

## Introduction

<b>Authority:</b>	Perth and Kinross
<b>Case Study Focus:</b>	Partnership working to embed 2 languages from primary through to the end of the broad general education (BGE) and beyond
<b>Establishments:</b>	Breadalbane Academy Community School
<b>Learners' stage/s:</b>	S1– S3
<b>Date:</b>	December 2013



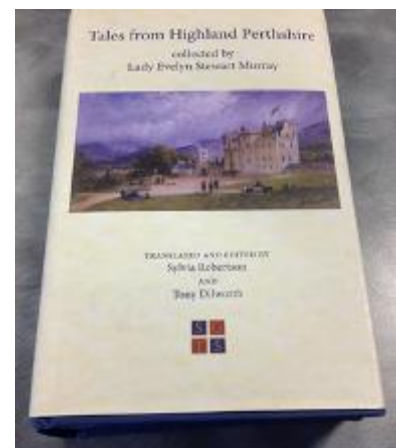
## About the educational establishment and the learners

Breadalbane Academy is situated in the town of Aberfeldy. The school is a state of the art new building consisting of primary and secondary departments, with community library and leisure facilities. Breadalbane Academy is a combined nursery, primary and secondary and caters for pupils from 3-18 years. It receives S5 pupils from Pitlochry High School and the surrounding area. At the time of this case study, there was a principal teacher of modern languages and a principal teacher of Gaelic.

## Background

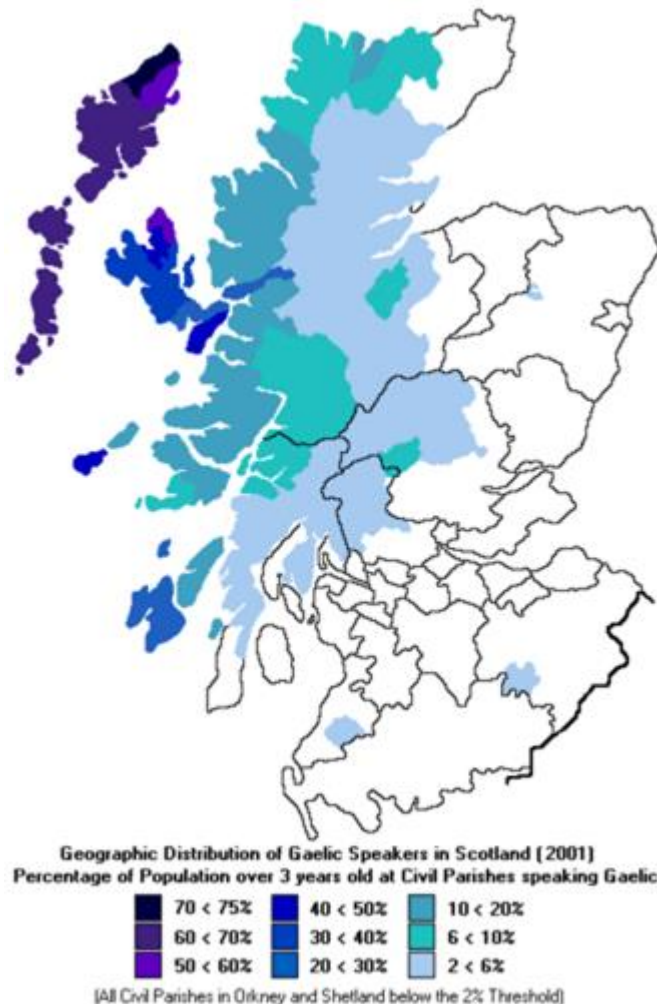
Gaelic is indigenous to Highland Perthshire and historically there has always been a large community of native Gaelic speakers in the area.

Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray (1868 – 1940) collated Gaelic stories from Highland Perthshire in order to preserve the



heritage of the area. These stories have now been translated into English and published.

This map, taken from the 2001 Census displays the distribution of Gaelic speakers in Scotland. Since the census, the number of Gaelic speakers has remained stable.



### **Progressing towards the “1+ 2 Approach”**

Breadalbane Academy Community School has taught both French and Gaelic to S1 pupils since the early 1970s. The teaching of Gaelic started following the school choirs’ successes at the National Mod. Since that time, pupils have been presented at all levels for national examinations in French and Gaelic.

Gaelic was introduced into the associated primaries as provision in the secondary school continued to grow. Additionally, in recent years, one of the associated primaries has offered a Gaelic medium class for Gaelic learners in P2/3. As a result, every pupil in the cluster primary schools learns both Gaelic and French. Some pupils start learning Gaelic as early as Nursery and P1; others start in P4 with both Gaelic and French. All schools, however,

provide French and Gaelic from at least P6. Thus, in this cluster there is an opportunity for learners to progress in two languages from primary into S1.

### **Aims of language learning approach**

As two languages are already being taught throughout the BGE for all in Breadalbane Academy and its associated primary schools, the cluster is poised to deliver the recommendations outlined in the 1+2 policy:

*“The Scottish Government's key commitment to language learning is to “introduce a norm for language learning based on the European Union 1 + 2 model - that is we will create the conditions in which every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue.”*

*Language Learning in Scotland: a 1+2 Approach*

For further information, please follow the link below:

[A 1+2 Approach to Language Learning](#)

## **Curriculum**

### **Embedding language learning skills**

The headteacher at Kinloch Rannoch Primary School comments:

*“Any language teaching, when effectively delivered, can support almost any area of the curriculum. It is at the planning stages when these links should be clearly made and the lessons tailored to support the on-going classroom work across the experiences and outcomes...”*

Moreover, the school recognises that learning two languages enhances the learners’ experiences and strengthens transferrable skills.

