

Senior Phase Gaelic Survey (Autumn 2023)

Completed by 382 pupils in total (134 in GME and 248 in EME)

S4-S6 Fileantaich / GME	Nicolson (63 pupils)	Sir E Scott (17 pupils)	Lionacleit (34 pupils)	Castlebay (20 pupils)	Total: All Schools (134 pupils)
1) I am interested in using Gàidhlig in my future career.	73%	88%	68%	90%	76%
2) Gàidhlig will be relevant in my chosen field.	46%	59%	47%	60%	50%
3) I am confident in my own Gàidhlig skills.	81%	82%	79%	75%	80%
4) I wanted to carry on with Gàidhlig as a result of my BGE experience.	75%	88%	56%	70%	71%
5) Senior Phase courses on offer are relevant.	60%	53%	59%	65%	60%
6) If a broader range of courses was available, I would have been willing to study a GM subject.	68%	94%	71%	89.5%	75%
7) I would consider taking an appropriate Foundation Apprenticeship course in Gàidhlig.	44%	65%	44%	75%	51.5%**
8) I would like the opportunity to take Gàidhlig courses or experiences using technology.	52%	71%	53%	60%	56%**
9) I was encouraged by my parents/carers to study Gàidhlig to SQA level.	84%	94%	82%	85%	85%
10) I was encouraged by my peers to study Gàidhlig to SQA level.	71%	82%	41%	75%	66%
11) I was encouraged by my teachers to study Gàidhlig to SQA level.	89%	94%	79%	100%	89%
12) The social benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	59%	59%	44%	90%	60%
13) The cultural benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	62%	59%	56%	70%	61%
14) The economic benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	51%	29%	59%	40%	48.5%
15) The educational benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	68%	41%	50%	85%	63%
16) The school's ethos is strong enough in terms of hearing and seeing Gaelic.	54%	47%	59%	70%	57%
17) The benefits of being bilingual are promoted adequately by Careers staff.	67%	65%	41%	50%	57.5%
18) I feel that taking courses in Gàidhlig is more challenging than other modern languages.	70%	47%	76.5%	55%	66%
19) I feel that taking SQA exams in Gàidhlig is more challenging than taking them in other languages.	70%	82%	56%	65%	67%
20) I think that being bilingual will make a real difference when applying for jobs locally.	82.5%	94%	88%	75%	84%
21) I think that establishing Gàidhlig primary schools would be a good thing.	89%	82%	100%	100%	92.5%
22) I think that establishing Gàidhlig secondary schools would be a good thing.	78%	88%	97%	100%	87%
23) I want to stay on the islands after leaving school.	54%	41%	29%*	45%	45%

* A significant percentage (15%) of Lionacleit pupils indicated that they “didn’t know” the answer to Question 23 at the time of answering.

** The answers to Questions 7 and 8 have been affected by confusion over the question numbering on some questionnaire scripts, where it appeared as though the question numbers had been scored out. A number of pupils probably left these unanswered as a result.

