



# Dyslexia and Gaelic Medium Education

**This guide explains how children with dyslexia are supported in Gaelic Medium Education (GME), the benefits of learning and using two languages, assessment approaches and inclusive literacy support at home and in education.**

## **What is Gaelic Medium Education (GME)?**

Gaelic Medium Education (GME) is an option within Scottish education that gives children and young people an opportunity to become fluent in Gaelic. As children and young people progress, they will continue to develop their fluency, fulfilling all the aims and goals of Curriculum for Excellence.

## **Is dyslexia a barrier to GME?**

There are many sound educational benefits to learning Gaelic. GME is recognised for successful and high-quality achievement in which young people gain all the benefits of speaking more than one language. Being dyslexic should not be a barrier.

Children are entitled to enter GME from age 3 by attending a Sgoil Àraich (nursery) initially, before moving into primary GME. Some children also begin GME in primary one.

Dyslexia exists in all cultures and across a wide range of abilities and backgrounds, and learning through Gaelic should not preclude anyone from accessing GME. Dyslexia affects more than literacy skills and does not reflect a person's overall intelligence; in fact, individuals may have strengths in other areas.

What is most important is that early identification, appropriate support and an inclusive learning environment are in place, as dyslexia can impact wellbeing, confidence and achievement.

# Assessment and support for pupils with dyslexia in GME

The possibility of dyslexia in children who are in Gaelic medium is just as likely as it is for children in single language environments – dyslexia affects 1 in 10 children and adults. However, the fact that the child is learning to operate in two different systems of sounds and written language could be a complicating factor and close investigation should be done before reaching conclusions about dyslexia. This may require focused attention to the sounds and sound patterns in both languages. For most children, English will be their home language, so consideration needs to be given to English language skills as well as Gaelic. Some learners with dyslexia may approach reading and writing using English sound-letter patterns.

Because Gaelic spelling patterns often differ from English, it can be helpful to support learners in recognising common Gaelic spelling patterns and differences in sounds and pronunciation. This helps learners identify familiar Gaelic words and builds confidence in reading and writing.

Crucially, the most important factor is to ensure that targeted teaching approaches and support is given so that any gap that exists between the child and their peer group is not allowed to grow. This should involve close monitoring, liaison with parents/carers and agreed strategies to support the child's development of literacy skills.

Most local authorities follow the same identification pathway for English and Gaelic pupils. Any assessments will be in the learner's home/strongest language which is usually English.

**Learn more on Education Scotland's website**