Listen to Finlay McSween, the Principal Teacher of Gaelic, talking about how learning a language develops transferrable skills and develops the appreciation of the interconnected nature of languages.

[Video of Finlay McSween](#)

### **Secondary Curriculum Structure**

The secondary school has recently reviewed its timetable structure in order to continue the provision of two languages (in line with the 1+2 Report) and the demands of the broad general education.

S1 learners currently follow a course which allows them to study both French and Gaelic. In S2, pupils continue to study French and are given the choice of continuing with Gaelic or opting to learn German instead. Pupils subsequently continue to study French in S3 and can choose to continue studying Gaelic or German. All learners are, therefore, afforded their full entitlement to progression in one language until the end of S3. Moreover, for many learners, this is not just in one language, but in two.

Moreover, the school is currently planning strategies to increase flexibility within the timetable so that the curriculum structure from session 2014/15 will allow learners access to a range of language electives in addition to their entitlement.

Additionally, pupils have the opportunity to continue into the senior phase and can progress to National Qualifications up to and including Advanced Higher level in both languages.

Emphasis is placed on communication as can be seen by this video clip of a spontaneous conversation on familiar topics between a teacher and pupil. This pupil started Gaelic in primary 1, and her positive experience in primary school inspired her to continue with her Gaelic studies to Higher level.

#### [Video of pupil speaking Gaelic](#)

The school was one of the first schools in Scotland to offer the Scottish Languages Baccalaureate to learners in S6 and is keen to create business partnerships.

A former pupil, who is now an undergraduate at Cardiff University, successfully completed a Baccalaureate Interdisciplinary Project in which she investigated the use of languages in the Scottish whisky industry. The impact of her knowledge of French and Gaelic was evident in her successful project and her exposure to more than one language in school has ensured that she has become a life-long language learner.

Hear the pupil talking about how learning languages has had a positive impact on her life and how she has been able to use her languages not only at university but also in a practical way as a tour guide in a whisky distillery.

#### [Video of former pupil](#)

### **The Power of Partnerships**

Learning languages has opened up many opportunities over the years for pupils attending Breadalbane Academy Community School. The department continues to build on internal and external partnerships to increase the relevance of language learning and to create real contexts for learning

### Community Links

Fluent Gaelic speakers, who are parents in the community, support the learning and teaching of Gaelic through, for example reading Gaelic stories or poems or teaching Gaelic songs. This is in line with one of the key recommendations from the 1+2 Report:

*“The Working Group recommends that schools and local authorities consider the engagement by schools of other skilled and trained native speakers of additional languages to work under the direct and explicit supervision of the classroom teacher in schools.”*

### International links

The school has also developed strong international partnerships. Learning and teaching in the French classroom is complemented by a bi-annual exchange with the Collège Louis Leprince Ringuet in Genas near Lyon which affords pupils the opportunity to practise their language skills in a real life context.



In addition, one of the school’s ceilidh bands, *Fiddlestix*, was recently invited to perform in St Galmier, near St Etienne, at the Alliance Franco-Ecosse. This event allowed pupils to highlight not only their musical talents and their knowledge of Scottish culture, but also to develop their linguistic skills. This is a good example of how learning two languages can help pupils to broaden their horizons.

The headteacher explained in the school’s End of Year Newsletter:

*“The trip involved playing music with a French Specialist Music School and at a local music festival. The group opened the proceedings of an international music and dance festival with a fine selection of Scottish music before appreciating the musical and dancing skills of groups*



*(such as those) from Serbia and Russia.”*

## **Impact**

### **Pupil and parental feedback**

The local community is supportive of the range of languages on offer at the school. Feedback to modern languages staff at Parents’ Evenings on the choice of languages available to pupils is very positive.

The headteacher at Kinloch Rannoch Primary School also commented on her pupils’ positive experience in primary school:

*“(Gaelic) is particularly well received by the pupils and they enjoy the flow of the language and the challenge in learning it.”*

### **Lifelong language learners**

Breadalbane Academy and its associated primary schools have created some life-long language learners. Notable former pupils who have gone on to develop successful careers in languages include Dr Sheila Kidd, Head of the Celtic Department at Glasgow University who explains:

*“In my current position as Head of Celtic and Gaelic at the University of Glasgow...one of the many enjoyable aspects of my job is introducing students to Gaelic for the first time and trying to enthuse them about Gaelic, its literature, history and culture in the same way as I was enthused as a pupil at Breadalbane.”*

Meanwhile, another former pupil, Dr Gary West, Head of the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University explains:

*“We studied a good deal of poetry I remember, Sorley MacLean in particular and that has stayed with me ever since. I went on to take some more Gaelic at Edinburgh University where I now work within the School of Scottish Studies, having made a career in teaching and researching Scottish culture. I can genuinely say that...Gaelic classes both at Pitlochry and Breadalbane helped to sow the seeds of that, and to inspire me to take up this career. Happy days!”*

## Next Steps

The ethos and structures at Breadalbane Academy allow language learning to flourish. The challenge is to maintain this provision. And of course a specific challenge for Gaelic across the country is the relatively low number of qualified teachers.

Due to the nature of the geographical area along with the range in size of the primary schools, a continuous effort is needed to ensure a coherent approach to language learning across the clusters.

Next steps:

- To maintain a sustainable timetable structure that is flexible enough to allow learners to experience a range of languages.
- To continue to promote languages in the school to ensure up-take in the Senior Phase