 | 6 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| CnES | 6 | 2 | 33 | 4 | 67 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Not identified | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The commentary shown below gives a clearer understanding of parents' choices.

Comments:

- *The results of the GM school are poor, below average. I teach High School and the students are so poor at English.*
- *We chose EME as GME was not available at our local village school, the nearest is 8 miles away. Our local school was threatened with closure, so we wanted to keep pupil numbers up.*
- *Very difficult as older sister in GM but school is 7 miles away, . . . local school won, although an excellent school, disappointed not to get Gaelic.*
- *We chose mainstream for many complex reasons; class size (Gaelic stream is too small), there is no Gaelic in our family & realistically we won't learn it. Mainstream teachers are very good. It is not a second or poorer choice.*

Parents were asked if Gaelic was available locally, was there another factor preventing them from choosing it?

| No local GM | % | Location | % | No Interest | % | Not relevant | % | No answer | % |
|-------------|----|----------|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|-----------|----|
| 15 | 22 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 26 | 13 | 19 | 12 | 18 |

Just under half of respondees (45%) have no interest in Gaelic, nor see it as relevant. Approximately one fifth have no local Gaelic Medium Education and where there is, the location of that provision is not suitable for parents. The responses could indeed be higher if the “No” Answer numbers are considered, as no interest/not relevant.

Projected nationally, the “No” responses of 63% would reduce the available pool of potential pupils to c37% overall where there is potentially some demand for GME/bilingual education **if all other conditions** regarding transport, staff supply and local provision were met. The numbers above are, of course, very small and care should be taken with any future projection.

| Area | No local GM | % | Location | % | No Interest | % | Not relevant | % | No answer | % |
|---------------------|-------------|-----|----------|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|-----------|----|
| EME only | | | | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 2 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 20 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 3 | 33 | 1 | 11 | 4 | 45 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Fife | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 13 | 2 | 25 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 2 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 75 |
| CnES | 1 | 17 | 2 | 33 | 3 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 3 | 43 | 3 | 43 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 1 | 25 | 3 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 0 | 0 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 3 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 36 | 2 | 18 | 2 | 18 |
| Not identified | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 40 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 20 |

Comments:

- *We are unable to speak Gaelic, so unable to assist my child.*
- *Wanted child to go to local school, can walk there & more likely to live near his friends.*
- *Education in a second language is a disadvantage, don't want child to be different from his/her friends.*
- *I'd be interested in knowing why people think it's [Gaelic] relevant today.*
- *We chose the best run school with the best Head Teacher.*

If more information about Gaelic Medium Education and its benefits, e.g. bilingualism, the high achievement seen in children educated through the medium of Gaelic, etc., had been available, would that have had an impact on their decision where to educate their child?

| Yes | % | No | % | Maybe | % |
|-----|----|----|----|-------|---|
| 10 | 15 | 57 | 84 | 1 | 1 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % | Maybe | % |
|---------------------|----|-----|----|----|-----|-------|----|
| EME only | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 2 | 22 | 6 | 67 | 1 | 11 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 1 | 12 | 7 | 88 | 0 | 0 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 1 | 12 | 7 | 88 | 0 | 0 |
| CnES | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 1 | 9 | 10 | 91 | 0 | 0 |
| Not identified | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

The responses from The Highland Council area indicates that, if information had been available, parents would have considered changing their minds. In addition, it is very interesting to note that in CnES, where GME is widely available, all of those who responded said more information would not have affected their choice.

Comments:

- English taught with Gaelic classes would suffice.
- If I had been more informed, I would have considered it.
- I appreciate the benefits of bilingualism, but am not convinced of resurrecting Gaelic.
- Bilingual education is fantastic but prefer Spanish or French.
- I agree with benefits of bilingualism, but a more widely spoken language would have swayed me.
- I think it should be taught as a modern language at Primary school age Scotland wide.

If more advice for parents about Gaelic Medium Education and its benefits had been available, would it have had an impact on their decision where to educate their child?

| Yes | % | No | % | Maybe | % |
|-----|----|----|----|-------|---|
| 55 | 81 | 9 | 13 | 4 | 6 |

| Area | n= | No | % | Yes | % | Maybe | % |
|---------------------|----|----|-----|-----|----|-------|----|
| EME only | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 4 | 80 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 7 | 77 | 2 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| Fife | 1 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 5 | 63 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 25 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 7 | 88 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| CnES | 6 | 6 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 5 | 72 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 14 |
| Highland | 4 | 2 | 50 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 25 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 3 | 75 | 1 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 10 | 91 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Not identified | 5 | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The outcomes of this question suggest there is a demand for more advice which is currently unmet. Key drivers for that advice would be to concentrate on the bilingual aspects of GME, which is attractive to parents, rather than lead on Gaelic language as such.

What factors, if any, would have encouraged parents to consider choosing Gaelic Medium Education for their children?

Consultees could answer more than one option.

| Area | Would never choose GME | Class size | 2nd language | Learn about Gaelic culture | Expand Scottish culture | No answer |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| EME only | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| Fife | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| CnES | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Highland | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| North Lanarkshire | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 7 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Not identified | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Totals | 32 | 10 | 23 | 17 | 18 | 4 |

It is interesting to note that the majority of those parents who answered that they would never choose GME came from areas where GME is already available.

A key point is the desire for bilingual education. Here, 23 parents highlighted bilingual education would be a factor in their choice of school. It is important to note, however, that, in some cases, languages such as French or Spanish would be preferred.

There is **no evidence** that parents have informed schools that bilingual education is a factor in their choice of school.

Comments

- *I would only consider it if there was a local school. (comment from Glasgow area)*

If parents had chosen to register their child/children in Gaelic Medium Education, what support would they have needed to help them support their child's learning? They could select more than one option.

| Area | Classes for parents | Web based support | Books | CDs | No answer |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| EME only | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| Fife | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| EME in GME | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| CnES | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Highland | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| North Lanarkshire | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Perth & Kinross | 7 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Not identified | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Totals | 46 | 33 | 35 | 30 | 13 |

The high response to the "Books" option is not surprising when the likely age group of parents is factored in. It should also be remembered that not all families have access to the internet and therefore the value of books is higher. Recent statistics show that 39% of the Scottish population does not have access to broadband and not all households are online. (Scottish Government 2011).

If support for parents was available, would they have considered registering their child/children in Gaelic Medium classes?

| Yes | % | No | % | Maybe | % |
|-----|----|----|----|-------|---|
| 18 | 27 | 49 | 72 | 1 | 1 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % | Maybe | % |
|---------------------|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-------|----|
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 3 | 33 | 6 | 67 | 0 | 0 |
| Fife | 1 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 2 | 25 | 6 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 2 | 25 | 6 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| CnES | 6 | 1 | 17 | 4 | 66 | 1 | 17 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| Highland | 4 | 2 | 20 | 2 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 2 | 50 | 2 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 3 | 27 | 8 | 73 | 0 | 0 |
| Not identified | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

The outcomes of this question lead to the conclusion that support may not be as important a driver as might have been thought; i.e. more support for parents does not always lead to more registrations as other factors influence decisions. (See Comments below).

Comments:

- *With no knowledge of Gaelic, I won't be able to assist my child if I've no clue about my child's progress.*

- *If we lived in a local authority with strong Gaelic links, we would have thought about it but less relevant where we are.*
- *European language rather than a dead language would be better.*
- *Not relevant to modern Scotland, waste of tax payer's money.*
- *Would not consider due to mixed class years.*

Parents were asked what they thought local authorities could do to promote Gaelic Medium Education as a choice for parents.

| Area | n= | Keep as is | % | General info incl. for adults | % | Leaflets/ publications | % | No answer | % |
|---------------------|----|------------|----|-------------------------------|----|------------------------|----|-----------|-----|
| EME only | | | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 60 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 66 | 1 | 11 | 3 | 33 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 25 | 1 | 12 | 5 | 63 |
| EME in GME | | | | | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 |
| CnES | 6 | 2 | 33 | 1 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 50 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 57 |
| Highland | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 50 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 64 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 36 |
| Not identified | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 |

As a significant number gave a “No” answer to this question, it is difficult to draw any valid conclusions. Two exceptions stand out: Dumfries & Galloway and Perth & Kinross where more general information, including information for adults, was seen as desirable.

Comments:

- *We've been in Scotland for 3 years & yet to hear how Gaelic sounds. It would be excellent if the local people spoke Gaelic, even in public. This would encourage and entice parents to choose GME. (P&K)*
- *Have it introduced as normal as students start school as they do with English*

Parents were asked if they could speak Gaelic.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|---|----|----|
| 4 | 6 | 64 | 94 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % |
|---------------------|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| EME only | | | | | |
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 100 |
| Fife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 100 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 100 |
| EME in GME | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 1 | 12 | 7 | 88 |
| CnES | 6 | 2 | 33 | 4 | 67 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 100 |
| Highland | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 100 |
| Not identified | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 |

They were asked if they had any interest in Gaelic.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 36 | 53 | 32 | 47 |

| Area | n= | Yes | % | No | % |
|------|----|-----|---|----|---|
|------|----|-----|---|----|---|

| EME only | | | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|-----|---|----|
| Aberdeenshire | 5 | 2 | 40 | 3 | 60 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 9 | 4 | 44 | 5 | 56 |
| Fife | 1 | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| South Ayrshire | 8 | 4 | 50 | 4 | 50 |
| EME in GME | | | | | |
| Argyll & Bute | 8 | 7 | 88 | 1 | 12 |
| CnES | 6 | 3 | 50 | 3 | 50 |
| Glasgow | 7 | 4 | 57 | 3 | 43 |
| Highland | 4 | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | 4 | 2 | 50 | 2 | 50 |
| Perth & Kinross | 11 | 4 | 36 | 7 | 62 |
| Not identified | 5 | 1 | 20 | 4 | 80 |

The two questions above would be expected to show a correlation. It is interesting that this is not the case, with 94% not speaking any Gaelic, yet 53% showing an interest in Gaelic.

It is also interesting to note that when the local authority tables for questions 14 and 15 are analysed further, the local authority areas where there is a higher than expected lack of interest in Gaelic are Perth & Kinross, Glasgow and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

In all EME only areas, no parents can speak Gaelic, yet almost half have noted an interest in Gaelic. This is an important result as it suggests a latent interest which, with development, may drive a demand.

