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**Gaelic Learners in the Primary School (GLPS)  
in Argyll & Bute, East Ayrshire,  
North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross  
and Stirling**

# **Evaluation Report**

**Richard Johnstone**

*with the collaboration of*

**Hannah Doughty and Robert McKinstry**



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## FOREWORD

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The Gaelic language and culture is an integral part of the heritage of Scotland. We live at a time in which linguistic diversity and multiculturalism are regarded as being essential for preserving the identity and distinctiveness of communities in our world. Gaelic is part of this rich diversity and as such it should be promoted and expanded.

Gaelic Learners in the Primary School is an important programme in Scottish schools and I welcome the progress that has been made in this area in recent years. Gaelic Learners in the Primary School has an important role to play in increasing the visibility and profile of Gaelic in Scotland. It is also an important means of introducing Gaelic to families, schools and communities throughout Scotland.

I am very supportive of Gaelic medium education in Scottish schools and I hope to see this strengthened and expanded. Our aim in this is a sustainable future for Gaelic in Scotland and I am confident that Gaelic Learners in the Primary School has a vital role to play in this also. I welcome this Report and I hope to see Gaelic Learners in the Primary School promoted in Scottish schools.

*Peter J Peacock  
Minister for Education and Young People  
January 2004*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am very grateful to the committee representing the five local authorities (Argyll & Bute, East Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, Stirling) for giving my colleagues and myself the opportunity to conduct the present evaluation study. I am equally grateful to the thirty-three teachers in the participating primary schools for agreeing to be interviewed at what for them was a very busy time; likewise to Mary MacKinnon the course tutor, and to Douglas Ansdell (SEED), Duncan MacQuarrie (HMIE) and Matthew Maclver (GTC).

My thanks are also due to Hannah Doughty and Robert McKinstry for the exemplary way in which they conducted and wrote up the interviews, and to my other colleagues at Scottish CILT, Lottie Gregory and Helena Jamieson, for their administrative and secretarial assistance.

*Professor Richard Johnstone, Director Scottish CILT  
October, 2003*

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The Gaelic Learners in the Primary School Consortium would like to thank Professor Richard Johnstone and his colleagues at Scottish CILT for undertaking this evaluation study.

Our thanks are also due to Dr Alan Wolfe and his colleagues at the University of Aberdeen who produced the training programme which formed the basis of the Argyll and Bute training initiative.

We would like to express our appreciation for the vision, support (and funding!) provided by HMI Duncan MacQuarrie and SEED.

*GLPS Consortium members*





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# INTRODUCTION

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1. For many years individual primary school teachers have no doubt sought to provide their pupils with a brief initial introduction to Gaelic language and culture. However, as a planned, systematic policy development across schools, backed by local authority and national support, GLPS (Gaelic learners in the primary school) has only come into being in the past three years. Thus far it has been taken up in a small number of local authorities, including the five which have commissioned the present evaluation (Argyll & Bute, East Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, Stirling), but it is attracting interest in a number of others.

## *GLPS and Gaelic-medium primary education*

2. Compared with other forms of provision for Gaelic at primary school, in particular Gaelic-medium primary education based on early total or partial immersion, GLPS presents a much more limited offering. This makes it different from rather than necessarily inferior to Gaelic-medium primary education, since it serves different aims and offers opportunities to pupils and their parents which would otherwise not be available.

## *GLPS and MLPS*

3. It has much in common with MLPS (modern languages at primary school) which has provided teaching of French, German, Spanish or Italian since the early 1990s, initially on a pilot basis, then followed in the mid-1990s by a generalisation phase. Characteristics common to GLPS and MLPS are that the teaching is generally undertaken by primary school classteachers who volunteer to undergo a special training course in order to teach the language to their pupils as an additional part of their general everyday teaching; the training of the teachers covers mainly language but also to a lesser extent culture and is delivered on the basis of a number of days release from normal classroom duties over three or four terms; and the amount of time made available per week for teaching in class at school is limited, unlikely to extend beyond 75 minutes maximum and often much less than that. GLPS differs from its MLPS counterpart in that quite often there is an earlier start than P6 and the number of days available for training the teachers is less (20 as compared with 27, though there is evidence now that in some cases the number of days available for MLPS training is being somewhat reduced).