<p>Additional Comments</p> <p>Below is a representative selection of comments made at the end of the form by pupils. They have been grouped under three broad themes:</p> <p>School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Tha mi smaointinn gum feum barrachd rudan a bhith ann airson foghlam na Gàidhlig, tha sinn dìreach bruidhinn a’ Ghàidhlig sa chlas agus feumaidh barrachd a bhith air a bhruidhinn.”</i>• <i>“Bhiodh barrachd cuspairean anns a Ghaidhlig mar saidheans is ceòl gu math feumail gu h-àraidh nuair a tha sinn toiseachadh an treas bliadhna.”</i>• <i>“[Tha mi ag iarraidh] barrachd cothroman cuspairean a dheanamh sa Gàidhlig agus cothroman anns an sgoil a bhruidhinn Gàidhlig.”</i>• <i>“Chan eil tidsearan gu leòr a tha a bruidhinn Gàidhlig san sgoil airson na cuspairean a dheanamh a tha sinn ag iarraidh.”</i>• <i>“Feumaidh sinn barrachd rudan san sgoil ann an Gàidhlig aig ard ìrean (S4, S5, S6)”.</i>• <i>“[Gaelic] is not promoted enough! I would like to see more inclusive Gàidhlig days, connecting schools throughout the Western Isles [...] Maybe opening doors linking Stornoway, Uibhist, Barra schools together to talk about Gaidhlig might inspire them to keep the language, make it ‘cool’ again.”</i>• <i>“I speak Gàidhlig at home and did it until third year but then decided it wouldn’t be useful for my career and N5 Gaidhlig clashed with a subject I needed.”</i>• <i>“Chan eil gu leòr cuspairean air a bhith teagasg ann an Gaidhlig – tha seo pàirt den adhbhar nach eil a’ Ghaidhlig agam math.”</i>• <i>“I was brought up with gaelic but the teachers never made it interesting and they were scary, so I wasn’t feeling comfortable doing it. I really love the language and want to bring my kids up with it in the future.”</i>• <i>“Tha e math a bhith bruidhinn ar canan. Tha e math ann am ball-coise.”</i>• <i>“[It’s the] native language of Scotland so it should be taught in schools.”</i>• <i>“There’s not enough of a range of Gaelic [subjects].”</i>• <i>“[Tha feum againn air] cuspairean eile ann an Gaidhlig, mar maths is ceol.”</i>• <i>“I wanted to take Gàidhlig Higher but they wouldn’t let me because of clashes in my timetable.”</i>• <i>“[I would like] more opportunity to speak gaidhlig.”</i>• <i>“Tha mi a smaointinn gu bheil Gàidhlig gu math feumail dhuinn, gu h-àraid nuair a tha sinn fileanta ann an dà chànan bho aois gu math òg. Chanainnsa gum bu chòir barrachd bhrosnachadh a bhith ann airson na h-oigridh le Gaidhlig.”</i>• <i>“I would like to improve my Gaelic even though I did not take it at SQA level.”</i>• <i>“Tha mi a smaoinichadh gum feum sinn barrachd a dheanamh airson Gàidhlig ann an sgoil.”</i>

Community / Employment:

- *“Tha Gàidhlig uabhasach cuideachail dhomh, bidh mi ga’ chleachdadh gu math tric air sgath ’s gu bheil mi ag obair ann an care-home.”*
- *“Tha mi airson barrachd fiosrachadh a bhith ann mu dheidhinn obraichean ann an Gàidhlig anns na h-Eileanan an Iar.”*
- *“[Tha feum againn air] barrachd mu dheidhinn obair ann an Gàidhlig.”*
- *“I find it useful being able to talk to people in public/work in Gaelic.”*
- *“Bidh mi ag obair ann am buth, agus bidh mi a bruidhinn gaidhlig ri na seann daoine.”*
- *“Chan eil obraichean ann an saidheans / maths etc. far am biodh Gàidhlig cuideachail sna h-Eileanan neo air tìr mòr.”*
- *“Gaidhlig has had a positive impact on me in my local community by allowing me to chat to the elderly members of the community and allows tòrr rùm for craic!”*
- *“[Tha feum againn air] barrachd support airson pàrantan nach eil fluent as a’ Ghaidhlig, a tha airson na clann aca a chuir a-steach do foghlam Gaidhlig.”*

Identity:

- *“Tha mi proiseil gu bheil Gàidhlig agam.”*
- *“Tha mi ag iarraidh a dol air falbh as deidh sgoil ach tha e cudromach ma tha mi a cumail a Ghaidhlig agam.”*
- *“Bidh daoine magadh air a’ Ghaidhlig.”*
- *“Feumaidh a h-uile sgoilear gaidhlig fheuchainn. Tha gaidhlig a cordadh rium air sailibh gur e canan an aite a th’ ann agus feumaidh sinn ga bhosnachadh. Bidh Gàidhlig a toirt torr daoine ri cheile.”*