Additional comments made by parents

- *I feel Gaelic should be taught as a second language in all schools, Primary and Secondary. It is part of our culture which our children know nothing about.*
- *It does seem logical for students to learn of different cultures so why is it not logical to dual teach from Primary school in Gaelic.*
- *I personally don't see Gaelic as an appropriate up to date language. It's not recognised much for it to be taught. Other languages should be taught but throughout school at an early age. Scrap Gaelic.*
- *Gaelic is not used in the playgrounds, despite all the money poured into the language. My daughter was not allowed to speak Gaelic in a school play as she wasn't a native speaker, there is a snobbery that needs to be stamped out and cliques who don't encourage learning.*
- *I would like my children to be able to speak Gaelic and write it as a national second language.*
- *Gaelic is not very important in the area. Basic Gaelic would broaden horizons & of the country. Any language is helpful.*
- *I'd be interested in hearing more about why/what arguments are in favour of supporting Gaelic in modern Britain.*
- *There is a reason the language is dying out. Why force it on the young when there are no benefits in the future. Yes being bilingual is good but there are many languages out there they could learn which would help expand their horizons when older.*
- *Some Gaelic language & culture in ALL schools would be good as increase of awareness of Gaelic culture & Scottish culture. Doric promoted locally as is an area dialect, but Gaelic not which is a shame.*

- *I would like to see more Gaelic in mainstream classes and enable a fraction of the benefits of bilingualism into mainstream education. Currently it's all or nothing which isn't good enough in today's society.*
- *Unless one or both parents speak Gaelic and family is planning to move to the Hebrides, I don't see any advantages in putting a child to a GM unit, early education in French or German would prove more useful in the long term.*
- *I speak a little Gaelic and understand a fair bit but feel separating classes is wrong and unfair on the child. Should be taught English with Gaelic classes and if people want to further their Gaelic language do so separately and at their own cost through private classes.*

3.5 GME Questionnaire Outputs

A questionnaire of 21 questions was sent to 158 parents of children in GME across Scotland in local authority areas where GME is delivered. 38 responses were received.

NOTE: Those familiar with Gaelic will note the City of Edinburgh Council is not included as a local authority under study. Following discussion with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, it was decided that, as City of Edinburgh Council GME parents had been surveyed so recently regarding the demand for GME (in connection with the new Primary School at Bonnington), this work would not include them. Edinburgh was also excluded as it was felt studying three large urban areas (Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness) would lead to statistical bias.

The number of responses in each local authority area from parents of children in GME against base are:

| Local Authority | Number of responses | Number of questionnaires sent | % |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|----|
| Argyll & Bute | 1 | 4 | 25 |
| CnES | 4 | 5 | 80 |
| Glasgow | 15 | 78 | 19 |
| Highland | 8 | 29 | 28 |
| North Lanarkshire | 6 | 31 | 19 |
| Perth & Kinross | 4 | 11 | 36 |

For GME schools, unlike the analysis in the EME Questionnaire, analysis by local authority area is not relevant as some schools are within the same local authority area.

- Parents were firstly asked which local authority area they were based in and,
- If the school their child attends is in the same local authority area.
- Only two respondees said their child went to school in another local authority area – one where the family lives in East Dunbartonshire and their child is educated in Glasgow and the other where the family live in Falkirk, and the child is educated in North Lanarkshire.

They were asked if the location of the nearest Gaelic Medium school had any influence on their decision to send their child there.

| Yes | % | No | % | No Answer | % |
|-----|----|----|----|-----------|---|
| 14 | 37 | 23 | 60 | 1 | 3 |

Many of those who answered “No” said they would have sent their child to GME regardless of where the school was in relation to their home; others had EME close to their homes but preferred to take their child/children further afield to ensure they received GME; others had moved house to be situated closer to a GME school.

The availability of transport was mentioned in two cases where busses laid on by the local authority allowed children to be taken to GME. One parent noted that transporting their child to school was costing “a fortune” as the local authority did not provide transport (Perth & Kinross).

Whilst in the minority, the respondees who answered “Yes”, all stated the location was a deciding factor. However, it was interesting to note that whilst being committed to GME, some parents had initially felt the distance to school or its location in a poor area had initially stopped some from sending their children to GME. In some cases, they had moved to be closer to a school in a “better” area.

This has resulted in a small number of children starting GME at a later date, e.g. Primary 2 or 3. Other comments included that the ability to attend the Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu where education is available throughout Secondary school was a deciding factor in selecting that school.

Parents were asked if they were based in an area where Gaelic is commonly heard.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 7 | 18 | 31 | 82 |

This is an interesting outcome. It would be expected that the outcomes were either reversed or more balanced. Of those who responded in each particular area, it was interesting to note the splits as follows:

| Local Authority | Yes | % | No | % |
|-------------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| Argyll & Bute | 1 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| CnES | 4 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 2 | 13 | 13 | 77 |
| Highland | 0 | 0 | 8 | 100 |
| North Lanarkshire | 0 | 0 | 6 | 100 |
| Perth & Kinross | 0 | 0 | 4 | 100 |

The responses from the Highland area stand out as surprising. However, this may be due to the urban locations of the schools surveyed.

Parents were asked to rank in order of importance six factors that led them to choose GME, where 1 was very important and 7 not important.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|----|
| Acquisition of a second language | 31 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| A wish to use and promote Gaelic | 21 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Continuity of family Gaelic | 12 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 12 |
| Continuation of local Gaelic heritage | 10 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Style of education | 8 | 13 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Class sizes | 3 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 8 |

The most important factor by a significant margin is the acquisition of a second language and, to a lesser degree, the wish to use and promote Gaelic. This is somewhat surprising as it might have been expected that these factors would be reversed. However, it is also true that the combination of all factors linked to using, promoting and continuing Gaelic lead to a considerably higher level of importance.

Comments:

- *The class sizes are not any smaller than other schools so not a factor at all*
- *My child has ASD and (is) obsessed with languages. Learning Gaelic as well as having a familiar structure and routine has meant her overall wellbeing has changed positively.*

Parents were encouraged to give examples of all the sources of information they used to enable them to make decisions about GME.

| Sources | Responses |
|--------------------|-----------|
| School | 16 |
| Internet/Online | 15 |
| Word of mouth | 10 |
| Parents' groups | 8 |
| Other parents | 7 |
| Family/Friends | 7 |
| Local authority | 5 |
| Existing knowledge | 3 |
| Did not need any | 3 |
| Leaflets/Press | 3 |
| Library | 2 |
| No answer | 1 |

The official promotion routes developed by local authorities and Bòrd na Gàidhlig were, from the outcomes, ranked very low. This would suggest more promotion should be focused on online information and through the schools. Clearly, the main drivers are informal routes such as speaking to other parents, word of mouth and family and friends which, if taken together, form the largest number of responses (24).

Again, the development of positive word of mouth experiences should inform future strategy to reach parents with the appropriate information.

Parents were encouraged to give examples of all the sources of advice they used to enable them to make decisions about GME.

| Sources | Responses |
|--|-----------|
| School | 14 |
| Parents | 9 |
| Parents' Groups | 8 |
| Family/Friends | 8 |
| Word of mouth | 5 |
| Local authorities | 4 |
| Did not need any | 4 |
| No answer | 4 |
| Gaelic Organisations (not Parents' groups) | 2 |
| Internet/Online | 2 |
| Existing knowledge | 2 |
| Leaflets/Press | 1 |
| HM Inspector Reports | 1 |

Again, it is informal routes to advice that are mainly being used. The more formal support being implemented by the local authorities and Bòrd na Gàidhlig (e.g. leaflets, talks, posters and advertising) appears not to be matching nor meeting parents' behaviours when seeking advice.

Particular comment should be made about the poor performance of leaflets/press stories, advertisements etc. in providing advice to parents. They were quoted by surprisingly few parents as a source of advice or for accessing information. Building 'social media' networks amongst parents', supported by the school, may prove a more successful route to reach parents with advice and information.

Surprisingly, the ranking of online advice is very poor compared with the very high ranking seen when parents are seeking information about GME. What is also surprising is how few parents contacted Gaelic organisations to seek advice on GME.

Parents were asked how they became aware of Gaelic Medium Education provision in their area. They were asked to list the main sources used as well as all other sources.

***Note, not all parents answered both columns**

| | All sources used | Main source |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Through a friend | 20 | 2 |
| Local knowledge | 19 | 7 |
| Through GME school | 13 | 7 |
| Family knowledge | 11 | 2 |
| Via council | 10 | 1 |
| Siblings already at school | 8 | 2 |
| Libraries | 5 | 0 |
| Other Parents' groups | 4 | 3 |
| Gaelic Parents' groups | 2 | 0 |

Again, the vast majority of respondees sourced information through informal routes such as: through a friend, family knowledge or already having children at the school. (Combined count of 39).

It is noteworthy how few parents have used Parents' groups as a source of information. Questions should, perhaps, be asked by Bòrd na Gàidhlig about the effectiveness and value for money offered by these groups. Gaelic Parents' groups are charged with promoting GME and, whilst it is recognised that the respondees are parents of children in Primary 1, they may only recently have become aware of GME or have made a decision to send their child to GME.

The outcomes suggest that more information and work needs to be done by Gaelic organisations and Parents' groups at 0-3 years to ensure better awareness of the work being done by such groups.

Parents were asked if there was enough information available regarding Gaelic Medium Education, to allow them to make an informed decision.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 27 | 71 | 11 | 29 |

Those who answered "No" to this question were very clear in their opinions. In one case, parents stated that there had been "very little information from the local authority other than where the school was – we didn't even have info on where the nursery was". Others felt that their local authority was obstructive and "opposed to promoting Gaelic", with poor promotion of Gaelic on websites, leaflets or advertising.

Even those who were satisfied with the amount of information available noted that there was a need for better websites for the Gaelic schools. In one case, existing knowledge of a specific school allowed a decision to be made but this decision was made without the aid of promotional information through any other route.

The outcomes of this question are generally in line with what was anticipated.

Was there enough advice available regarding Gaelic Medium education, to allow them to make an informed decision?

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % | No answer | % |
|-----|---|----|---|------------|---|-----------|---|
|-----|---|----|---|------------|---|-----------|---|

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | 63 | 9 | 24 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|

Advice sought by parents included:

- 'more information on the drawbacks of your child learning Gaelic'
- 'how to deal with homework'
- 'more advice pre-enrolment'
- 'information on how parents must learn the language too'
- 'one central point online for all info and links'

Advice was also sought through word of mouth and from a variety of Gaelic Forums and Parents' groups.