## *GLPS + MLPS: an additive trilingual approach*

4. A key characteristic of GLPS within the five local authorities which are the focus of the present evaluation is that it is intended to be 'in addition to' and not 'instead of' MLPS. This makes primary schools offering GLPS rather 'special' in that instruction is provided in three languages (Gaelic, English and a modern foreign language) rather than in two languages (English and a modern foreign language) which is the norm elsewhere. The fact that the model is one of GLPS + MLPS

and not GLPS or MLPS places the schools offering GLPS + MLPS at the centre of the Partnership agreement (2003) - 'A partnership for a better Scotland' - which sets out the directions to be taken over the next four years of the Scottish Parliament. The agreement states that there will be 'a new focus for Scotland's languages recognising both our heritage and cultural diversity' (p42). It states also that 'we will guarantee the opportunity to learn a modern European language starting in Primary School' (p28). The GLPS + MLPS model also fits well with the European Council's Presidency Conclusions to the Barcelona Summit (March, 2002) which call for further action 'to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age' (Section on Education, point 44). Although of course Gaelic + one MLPS language does not constitute 'two foreign languages', GLPS + MLPS nonetheless realises the spirit of the Barcelona Conclusions but achieves this in a way which supports one of Scotland's major indigenous heritage languages and indeed projects this as the modern European language which it undoubtedly is.

5. GLPS does not appear thus far to have been the focus of published research, unlike MLPS (e.g. Low et al, 1995; Blondin et al, 1999) and Gaelic-medium education (e.g. Johnstone et al, 1998). The present evaluation may therefore be considered as a first attempt at gathering and publishing systematic information in relation to GLPS.

## **NATURE AND PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION**

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6. The present short-term evaluation is designed to cover only limited aspects of GLPS in the five local authorities. Its main focus is on perceptions of some of the key stakeholders:
  - the teachers who have been taking the GLPS training programme
  - the course tutor for the GLPS training programme
  - a representative of SEED
  - a representative of HMIE
  - and to a lesser extent thus far, a representative of the GTC.
  
7. The present evaluation thus far does not provide information on the perspectives of other key stakeholders such as:
  - the primary school pupils who have been receiving GLPS from their GLPS-trained teachers
  - their parents
  - senior staff in the primary schools which provide GLPS
  - relevant staff in the secondary schools which receive GLPS pupils
  - representatives of the five local authorities in the present consortium.
  
8. In addition, since the present evaluation deals only with 'perceptions', it does not seek to provide information arising from the observation and analysis of classroom processes in the GLPS training programme or in GLPS primary schools. Nor does it seek to provide information based on the measurement of outcomes such as pupils' emerging proficiency in Gaelic, their intercultural development or their underlying awareness of language.
  
9. Nonetheless, limited though the scope of the present evaluation may be, the information which it generates is intended to be useful to the local and national authorities, the course tutor and the teachers and others in providing an initial picture of how the innovation seems to be faring and of possible future directions.

## **Aims**

10. The evaluation has the following aims:

**Aim 1**

To collect, analyse and present the perceptions of key stakeholders in the project in the light of their experience thus far.

**Aim 2**

To make recommendations on how the project might be extended or further developed.

## **Data-collection and -processing**

11. Data were collected by means of interview (in some cases by direct interview and in others by telephone interview) from the great majority of the participating teachers, the course tutor and one representative of SEED, HMIE and GTC. In all cases a semi-structured interview format was adopted which allowed the interviewer to lead the interviewees through a series of pre-planned questions but which also contained some more open-ended items which gave interviewees the opportunity to give freer expression to their own thoughts. The teacher interviews were conducted by Hannah Doughty and Robert McKinstry who have been acting in a consultancy capacity for Scottish CILT. Robert McKinstry also conducted the HMIE interview. The other interviews (course tutor, SEED and GTC) were conducted by Richard Johnstone, evaluation director.

12. Given that the interviews represented the first contact which the teachers and other respondents would experience with the present evaluation, it was considered inappropriate and unnecessary to seek to audio-record them for further detailed analysis. Instead, the person conducting the interview took detailed notes as each interview proceeded, following the semi-structured interview schedule point by point. Later that same day the interviewer re-read these notes and converted them into a more formal account of each particular interview. When all of the interviews had been processed in this way, the interviewer compiled an overall summative report on the responses received and submitted this to the evaluation director. The summative reports from the two interviewers were integrated by the evaluation director into the present report.

