

The Report of the Gaelic Medium Teachers' Action Group

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present this report to the Minister for Education and Young People, Peter Peacock, on behalf of the members of the Group. On their behalf I would also like to thank the Minister for his ongoing support for Gaelic education and for inviting this Group to prepare recommendations on the subject of Gaelic teacher education and supply.

It is clear that if Gaelic medium education is to develop and expand within the Scottish education system there is a need for more teachers. The recruitment and supply of Gaelic medium education teachers is clearly critical to the success of Gaelic Medium Education. We believe it is also vital to the survival of Gaelic as a living language.

The key recommendations of this report need to be implemented as soon as possible. If they are, we are confident that Gaelic medium education can be expanded at primary and developed into the secondary sector in a way that has not happened in the past. We can already see the danger that without new teachers coming into the system Gaelic medium education might reach a comfortable plateau. We must not allow that to happen.

I want to thank all the members of the Group who contributed so freely of their knowledge and time. I believe the strength of this report is that it represents the views of a group of educationists with both an intimate knowledge of, and commitment to, the Gaelic education sector. In particular I would like to thank Douglas Ansdell and Eoghan Stiubhart, our colleagues from the Scottish Executive, who have ensured that our Report has been delivered in good time. The Group met for the first time in March and the fact that our Report is now completed reflects not just the work of the Group but also the urgency with which we view the situation.

I hope that as a result of this report, we will see significant improvements in Gaelic teacher supply and that this will, in turn, allow Gaelic medium education to develop successfully across Scotland.

Matthew M Maclver

Registrar/Chief Executive GTCS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

A key appointment is needed to drive forward Gaelic teacher recruitment

- A Gaelic teacher recruitment officer should be appointed. This appointment could run, in the first instance, for two years, be located within Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and would co-ordinate many of the activities identified in this report.

Expansion of new routes into Gaelic teaching

- The Strathclyde/UHIMI course should be made available from a wider range of partner colleges, particularly Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO), Colaiste Bheinn na Faoghla and Lochaber College. Aberdeen should extend their distance learning provision to include a programme for secondary teachers. All of these courses should be effectively promoted in relevant areas as routes into teaching.

Elimination of course fees for students following Initial Teacher Education courses on a part-time basis

- Scottish Executive's Enterprise Transport and Lifelong Learning Department should, as soon as possible, revise its policy requiring the payment of fees by part-time teaching students.

Implementation of the General Teaching Council Report on Gaelic medium education

- The GTC should seek to take forward, with the education faculties, the implementation of the recommendations in the report 'Teaching in Gaelic Medium Education, Recommendations for Change'.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig should ensure that the supply and training of Gaelic medium education teachers remains a priority

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig should ensure that the supply and training of Gaelic medium education teachers remains a priority and features prominently in the National Gaelic Language Plan and the National Gaelic Education Strategy, required by the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Language courses to assist students and teachers

- Language courses should be offered to address student and teacher language deficit in order to allow them to progress to Gaelic medium teacher training or teaching.

All Gaelic students to be placed in Gaelic classes

- The Scottish Executive should seek to ensure that all Gaelic medium probationers are placed in Gaelic medium classes and the Executive should seek to use the £6000 preference waiver to attract students to priority areas and authorities should seek to ensure probationers continue within Gaelic medium classes.

Support for Gaelic speaking teachers to transfer to Gaelic medium education

- The Scottish Executive should continue to support the development of the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig course which would assist teachers to transfer to Gaelic medium and that this should be extended to primary teachers.

Establish promotion pathways for Gaelic teachers at Primary and Secondary

- Local authorities should seek to provide promotion opportunities for Gaelic teachers at primary and secondary by considering them for the position of principal teachers and heads of faculty. These posts may serve either one school or a cluster of schools where appropriate.

Support and development of Gaelic Language in the Primary School

- The Scottish Executive and local authorities should support the development of Aberdeen's GLPS courses for teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Gaelic Medium Education in Scotland

- I.1.1 There is now, in Scotland, a significant commitment to Gaelic medium education (GME). The evidence for this is found in a number of initiatives which are being supported by central government, local authorities and by the main education agencies and bodies. This commitment is linked to the shared aim of creating a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland and the recognition that Gaelic medium education has a key part to play in achieving this aim.
- I.1.2 Gaelic medium education has been an undoubted success story for the language. This has produced, in Scotland, a distinctive and confident Gaelic medium education sector within Scottish education that now can boast of many fine examples of learning and teaching. Above all, this sector is producing young people, at the end of primary education, who are confident and fluent in two languages. The Executive's provision of Gaelic specific grant has had an important role to play in this.
- I.1.3 Gaelic medium classes are fairly recent in Scottish education. For much of the twentieth century Gaelic was only taught as a subject and was hardly ever used as the medium of teaching in schools, even in Gaelic speaking areas. Although important attempts were made to address this in the 1960s and 1970s, not until the 1980s did parental pressure encourage local authorities to establish Gaelic medium classes. The first classes were opened in Inverness and Glasgow and there are now 61 primary schools with Gaelic medium classes and 36 Scottish secondary schools offering Gaelic for fluent speakers.
- I.1.4 Gaelic classes for learners, whether at primary or secondary, are also an important aspect of Gaelic development. There has been an encouraging rise in the numbers attending learner classes in the last few years. Numbers have risen from 2370 in 2002-03 to 2513 in 2003-04 and 2583 in 2004-05. Gaelic for learners is also taught in the primary school and is organised in different ways. These classes have an important role to play in terms of increasing interest in the language and culture. In the long term they carry the potential for increasing the number of fluent speakers and possibly the supply of teachers.

I.2 Progress and Development

- I.2.1 The Scottish Parliament was established in 1999 and since then there have been a number of important initiatives which have sought to consolidate and expand Gaelic medium education in Scotland. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, early in the life of the new Scottish Parliament, contained important Gaelic provisions and signalled that Gaelic was a National Priority for school education in Scotland.
- I.2.2 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 imposes a duty on authorities to publish an annual statement of improvement objectives. This annual statement must include an account of an authority's Gaelic medium education provision. The Act also gives Ministers the ability to set objectives for the National Priorities for school education, one of which is Gaelic.
- I.2.3 Following this lead, several authorities have developed and improved their Gaelic medium education provision and most areas of Gaelic education have benefited. There have been improvements in funding, in materials, in teacher training, in ICT, in support for pupils, teachers and parents and in policy statements from authorities on how Gaelic medium education will be delivered in their areas.

- 1.2.4 Gaelic education has also benefited from reports and research which have focused on specific aspects of provision. Guidance has also been prepared and issued by the Scottish Executive to inform the development of Gaelic medium education. Whilst positive, however, these signs of vitality have also served to identify key areas which are acting as constraints on the growth of Gaelic education.

1.3 The Teachers' Action Group

- 1.3.1 One of the areas which requires further attention to allow Gaelic medium education to expand is the recruitment and supply of Gaelic medium teachers. Some areas of the country have experienced significant difficulties in securing teachers and expansion has been held back as a result. In some situations this has disrupted pupils' education with a measure of disappointment for all concerned. This has been a feature of Gaelic primary education, but it has also been keenly felt at secondary, where authorities have been seeking to improve continuity between primary and secondary and extend the range of subjects available in Gaelic.
- 1.3.2 In recognition of this, the Minister for Education and Young People set up the Teachers' Action Group to look at the recruitment and supply of Gaelic medium teachers and to make recommendations. The Group agreed that its remit should include consideration of: strategies to increase the supply of Gaelic teachers, existing teacher education opportunities, professional preparation for Gaelic teachers and professional support for teachers.
- 1.3.3 There are important links between the Teachers' Action Group and other recent initiatives such as the establishment of the Gaelic ICT Secondary Implementation Group. The aim of the Gaelic ICT Implementation Group is to explore virtual solutions to delivery in Gaelic medium at secondary level which could offer a way of meeting the increased demand for Gaelic subject teaching in secondary schools. This involves looking at which subjects to focus on, the preparation of course materials and appropriate delivery mechanisms. The work of the Teachers' Action Group also includes important links to recent work by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and the local authority Management Review Group (MRG).