S4-S6 Luchd-ionnsachaidh / EME	Nicolson (183 pupils)	Sir E Scott (20 pupils)	Lionacleit (25 pupils)	Castlebay (20 pupils)	Total: All Schools (248 pupils)
1) I am interested in using Gaelic in my future career.	19%	20%	28%	35%	21%
2) Gaelic will be relevant in my chosen field.	10%	25%	12%	30%	13%
3) I am confident in my own Gaelic skills as a learner.	27%	40%	12%	40%	27%
4) I wanted to carry on with Gaelic as a result of my BGE experience.	22%	30%	20%	40%	24%
5) Senior Phase courses on offer are relevant.	23.5%	50%	16%	55%	27%
6) If a broader range of courses was available, I would've been willing to study a subject with more Gaelic content.	25%	40%	24%	45%	28%
7) I would consider taking a Foundation Apprenticeship course in which I was supported to improve my Gaelic skills.	19%	25%	16%	35%	21%
8) I would like the opportunity to take Gaelic learner courses or experiences using technology.	23%	25%	20%	50%	25%
9) I was encouraged by my parents/carers to study Gaelic to SQA level.	29%	35%	40%	40%	31%
10) I was encouraged by my peers to study Gaelic to SQA level.	13%	35%	20%	45%	18%
11) I was encouraged by my teachers to study Gaelic to SQA level.	40%	65%	32%	50%	42%
12) The social benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	48%	75%	36%	75%	51%
13) The cultural benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	47.5%	80%	44%	80%	52%
14) The economic benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	39%	70%	28%	75%	43%
15) The educational benefits of bilingualism are promoted adequately in school.	50%	70%	48%	75%	53%
16) The school's ethos is strong enough in terms of hearing and seeing Gaelic.	47%	65%	60%	75%	52%
17) The benefits of being bilingual and Gaelic career pathways are promoted adequately by Careers staff.	37%	70%	40%	70%	43%
18) I feel that taking courses in Gaelic is more challenging than other modern languages.	45%	75%	56%	65%	50%
19) I feel that taking SQA exams in Gaelic is more challenging than taking them in other languages.	43%*	75%	60%**	55%	48%
20) I think that being bilingual will make a real difference when applying for jobs locally.	52%	80%	56%	80%	57%
21) I think that establishing Gaelic primary schools would be a good thing.	56%	85%	64%	80%	61%
22) I think that establishing Gaelic secondary schools would be a good thing.	51%	70%	48%	80%	55%
23) I want to stay on the islands after leaving school.	34%	25%	12%	40%	32%

* A significant percentage (34%) of Nicolson pupils indicated that Gaelic was “equally challenging” in answer to Question 19.

** A significant percentage (40%) of Lionacleit pupils indicated that Gaelic was “equally challenging” in answer to Question 19.

Additional Comments

Below is a representative selection of comments made at the end of the form by pupils. They have been grouped under three broad themes:

School:

- *"There needs to be more opportunities outside of the classroom [to speak Gaelic], as seniors are only speaking Gaelic in the Gaelic class."*
- *"I would study Gaelic but I need to focus on other exams."*
- *"[I] wish I learned it when I was younger."*
- *"I think taking gaelic is pushed too hard."*
- *"Personally I believe that if a child from a young age is put into Gaelic speaking Nursery & Primary, their parent(s) who may not know any Gaelic should also have resources available to them so that they may learn the language for themselves and to help their child."*
- *"I think bilingualism in languages besides gaelic is not promoted enough."*
- *"[I was] brought up in a Gaelic speaking household and went to GME nursery, [but] chose to join EME, and regret my decision."*
- *"[I] never had many opportunities when I was younger to learn Gaelic, so when I had it in secondary I wasn't really interested which I regret now."*
- *"I think that it is a good thing to promote the language but I think that if you over push it some people [feel] lectured by it."*
- *"I desperately wanted to study Gaelic, [but] due to the columns arrangement I was unable to."*
- *"Gaelic is quite hard to learn."*
- *"[The school's Gaelic ethos] is not made clear, though lots of teachers make an effort to speak it."*
- *"Most of my answers were based on the difficulties I had in primary with dyslexia [which] made me switch to english medium."*
- *"I think the introduction of gaelic at a young age is a good idea as it gives children an opportunity to pursue it if they wish but gaelic shouldn't be forced on children who don't take an interest in it."*
- *"I don't see what gaelic is going to do for me."*
- *"[There should be] more traditional music as part of the higher SQA course, and more gaelic classes available from S1."*
- *"[I] want to speak Gaelic but don't enjoy school courses."*
- *"I feel that many EME students, especially if not originally from the islands, are turned away from Gaelic due to the blatant segregation particularly in Primary, but also somewhat in Secondary, which makes them feel excluded from certain opportunities."*
- *"[I would not consider taking a FA course in which I was supported to improve my Gaelic skills] because I don't like FAs, even in English."*
- *"Gaelic should not be enforced, only optional."*
- *"I wish I was taught a lot more [Gaelic] in primary."*
- *"I feel it is very hard to learn gaelic unless it is offered from the very start of your education. It was not an option to do gaelic in my primary school."*
- *"Gaelic does not interest me."*
- *"I think having gaelic will help me in the future."*

Community / Employment:

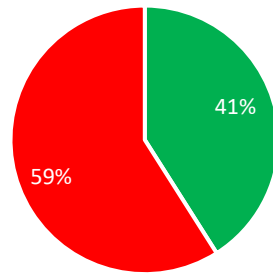
- *"[There should be] more career options in Gaelic."*
- *"I use gaelic when I am at work talking to my boss and customers!"*
- *"My mum works in an old folks home so [Gaelic] is useful as most of them speak Gaelic."*
- *"I only moved here in 2020 from a place that didn't speak gaelic, so it was hard to start trying to speak gaelic."*
- *"A lot of local businesses under appreciate Gaelic."*
- *"My mother is from harris and Gaelic is her first language. I want to learn Gaelic in case my mother forgets her English when she gets older, as that happened with my Gran and I can no longer understand her."*
- *"Gaelic is alright if you would like an island job."*
- *"Gaelic doesn't have any significance outside the Western Isles."*

Identity:

- *"My dad's family all speak gaelic and I want to be able to carry it on."*
- *"My Dad inspired me."*

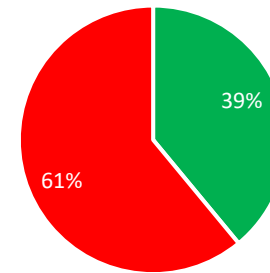
Key Results – GME and Learner Surveys Combined (382 pupils)