## FINDINGS

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### Views from key bodies at national level

13. The present GLPS evaluation applies to five local authorities only and therefore cannot be considered as a national evaluation of GLPS. Nonetheless it was considered useful to ascertain the extent to which GLPS fitted into a national picture. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with a civil servant in SEED with responsibility for Gaelic, a member of HMIE also with responsibility for Gaelic and with the Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Information arising from these three interviews is presented in paragraphs 14-28 below. It is not possible to separate these three contributions completely in view of overlapping issues, but generally the view from SEED is contained in paragraphs 14-17, from HMIE in paragraphs 18-27 and from the GTC in paragraph 28.

### *Funding for GLPS*

14. SEED funding for GLPS overall has risen from £5,000 for an initial pilot project in 2000/1 to £53,086 in 2001/2, to £80,000 in 2002/3. GLPS funding does not come through Bòrd na Gàidhlig, though the Bòrd is very interested in the scheme. The scheme is and will remain funded by SEED via local authorities, mainly on application to the Gaelic specific grant. SEED has no plans to reduce the funding for GLPS training, and the present evaluation will be helpful to SEED in identifying needs and opportunities.

15. With regard to CPD for teachers of Gaelic, some authorities bid for funding support from the SEED specific grant scheme (e.g. for distance-learning via Sabhal Mòr Ostaig). Funding may also be made available through local authorities' own training budget and via the Modern Languages Innovation Fund. SEED recognises that if numbers of GLPS teachers increase, this will create greater needs for follow-up CPD support, and is keen that this need should be carefully monitored in order to inform the planning and funding process.

### *GLPS in the wider context of promoting Gaelic*

16. GLPS is of course only one of a range of measures for promoting uptake of Gaelic in Scottish education. Although it cannot deliver the levels of proficiency which arise from Gaelic-medium primary education, it nonetheless has an important role to play in helping a relatively hidden language of Scotland to assume a higher public profile. It may encourage pupils to stay with the language beyond primary school and it may help to bring the language back into families and local communities.

### *Information which would be useful to SEED*

17. SEED would be very interested to receive information on facts and figures, e.g. How many teachers have been trained? How many schools are involved? How

many pupils? It would also be interested to know of any examples of good practice which might be disseminated more widely, to learn of any factors which might be creating difficulties and to become informed about possible links with GME, Gaelic at secondary school and MLPS.

### *Initiating the scheme*

18. The GLPS project was initiated in July 1998, supported by HMIE. Northern College was the contractor, in association with Highland Council. The project advanced in leaps and bounds and was eventually finished by Christmas 1999. Argyll and Bute approached SEED to assist with piloting, and indeed they did pilot in Spring 2000. Argyll & Bute gave a very positive evaluation on piloting. Highland piloted in Lochaber on a smaller scale. An additional set of support materials was then commissioned. The two authorities had been brought into contact, and their amendments were fed into the scheme. Argyll & Bute have taken the lead in use of the GLPS scheme, appointing a specific tutor, Mary MacKinnon from Oban High School.
19. The basic idea was to increase numbers in learners' classes in the secondary school by giving them a Gaelic experience in primary. That in essence is what the GLPS programme is seeking to achieve. Considering the demand from Argyll & Bute, the west of Highland and the Western Isles, the desirability and feasibility speak for themselves.

### *GLPS elsewhere in Scotland*

20. The scheme is also used in Highland and CNES (Western Isles). There have been enquiries from Edinburgh, and one trainee from Glasgow began in 2002/3. It is pleasing that the consortium of authorities in the central belt has established itself so that the principle of GLPS can become embedded in their primary provision. Through MRG (Management Review Group, the committee at Directorate level which deals with specific grants) word of GLPS has spread to other areas. Positive messages are getting into the system from the central belt authorities. Argyll & Bute have a pack of training materials and supplementary materials which they are happy to make available at a cost of £200 - £300. Highland have now put in place a programme differentiated to meet teachers' needs, with regard to their previous knowledge and skills, and have altered the course to meet the needs of the clients. Essentially the other schemes share the same features, but are at slightly different stages – Highland having used the scheme from inception, CNES more recently.