1.4 Teacher Supply – A Priority

- 1.4.1 The Group welcomed the recent report on Gaelic education from HMIE and noted that it reflected the very considerable achievements made in taking forward Gaelic education since their previous report in 1994. The Group was also pleased to see the report's strong emphasis on secondary education and the need to develop Gaelic at those stages more vigorously, capitalising on the growth of Gaelic in primary and developments in new technology. The decision by a number of authorities to take forward secondary developments in Gaelic is further evidence of this emphasis. In the recent HMIE report, the areas for improvement included ensuring 'that there are sufficient well qualified Gaelic and Gaelic medium teachers to meet future demands'. The Management Review Group has consistently emphasised the need for practical measures to assist the recruitment and training of Gaelic teachers and Comunn na Gàidhlig have also made an important contribution to this.
- 1.4.2 A strong focus on the importance of Gaelic education and the need for an increased supply of teachers was also a feature of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 as it progressed through the Scottish Parliament. This was evident in consultation responses, in debate and in evidence given to the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament. Furthermore, the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament also reflected these issues again in their report on the 5th February 2005, where they stressed the need for the Scottish Executive to improve the recruitment of Gaelic teachers.

'The Committee welcomes the fact the Scottish Executive stresses to the funding councils that Gaelic is a priority area and that a recruitment campaign for Gaelic medium teachers will be launched during the course of 2005. However, the Committee notes with concern the discrepancy between supply and demand for Gaelic medium teacher training.'

- 1.4.3 The Education Committee emphasised that this discrepancy should be 'addressed in the national Gaelic education strategy' which is required by the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The Teachers' Action Group welcomed these comments and has endeavoured to respond to these concerns by the measures outlined in this report. The Report contains a number of recommendations at the end of each section and, at the front, a number of key recommendations that the Group has decided are crucial to addressing the current shortage of Gaelic teachers. The Group believes that this report sets out the steps to provide an improved supply of new Gaelic Medium teachers to meet the ever growing demand for Gaelic Medium Education in Scotland.

2. TEACHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 Current Teacher Education Opportunities

- 2.1.1 There are seven teacher education institutions in Scotland and of these seven, three make provision for teacher education in Gaelic. These are the faculties of education at the University of Strathclyde and University of Aberdeen and to a lesser extent the University of Glasgow. Initial teacher education in Gaelic takes place within the context of the B.Ed and PGDE courses. In recent years, Aberdeen and Strathclyde have both established partnerships with other bodies to deliver part-time and distance learning or off-campus provision for Gaelic teacher education.
- 2.1.2 The Scottish Executive conducts an annual Teacher Workforce Planning Exercise. This process involves examining the demographics of the profession, future pupil numbers and movements into and out of the profession, in order to project numbers of new teachers needed. The outcome of this process results in Guidance being prepared by SEED for SFC. This Guidance includes advice on a number of areas apart from those mentioned above, such as subject priorities and the requirements for denominational and Gaelic teachers.
- 2.1.3 This Guidance advises SFC that the supply of teachers able to teach in the medium of Gaelic continues to be a priority for Scottish Ministers. The Executive also has a Partnership commitment to continue to invest in Gaelic medium education including the provision of more Gaelic medium teacher training places. In accordance with this the Executive's Education Department has asked the Council to continue to assist by promoting provision in this area. At present the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) provides funding for a total of 20 places for Gaelic speakers on the University of Strathclyde's PGDE (Primary) course and for five places at the University of Aberdeen.
- 2.1.4 Furthermore the Executive expects SFC to consider pursuing the introduction of further avenues to increase the number of Gaelic medium teachers in both the primary and secondary sectors while continuing to bear in mind that all students for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) must meet the same minimum academic entry requirements. Where possible, consideration should also be given to overseas students who may be qualified to enter courses but for whom fees may be prohibitive.
- 2.1.5 The Guidance to SFC also recommends that all teacher education providers continue to be encouraged to promote a positive approach in relation to applicants for all ITE courses by interviewing all who would be able to teach in Gaelic medium education. Both the Universities of Strathclyde and Aberdeen observe this and seek to interview all applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements.
- 2.1.6 Applicants are interviewed bilingually and are also asked to complete a written exercise to provide evidence of Gaelic literacy. All applicants who provide evidence of fluency, literacy and suitability to deliver the curriculum in Gaelic medium are given a place subject to confirming that they meet the basic requirements.

2.2 New Routes

- 2.2.1 The Executive's Guidance to SFC includes support for pursuing the introduction of further avenues into Gaelic teaching. Over recent years this has produced important new routes into Gaelic teaching. These new routes have been developed in order to attract into the teaching profession people who may not be able to move to Glasgow or Aberdeen for an extended period and it allows them to train and complete placements in the areas in which they live.
- 2.2.2 These new routes involve a significant commitment on behalf of the training providers and they are already producing results. In June 2005, 10 Gaelic medium teachers emerged from two new routes into Gaelic medium teaching, one established by the University of Aberdeen and another established through a partnership between the University of Strathclyde and the University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute (UHIMI).
- 2.2.3 The PGDE Strathclyde/UHIMI course is a 36 week off-campus course that offers a qualification to teach in both Gaelic medium and English medium classes. The course is taught in Gaelic and English and the teaching placements are in Gaelic classes.
- 2.2.4 The University of Aberdeen, in partnership with Highland Council, has also taken important steps to address the difficulties of recruiting primary teachers, which includes Gaelic teachers. From session 2003-2004, Aberdeen University offered a two-year part-time distance learning course. Four of the students who secured a place on this course will be able to teach in the Gaelic medium on qualifying as a teacher. The course will again be offered from August 2005: approximately 50% of the course is delivered through the medium of Gaelic and a minimum of 50% of placements will be in Gaelic medium classes.
- 2.2.5 At present, students on the part-time courses (ie Aberdeen) are required to pay their own tuition fees. The Group was of the strong opinion that this should not be the case and that the Executive should ensure that funding is available for part-time courses, as it is for full-time courses.
- 2.2.6 A highly positive dimension of both courses has been the input of practising teachers as associate tutors. Course delivery and assessments are undertaken by associate tutors from the local authority as well as by university tutors. All students will have school experience placements within their local authority and, in the case of PGDE(P) students, induction placements are guaranteed within their local authority area. The Group felt that these courses were very promising initiatives and that they should be encouraged, promoted and further developed. The Group felt that both Aberdeen and Strathclyde should strive to utilise jointly associate tutors in schools.

2.3 Expansion of New Routes

- 2.3.1 Both Strathclyde/UHIMI and Aberdeen have plans to extend the part-time and distance provision mentioned above. The Strathclyde/UHIMI course was extended to Islay in August 2005 and Aberdeen's course will be available also as a secondary part-time course in partnership with Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.
- 2.3.2 The Group welcomed these developments and felt there might be opportunities to expand these new routes into other areas of Scotland where people might benefit from studying closer to the areas in which they live or where courses that had been offered at primary level could be offered at secondary level too.
- 2.3.3 In launching the distance learning course Strathclyde/UHIMI publicity suggested that this course was also available through video-conference techniques at a number of other UHI colleges and learning centres across the Gaidhealtachd. The Group believes that there may also be scope for access to these courses to be extended to people living in urban areas and to all relevant UHIMI centres, particularly Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Colaiste Bheinn na Faoghla, Lochaber College and Ionad Chaluim Chille in Islay. The Group especially felt that Sabhal Mòr Ostaig must be actively involved in teacher training and a range of associated professional developments.

Recommendations:

- The Strathclyde/UHIMI course should be made available from a wider range of partner colleges, particularly Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Colaiste Bheinn na Faoghla and Lochaber College. Strathclyde/UHIMI courses should be effectively promoted in relevant areas as routes into teaching.
- Aberdeen University should also make their secondary part-time distance learning course available throughout Scotland.
- SEETLLD should, as soon as possible, revise its policy requiring the payment of fees by part-time teaching students.
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig should be actively involved in teacher education and associated professional development.
- SFC should place a high priority on offering support for new initiatives as far as Gaelic Medium teacher education is concerned.
- There should be improved partnership and co-operation between Gaelic ITE providers and partners, especially as regards the joint usage of associate tutors.