Parents were then asked if they had relied on other information (e.g. word-of mouth/ family already in Gaelic Medium Education etc.) to help make their decision?

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % | No answer | % |
|-----|----|----|----|------------|---|-----------|---|
| 24 | 63 | 12 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |

YES Comments:

- Spoke extensively to parents of children currently in GME
- Having relatives who had had good experiences in Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu was encouraging.
- Friends who are GME teachers
- Overwhelming positive reports from parents
- Attended a Gaelic toddler group and met other parents
- Know how dedicated staff in school are
- We have used wide and varied informational resources to keep our decisions under continuous review
- We relied on parents in the Falkirk Gaelic Forum

NO Comments:

- Too many pro Gaelic voices not giving a balanced opinion (too much agenda)
- Only heard through a family member working at the school in a non-Gaelic capacity who said they got a good education in Gaelic.

It is noteworthy that, again, informal routes to information are the most important.

When asked if they had encountered any difficulties in achieving their choice of Gaelic Medium Education for their child, the responses were as follows:

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 11 | 29 | 27 | 71 |

Whilst the vast majority of those who responded had not experienced any difficulties, a significant percentage had.

Those who had experienced difficulties referred to the following:

- Lack of a local GME school

- Transport (Bussing to other local authority areas)
- Problems in accessing information from the local authority
- Negativity from those who were 'against GME'
- The low numbers in Primary 1
- The transition from nursery to Primary not being as 'extensive as for EME'
- The lack of information on homework, bottlenecks and placing request issues.

As in many other responses, transport was identified as a barrier to access.

Parents were asked what they believe are the benefits of Gaelic Medium Education. They were encouraged to give more than one response.

| Benefits | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Second Language | 23 |
| Involvement with Gaelic culture (including media/drama and dance/community) | 20 |
| Benefits of bilingualism/cognitive skills | 13 |
| Gaelic heritage | 9 |
| Secure Scottish identity | 5 |
| Confidence building | 5 |
| Good ethos | 5 |
| Dedicated teachers | 3 |
| Increased problem solving skills | 3 |
| Communication skills | 2 |
| Class sizes | 1 |
| High education standards | 1 |
| Motivated & interested parents | 1 |
| Improved English | 1 |

There are two main outcomes of the responses.

Firstly, the importance of having a second language/bilingualism. The importance of having a second language ranks well above all other factors. When combined together, second language and bilingualism outrank all other responses.

Across this study, both EME and GME parents identified bilingualism as a key desire for parents when educating their child/children.

The second outcome is that of the importance of Gaelic culture and heritage. It is worth highlighting that many parents surveyed will have existing Gaelic links which may be a factor in the number of responses. All other responses are insignificant in comparison.

The questionnaire asked how big a factor these benefits were in their choice of Gaelic Medium Education.

| Factor | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Main Factor | 19 |
| Was very important | 13 |
| A second language was the important factor, it didn't matter that it was Gaelic | 4 |
| Keeps Gaelic alive | 2 |
| No answer | 2 |
| Don't Know | 1 |

Combining these responses shows that bilingualism/second language acquisition is tremendously important for parents when choosing a school for their child.

A cross correlation of the outputs of questions 13 and 14 found that there were three areas which parents designate as their main factors when choosing GME.

They are:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Acquisition of a second language | 14 |
| Continuation of Gaelic culture | 11 |
| Bilingualism | 7 |

For some parents, the acquisition of a second language is more important than the actual language being acquired.

The questionnaire also ascertained how many parents spoke Gaelic in the home.

| Yes | % | No | % | No Answer | % |
|-----|----|----|----|-----------|---|
| 24 | 63 | 13 | 34 | 1 | 3 |

This question was asked to identify if the responses were made due to an existing tradition of Gaelic in the family.

It is clear that the majority of parents do have some level of Gaelic language skills. Some parents made it clear that they are learners and are learning in order to support their children.

Parents were also asked if, excluding English and Gaelic, any other languages were spoken in the home.

| Yes | % | No | % |
|-----|----|----|----|
| 4 | 10 | 34 | 90 |

Previous experience in Gaelic research showed that families who enrolled their children in GME often show higher levels of other languages being spoken in the home than is generally found in the wider population. These families may be predisposed to bilingual education.

Therefore, a question was asked to ascertain whether, in this piece of research, families who had their children in GME showed a higher percentage of other languages in the home. It is interesting to note

that very few families spoke additional languages at home. Other languages identified were Punjabi, Spanish, Filipino (Tagalog) and Urdu.

Parents were asked what change in factors would encourage other parents to consider choosing Gaelic Medium Education for their children.

| Changes | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| More information from local authorities etc. – promotional materials /online links to support in the area | 14 |
| Wider information about homework support (especially for non-Gaelic speaking parents) | 9 |
| More positive publicity re benefits of bilingualism | 9 |
| Better transport | 6 |
| No answer | 6 |
| More GM nurseries | 4 |
| No need for change | 2 |
| The dedicated staff and the links to other GM schools | 2 |
| More information available to parents outwith existing Gaelic speaking areas | 2 |
| Fewer negative press reports | 1 |
| More schools | 1 |
| Smaller class sizes | 1 |
| More support for children with learning needs | 1 |
| Change attitudes of Gaelic being a ‘useless dead language’. | 1 |
| Meet parents at pre-nursery stage | 1 |

Comments:

- *Maybe in non-Gaelic speaking school parents could get a taster - bring a class from the Gaelic school as a taster of as typical class.*
- *More Gaelic provision for toddlers & social facilities to encourage mixing of parents i.e. a Gaelic hub for learners, kids, speakers.*
- *There doesn't appear to be any promotion on GME outwith the existing Gaelic community. This needs to change.*

It is interesting to note that whilst the majority of those consulted suggested more online resources are required to encourage demand for GME, many had already indicated that they **had used online** as a

source of information in response to Q6. This response suggests parents were not fully satisfied by their own experiences of online information. Interestingly, when the question was asked about their sources of advice, (Q7), very few used the internet as a source of advice.

Both bilingualism and transport are mentioned by many as being important.

Based on their experience, they were asked what support they thought parents need to support their child's learning, if they chose to register their children in Gaelic Medium Education.

| Support | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| Classes for parents | 23 |
| More web / apps/online resources/CDs/sound files. | 12 |
| Homework clubs for children & parents including online homework support | 9 |
| No need for more support. | 2 |
| No answer | 2 |
| Dual language resources & common phrases to use with your child | 1 |
| Make more use of fluent speaking parents | 1 |
| Compulsory, free classes for parents | 1 |

Classes for parents are, for the most part, to allow them to learn the language but also to allow them to support their children – in particular with homework. This was an area mentioned throughout the responses from parents in both GME and in EME.

There are classes available in many areas but comments were made that they are difficult to access if the parent is working full time and, in some areas, classes may be oversubscribed.

Comments:

- *CDs to take home would help us to grasp the sound of the language through the kinds of repetition and song learnt by the children at school.*
- *Accessible classes for working parents.*
- *Stòrlann have done wonderful over the years and have produced huge amounts of books, DVDs etc. Ùlpan has helped many but they also need to have an informal class which is based on talking, giving them opportunities to use the language, cookery get together, gardening exercises.*
- *Classes for parents like Ùlpan. Continuation and further development of Gaelic 4 Parents website which is great!*
- *Parent buddy system.*
- *Some suggested a telephone support system for parents – especially to help with homework.*

- *Being able to access sounds and spelling for non-Gaels, would help considerably.*
- *Gaelic for parents from university very useful. Access to Ùlpan (local classes oversubscribed); classes during day for non-working/working mums/grannies.*
- *Classes for parents, structured like GLPS course, give and use vocab play games in Gaelic.*

Parents were asked if they thought other parents in their area are interested in registering their children in Gaelic Medium provision.

| Yes | % | No | % | Don't know | % |
|-----|----|----|----|------------|----|
| 18 | 47 | 13 | 34 | 7 | 19 |

A belief that parents have a lack of awareness or understanding of the benefits of GME, was at the heart of many responses to this question. Again, transport and ease of access to the GME schools, was seen by some as a barrier to entry.

Respondees who said “Yes”, noted that if parents were given the correct information, specifically about the value of GME educationally, they were generally interested. More than one of those who answered “Don't Know”, highlighted this point, “[As] Numbers are dangerously low there may be people who don't know it [Gaelic Medium Education] exists, which leads to a lack of understanding/knowledge of GME v G Learners”.

Those who answered “No” agreed that many parents “don't have knowledge of provision or benefits of GME”.

One respondent suggested many parents didn't think that Gaelic was a language spoken today and was, therefore, not relevant in modern Scotland.

Again, these responses are further indication that the promotion of GME may be slightly mis-targeted and that, if it is promoted as bilingualism, the language uptake may be significantly higher.

Widespread press coverage of issues facing Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis was also commented upon by parents and thought likely to reduce interest from parents in registering their children in GME.

Parents were asked what local authorities could do to promote Gaelic Medium Education better.

| Suggestions | Number of responses |
|---|---------------------|
| More positive information in local press | 12 |
| Promote the benefits of GME from an early age through pre-school (toddler groups & nurseries) | 11 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Council already doing a good job | 8 |
| Information and advice on benefits of bilingualism | 5 |
| No answer | 3 |
| Provide transport | 3 |
| Have a presence at non-Gaelic events such as local gala days | 2 |
| Homework support groups | 1 |
| Provide more GME pre-school | 1 |
| Increased visibility of GME on Council website | 1 |

Parents noted that those within the Gaelic community, including groups tasked with GME promotion, tend to attend events within the wider Gaelic community. In consequence, it was suggested there may be a need to widen promotion of GME into non-Gaelic events.

Another key outcome of this question was the emphasis on a need to increase promotion of GME at an earlier stage (0-3 years). It is understood that this has already begun to happen but is interesting to note the level of response indicating its importance to parents throughout this research.

Throughout this work, transport, or lack thereof, has emerged as a key requirement to accessing GME by many parents. If local authorities do provide transport for children to attend a GME school, this should be highlighted in GME promotional material. Those mentioning transport in the answers above were surprisingly low but this may have been due to the majority of respondents not considering transport as a promotional route for GME.