### *Intensity of GLPS training*

21. The GLPS training is more intensive than the training for MLPS, having been designed to be delivered in 20 days – two days per week for ten weeks, for example. At the moment, all trainees who have completed their training are offered two in-service days per year for two years.



### *Teachers' perceived reactions to GLPS*

22. The reactions of teachers taking the training programme seem to be very positive, including those with no previous background in Gaelic. They found the intensity of the course challenging, but felt confident of being able to deliver quickly in the classroom. The discussions had deliberately involved teachers who were non-Gaels. The training programme seems to have been very effective and to have had a high impact.
23. Have there been opportunities to observe any GLPS-trained teachers actually teaching Gaelic to their pupils? No, apart from evidence such as Gaelic corners in schools.
24. There have also been discussions with staff in several local authorities with responsibility for Gaelic. The general view is that the scheme is very good. The level of awareness of the Gaelic advisers/development officers is high. They support the scheme. Links with secondary education at the moment seem to be less well developed.

### *Developing the scheme further*

25. Is there a view as to how the present scheme might be further developed or improved? For example, does it offer a sufficient number of hours of contact? The initial contact hours seem appropriate. The scheme could be improved by working up materials for follow-up days.
26. Is there a view as to how GLPS teachers who have been trained through the scheme might receive further CPD support? This might be provided by follow-up days. Learning & Teaching Scotland might be able to help. A short-term goal would be to have a national event for GLPS teachers – a 'good practice' conference on the lines of the SEED modern languages conferences (Autumn 2003). There was a conference in Nairn for 140 GM teachers in November 2002, reported in *A'Chuisle*, 2002, with a follow-up due to take place in March 2004, and the MRG might consider a separate one-day seminar for GLPS teachers.

### *Criteria for GLPS in the future*

27. Might the scheme be extended to other local authorities? Yes, but there need to be opportunities for continuity and progression in the secondary schools. Other key considerations would be likely to be: value for money and educational gain. Curriculum management issues would need to be addressed. In an already full curriculum, adequate time needs to be guaranteed for GLPS. The views and attitudes of headteachers towards GLPS might be a worthwhile area to follow up and investigate.
28. A brief meeting was arranged with Matthew MacIver, Chief Executive of the GTC, a well-known figure in the Gaelic community. The purpose was to explore initially what the possibilities might be for accreditation or recognition of the GLPS programme. One possibility might be for the programme to become recognised by the GTC, which would give it status and which would entail a periodic process of quality assurance which the GTC would put in place. However, it was agreed that the best way of taking this issue forward would be for the course tutor and

members of the programme planning team to contact the Chief Executive with a view to having a more detailed discussion.

## **A view from the GLPS tutor**

### *Previous experience*

29. Previously she had been a visiting teacher (VT) of Gaelic in secondary and primary schools. This enabled her to form a view as to the benefits and disadvantages of the VT approach and led her to see merit in what has become the present GLPS scheme in which classroom teachers with special training in and for Gaelic would play a central role in teaching GLPS to their own pupils.
30. An additional factor in her thinking was a change in the curriculum in the secondary school where she taught. Up to that point, pupils in S1 had five hours for two languages (including Gaelic) additional to English, but now they were to have four hours for one language additional to English, and therefore might have to choose between Gaelic and a modern foreign language. French was already well-established in P7 classes and this made it important to strengthen Gaelic at primary school so that pupils would receive a positive experience in Gaelic which would inform any choice they might make on entering S1.

### *A major aim of GLPS*

31. A major aim of GLPS is to help return ownership of the Gaelic language and culture to those communities in which it had formerly been spoken.

### *Initial involvement in GLPS*

32. Her initial involvement as GLPS tutor began in March 2000 on a pilot scheme for five teachers lasting 20 days (two days per week for ten weeks). At the time there were no resources or materials to support it, but nonetheless the participating teachers were happy with the scheme. Subsequently her local authority (Argyll and Bute) applied for specific grant funding to allow her to be seconded for two years in order to help expand the scheme to other parts of the country. Last session (2002/3) she worked on the project for four days per week and at Oban High School for one day per week, and a further period of secondment has been arranged for 2003/4.