3. INCREASING RECRUITMENT

3.1 Recruitment

- 3.1.1 There have been commendable and welcome efforts to promote a career in Gaelic medium teaching in Scotland. In this, authorities, universities and Comunn na Gàidhlig have been active. The 'Thig a Theagasg' materials, prepared by Comunn na Gàidhlig, have been distributed and used at Careers Fairs. Authorities and universities have also advertised in the press and prepared recruitment materials.
- 3.1.2 There is, however, still a need for a more co-ordinated and targeted approach which promotes Gaelic medium teaching as an attractive career choice. This approach would combine the work of schools, universities, community education, local authority efforts and the careers service.
- 3.1.3 This need could be addressed by the appointment of a Gaelic teacher recruitment officer. This appointment could run, in the first instance, for two years, be located within Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and would co-ordinate the various activities identified in this report. This would include co-ordination of recruitment literature, running conferences on Gaelic education careers, attending careers fairs, school/university visits and advising Careers Scotland.

3.2 Promotion of GM Teaching

- 3.2.1 In addition to the work that could be undertaken by a dedicated officer, the work of promoting Gaelic teaching could be assisted by other means. There is a role for community leaders and those working in Gaelic organisations to promote Gaelic teaching. In addition, head teachers and guidance teachers, along with careers advisers, have important roles to play in their work with pupils. There is also a role for local authorities to encourage pathways into Gaelic teaching for those staff who may have Gaelic language skills which are not being used.
- 3.2.2 In schools, work experience could play a role in promoting Gaelic medium teaching as a career choice from an early age in secondary school. Gaelic medium secondary pupils should readily have the opportunity to do their work experience and/or community involvement modules in Gaelic medium primary schools. This early exposure to the educational environment from another perspective is important and other Gaelic sectors should also be engaged to ensure that, if possible, Gaelic school pupils receive a Gaelic medium work experience and to encourage Gaelic staff to establish links with the universities.
- 3.2.3 Schools, in particular, have a duty to ensure that Gaelic medium pupils have a range of opportunities to consider with regard to careers in Gaelic and Gaelic teaching. In this respect the ethos in schools has to be one that positively promotes the aspirations of Gaelic medium pupils to view careers in Gaelic-related professions as realistic, fulfilling and achievable.
- 3.2.4 The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 gives Bòrd na Gàidhlig a strategic and advisory role in promoting the use of Gaelic in Scotland. In the National Gaelic Language Plan and the National Gaelic Education Strategy, required by the Act, Bòrd na Gàidhlig should ensure that the supply and training of GME teachers remains a priority.

Recommendations

- A Gaelic teacher recruitment officer should be appointed. This appointment could run, in the first instance, for two years, be located within Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and would co-ordinate many of the activities identified in this report.
- Careers Scotland should be encouraged to develop a focus on Gaelic careers, with a specific focus on promoting Gaelic teaching. This should be emphasised in a guidance letter from Ministers and in any Gaelic language plan which the Careers Service may develop under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act.
- Gaelic medium secondary school pupils should be offered the option of Gaelic-speaking environments as part of their work experience when possible. Local authorities should seek to ensure that young people can do their work experience in Gaelic medium classes.
- The Scottish Executive should promote and advertise Gaelic teaching as an attractive career choice.
- Aberdeen and Strathclyde, and their partner institutions, should ensure that a variety of approaches are used to encourage interest and applications by potential teachers.
- Bòrd na Gàidhlig should ensure that the supply and training of Gaelic medium education teachers remains a priority and features prominently in the National Gaelic Language Plan and the National Gaelic Education Strategy, required by the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act.

4. PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

4.1 Gaelic Content

- 4.1.1 In 1999 the General Teaching Council (Scotland) issued a report on 'Teaching in Gaelic Medium Education, Recommendations for Change'. This report made a number of important recommendations in connection with courses, student selection and teacher qualifications. Many of the recommendations in this report are still relevant and the Group felt that the GTCS should seek to implement these and to ensure that all teachers qualifying with Gaelic-related qualifications receive formal certification verifying this as part of their qualification.
- 4.1.2 There are two other issues arising out of the GTCS report which the Group would like to emphasise and which are directly relevant to the work of the Teachers' Action Group. The first is the need for a significant aspect of ITE courses and related placements to be in the medium of Gaelic in order to develop and maintain the fluency, confidence and linguistic development of students.
- 4.1.3 The Group felt it was extremely important that Gaelic medium students undertake placements in Gaelic medium settings and if possible to vary the size and level of the class. If that were done it should be possible for students following a joint course to gain experience of teaching their second subject through the medium of Gaelic, where that subject is available through the medium of Gaelic. The new arrangements directly involving local authorities in student placements gives an opportunity to ensure that Gaelic medium students are placed in Gaelic classes with support from schools and the local authorities. In Aberdeen's PGDE (Primary), students have a minimum of 50% of their placements in Gaelic medium, in upper stages and immersion, and where possible they also undertake their nursery placement in Gaelic medium.
- 4.1.4 The second issue is the need for Gaelic modules in ITE to assist with the diverse requirements and particular needs of Gaelic medium teaching. For example, students should have the opportunity to focus on distinctive aspects of Gaelic medium education. At present, in Aberdeen's PGDE, Primary, the modules delivered through the medium of Gaelic include: Professional Focus, Preparation for School Experience, Language (English) and Maths. Again, as mentioned above in 4.1.1, the GTCS report is quite clear on these issues.

4.2 Language Deficit

- 4.2.1 As stated above, in order to proceed beyond the interview an applicant will have to demonstrate appropriate fluency in Gaelic. Both Universities of Aberdeen and Strathclyde acknowledge that not all applicants are accepted and often it can be the level of fluency or competence in Gaelic that can be the reason for failure to proceed beyond interview. The Group felt that consideration might be given to offering some support to applicants to remedy mild language deficits. If some support was in place, possibly in terms of an additional course, this would increase the number of Gaelic medium students training to be teachers.
- 4.2.2 It is also now generally accepted that even amongst those students who are successful in securing a place in Gaelic Initial Teacher Education, there are some who require linguistic support. There are two types of support required but at present there is no means of providing that support, other than during University inputs, which are already demanding in terms of course requirements. In the case of learners, there is often a need to improve their skills in speaking and listening and in the case of native speakers there is often the need for support in literacy in areas such as language structures and orthography. The Group felt that there was a need to address this question of the language deficit of some students and that this be addressed by means of a short summer course.

- 4.2.3 Such a course should be available for all students: those wishing to go into ITE but who have a linguistic deficit; those who have come through the system and are about to embark upon their induction year, but feel that they need further assistance, either in fluency and/or literacy; and also those qualified teachers who speak Gaelic but are currently unable to teach in Gaelic medium through lack of confidence or linguistic ability.
- 4.2.4 The course could be designed to suit the needs of all Gaelic medium students and perhaps adapted to suit individual need in terms of subject specialism. For practising teachers the completion of the course would enable them to teach in Gaelic throughout Scotland. It would be to the benefit of a local authority to encourage and support teachers in attending a course of this nature.

