

Case study: Clare

Introducing Clare

Clare is 39 and lives in the Highland local authority area, where she works in a Gaelic-medium primary school. Clare is not learning Gaelic at the moment but uses it every day – both at work and home.

Clare says she is “fairly fluent” at speaking and listening to Gaelic and is comfortable talking to the children in school and in reading stories to them. She doesn’t write much in Gaelic but considers her speaking and listening skills to be at an intermediate level. She says her writing skills were better in the past.

Clare’s motivation for learning Gaelic

Clare did not learn Gaelic in school or at home but was a member of the school’s Gaelic choir. Her involvement in the choir ignited her interest in Gaelic, and she studied a Gaelic module as part of her History and Celtic Studies Degree at university. [Redacted].

Clare’s experience of learning Gaelic

When she left university, Clare did a two-year distance learning Gaelic course, which involved self-study and attending some weekend courses. She has also attended a council-run Gaelic conversation circle, which she found “very helpful”. Unfortunately, the class is no longer running due to the low number of learners.

All conversations with colleagues in the primary school are in Gaelic, and this helps Clare to improve her Gaelic skills. She says she also learns from her husband and children and sometimes uses the [LearnGaelic](https://learngaelic.scot)¹⁰ and [Gaelic4Parents](https://www.gaelic4parents.com)¹¹ websites, or watches videos on social media.

Clare’s biggest success, in her view, has been conversing in Gaelic. She says, “I’d done the grammar – that was fine as a learning thing, but I’m not a linguist. My aim was to communicate so what’s really helped has been just using it.”

What’s next for Clare and her Gaelic learning?

Clare plans to continue learning Gaelic and hopes to carry on working in Gaelic-medium education. She would like to feel more confident and become more fluent in speaking Gaelic.

Clare says she will go back to the conversation classes if they start again and she would like to join a Gaelic course for parents and children. She says, “It would be great to have something the children go to and that I could attend too”. Clare would also be interested in doing a Gaelic-medium course to help with fluency and using Gaelic in real-life situations.

¹⁰ <https://learngaelic.scot>

¹¹ <https://www.gaelic4parents.com>