

Learn Gaelic at school with Fèisgoil Development in Highland Perthshire

Following its launch in August 2012, Perth and Kinross Council became the first Council to take advantage of 'Fèisgoil', Fèisean nan Gàidheal's Educational Service, specifically its **Learn Gaelic at School** programme which is currently benefitting 3 schools in Highland Perthshire.

- **Royal School of Dunkeld**
- **Kinloch Rannoch Primary School**
- **Glenlyon Primary School**

Between August and November 2012 Gaelic lessons were delivered by Fèisean nan Gàidheal officer Angus Macleod.

*The objective of the 'Learn Gaelic at School' programme is the retainment and attainment of the Gaelic language through **active learning**. In addition to having the opportunity to learn the Gaelic language from a fluent Gaelic speaker, pupils also have the opportunity to learn about the heritage of the Gaelic language locally and nationally.*

Lesson Plan

Angus followed a lesson plan which, week by week, introduced new vocabulary and phrases related to a variety of familiar subjects which were then revised and incorporated into the lessons that followed. To aid pupil engagement some lessons were developed to tie in with class room projects or national events or festivals. Here is a list of the vocabulary topics covered during this period:

- Introductions
- What's your name?
- Numbers
- How old are you?
- Colours
- Days of the week
- Months of the year
- Happy Birthday
- Halloween
- How are you?
- The body
- Clothing
- Animals
- The weather
- Gaelic place names

Tuition

- **Drilling**

A set, or if time permitted, two sets of words and phrases related to a familiar topic were introduced per lesson.

Flash cards were frequently used to illustrate the word and to support retainment. The whole class and each pupil individually were encouraged to repeat the word or phrase until all of the pupils were comfortable with the pronunciation .

- **Song**

For the younger pupils between P1-P3, simple Gaelic songs which featured the new vocabulary were regularly taught and played an important part of lessons for this age group. A sing-a-long, rhyme or action song was a great way to aid the introduction and retainment of new vocabulary and proved lots of fun for the pupils too.

- **Conversation**

The new words or phrases were consolidated with a number of active learning exercises. The exercises would encourage pupils to converse with each other in groups or pairs, using the new vocabulary. These exercises were the key element of each lesson

- **Reading and Writing**

Although the emphasis is on conversational Gaelic, for P4-P7 pupils, word recognition and reading and writing skills were also developed with the aid of flash cards. Simple exercises which help familiarise pupils with Gaelic spelling and sentence structure are useful when revising particular sets of vocabulary.

When introducing the written form of vocabulary, pupils will more often than not read and pronounce the word using English phonetics. This can lead to incorrect pronunciation in the future if the differences between English and Gaelic phonetics are not brought to their attention. Worksheet were handed out to round off a lesson or left with the class teacher to use with pupils afterwards.

Format

Lessons were delivered once a week and ranged from 50 minutes in length at the Royal School of Dunkeld to 60 and 90 minute lessons at Kinloch Rannoch Primary School and up to 120 minutes at Glen Lyon Primary School.

All classes were catered for with enough flexibility in lesson content to suit each schools timetable and accommodate differences in class size and age. Learning groups took the form of individual year groups as was the case in Royal School of Dunkeld or composite classes in Kinloch Rannoch Primary where provision was made for P1-P3 and P4 –P7 groupings.

In Glen Lyon Primary there was similar provision but the opportunity to begin with ‘warm-up’ language based games and action songs with all year groups together was possible.

Lesson plans and teaching approaches were adapted to accommodate all groups ranging from a composite class of 6 to large year group of 20.

Teaching Space

As space to move and interact was necessary in most cases, provision of an appropriate teaching space before the lesson began was required. With permission from class teacher, a space was cleared in the classroom beforehand. Although the gym hall, drama studio or playground would suit, the majority of Gaelic lessons were delivered in the school class room and this was the preferred option. Lessons were always planned with a class room environment in mind and benefited from the established discipline structure set by the class teacher and applied if necessary.

More information about Fèisgoil and its other service can be found on the Fèisean nan Gàidheal website at www.feisean.org/feisgoil

New of the official launch at Fèisean nan Gàidheal's 2012 AGM in Fort William can be found here. <http://www.feisean.org/en/news/article.php?ID=78>

The Fèisgoil 'Learning Gaelic at School' programme is aimed at schools nationwide.

To request provision in your school or local authority contact:

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