Comments

- *Any advertising outside the Gaelic community after all we know what's there already!*
- *More GM pre-school full time care as parents that both work full time won't have access to half-day Croileagans.*

Finally, parents were asked to list any obstacles they thought their child would face in continuing & developing Gaelic throughout their education, up to and including Secondary school.

| Obstacles | Number of responses |
|--|----------------------------|
| Lack of Gaelic speaking teachers & head teachers specifically in Secondary where subject choices are restricting | 13 |
| None that I am aware of | 9 |
| Lack of opportunities to speak language outside school. | 7 |
| Parents not being able to assist with homework or speak the language | 4 |
| Lack of and cost of transport | 2 |
| Lack of provision in other geographic areas | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Lack of Secondary GM provision after immersion in Primary | 1 |
| Non-Gaelic speakers attitude e.g. that is pointless, it's an unused or dying language | 1 |

Comments

- *Council do not provide transport home from after school clubs; Gaelic choir, music etc and this could hamper cultural education.*
- *Children feeling 'different' when they go to Secondary school.*
- *We would love advice from Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the transport issue.*

It is telling that parents, who have children in Primary 1, are so keenly aware of the issues facing the teaching of GME in both Primary and Secondary.

As the research period covered the time when national press and television coverage was focusing on the recruitment of a Head Teacher in Inverness, there may have been an increased awareness in parents, which may have influenced the outcome above.

3.6 Stakeholders Responses

In response to requests from stakeholders that they would prefer to be consulted by email, a set of 17 questions was developed and sent to 26 Directors of Education and Council Officers with responsibility for Gaelic across the ten local authority areas. Six responses were received from four local authority areas. Single responses were received from Glasgow City Council and The Highland Council; and two responses each were received from North Lanarkshire Council and South Ayrshire Council.

Of those local authorities who responded, three deliver GME and the fourth has no GME. We are grateful to all respondees and in particular to South Ayrshire (a non-GME Council) for taking the time to respond to the question set.

It was to be expected that South Ayrshire, with no GME in place, could not answer or give opinions of certain questions.

Every local authority that responded said their wider local authority was very supportive of GME. This included South Ayrshire Council, where a Gaelic Language Plan is in the early stages of preparation.

In addition, an amended question set was sent to 12 organisations that support Gaelic, including the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and others. There was a poor response to this question set with only three responses. One further response came from an individual who had received the questions through a distribution made, in error, by another consultee. The commentary below includes responses from both question sets.

Those respondents with GME were satisfied that parents' awareness of GME was growing, specifically through the marketing the local authority was delivering. Those marketing routes include:

- Posters, events, media campaigns by the Bòrd,
- GME related enrolment materials
- Leaflets on bilingualism and Gaelic education
- Web information
- Online interactive resources
- Open days and information days
- Promotional literature in public places
- Information for new mothers, nursery children and Primary school pupils

Surprisingly the number and nature of enquiries about educating a child in GME are **not** generally recorded by local authorities although it was noted that some enquiries do come through the Bòrd, Comunn na Gàidhlig etc.

The way those local authorities who deliver GME meet requests for GME varies. Identified routes were:

- Direct enrolment at GME schools
- Information through Area Education Officers
- Direction of parents to the relevant GM provision.

In South Ayrshire, arrangements for GME were agreed with East Ayrshire Council a number of years ago. East Ayrshire Council offers GME at Onthank Primary in Kilmarnock. Due to lack of requests, South Ayrshire Council has not pursued matters further and now do not know what capacity East Ayrshire Council may have to educate South Ayrshire Council pupils in their Gaelic Medium units.

South Ayrshire Council commented, 'We are positive about GME but in today's financial climate and with no requests for GME, we are not making this a priority'.

It was noted that in the areas where GME is delivered, EME is promoted alongside GME in registration publicity and in generic and GM targeted enrolment materials.

The support offered by local authorities to parents of children in GME to help them educate their child varies and includes:

- Advice
- Language classes for parents
- Ùlpan and other Gaelic adult learning opportunities for parents (50% discount on Ùlpan fees is available in one area)
- Events for GM children and for GM families.

Two areas that offer GME noted an increase in demand for GME at the Early Years' stage.

At Primary and Secondary, growth is continuing in some areas. The local authorities capture relevant data through increasing rolls at Primary & Secondary to establish growth in their area. The School Census Data is also used. This data has enabled certain local authorities to demonstrate a need for additional GME classrooms and schools. Commentary was made that the Scottish Government Gaelic Capital Fund had been accessed to support growth.

The constant challenge of meeting demand, aligned with the issues of sourcing teachers, was frequently mentioned by respondees. Whilst sourcing Primary teachers is potentially less difficult, comments were made that Early Years' Child Development Officers with Gaelic were very difficult to source.

Significant issues remain in recruiting Secondary staff. In some cases lack of teachers is preventing delivery of a full Secondary curriculum through Gaelic in the particular local authorities surveyed.

It was noted that National Workforce Planning; careers' marketing and incentives; teacher training and leadership development were recently implemented programmes that are working towards increasing the volume of appropriately qualified Gaelic speaking teaching staff across the country.

The reasons respondees gave to why parents might choose GME over EME were:

- Familial connection with the language;
- Respect for Scottish culture and heritage;
- Awareness of educational benefits of bilingualism.

Those that choose EME over GME do so because they feel 'Gaelic is useless'.

One surprising comment made by an organisation set up to support Gaelic was that "parents with no Gaelic should be discouraged from (but not prevented from) choosing GME and in such cases at least one parent or guardian should be required to attend Gaelic classes".

4 Funding in Scotland & Existing Models Elsewhere

National Funding Position - Scotland

The current Scottish Government is very supportive of indigenous languages. They recognise the cultural, health and economic benefits e.g. jobs, events, etc. which Gaelic and its increased use brings to the Scottish economy.

It is thought that, by the next election, there should be eight established or planned wholly Gaelic schools across Scotland with the increase in numbers wholly driven by parental demand.

Early Years' education is a key focus of the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17; meaning that the Scottish Government will be looking at Early Years' demand for Gaelic Medium Education as a guide to demand for Primary and Secondary education. Bòrd na Gàidhlig statistics now also include Early Years' which, in due course, will help indicate increases or decreases in demand.

The areas where GME is available all benefit from access to direct Scottish Government spending. The general economic environment has influenced the Scottish Government's strategy and budgets for Gaelic have been strongly defended.

Funding has risen via capital spend. The capital spend budget is currently £1.4m for schools and will increase to £1.8m and then £1.9m before the next election. **The total budget for Gaelic is 0.08% of total Scottish Government spending.**

Funding is mainly through the **Gaelic Schools Capital Fund** (for the development of Gaelic schools) & the ring fenced **Scheme of Specific Grants for Gaelic Education** which is open to all local authorities who wish to approach the Government or make a bid. Funding is 75% variable, meaning the balance must be found by the local authority.

Some local authority areas use central government grants for transport/or bussing children to GME schools; others use the funds to pay for a member of staff. Decisions on what to spend grant money on are made by the individual local authority and not by the Scottish Government who can only encourage, not dictate. Most of the funding budget is distributed by COSLA through a Service Level Agreement.

Commentary from parents throughout the questionnaire responses, suggested that some believe there is already a **'[statutory] Parental right to choose GME'**, however, the consultation process to make Gaelic Medium Education a statutory right is currently at a very early stage. It will require legislation and is unlikely to reach a conclusion until around the last quarter of the current parliamentary session in 2015. Once in place, parents could use this right to influence change and drive local demand for GME.

There has already been an increase in the number of local authority areas entering into a dialogue with the Scottish Government regarding future funding. It is understood that Falkirk Council and Fife Council have begun such a dialogue.

It was noted through commentary made by stakeholders in particular, that support had been received through the Schools Capital Fund to support growth. If there is a substantial increase in demand and growth, the Fund may be put under considerable pressure and, therefore, continued growth may be hampered.

Existing Models Elsewhere

In order to establish the structure for funding minority languages across Europe, the consultants considered Catalan, Breton and Irish Gaelic.

Catalan

There are 17 regions in Spain, each having their own regional government which depends on the national government for funding.

Catalan is the language of the Cataluña region, which is the North East corner of Spain, including Barcelona as its major city. Cataluña has its own administration but also depends on funding from the national government.

The regional government/administration can assign a certain amount of money to promote the use of Catalan. Catalan is funded by the local authority (or regional government) with money received from the national government.

For every school, a certain amount of funding comes from the national government. The regional government can distribute this money as it sees fit.

In Spain, there is an ongoing and lively debate about regional languages. It is believed that in regions such as the Basque country or Cataluña, the local administration assign more money to their own languages than to Spanish.

For example, Spanish and Catalan are the official languages in the region of Cataluña, and for that reason both should be spoken and learnt equally in schools. It is understood that this is not happening, as the Catalan government promotes the Catalan language in schools in almost all subjects. The same happens with the Basque language.

The Spanish regions were recently presented with new draft legislation that would force Cataluña, among other regions, to limit the hours Catalan is used in schools and guarantee that Spanish becomes the official learning language in the classrooms, including at private schools. If passed, the law would also affect the minority languages in the Basque Country, Galicia and Valencia.

The draft bill would ensure pupils are offered coursework in both languages “in balanced proportions.” If this is not the case, parents must be able to choose one main language for their children's classes, and if there is no satisfactory programme in public or publicly subsidised private schools, then regional authorities must “pay the cost” of a private programme.

The draft bill states that a given region can “award differentiated treatment to the co-official language with regard to Castilian Spanish in reasonable proportions, but in no case may it exclude Castilian Spanish.”

By the end of 2012, the Cataluña regional government was told it should challenge any eventual law restricting the use of Catalan in schools before the Constitutional Court. It was reported that the proposal failed to respect Article Three of the Spanish Constitution which states that: “The richness of the different linguistic modalities of Spain is a cultural heritage which shall be specially respected and protected.”

Cataluña has pursued Catalan-only schooling despite negative rulings by the Supreme Court and the Catalan regional High Court, after parents desiring a Spanish-language education took legal action against the Generalitat. This is an ongoing situation which reflects the difficulties faced when developing a minoritised language.

Note: At the end of 2012, Cataluña announced it would not enforce a proposed national education law which aimed to restrict the use of regional languages in the classroom. Cataluña will continue to apply its own regional law.