### *Views of the programme and time allocation*

33. The GLPS programme materials, developed initially through the Northern College pilot scheme, were well thought-out. She has 'tweaked' them in various ways, e.g. by introducing aspects of Gaelic tradition and culture and songs, since Gaelic tradition and culture had not been written into the training programme materials. Reference was also made to a teaching video for learners in primary schools which ties in well with the training programme.
34. The allocation of time (20 days) was initially appropriate, with the materials organised in advance for Day 1 through to Day 20. However, as the GLPS programme developed, other resources and activities inevitably have been

added. These include the mini-lessons which the teachers themselves teach to others in the group. This has allowed them to bring in excellent ideas from their own general classroom or other experience. It has also allowed them to learn from each other's mistakes and strengths, thereby building up their confidence. However, valuable activities of this sort take time, with the consequence that it would be more appropriate to view the GLPS course as now lasting 24 rather than 20 days, particularly as additional time is also needed for discussion of and familiarisation with new teaching materials.

### *Teachers' perceived views and progress*

35. All of the participating teachers are volunteers, so they bring an initial motivation with them. They reveal very different learning styles and abilities, possibly linked to age and prior experience. All of them nonetheless seem to have developed positive attitudes, confidence and commitment.
36. The great majority of the teachers are coping well with the language. Thus far in the course there has been relatively little grammar work. This comes into the materials from Day 18 onwards, probably too late, and consists of learning the patterns for past tense verbs, a process which requires much reinforcement and consolidation. Even though it is unlikely that there will be substantial teaching of Gaelic grammar to GLPS pupils (though this is an assumption which merits further discussion), grammatical competence is necessary for the teachers as a means of empowering them for further learning. Under this issue may lie a deeper issue of the extent to which primary school teachers receive an appropriate induction into key concepts about language during their period of professional preparation. The Course Tutor has provided some supplementary material to help the teachers with grammar, particularly in relation to their reading and writing. She is confident however that the teachers have sufficient knowledge about Gaelic to allow them to monitor the correctness of their pupils' utterances.
37. With regard to the teachers' awareness of Gaelic culture, the course materials do not provide substantial support. Accordingly, the Course Tutor feeds this in naturally as the opportunity arises, e.g. her own Gaelic background, place names, the Highland Clearances, the decline in the number of speakers, the importance of arresting this, and current initiatives designed to achieve this effect.
38. The teachers receiving the GLPS programme are keen to continue developing their Gaelic. Some for example went to Skye for an immersion course funded from their local authority's budget. Another group will be taken to Islay for a similar course.

### *Importance of parents and families*

39. The Course Tutor considers the role of GLPS parents and families to be vital. In those parts of Scotland where parents are sufficiently active and numerous, a case for Gaelic-medium primary education may be made. However, not all parents are like this. Many may possibly have a Gaelic connection but may not be strongly aware of this and may therefore not be motivated to campaign actively on behalf of Gaelic education. GLPS, which is much less radical than Gaelic-medium education, therefore offers an excellent opportunity for drawing

parents of this sort back to the language in a way that is informative, motivating and unthreatening.

### *Visits to schools*

40. The Course Tutor does not have substantial experience of visiting primary schools in order to observe the lessons taught by teachers taking the training programme. However, such visits as she has been able to make have left a highly favourable impression, e.g. seeing young GLPS pupils (in some cases long before P6) actively engaged in writing Gaelic. Other visits to schools have been primarily for the purpose of delivering resources, but it has been possible to observe the impressive classroom wall-displays in Gaelic.