4.3 Induction Arrangements

- 4.3.1 The placement of probationer teachers to the teaching profession is now managed directly through the General Teaching Council and the Scottish Executive as a result of the Teachers' Agreement for the 21st Century. This arrangement has been in place since school sessions 2002-03. The Teacher Induction Scheme offers all newly qualified teachers a teaching post for a year with a Scottish local authority, with a reduced class contact time and the opportunity to reach the Standard for Full Registration in one school year.
- 4.3.2 Students are asked to nominate, in preference order, the five local authorities that they would be willing to work in for their induction year. The Executive asks local authorities to offer up vacancies for the Scheme. A computer system randomly allocates probationers to teaching posts. Gaelic probationers are, however, matched manually taking account of their preferences and local authority vacancies.
- 4.3.3 There were 16 Gaelic medium primary probationers who qualified for the 2005-06 school session and they were all placed in Gaelic medium posts. Concerns still remain about the operation of this system and whether authorities kept the probationers in Gaelic medium classes. The Group welcomed the Executive's commitment to continue to monitor closely the situation and, where possible, to take action to ensure that Gaelic medium teachers stay in Gaelic medium.
- 4.3.4 The Group also believes that Bòrd na Gàidhlig should require such a practice to be put in place as part of a local authority's language plan. Local authorities should have to report on how many Gaelic probationers they have received, and how many are still teaching, in Gaelic medium or Gaelic Language. In the case of dual qualified students, schools and authorities should be encouraged to ensure that they can maintain their working knowledge of their second subject.

4.4 Strategic Approach

- 4.4.1 Scottish Ministers have made the commitment that Gaelic medium probationer teachers will, as far as is possible, be allocated to a Gaelic medium post. On successful completion of the probationer year, teachers can apply for work in the authorities of their choice.
- 4.4.2 For the year 2004-05 teacher induction scheme the Scottish Executive introduced the preference waiver payment. The payment offers probationers on the scheme £6,000 if they are willing to work anywhere in Scotland for their induction year and are subsequently allocated outwith their five preferences. For the 2005-06 scheme, all Gaelic probationers have been allocated to Gaelic medium posts. The preference waiver has not been granted very often and has not made much difference in relation to Gaelic speaking teachers. In Autumn 2005 the Induction Scheme will be reviewed.

Recommendations:

- The GTCS should seek to take forward the implementation of the recommendations in the report 'Teaching in Gaelic Medium Education, Recommendations for Change'.
- Local authorities and universities should ensure quality student placements for Gaelic medium students in Gaelic medium establishments.
- Gaelic medium secondary students offering a second subject should gain experience of teaching that subject through the medium of Gaelic, where this is available.
- Language courses should be offered to address students' and teachers' language deficit in order to allow them to progress to Gaelic medium teacher training or teaching.
- The Scottish Executive should seek to ensure that all Gaelic medium students are placed in Gaelic medium classes and should seek to use the £6000 preference waiver to attract students to priority areas, and authorities should seek to ensure they continue as Gaelic medium teachers.

5. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Converting Existing Teachers

- 5.1.1 There is a shortage of Gaelic teachers at all levels. However, the recent statistics issued by the Scottish Executive has helped to focus some attention on those who could teach through the medium of Gaelic but, at present, do not. In the most recent figures 253 primary teachers say they would be able to teach through the medium of Gaelic and 159 are currently teaching through the medium of Gaelic. At secondary level the figures are 112 able to teach in Gaelic and 44 currently teaching through the medium of Gaelic.
- 5.1.2 For this reason the Group was interested in ways in which they could target teachers who can speak Gaelic but currently do not teach in the language. There is a need to identify and offer support to those who might be in this category and may be uncomfortable or uncertain about teaching in Gaelic.
- 5.1.3 The Group felt that further information on the particular Gaelic language skills of those not teaching in Gaelic medium may be required. It may be possible that some teachers who might be interested in transferring may have a measure of language deficit and could also benefit from an initial language course to improve their linguistic skills.
- 5.1.4 The Group noted that the course being developed by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) and Aberdeen would address much of this perceived need, both in terms of languages skills and subject expertise in Gaelic. The Group felt that there were other issues that might need to be addressed in terms of incentives or what benefits could be offered to teachers to retrain.
- 5.1.5 A course to assist Gaelic speakers to transfer to Gaelic medium teaching had been available at SMO from 1999. There were several factors which had led to a limited uptake of the course. The course is now being made available electronically for secondary subject specialists. The course is currently being developed, with a view to mixed-mode delivery in January 2006. The course consists of three modules: Language Development, Enhancement of Subject Specialism and Professional Reflection. The course aims to increase the confidence of teachers who are involved in delivery of, or may be encouraged to deliver, their subject specialism in Gaelic medium.
- 5.1.6 This course is being developed to assist secondary teachers to transfer to Gaelic medium teaching but its modules could be adapted to assist primary teachers also. The Group felt that this would be a positive move and that this course should be made available for primary teachers as well as secondary teachers to assist those who may be interested in transferring.

5.2 Promotion Opportunities

- 5.2.1 The Group noted that a career in Gaelic medium teaching should be regarded as an attractive option and one of the elements in this had to be the opportunity for a career pathway. A lack of career pathways for teachers has sometimes been cited as a disincentive to a career in Gaelic medium education. There were some positive signs in this area and the present structures have provided opportunities where they might not have existed before. For example the framework of the Teachers Package for the 21st Century could be utilised to provide a clearer path for career development for Gaelic teachers.

- 5.2.2 There should be no obstacle to Gaelic medium teachers being considered for the new role of principal teachers in Scottish primary schools. This should be seriously considered as an option for management within a group of schools and for the creation of principal teachers in Gaelic Curriculum for Primary Clusters. Authorities should be able to put this in place under present arrangements.
- 5.2.3 This would begin to offer a career structure and a management structure in which Gaelic medium teachers as principal teachers could have specific roles in authorities. In secondary schools Gaelic language now comes into School Faculties of Languages. It would also be possible for a Gaelic teacher to be principal teacher in such a faculty. There are examples of this already in some areas of the country. The role of principal teacher should not be exclusive to Gaelic language teachers; Gaelic medium subject specialists should also be eligible for promotion to such posts.
- 5.2.4 It is expected that the Chartered Teacher programme will be reviewed soon and the proposed review should seek to address the needs of Gaelic teachers. This may lead to the inclusion of a module for Gaelic teachers. The possibility of a Gaelic module being included in the Standard for Charter and Standard for Leadership should be explored when possible. Local authorities already have an important role in providing continuing professional development for teachers and, where possible, should collaborate in providing Gaelic medium teachers in one authority with the opportunity to attend suitable Gaelic CPD events in another authority. Learning and Teaching Scotland, with Gaelic-on-line and A'Chuisle, also have an important role in this area.

5.3 Gaelic Language in the Primary School (GLPS)

- 5.3.1 The Scottish Executive has supported GLPS since 2001. GLPS is very similar to the more widely delivered Modern Languages in the Primary School programme and a number of authorities are taking this forward. The GLPS course offers 20 days of training to primary teachers to assist them to offer Gaelic language in primary classrooms. GLPS has been reviewed by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and both numbers and teacher responses were commended. The Executive provides some specific support for GLPS and the Scottish Executive's Languages Fund can also be used for this purpose.
- 5.3.2 Argyll and Bute piloted a training programme for primary teachers that enabled them to support GLPS in the classroom. Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and a consortium of authorities also offer GLPS (Stirling, East Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross, North Lanarkshire) with Argyll and Bute providing the tutor and the training materials are now published by Storlann. Some other authorities have shown an interest in participating in GLPS.
- 5.3.3 The course has been very successful and has helped to embed the teaching of GLPS in many primary schools. From this secure base it should help to promote the provision of Gaelic as a language in secondary schools. Since 2001 a total of 35 teachers have received GLPS training in the consortium and the Group wishes to express its strong support for the continuation and expansion of GLPS courses.

5.4 Future GLPS Developments

- 5.4.1 Aberdeen University proposes to develop a course which aims to increase the number of teachers involved in promoting the Gaelic language and the number of pupils involved in learning it. The course will enable primary teachers, currently in their profession, who have completed the 20 day GLPS programme to develop further their knowledge of Gaelic language and their skills in delivering the 5-14 Gaelic learners curriculum with confidence to pupils in upper primary and lower secondary. The target groups are primary and secondary teachers who have the equivalent of GLPS and who wish to teach Gaelic to learners in primary and S1/S2.
- 5.4.2 This course, which Aberdeen is developing, would enable teachers to deliver and assess the entire 5-14 curriculum and, with increased experience and confidence, to deliver at Standard Grade level. This development also aims to provide an opportunity for those teachers who are interested in undertaking a postgraduate element to do so. This additional element will be recognised within the PG Masters in Education and recognised by the GTCS as a possible level 2 qualification within the Continuing Professional Development framework for teachers. The Group wishes to commend Aberdeen for this development and support the future development of these courses.