Existing Breton Model

There are 3 French/Breton bilingual school systems in Brittany:

The Diwan schools, established in 1977, are associative immersive schools teaching in the Breton language. The first 5 years are self-financed by parents and after this period there is a contract with the National Education system. The teachers are paid by the Government.

From ages 2–6, Breton is the sole language of instruction. At the age of 7 and a half, French is introduced during 2 out of 26 school hours. When the students are 10, French (6 hours out of 23) is taught at the same level as Breton. This remains the same when they reach middle school, but English and a choice of Spanish or German are taught in addition.

All other expenses regarding the schools have to be financed by the “Parents-Teachers Association”.

Bilingual education in public schools: This model was originally established in 1983. Here schools are financed by the Government, who pay for the teachers and the local authorities, who fund the school buildings. This is also the case for monolingual education.

Bilingual teaching in Catholic schools: This model was established in 1990. Here, schools have a

contract with the Ministry of Education, meaning that the teachers are paid by the Government.

In Brittany, local authorities support the bilingual schools' development. The Regional Council of Brittany spends one third of its educational budget on developing bilingual education. They support the 3 school systems noted above and help in training bilingual teachers.

Certain Departments (mainly Finistère and Morbihan) also support the bilingual schools financially. Lessons for adults are available through local organisations – these still rely mostly on volunteers to delivery learning.

Adult training is now becoming more professional with the development of skilled delivery organisations and with the support of the Regional Council of Brittany and the Departments of Finistère and Morbihan.

Irish Gaelic

The Irish language has been the first language of the state since its inception. It is the language of the community in the Gaeltacht regions (which covers parts of the west coast counties of Donegal, Mayo, Galway and Kerry - and also parts of the counties of Cork, Meath and Waterford). These are the only parts of Ireland where Irish is still spoken as the community language.

Irish was awarded official status to become a working language of the European Union in 2005. According to the Census of 2006, 1.66 million people in the Republic of Ireland can speak Irish, an increase from 1.57 in 2002.

Gaelscoileanna, Irish medium schools, are more prevalent in the Republic. It is understood that the government has promised reforms in the curriculum and teaching training for Irish in English medium schools. The future of the gaelscoileanna has been affected by the Irish Language Strategy, 2009, which stated *'all children in primary schools in Ireland [will be given] the opportunity to experience partial immersion in the formative years of primary education'*. Primary teachers also have immersion classes to improve their fluency in the language.

Foras na Gaeilge is the advisory body that supports the administrations in the North and South in all matters relating to the Irish language including its promotion, offering advice and facilitation including on Irish medium education and teaching. They also work closely with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

The Department of Education in Ireland is responsible for the development of Irish medium education.

It aims to develop a high standard of language competence in the immersion language across the curriculum. Gaelic medium schools are able to achieve grant aided status, by applying for voluntary maintained status. In addition to free standing schools, Irish language medium education can be provided through units in existing schools.

Unit arrangements permit Irish language medium education to be supported where a free-standing school would not be viable. A unit may operate as a self-contained provision under the management of a host English-medium school and usually on the same site.

There are currently two types of Irish medium schools in Northern Ireland. There are 21 stand-alone schools and there are 12 Irish-medium units attached to English-medium host schools. There are also two independent schools teaching through the medium of Irish in Crumlin and in Derry City.

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) is the representative body for Irish-medium Education. It was set up in 2000 by the Department of Education to promote, facilitate and encourage Irish-medium Education. One of CnaG's central objectives is to extend the availability of Irish-medium Education.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

A number of conclusions and recommendations have been highlighted by the responses of Head Teachers, Parents and stakeholders throughout this research. The order shown below reflects the main drivers for growth in demand, as suggested by the outcomes of this research; how they affect demand and what has been suggested to enable that demand to be met.

5.1 Future Demand for growth, including targets

Note: As the number of responses is relatively low when compared to the overall population of parents with children in Primary 1, care should be taken when making future projections. The consultants have based the following conclusions on their interpretation of the data collected. The overarching situation of levels of current demand and the ability to service that demand, and any increase in demand, is currently very fluid. Therefore this document makes suggestions which are based on and linked to, the current position.

Prior to any high levels of capital commitment, the data being collected by Bòrd na Gàidhlig should be reviewed to ascertain if numbers in GME are continuing to change at the same rate.

The targets in the Scottish Government National Gaelic Plan expect increased numbers of children in Gaelic Medium Education Primary 1 by 2017 from 406 to 800. This means there needs to be double the number of children enrolling in Gaelic Medium Primary 1. The Plan also targets an expansion of those transferring into Secondary GME.

The table below shows pupils entering Primary 1 and Secondary 1 in 2012/13 in the schools consulted as provided by relevant staff in the schools. In schools where there is EME, figures for those pupils have been given and overall numbers in the year group are shown below.

| School | EME Pupils | GME Pupils | Overall numbers |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| Primary 1 | | | |
| Sgoil an Taobh Siar | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu | 0 | 78 | 78 |
| Condorrat Primary | 9 | 31 | 40 |
| Goodlyburn Primary | 29 | 1 | 30 |
| Rockfield Primary | 52 | 4 | 56 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis | 0 | 29 | 29 |
| Secondary 1 | | | |
| Nicolson Institute | 144 | 31 | 175 |
| Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu | 0 | 42 | 42 |
| Greenfaulds High School | 221 | 17 | 238 |
| Perth Academy | 172 | 2 | 174 |
| Tiree High | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Inverness Royal Academy | 179 | 9 | 188 |

The table shows that, at Primary 1, numbers of GME pupils are reasonable. In Secondary, numbers are far lower by comparison. Whilst, on the surface, this appears to demonstrate a drop in numbers, this is not the case in reality. Primary numbers are being driven upwards by the resurgence in Gaelic over the last five years and this increase in Primary pupils has not yet transferred to Secondary GME. It is expected that, from academic year 2014/15 onwards, Secondary GME numbers will begin to rise, so increasing total GME numbers further.

The research has shown there is growth in 80% of the GME Primary schools consulted. No schools consulted (Primary or Secondary) show a drop in numbers. The two Primary schools that showed no growth were in local authority areas where numbers of GME pupils in the schools concerned are very small. One was in an area where the national projections of future population anticipates a significant drop in population and the other is in an area where the population is expected to grow substantially.

In the six local authority areas offering GME considered by this research, increased numbers in GME pupils are being seen in four of the areas. The percentage increase varies from school to school (see outcomes of consultation with Head Teachers, Section 3.1 and 3.2). The largest increase is from 22 to 50 pupils in one academic year in one school, whereas in another numbers have grown steadily over a 13 year period.

There are three large urban areas across Scotland where GME demand is increasing substantially. This is to be expected given the density of their populations. Those areas are: Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. Within highly populated areas, it is expected that a cycle of demand will establish where there are more parents, more widespread word of mouth recommendation develops thereby driving further demand.

Although the Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu is reaching capacity, a new Gaelic Primary in the south side of Glasgow, to be opened in 2015, will reduce pressures in the short term. This will lead to increased numbers in Secondary in the fullness of time.

In Inverness, an annex expansion is being considered for Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis to meet significant increasing numbers in nursery.

Also in the Highland region, standalone Gaelic schools are being planned for Fort William and Portree which will meet local demand.

In Edinburgh (not consulted as part of this research), the opening of the new school, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce, will replace Tollcross Primary. In the short term, c5-7 years, it is expected the new school will relieve the immediate pressure for GME places in Edinburgh. However, if the growth patterns seen in Glasgow are taken as a model for GME in an urban environment, (and there is no reason to believe Edinburgh will not show the same demand pattern) then pressure for places at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce will, in time, grow and further expansion of GME will be necessary to meet that demand.

Condorrat Primary (North Lanarkshire) sits in an urban area, midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh and, whilst numbers are healthy in Primary, there is a marked drop at Secondary. This research suggests that the increased numbers in Primary GME have not yet moved through the school to Secondary. It should be noted that some parents of children at Condorrat Primary choose Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu in preference to Greenfaulds High as they believe the range of subjects offered is wider. Note: Greenfaulds High does offer a large number of subjects up to S2.

The other school catchments consulted as part of this research are, in the main, rural and consequently numbers, as would be expected, are lower. In some areas, Gaelic is offered in very rural Primary schools. Economic pressures mean keeping such schools open is a constant and very live issue for some local authorities.

As has been noted elsewhere, the lack of recording of enquires for GME by local authorities, leads to a lack of knowledge of demand.

Growth in demand for GME

In order to assess the potential statistical growth or otherwise for GME across Scotland, it was necessary to look at the wider demographic changes taking place in the country and the projected increases or decreases in population in future.

- There were 293,000 children aged under 5 in Scotland recorded in the Census of 2011. This is an increase of 6% in the last ten years.
- 22 of 32 Scottish local authority areas expect populations to increase in the next 25 years.
- Greatest projected increases are East Lothian (+33%) and Perth & Kinross (+32%).
- Inverclyde and the Western Isles are projected to have the largest decreases (-17% and -11% respectively).
- A decrease in numbers of children aged 0-15 is projected in the Western Isles (-34%) and Inverclyde (-27%).
- An increase in numbers of children aged 0-15 is projected in Perth & Kinross (+32%) and East Lothian (+41%).

It is interesting to note that, of the local authorities researched in this study, the following are expected to show population increases over the next 25 years.

- Perth & Kinross (+32%)

- Aberdeenshire (+22%)
- The Highland Council (+15%)
- Glasgow City (+11%)
- Fife (+9%)
- North Lanarkshire (+1.7%)

Decreases in population in the areas under research are projected in:

- The Western Isles (-11%)
- Argyll & Bute (-7%)
- South Ayrshire (-3%)

Sets of statistics considered for this research, and held by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, were unable to be used to provide a baseline on which to estimate future growth in GME.

Firstly, the mechanisms for collection had changed over the last two years. Secondly, the reporting bases had changed and, thirdly, the statistics had been gathered by two different bodies using different formats. These changes made it difficult to extract meaningful data from the raw numbers over the period considered for this report.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig acknowledge this issue presents some challenges to researchers. They commented that *“the base changes were restricted and most key statistics were directly comparable as all were incorporated in the shift and many added. There was a change in the bodies conducting the audit with one year overlap. The Bòrd is confident that the figures for the last three years (and methodology for the last two in respect of nursery and pre-school in particular) are now more robust. Pre-school, other than nursery, was not reported on post 1997 until taken in-house by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2011”*.