### *Transition to secondary*

41. It is anticipated that in several cases the GLPS pupils may have to switch to a modern foreign language when entering S1, because of the lack of Gaelic teaching available at that point. A number of possible strategies were suggested for making the best of the situation. These included: cluster arrangements of primary schools with an associated secondary, in order to maximise continuity; secondary school teachers with some Gaelic setting up additional activities (even outwith the set curriculum) which give pupils an opportunity to experience Gaelic (an example was given of a secondary school music teacher with Gaelic setting up a lunchtime Gaelic club); the possible use of ICT and video-conferencing in order to maximise the accessibility of such secondary teachers as were available.
42. The Course Tutor's own situation was more favourable in that at the secondary school where she teaches there is Gaelic in S1, allowing GLPS pupils to feed into this. When teaching in S1, she re-uses the key content of the GLPS programme in order to bring non-GLPS pupils on board. Specific strategies for this have been developed, e.g. pairing GLPS and non-GLPS pupils in order to provide opportunities for co-operative learning. For other schools a system has been developed whereby the content covered by each GLPS pupil can be recorded on a specially devised check-sheet. This provides teachers in S1 with information on what GLPS pupils have been doing, and the same system can be used for promoting continuity within the primary school between P6 and P7. In addition, much of the key content of GLPS links with 'Abair e', the Learners' course used in high schools.

### *Relationship with MLPS*

43. The Course Tutor takes a positive view of links with MLPS, both in principle and from her own experience. However, some headteachers may require more information or persuasion. In some cases they seem to fear that learning two additional languages may confuse pupils, while in other cases they seem to fear that the amount of time given to a Gaelic + MLPS approach in P6 and P7 will upset the balance of the primary school curriculum and make them liable to criticism from inspectors. Accordingly, high-status endorsement of the GLPS + MLPS approach would be helpful.

### *Developing the programme further*

44. In order to develop the existing programme for teachers, some possibilities were suggested. These included: the local authorities might be more proactive in promoting GLPS; there is a need to make GLPS training available to all teachers in the country wishing to benefit from it; additional teaching resources are needed, supplied and up-dated by a designated website; drama offers considerable potential as a means of engaging pupils emotionally and culturally as well as linguistically and cognitively; an increase from 20 to 24 days initial training, in order to integrate the additional sorts of activity which have been developed through experience of actually using the course materials. It would also be important that the GLPS training and subsequent CPD provision should receive recognition at national level, possibly by the GTC.

### **Views of GLPS teachers**

#### *Numbers and prior experience of Gaelic*

45. Thirty-three teachers were interviewed, of whom twelve had received their GLPS training in cohort one and twenty-one in cohort two. Fourteen knew no Gaelic before taking the GLPS training. Of those who already knew some Gaelic beforehand, this had come about for a variety of reasons, e.g. parents who were Gaelic speakers; having Higher Gaelic; taking a 10-month distance learning course with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO); taking two Gaelic modules with Lews Castle; participating in a family learning group; picking up Gaelic through sitting in with the Visiting Teacher. In some cases the teachers felt that their prior knowledge of Gaelic consisted mainly of a listening comprehension ability rather than confidence or fluency in speaking.

#### *Perceptions of the impact of the GLPS programme on their command of Gaelic for teaching GLPS*

46. As a result of the programme the overwhelming majority felt 'very confident' or 'confident', and nobody felt 'not at all confident'. Most teachers felt broadly the same about their command of the language and their knowledge of culture, though one teacher felt 'very confident' about her Gaelic and less confident about her knowledge of culture, whereas a few others felt 'quite confident' about their Gaelic and 'very confident' about their knowledge of culture. Most teachers claimed that although their current level of Gaelic was limited they felt sufficiently confident to teach the topics they had covered during the training course. This was because of the good grounding in the course and also in some cases because of prior knowledge. The one itinerant teacher had already learnt Gaelic to Higher and had taught Gaelic at night classes, so only required to adapt her teaching methods to the lower age groups. Where Gaelic was introduced in the lower age groups (pre-P6) there was occasional concern, however, that eventually children would 'catch up' with the teacher, with the consequence that more advanced GLPS training would be required. One teacher felt confident when she had support in the class. Two who were quite confident felt that their confidence would grow. One teacher admitted to being particularly 'bad' at language learning.

*Perceptions of the impact of the GLPS training programme on their knowledge of appropriate methods for teaching GLPS*

47. The overwhelming majority felt 'very confident' (21) or 'confident' (11) and nobody felt 'not at all confident'. Most teachers with prior Gaelic knowledge felt 'very confident' about their ability to teach, though fewer teachers with no prior knowledge did so. Many specifically mentioned the quality of the course: 'fantastic' was used by one. Some specifically mentioned the preparation of mini-lessons as being very helpful. Some had already had MLPS training and were familiar with language teaching techniques.

*Perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the GLPS training programme*

48. The overwhelming majority felt it had been 'very effective' (31), with nobody registering an opinion that was below 'effective'. Several teachers immediately praised the tutor, and the atmosphere of collaboration she had created. One teacher commented that while it had been 'enjoyable but hard work' there had been 'no intense pressure' and this had been greatly appreciated. Some indicated that they now had the confidence to learn more. Others claimed that the course had given insights into language learning in general, with a spin-off for her English teaching. One had found the grammar difficult.

*Perceptions of the GLPS training programme's main strengths and weaknesses*

49. Most teachers again immediately referred to the tutor and the way she had managed to get everyone in the group working together, build up beginners' confidence and had put in a lot of time and effort to respond to individual needs amongst participants in the group. The tutor had also encouraged participants from the start to produce and share resources and this was generally felt to have been a valuable exercise. As a result, a CD ROM had been produced for teachers. Some teachers referred not to the tutor directly but to the teaching methods used, which appeared to have been similar to the ones used for teaching MLPS. Some commented favourably on the mini-lessons, others on the resources and one on the grammar input. For one teacher, going through the programme had highlighted to her the difficulty of having to learn another language.

50. Several teachers felt that the programme had no weaknesses. Six felt that the course had been slightly too short (e.g. 'an extra 2-3 weeks to pull the course together'), four felt that it would have been better to set groups according to prior Gaelic knowledge of participants (although this might not be possible in practice with low group numbers). One tutor felt that too much had been crammed into the course, and that it might have been beneficial to split the course in two parts, with a 'trial teaching' period in between. Other views commented on the small size of groups, lack of enough grammar, need for a more 'adult' speaking programme, need for follow-up courses, some materials in the training programme being perceived as possibly unappealing to a modern child.

*How long the teachers have been teaching GLPS to their pupils, to which classes and for how many minutes per week*

51. The answers varied, and this depended as much on teachers' confidence as on timetable arrangements and individual circumstances. Some had started teaching Gaelic to their pupils almost as soon as they had started learning it; others had finished the course and then started teaching it the following session. Only two teachers had not had an opportunity to teach Gaelic at the time of interview. Overall responses ranged from several with less than one year's experience to a small number with two or more years experience, with one who had been teaching GLPS before the scheme actually began.
52. Although P6/7 had been selected as target groups, Gaelic had also been introduced to earlier age-groups, partly because of composite classes. In several schools, there had been a deliberate decision to introduce Gaelic to the lower age groups, e.g. P3, P4 or P5 or even from P1 where the classes were composites. One school was planning to introduce Gaelic to the Nursery in the coming session. Only one school had still to decide on the target group. The itinerant teacher, who was also teaching in 13 nurseries, had used rhymes, games and songs to introduce the language at that level.
53. One school offered 20 minutes per week. Eight schools had opted for 30 minutes/class/week. Nine schools had opted for 40-45 minutes. Six had opted for 50-60 minutes or more (in one case, half a morning per week). At one school Gaelic was only used in the learning of songs, and again one school had not decided on the length of time to accord to Gaelic.

*Prioritisation of language skills*

54. The teachers were asked to rank 'listening', 'speaking', 'reading' and writing' in order of priority for teaching their pupils. First place was divided between listening (18) and speaking (12). Second place was divided between speaking (18) and listening (12). Third place was divided between reading (22) and writing (1). Fourth place was divided between writing (22) and reading (5).

*Perceptions of benefits to pupils, schools and communities brought by GLPS*

55. Overall children's confidence has been boosted; their attitude to other areas of curriculum has improved. Most teachers believed that their students were now more aware of their cultural heritage (e.g. being more knowledgeable about Gaelic place names in the area, and/or becoming more aware of the existence of native Gaelic speakers within the community). A number of teachers referred to an increase in linguistic skills, or at the very least to a broadening of pupils' horizons. Others mentioned increased confidence in dealing with modern language learning in general. In one school it was felt that Gaelic learners had gained closer links to the Gaelic medium unit at the school. Two mentioned that less able children had gained in confidence and that their language skills in English had improved, particularly their listening skills. Concentration has improved, pupils are listening more intently. There seems to be recognition that languages other than English exist and are valued, with less division now between the Gaelic Medium Unit and rest of school. There are benefits in the formation of Gaelic choirs and in a more informed choice being made available in S1 between French and Gaelic.