Recommendations:

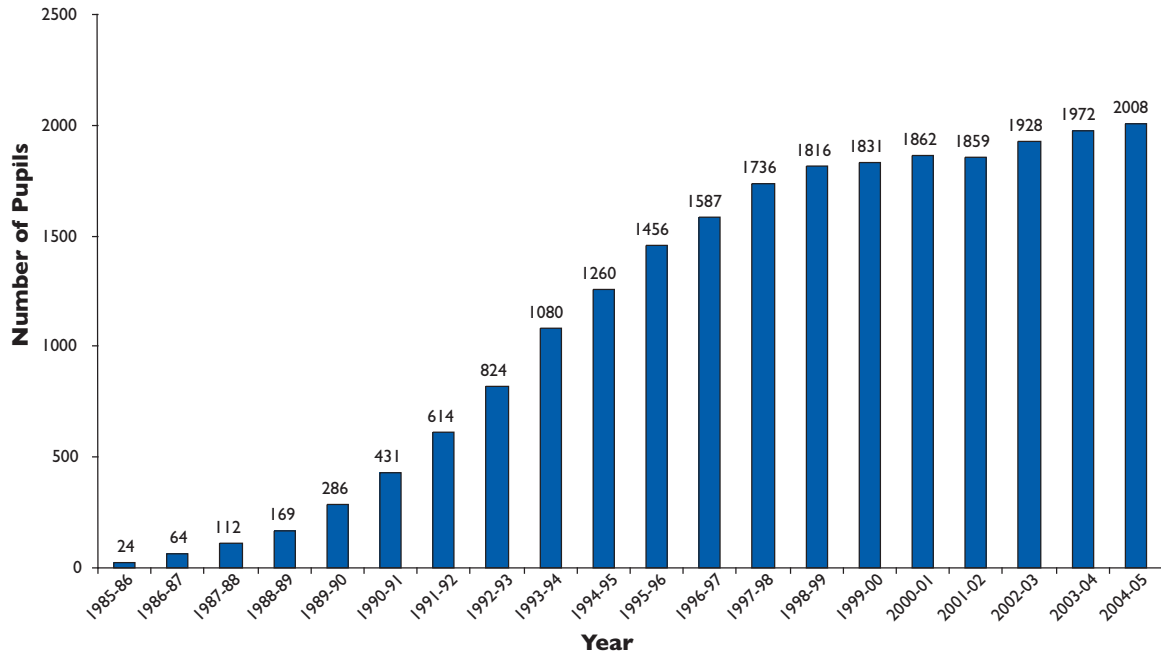
- Local authorities should identify and encourage Gaelic speaking teachers to transfer to Gaelic medium and assist them with relevant training.
- The Executive should continue to support Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's course, which would assist teachers to transfer to Gaelic medium, and this should be extended to primary teachers.
- Local authorities should collaborate in providing Gaelic medium teachers in one authority with the opportunity to attend suitable Gaelic CPD events in another authority.
- Learning and Teaching Scotland, with Gaelic-on-line, should seek to support Gaelic medium teachers in their professional development.
- Authorities should seek to provide promotion opportunities for Gaelic medium teachers at primary and secondary by considering them for appointment as principal teachers and heads of faculty where appropriate.
- The Group expects Local Authorities with GLPS to support the Aberdeen University course, and the Scottish Executive should support the development of Aberdeen's GLPS courses for teachers.
- The Scottish Executive's Language Fund should continue to support GLPS.

GAELIC TEACHERS' ACTION GROUP

Matthew MacIver	Registrar/Chief Executive of General Teaching Council Scotland
Bruce Robertson	Director of Education, Highland Council
Murdo MacIver	Head of Education Provision, North Lanarkshire Council
Bill Maxwell	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education
Iain Smith	Dean of Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde
Cathy Macaslan	Dean of Faculty of Education, University of Aberdeen
Christina Walker	Lecturer in Gaelic Education, University of Aberdeen
Duncan Ferguson	Headteacher of Plockton High School/Chair of Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Donald Henderson	Head of Teachers' Division
Douglas Ansdell	Gaelic Unit
Eòghan Stiubhart	Gaelic Unit/Bòrd na Gàidhlig

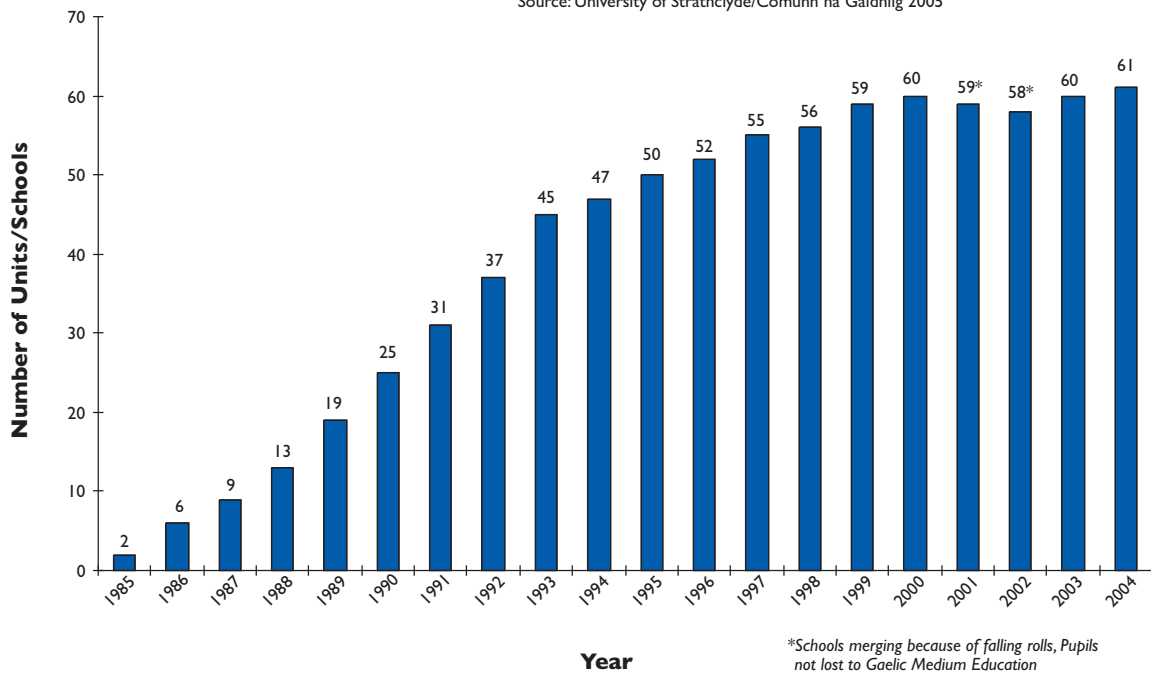
Number of Pupils in Gaelic Medium Education Primary 1985-6 to 2004-5