A particular example of the problem was shown in nursery GME reporting where in academic year 2010-11, 802 children attended 58 different nurseries across Scotland. In academic year 2011-12, when the reporting base was changed, 715 children attend 60 nurseries. It is thought the change in reporting base accounts for the perceived decline in numbers.

A further complicating factor at pre-school and nursery level is that a child may attend more than one pre-school or nursery at a time and so may be double-counted. Dual attendance is more likely to occur in urban areas where provision is wider.

Data held on Secondary education was presented in a manner which made analysis extremely difficult to the point where it was almost impossible to compare like with like. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has stated that data is now recorded by subject and qualification giving a breakdown of exactly how many individual pupils overall are studying these subjects.

There are 370,839 (Source: Scottish Government) primary school pupils in Scotland per annum. (c53,000 per year group across all schools).

In Gaelic there are c406 pupils in GME (Source: Bòrd na Gàidhlig) in Primary 1 per annum. This is 0.77% of the national total.

The average growth of Primary 1 numbers across all the GME Primary schools consulted is c10% per annum* and this assumption has been included in the table below.

*Note: Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis reported growth of in the region of 150%, (22 pupils in 2012/13 and an anticipated 50 pupils in 2013/14). However this is a localised anomaly driven by general population expansion in the area. In addition, the opening of the new schools in Highland and Edinburgh are likely to show high growth rates in the very short term, which will distort the underlying steady growth rate.

The table below considers growth in Primary 1 from 2010 to 2017.

Two growth factors are taken into account:

1. The steady, year on year growth of around 10% per annum seen across the majority of GME primary schools.
2. The sharp spikes in growth which are likely to be experienced as those new Gaelic schools already in the pipeline come on stream. Glasgow City Council are planning for a 25 pupil Primary 1 class in the new school. It has been estimated that the new Edinburgh School will attract one new class of 20 Primary 1 pupils in the first year it opens. Fort William and Portree have been estimated at one new class of 10 Primary 1 pupils in the first years they open.
3. Urban schools may have higher enrolment rates which are balanced out by lower enrolment rates (simply because there are fewer children) in rural areas. These figures are shown in the column "New Schools/Classes Assumed".

| Year | Number of GME pupils in Primary 1 | Steady Growth @10% pa | Sub Total | New Schools/Classes Assumed | Totals |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Historic figures | | | | | |
| 2010 | 390 | - | 390 | 0 | 390 |
| 2011 | 406 | 16 | 406 | 0 | 406 |
| 2012 | 406 | 0 | 406 | 0 | 406 |
| Projected figures | | | | | |
| 2013 | 406 | 45 | 451 | 20 ¹ | 471 |
| 2014 | 471 | 47 | 528 | 0 | 528 |
| 2015 | 528 | 52 | 580 | 25 ² | 605 |
| 2016 | 605 | 61 | 661 | 10 ³ | 671 |
| 2017 | 671 | 68 | 739 | 10 ⁴ | 749 |

1. Edinburgh 2. Glasgow 3. Fort William 4. Portree

At the time of writing, the new schools known to be coming on stream over the course of the projections are in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fort William and Portree.

The table demonstrates that with:

- Existing GME schools achieving a 10% increase in numbers year on year,
- The addition of new, already approved, schools being opened by 2017 and,
- Those schools also achieving a modest increase in numbers year on year after opening.

Given that the figures above are very conservative, the target for doubling numbers of pupils entering Primary 1 as set by the National Plan for Gaelic **may** be achieved. The figures above show 94% achievement and it is very possible that if promotion of GME is more strategic, further increases in numbers are likely.

This research also suggests that a change in emphasis in marketing or promoting GME with a focus on bilingualism may also drive up demand.

It is clear from the research interviews that there is to be a more strategic focus from support agencies and the Bòrd on the development of Gaelic in pre-school, including age 0-3 years and nursery education. This is because they are the main feeders or drivers of GME Primary education.

Whilst some areas under study have many GME nurseries and do not feel the need for more, provision is not evenly spread across the country. In the ten local authority areas under research, several felt they need more “pipeline” via pre-school and nursery education. This recognition of Early Years’ demand fits well with all other results and the new strategic focus on 0-3 years.

Other areas had not seen an increase in 0-3 demand to date but were satisfied that the structures they had put in place (support, classes, and community based activities) should help manage increases in demand if it was experienced.

During the course of this work, it is understood Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s Education and Learning team mapped GME education 0-18. It is understood that it is now available on the Fiosrachadh do Phàrantan website.

According to Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s own studies, parents often know before their child is born where the child will attend school and, generally, have made the Primary education decision before the child’s first birthday. Few decide on GME or otherwise just before starting school, meaning that the 0-3 years stage is very important in promoting Gaelic Medium Education and, as a direct result, increasing demand.

Progression from Primary to Secondary

There is now more progression from 0-3 years’ right through to Secondary education, i.e. GME is available from ages 3-18 years in a number of geographic areas, with further development in the planning stage in other areas.

Statistics now show a 20% drop off rate between Primary and Secondary. The key reasons for the drop off were highlighted by many parents throughout this research, being:

- Subject choices being more limited in Gaelic
- Lack of knowledge about Gaelic

- Fluency of teachers
- In some cases, teachers believe there is a disadvantage to sitting exams in Gaelic (linked to poor fluency).

There is therefore a need to increase P1 intake and reduce the drop off in P7/S1. In addition, some consultees noted that some pupils are moved from GME around P4/5. Reasons for the drop at P4 and P5 are not fully documented but suggestions have been made that parents want to move children to other primary schools which feed into specific secondary schools.

A recent documentary, noted by stakeholders, consulted educators and secondary school students who said that the drop in hours of education 'was bad' and that they wanted more subjects in Gaelic.

There are 60 primaries with GME in Scotland. With cost pressures increasing on local authorities, many are now looking to make savings and very small rural schools, often where Gaelic is taught, are now being merged.

This is not purely financially driven. Educators recognise that broadening children's outlooks by having more interaction with other pupils is beneficial for the child in the longer term. Larger schools also allow the school to offer a wider range of subjects.

In rural areas, falling populations influence the numbers going into GME. It is therefore crucial that rural areas with GME, are promoting GME at an early stage to allow informed choices to be made. This links back to the need for a more strategic approach to increasing awareness of GME at the pre-school stage.

The research established that all the schools offering GME in Primary could provide progression to Secondary. Of the schools consulted, between 80-100% of their Primary pupils move into GME provision in Secondary. The type of Secondary provision varies from area to area. Head Teachers believe demand for GME is growing, but they are concerned about how to service that demand as suitably qualified and experienced staff are difficult to source particularly in Secondary. A key issue to retaining staff, they believe, is the ability to offer permanent contracts.

Parents' Councils are now more prevalent, and it was noted by many consultees that an active parents' group with a Gaelic focus could increase the numbers of pupils entering GME.

Latent demand

Most stakeholders found it difficult to quantify latent demand. It was thought that local authorities capture the number of enquiries regarding enrolling children into GME, but stakeholder responses suggest they do not. No one who responded seems to capture this information.

This is a major omission in determining demand as, if enquiries are not captured, no follow up will happen and opportunities are, potentially, being missed. Some local authorities including The Highland Council, the City of Edinburgh Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar use data captured by Bòrd na Gàidhlig to assess growth and demand.

A local authority's Gaelic Language Plan gives an indicator of whether there is a latent demand for GME in the area. It was agreed by many respondents that those areas where GME is not yet in place, are likely to be the last to demonstrate a demand and that demand will be directly linked to the commitment of the local authority to Gaelic.

Parents of children in EME were unable to comment on latent demand but are strongly interested in bilingual education which again suggests a potential missed opportunity. For example, in Fort William there is more potential latent demand, as there are many Latvians and Lithuanians who want GME due to the bilingualism opportunities offered. Stakeholders' commentary would suggest some Gaelic support organisations believe the knowledge of GME amongst parents generally is more widespread than this research would suggest.

Commentary was also made about those who work in Gaelic mainly interacting with others who work in Gaelic, and this interconnectedness may be inward looking when it comes to bringing new, non-Gaelic speakers and their children into GME.

National projections on the EME figures within this research, suggest there is a potential available pool of pupils for bilingual education of around 37% of all pupils providing **all other conditions** regarding transport, staff supply and local provision can be met.

Overall, pupil numbers in rural areas are generally dropping, but numbers in GME in rural areas are increasing. There has been a significant increase in numbers in some areas meaning that the overall proportion in GME is increasing. The three city-based GME schools, Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh, may show a disproportionately higher latent demand to other areas. This is likely to be wholly driven by the levels of population in the areas.

The growth in Primary demand is the direct driver for Secondary demand. As noted elsewhere, there is a need to double the existing numbers to meet the targets set out in the National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-17. In some areas, numbers are already high and are unlikely to increase and so it will be important to focus on those schools where EME outnumbered GME and work towards changing the ratio towards GME.

Recommendations

All local authorities, Gaelic Medium Schools and organisations promoting Gaelic education should capture data on the number of enquiries which are made about enrolling children in GME. If enquiries are made, all should have some mechanism in place, as a central clearing point, to follow up those enquires and they should be shared with other local authorities and Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure that if cross border education is, or can be, offered, the enquiry is not lost.

This also links to the provision of a central interactive website which would allow parents to swiftly locate their nearest GM school; see how wide the local (geographic rather than local authority area based) GM provision is; find out whether local GME schools take placing requests from outside their own local authority area and also whether the 'home' local authority area provides transport if GME is not offered

by that local authority. Data held by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on the number of children in GME at all levels (pre-school, nursery, Primary and Secondary) should be gathered and collated in a consistent way.

5.2 Second Language /Bilingualism

Learning a second language and bilingualism emerged as the strongest single factors in parents' choice when choosing GME.

Further wide spread demand of GME is likely to be driven by parents' desire for their children to be bilingual. Interestingly, Gaelic support organisations/stakeholders suggested that the expansion in GME was culturally led rather than being bilingually led.