1. I am interested in using Gaelic in my future career



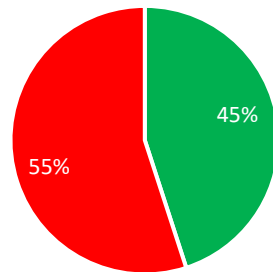
■ YES ■ NO

5. Senior Phase courses on offer are relevant



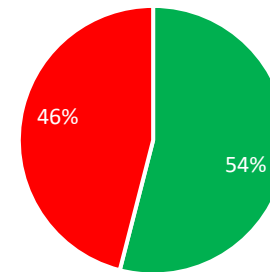
■ YES ■ NO

14. Economic benefits of bilingualism are promoted



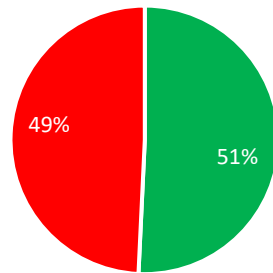
■ YES ■ NO

16. School ethos is strong in terms of Gaelic



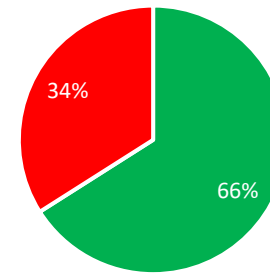
■ YES ■ NO

17. Benefits of bilingualism promoted by Careers staff



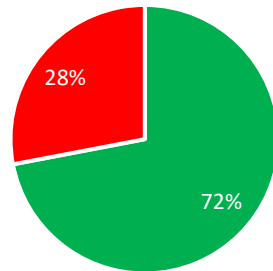
■ YES ■ NO

20. Being bilingual will help in applying for local jobs



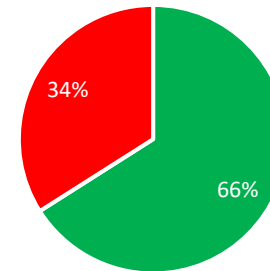
■ YES ■ NO

21. Support for Gaelic Primary Schools



■ YES ■ NO

22. Support for Gaelic Secondary Schools



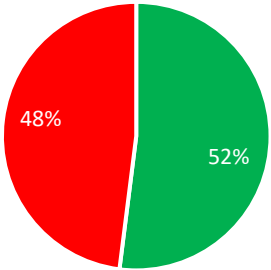
■ YES ■ NO

Observations

- Only 41% of all pupils asked said they were interested in using Gaelic in their future career.
- A much higher percentage of GME pupils (76%) were interested in using Gaelic in their future career, compared to those in EME (21%). Is it time to examine whether the Gaelic curriculum is sufficiently broad enough to encourage more pupils, particularly in EME, to seek careers using Gaelic?
- A much higher percentage of GME pupils (80%) are confident in their Gaelic skills compared to EME pupils (27%). Although unsurprising that the percentage was larger amongst GME pupils, the disparity between GME and EME pupils here is huge.
- Only 39% of all pupils, i.e. GME and EME combined, thought that the Senior Phase curriculum was relevant to their needs. This indicates perhaps that the curriculum needs to be re-assessed in terms of relevancy. (This figure is also in line with the research done in Summer 2023 by Sgioba na Gàidhlig on the views of 16-25 year-olds regarding Gaelic, where only 40% thought that the Gaelic curriculum was appropriate to their needs.)
- A high percentage of GME pupils (75%) said that if a broader range of courses was available, they would have been willing to study a GM subject.
- 85% of GME pupils said that their parents encouraged them to study Gaelic, whilst only 31% of EME pupils said that their parents encouraged them to study Gaelic. This suggests that parental engagement is very important in terms of supporting pupils in their Gaelic learning.
- Only 45% of all pupils surveyed thought that enough was being done in school to emphasise the economic benefits of bilingualism. This has real implications in terms of being able to fill posts in the community where Gaelic skills are advantageous or essential. This figure is identical to the figure in the 16-25 year-olds survey who said that enough was being done in the Isles to promote Gaelic economically.
- Similarly, only 51% of all pupils surveyed thought that the benefits of bilingualism were promoted by schools Career staff.
- A disappointingly low percentage of all pupils surveyed (54%) felt that their school's ethos was strong enough in terms of hearing and seeing Gaelic. Clearly, work needs to be done to create a stronger Gaelic ethos in schools, aligned to stronger messages about the economic benefits of bilingualism.
- There is a strong perception that having Gaelic skills will assist pupils in terms of looking for jobs locally, with 66% of all pupils believing this to be the case. However, as already discussed, only 21% of EME pupils were interested in using Gaelic in their future career. This emphasises once more that the Senior Phase curriculum probably should be re-assessed for relevancy.
- There is very strong support for establishing Gaelic Primary schools (72%) and Secondary schools (66%) as an initiative to support and develop the language, even amongst those who indicated very little interest in Gaelic.

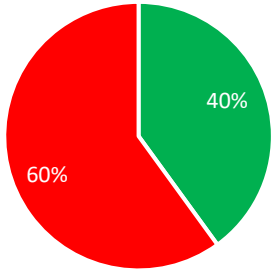
Senior Phase Gaelic Survey + 16-25 Gaelic Attitudinal Survey Combined
(Sample size – 704)

Economic benefits of bilingualism promoted in school



■ YES ■ NO

Senior Phase courses are relevant



■ YES ■ NO