Source: University of Strathclyde/Comunn na Gaidhlig 2005



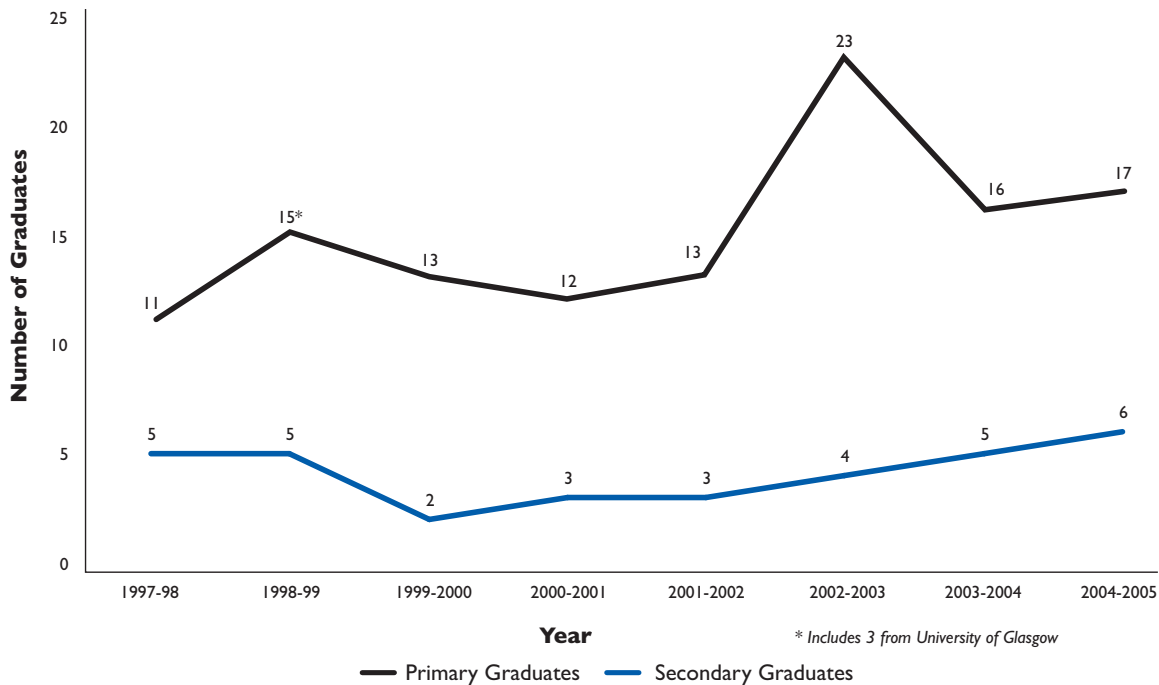
Number of Gaelic Medium Primary Units 1985-2005

Source: University of Strathclyde/Comunn na Gaidhlig 2005



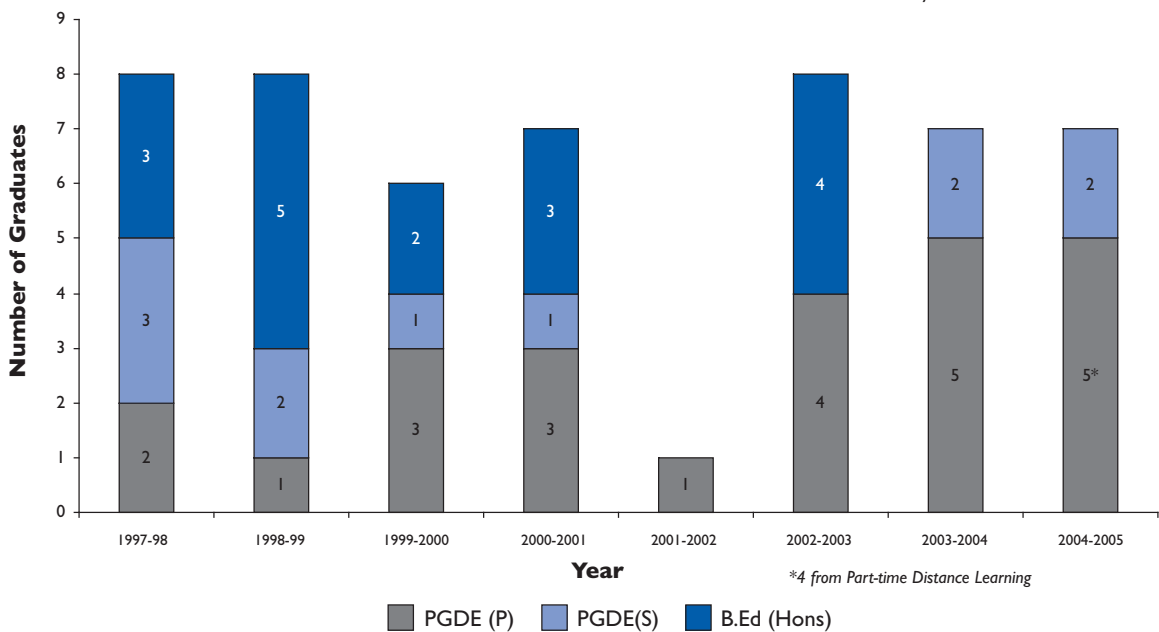
Primary and Secondary Gaelic Medium Graduates in Scotland 1997-98 to 2004-05

Source: University of Strathclyde/University of Aberdeen 2005/
GTC Scotland 1999



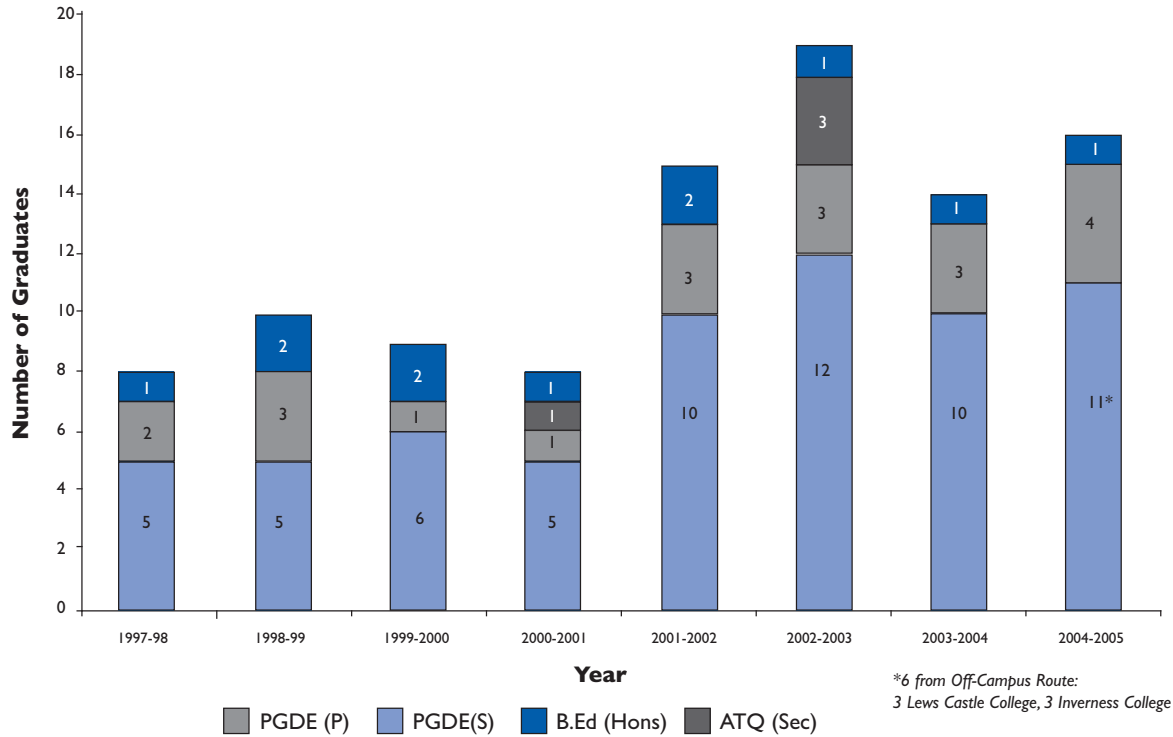
Graduates from Northern College/University of Aberdeen 97-98 to 04-05