From the research, bilingualism is the key consideration for parents of children in EME **and** in GME. One third of EME parents indicated the availability of bilingual education could be a factor in their choice of school. In GME parents, the benefits of a second language and bilingualism scored very highly, 60% and 34% respectively. Indeed, acquisition of a second language ranks above Gaelic culture as a driver for GME.

There is an indication that parents choose GME simply to achieve a bilingual education and the fact that Gaelic is the language offered is not always crucial. Some parents clearly stated that they would prefer Spanish or French as the language option.

The parental comments made the point very strongly that bilingualism, if available, was a very important factor in their decision making.

Recommendation

The research, therefore, concludes that existing promotion, with its focus on the Gaelic cultural and Scottish heritage aspects, may be mis-targeted when attempting to reach parents who live in areas where GME is relatively unknown or who do not understand the benefits of learning Gaelic but do understand the benefits of bilingualism. The research suggests, therefore, that bilingualism should be the main focus of all future promotion.

Note:

Dr Fraser Lauchlan, Honorary Lecturer at the University of Strathclyde's School of Psychological Sciences & Health, spoke on GME and Sardinian education at the recent Head Teachers conference in Glasgow.

Conferences such as these improve the knowledge and understanding of teaching staff and others in education and that improved knowledge translates to the classroom and on to the wider community.

On the subject of bilingualism, Dr Lauchlan said: *"Bilingualism is now largely seen as being beneficial to children.... Our study has found that it can have demonstrable benefits, not only in language but also in arithmetic, problem solving and enabling children to think creatively. We also assessed the children's vocabulary, not so much for their knowledge of words as their understanding of them. Again, there was a marked difference in the level of detail and richness in description from the bilingual pupils. ... they had an*

aptitude for selective attention - the ability to identify and focus on information which is important, while filtering out what is not - which could come from the 'code-switching' of thinking in two different languages."

5.3 Teachers

Without suitably qualified Gaelic speaking teachers, any increase in demand for GME cannot be met.

All consultees, including parents, referred to the lack of teachers with the appropriate combination of language and classroom skills combined with subject skills. The high number of schools (70%) experiencing movement of Gaelic speaking staff to other Gaelic schools was also mentioned.

Teaching and the sourcing of suitably qualified Gaelic speaking teachers alongside the movement of said teachers across Scotland, was highlighted across all consultation groups, it is therefore necessary to consider its implications within the wider study.

Many Gaelic schools had lost staff to Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu. Whilst Edinburgh was not specifically mentioned, it is likely that the new school will have an influence on the movement of Gaelic speaking teaching staff as will expansion in Inverness.

Importance was placed on access to permanent contracts as a main reason for movement with 60% of Head Teachers believing this movement was likely to increase. The other main reason for moving was thought to be for family reasons.

Numbers in GME in urban areas are **increasing** e.g. East Dumbartonshire, although in such areas, the number of teachers is both a concern and a priority.

It was noted that if schools do not have Gaelic, as a subject at the very least, there is no pipeline of teachers as those pupils with Gaelic are the teachers of the future. By improving Secondary provision, language ability will be maintained and pupils will not lose confidence in their language skills and may be more likely to go on to teaching in Gaelic. It must be recognised however, that not all those who study Gaelic will wish to teach or work in Gaelic.

The research considered which was more important when sourcing suitably qualified Gaelic speaking teaching staff, the **language skill** or the **subject**. This gave surprising results. Only 20% of Head Teachers consulted in both Primary and Secondary said the subject was more important and 40% the language skills. 30% felt they were equally important. This is, of course, of particular importance at Secondary level where a teacher must be qualified in the subject he or she is teaching.

- Of the Secondary schools consulted, 30% put the language first and 10% put the subject first. 10.0% gave both equal importance.
- Of the Primary schools, 20% put the subject first, 10% put the language first, 10% made no comment and 20% gave both equal importance. This is an interesting outcome, as it is the Primary schools that are embedding the language in their pupils.

The quality of teaching in Gaelic is another significant issue highlighted by many consultees.

One consultee stated 'The parents most hard to convince are the existing Gaelic speakers as they feel the quality of teaching is poor and that in some cases, the pupils are better at Gaelic than the teachers'.

The difference between classroom Gaelic and everyday Gaelic was highlighted by many and the need to give teachers classroom Gaelic training was thought to be crucial. It is important to highlight that, to address this issue, Bòrd na Gàidhlig is already running 2 courses for teachers in classroom Gaelic as CPD. There are also courses available through the STREAP CPD programme for Gaelic Language Development for teachers.

In further education, including teacher training, there is already more consultation and joint working between institutions to, firstly, bring more Gaelic speakers into teaching; secondly, to teach more teachers Gaelic to enable them to teach in Gaelic and, thirdly, to adapt further education Gaelic courses to be more relevant to those who may then wish to go into teaching in Gaelic.

Several consultees suggested there must be incentives for teachers to learn Gaelic and teach in Gaelic.

There is a need to create a critical mass of teachers who could be Head Teachers of Gaelic schools. This is of particular importance as the number of Gaelic schools increases.

Discussion is, of course, ongoing and Bòrd na Gàidhlig have been working to establish ways of dealing with these issues. They held a Head Teacher seminar in 2011, for example, with speakers on bilingualism. The wider message was on the employability, cultural, economic and cognitive benefits of Gaelic.

It is clear that Bòrd na Gàidhlig are working at raising the profile of Gaelic, through working with schools, the Parental Advisory Scheme (PAS), local authorities and others. Successes and otherwise are to be regularly reviewed.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have also instigated a plan to train more teachers across Scotland through a Gaelic Language Immersion Course for already qualified teachers who wish to improve their Gaelic with a view to transferring to GME. At the time of writing, this work was out to tender.

5.4 Promotion of GME

In order to assess the current promotional routes used by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, local authorities and others to reach parents and, thereby, drive demand for GME, the following section considers the existing promotional routes and then makes recommendations based on the outcomes of this research.

It is important to stress the outcomes of the research which have highlighted the desire by parents to seek a bilingual education and give their children a second language. Which language their children were educated in was less important to the parents than their child being bilingually educated.

Organisations which promote GME may, therefore, have been mis-targeting promotions and promotional material by leading on Gaelic rather than bilingualism/second language.

It was clear from consultees that an interest in Gaelic, perhaps as a way of linking to their Scottish heritage, or the cultural benefits were of lesser importance to many parents. This was seen in parents with children in both EME and GME.

Information gathered through interviews with stakeholders, representatives of local authorities and parents' support groups suggests promoting GME to parents is now, more than ever, being achieved through a better, more joined up approach.

The current process for promoting Gaelic and GME is as follows:

In some areas, promotion starts from when a child is born. Here, GME information packs within a baby pack are distributed via organisations and groups such as PAS (Parental Advisory Scheme) to new mothers in local hospitals.

Note: PAS employs parents who have experience of GME to carry out promotional activities with parents of pre-school children. The Comann nam Pàrant Parental Officer works closely with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig Education Team on this. PAS provide a professionally produced pack of information on GME and the benefits of bilingualism. They talk with parents at nursery groups and mother & toddler groups about Gaelic Medium Education. They also attend baby and toddler shows to promote GME to parents attending these shows. However, a strong impression is created that those being targeted are already within the groups predisposed towards GME.

There is also information on a Bòrd na Gàidhlig portal where they have a teacher recruitment section and another on information on educating in Gaelic. All Scottish local authorities have been sent the link to the portal although there is no evidence as to how many have used or publicised it.

There is some follow up at croileagans, parent & toddler groups and in other pre-school groups. Local newspaper advertisements are placed at the time of Primary 1 enrolment and, in some cases, these include testimonials from parents.

These actions are combined with a variety of talks on the benefits of GME and its availability. Talks are through, for example, Stòrlann, libraries, via Book Bug etc. In addition, certain local authorities have sections on their websites explaining access to GME and its benefits.

Marketing and promotion in the last year has been implemented Scotland wide and has included Bòrd na Gàidhlig led advertising in Glasgow's underground, in Inverness airport and on telephone boxes.

Other research and anecdotal evidence has highlighted the importance of Gaelic support groups, including parents' groups, in attracting and maintaining the interest of local families to the Gaelic medium. One school noted the importance of Comann nam Pàrant and made the point that having an active Comann nam Pàrant leads to higher numbers.

As with all promotional routes, word of mouth via satisfied parents has the most impact.

New promotional booklets and materials are currently being developed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and are at the publishing stage. Wider promotion of GME will focus on 4 strategic geographic areas in order to support expanded GME provision in:

- 1) Oban,
- 2) Fort William (where the new school will need increased numbers),
- 3) Aberdeen where parents currently do not have high awareness of GME, and
- 4) Bishopbriggs, specifically Meadowburn.

The areas have been chosen after examining annual statistics on opportunities for growth, space in classes and whether schools have staff available. All promotion will help schools be sustainable.

Recommendations

To reflect the research outcomes, it is recommended that any future promotion of GME leads on bilingualism and the benefits of acquiring a second language. Promotion must be made across all geographic areas and outside the 'normal' Gaelic areas to reach those who may have a latent interest in bilingual education but who may not recognise the benefits of learning Gaelic as a route to a bilingual education.

A national campaign, rather than a local authority led campaign, would reach areas not currently served by GME but which may have a latent demand for bilingual education. The outcomes of this research have demonstrated that such an interest in bilingual education exists and this should be developed further.

In addition, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should carry out a marketing audit of all materials used by schools, local authorities and Gaelic support groups to establish best practice, reduce duplication and streamline delivery.

Promotional materials may, in some cases need to be simplified, as some materials viewed as part of this research were thought to be overly complex

This research has shown there is a need for a consistent, strategic approach to increase demand for GME and this approach should be across all year groups (0-18 years) and to parents on a national level, rather than focusing on local delivery. This is already beginning to happen.

It is recommended that any new GME promotional materials developed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Gaelic support organisations should be market tested on non Gaelic speaking parents before they are widely adopted. For example, Gaelic4Parents and the Fiosrachadh do Phàrantan website have been available but there was little evidence that parents were aware of them.

It is also recommended that rather than target existing groups who are predisposed towards GME, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and others should widen their remit to raise awareness within all groups. There should also be a promotional link with Health Boards, Ante-natal clinics, Health Visitors and other similar service providers to help raise awareness, if links do not already exist.

At a national level it was suggested that there is no real promotion, although some advertising is placed in local newspapers.

With ever declining circulations, advertising in newspapers is likely to be less effective, especially when the socio-economic profiles of the newspapers are considered. Many local papers now show a readership profile where the age of readers is well in excess of 45. Parents of young children are generally outside this profile and so are unlikely to see local newspapers as a source of information. This will be particularly true in urban areas where more immediate sources of information may be available.

There appears to be a disconnect between the local authority view of how parents access information on GME and the reported results within this research on the sources parents actually use for information.

In many cases, current promotional routes may not be reaching latent demand, i.e. parents outside the existing Gaelic speaking sphere. This is particularly important when considering the importance of word of mouth information and advice to parents.

There is a need for strategic information to be available to parents at early stages, specifically at pre-school (0-3 years).

Additional promotional strategies should be put in place at transition to Secondary, where information should be made available to parents **and** pupils on the benefits of Gaelic as a Secondary school subject or through continuing to attend GME in Secondary if it is available.

The central interactive website should be more widely publicised to allow parents to swiftly locate their nearest Gaelic Medium school; assess how wide the local Gaelic Medium provision is; find out whether that school takes placing requests from outside its local authority area and also whether the 'home' local authority area provides transport. It could also provide information on what GME is and what it entails.

Whilst information is available on the www.gaidhlig.org.uk website indicating where all the GME provision is available, maps, information on bilingualism and FAQs, it appears there is very low awareness of this amongst those consulted. The website would also allow enquiries to be captured across the country thereby increasing the information gathered on potential and latent demand.

It was interesting to note that some consultees believed that, with more information on GME, parents would automatically choose it. This belief has not been supported by the research outcomes.

Consultees suggested You Tube videos explaining the benefits of bilingualism through GME could be produced relatively easily and at little expense, giving an active promotion of GME for parents and an easily managed marketing resource for Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Finally, many parents have indicated their concern about the support, or the assumed lack of support, for them specifically regarding help with their child's homework.

In marketing terms, it would be helpful if materials were produced (whether at school, local authority or at national level), if not already available, to address parents anxieties in this area. Such materials must be easily accessible and widely promoted nationally. Through addressing these anxieties, by use of case

studies, You Tube videos, webinars, and other mechanisms, these anxieties may be diminished, leading to more enrolments in Gaelic Medium Education.

5.5 Training Programme

The importance of word of mouth promotion of the benefits of bilingualism and having a second language has been identified within the research as of high importance. This factor, linked with the need to raise awareness of GME to parents outside the traditional Gaelic speaking locations and schools would benefit from the development of a Peer Education Training Programme. It is understood that this is already happening, albeit informally, in one or two areas.

Recommendation

A programme of Peer Educator support could be developed and delivered to all age groups – e.g. 0-3 years, parent & toddler groups, pre-school groups including nurseries, Primary and Secondary education.

Peer Educators would be identified from existing GME pupils in Secondary 5 and 6. They would be encouraged to develop a small interactive drama or play that would demonstrate the benefits of GME from a pupil's point of view. The drama would be presented to parents of children not in GME or at transition.

Such training will reassure parents and pupils of the key advantages of GM education. The Programme will also provide an opportunity for questions to be asked thereby reassuring parents in particular, about the benefits of a bilingual education in Gaelic.

The researchers have experience of evaluating how successful a Peer education model can be. Pupils who may be considering leaving Gaelic language in Secondary, may be more willing to continue if they have a positive role model to follow.

There are also benefits to the Peer Educators themselves who will improve their existing presentation skills – often already highly tuned by having an education in GME.

Likewise parents will be reassured their choice is sound. This is particularly important where no previous knowledge of Gaelic is found. Here, the Peer Educator programme introduces the benefits of GME to a wider audience who may not have previously considered GME.

5.6 Parents' Language Support

When asked if schools used Gaelic speaking parents to fill any latent demand for Gaelic, it was surprising that all schools focused on parent support for pupils rather than parent support for parents. This is perhaps an untapped resource which parents without Gaelic could benefit from.

It was anticipated that Gaelic speaking parents would be utilised, where possible, to provide classroom support activity. 60% of Head Teachers in Primary schools in GME stated that they would only ever use

parents in classrooms on a voluntary basis and it was noted that, as is required by law, those parents must be Disclosure checked.

Schools who use parents' skills to underpin classroom work, stated that those skills were generally in music, drama classes, arts and writing.

One school noted that although they do have Gaelic speaking parents, they do not use them as a resource, rather they use other agencies or organisations for trips away etc.

Recommendation

There appears to be an opportunity for schools to use parents who are fluent in Gaelic to provide support for other parents who may not have the language skills themselves to enable them to help their own children. This is particularly important for parents who have chosen Gaelic specifically for a bilingual education and may influence the increased demand of GME in the longer term.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should also consider the development of a toolkit to enable schools to facilitate this opportunity.

The use of parents may also help to address comments made by some GME parents about a lack of local support or classes at times which suited working parents.

5.7 Homework

Linked to other points, above, regarding parents' language support and promotion, is the issue of homework. In all parts of the research, the issue of dealing with homework, particularly by parents who do not have Gaelic, is significant.

Many consultees, including parents, referenced the importance of parents learning Gaelic to a standard that would allow them to support their children with homework.

The issue of homework was also seen as a key barrier to entry into GME by EME parents.

Help is offered in some areas, for example, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Community Education is working on homework support which benefits parents 'hugely'.

It is understood however, that parents don't always attend such support sessions. Indeed, one parent stated that there needs to be a contract (informal or formal) with parents to ensure they understand the importance of learning Gaelic when their child enrolls in GME.

Recommendation

Aligned to the recommendation above, about the benefit of utilising the skills of parents with existing Gaelic language, these opportunities could be further developed to devise a scheme which supported parents with homework.

In addition, there is a need to develop a mechanism to deliver Gaelic classes for parents to allow them to support their children. The availability of classes for parents was by far the highest ranking support mechanism noted by those with children in GME.

Commentary from parents suggested existing offerings are either oversubscribed or held at times when working parents cannot attend.

It is recommended a series of online or You Tube webinars or similar structures are made available to help parents assist their children with homework.

A national online programme, delivered through You Tube or webinars, which parents could join **at any time** could be developed to assist in this area. This would go some way to addressing the issues of classes being oversubscribed or at inconvenient hours. It would also widen access to Gaelic to other non-speakers who could join in too.

As noted elsewhere, Gaelic4Parents and the Fiosrachadh do Phàrantan websites have been available but there was little evidence that parents were aware of them.

5.8 Transport

The issue of travel distance to school from home is an area that has been highlighted by many parents in the GME Questionnaire outcomes. Transport to a GME school is thought by many to need to be a 'legal entitlement'.

Transport is seen as a barrier to access by many others although this was predominantly noted by parents living in local authority areas where transport is NOT provided free of charge to take pupils to GME schools either within or outside the 'home' local authority area.

As noted elsewhere, those local authority areas that bid for funding through the Scottish Government funds make their own decisions on what funding is used for. It may or may not include funding transport for GME.

Transport links are seen as very important especially for parents sending children to Secondary in areas outwith their immediate local authority area.

For those schools based in cities and highly populated urban areas, (e.g. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and North Lanarkshire), the transport issue is often overcome informally through one or more parents working near the school, thereby negating the need for the local authority to provide transport.

It is difficult to see how Bòrd na Gàidhlig can influence those local authorities that do not provide transport for GME pupils as there may be a more significant demand for the funding to be used to develop other aspects of their Gaelic education delivery. For example: to cover the salary of a Gaelic teacher.

Recommendation

The availability of transport from one local authority area to another or within a local authority may be a deciding factor in some parents choosing GME. Specific examples were evidenced during this research.

Whilst it is understood transport policy is a local authority decision, it is recommended that Bòrd na Gàidhlig continues to have a dialogue with local authorities where cross border movement already exists or has the potential to exist, to encourage provision of transport and thereby drive up demand.

The development of a central interactive portal could indicate whether transport was or was not available in each local authority area.

5.9 General Recommendations

The following section gives some general recommendations which the Bòrd could examine as part of an integrated pathway to developing GME.

Bilingualism

In other countries, the local minority language is often more widely embedded in the community than Gaelic is in Scotland. The minority languages in these countries (Spain and France and, to a lesser degree, Ireland) is linked to autonomous regions. These regions desire to have a higher level of self government than they currently do and the language development has been tied in with a widespread political movement. This is not the case in Scotland.

Those who are interested in language and bilingual education may be contacting organisations such as the Alliance Française, The Goethe Institute and others to ascertain whether bilingual education is possible. It is suggested that the Bòrd contacts such organisations and asks that if they are being asked about bilingualism, they signpost GME as the language on offer for bilingual education in Scotland.

Consulates and similar should also be contacted as they will be signposting their fellow citizens to services in Scotland.

Cross Local Authority Border Schooling

The demand for, and spread of, Gaelic education across Scotland led many consultees to recommend more **cross local authority border schooling** takes place to ensure demand is met. This demand may also be serviced by increased use of new technology such as video conferencing, teaching over the internet etc.

The increase in demand for cross border schooling is thought, by some stakeholders, to be driven by parents in some geographic areas and not the local authority.

Advertising that cross border schooling is possible (through placing requests) should be included by the Bòrd in any materials which are produced to promote GME. It is thought likely that many parents are

unaware that it is possible. It does, of course, depend on the recipient school having places available and the local authority being willing to accede to a placing request.

Use Technology Smartly

In conjunction with the above, moving to a situation where technology is used to deliver learning could help meet latent demand and/or expand provision. The Western Isles are piloting a scheme where one teacher teaches many pupils at different locations through the use of real-time video conferencing/teaching over the internet.

Adopting something similar could be a method of expanding GME without needing a critical mass of pupils at a location.

Learning Support

Note: Circa 4% of consultees highlighted the following issue. The response rate is very low but was worthy of note.

Throughout the period of research, consultees, parents and educators, noted the need for more learning support for GME. Comments were made that a child had left GME due to struggling with GME which was exacerbated by their learning difficulties. However, this child also struggled in English language and the school did not have a Learning Support teacher with Gaelic.

It was also noted that children with learning difficulties had also improved their wellbeing in a positive way as a direct result of being in GME.

It is recommended that this area is considered in more detail when planning forward promotional strategies for GME teaching in the future.

There may be potential for training for Learning Support teachers in Gaelic – or specialist training for teachers who are already providing Learning Support in English.