Source: University of Aberdeen 2005



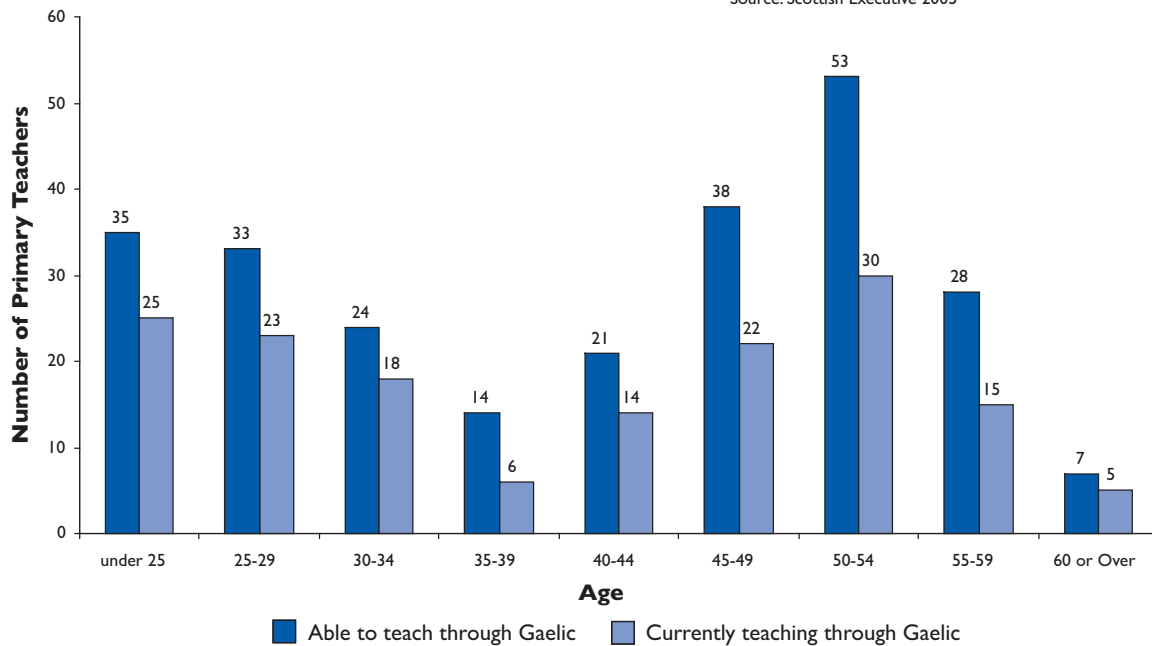
Graduates from University of Strathclyde 97-98 to 04-05

Source: University of Strathclyde2005



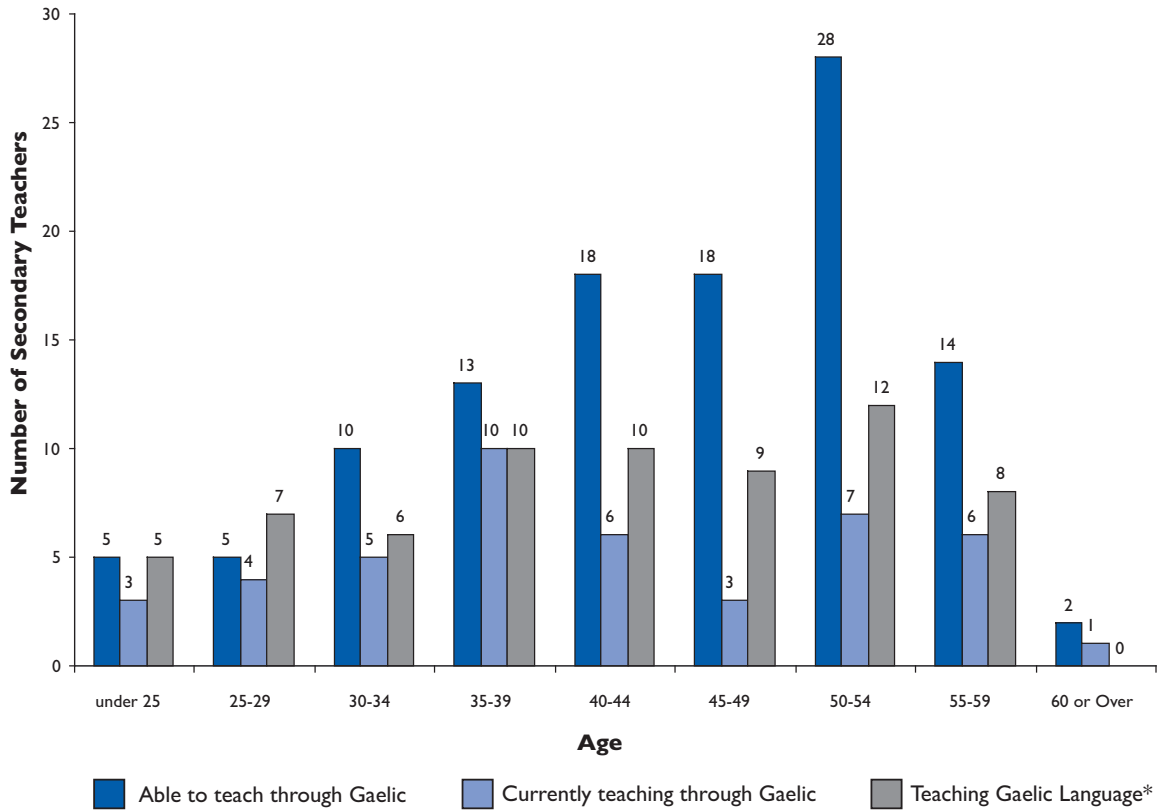
Primary Teachers by ability to teach in Gaelic and Age, 2004

Source: Scottish Executive 2005



Secondary Teachers by ability to teach in Gaelic and Age, 2004

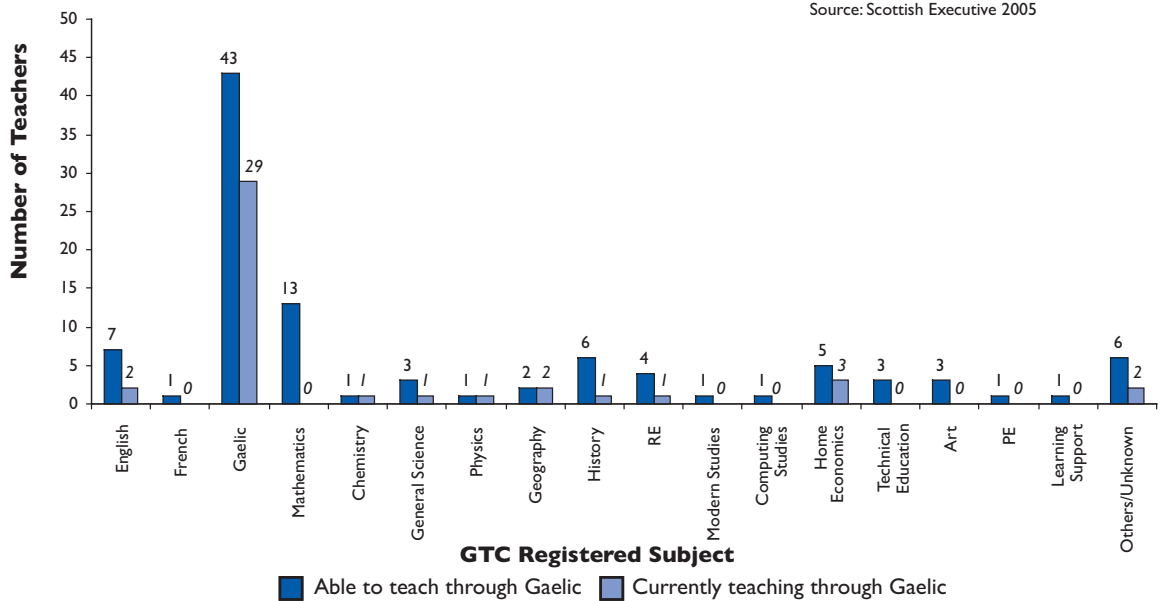
Source: Scottish Executive 2005



* As main subject or other subject

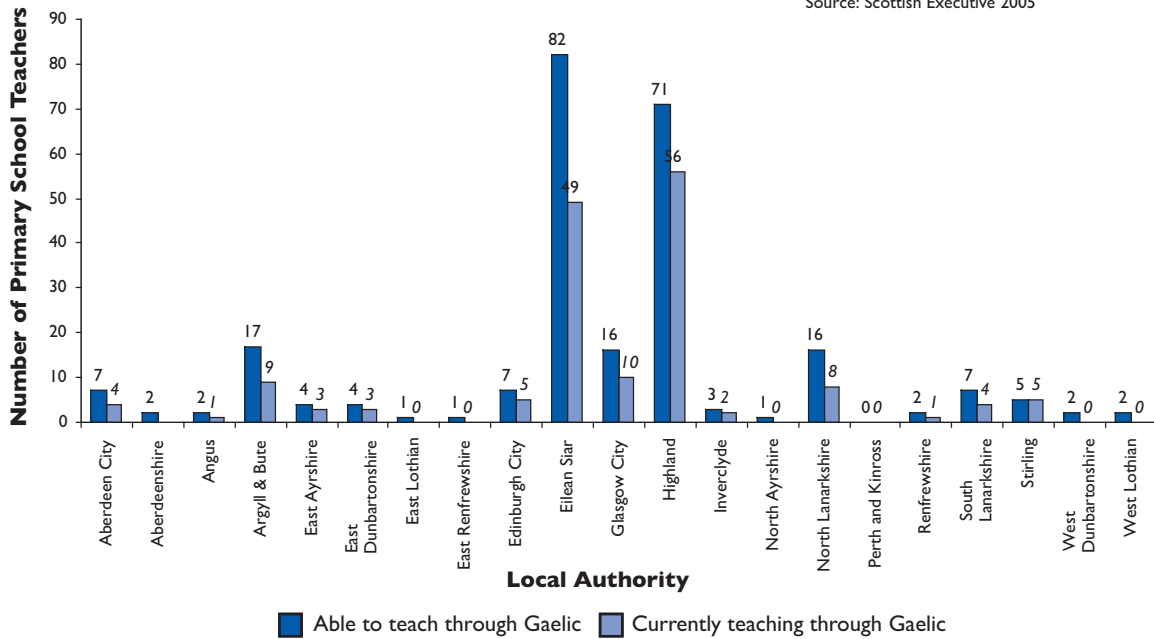
Secondary Teachers by GTC Registered Subject and ability to teach in Gaelic, 2004

Source: Scottish Executive 2005



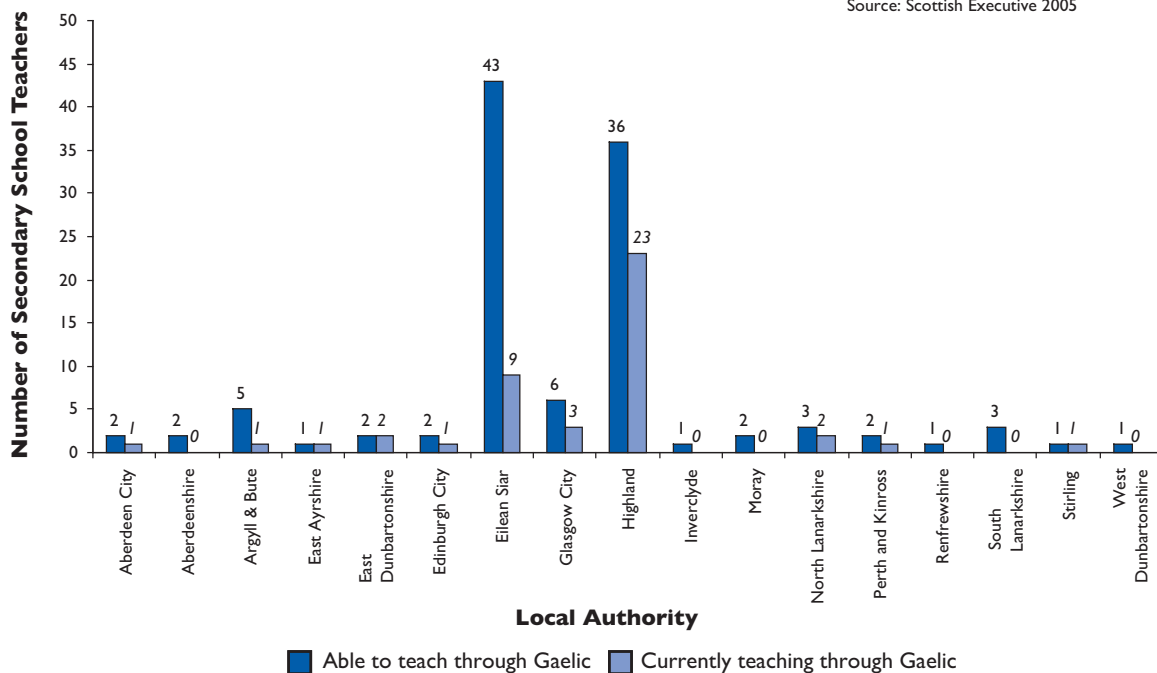
Primary Teachers by ability to teach in Gaelic and Local Authority, 2004

Source: Scottish Executive 2005

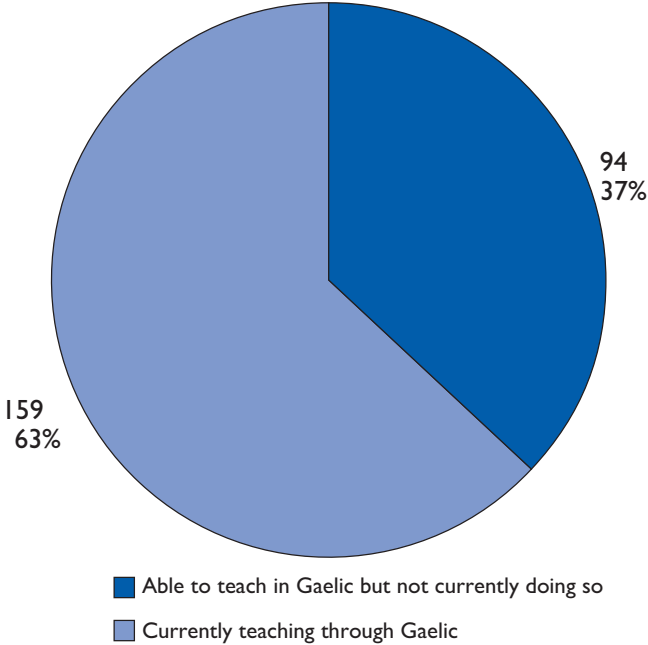


Secondary Teachers by ability to teach in Gaelic and Local Authority, 2004

Source: Scottish Executive 2005

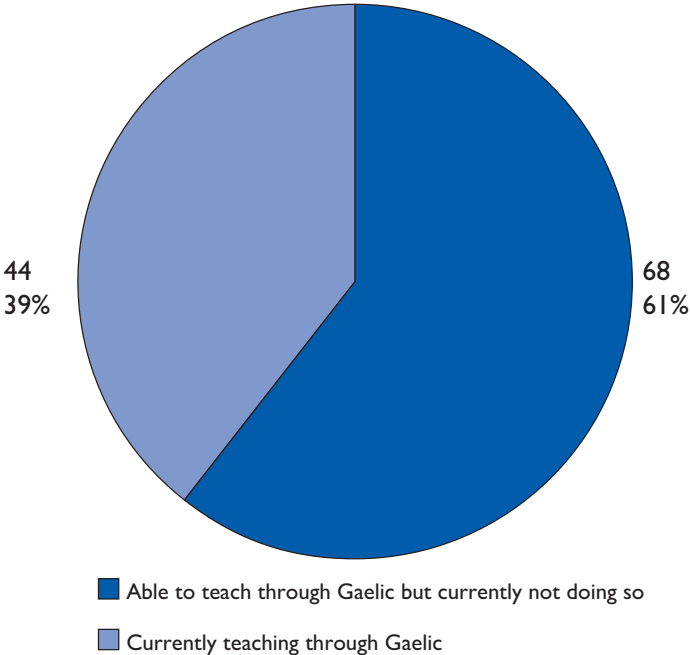


Primary Teachers able to teach GME Primary, 2004



Source: Scottish Executive 2005

Secondary Teachers able to teach through Gaelic, 2004



Source: Scottish Executive 2005