56. Nearly half the teachers believed that the school had gained in status and/or profile as a result of GLPS. Some schools had started Gaelic choirs, and others had entered competitions (and sometimes won!), or were participating in the Mod for the first time. Ethos has improved; GLPS is good for school morale. It has made teachers more aware of language acquisition. The positive learning experience has spin-off in other curricular areas. Concentration overall has improved. There is better knowledge and awareness of Gaelic tradition throughout the school, among both teachers and pupils, and the curriculum has become richer.
57. Nearly half the teachers considered that the introduction of GLPS had generally been well received in the local community and led to a revived interest in Gaelic history, tradition and culture. Where there were Gaelic native speakers they had expressed their delight at GLPS. There was now heightened awareness about Gaelic within the community. Some (non-Gaelic speaking) parents in one school had even asked for tapes so that they might learn with their children. Others highlighted a rekindling of interest in Gaelic and a breaking-down of divisions between Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic speaking families. GLPS serves to open minds to the fact that Gaelic is a living language. Community morale has improved. There is more interest in Gaelic choirs and Fèisean. Families who have a child learning Gaelic have become more involved in school life. Parental involvement and support have increased. There are increasing bonds between Gaelic-speaking grandparents and their Gaelic-learning grandchildren. Older residents feel that it is good to keep traditions alive. Two on the other hand indicated no clear benefit.

#### *Perceptions of problems caused by the introduction of GLPS*

58. Most responses indicated that GLPS had not caused major problems. Of the minority which mentioned problems, these referred to timetabling and a feeling of being pressurised by the overall demands of the primary school curriculum, the amount of time available for GLPS and a lack of clear information for teachers and parents (with the consequence that this might provoke some anti-Gaelic feeling). At two schools there had been resistance by a minority of parents, and in one school from some children. In another school the P4 teacher had had initial reservations about the introduction of GLPS but now seemed supportive. One teacher who was about to start teaching GLPS was concerned that it might create problems with MLPS. Timetabling was also a concern where GLPS was to be introduced in the Nursery class in the coming session and the teacher was unsure how she would find the time to continue teaching in the P1-3 classes as before. In one school, the children apparently had had a negative experience of Gaelic with a former teacher and the teacher had to work hard initially to counter pupils' negative attitudes. However, she felt this barrier had been overcome and parents were keen to see the language continued.

#### *Perceptions of extent to which GLPS is taught separately from other aspects of the primary school curriculum or is in some ways integrated with it*

59. Thirteen teachers taught GLPS separately from the rest of the curriculum. Four considered that GLPS was integrated with it. Fourteen considered they provided a mix of 'separate + integrated'. Just under half of teachers reported that whilst they were teaching GLPS mainly as a separate subject, they also tried to



integrate it into other activities when they saw an opportunity, e.g. crofting, music and drama, language structures, the alphabet, special Gaelic vocabulary e.g. 'sea', numeracy (shops). Some tried to integrate Gaelic outwith the curriculum, e.g. when greeting or meeting children in the school at other times, or by having bilingual signs and notices. One teacher taught Gaelic as a separate subject with P3 and in an integrated fashion with P7. Only one teacher had merely used Gaelic as part of the song repertoire. In several cases, the Gaelic taught to children consisted of being able to ask and give simple personal information, understand simple instructions and learn to talk about mini-topics such as days of the week, the body, colours, family, numbers, pets, food, likes/dislikes.

*Perceptions of the extent to which their pupils felt motivated by participating in GLPS, and of any possible 'gender' or 'ability' differences in this respect*

60. The overwhelming majority of teachers considered that their pupils felt 'very motivated' (17) or 'motivated' (13) by GLPS, and no teacher registered a perception of pupils being 'demotivated'. Three teachers had noted gender differences with boys being less enthusiastic. However, most teachers claimed not to have noticed any differences, and in some instances even reported trends 'against the norm' e.g. boys being better than girls, or slower learners being able to shine in the subject ("you don't need to be clever to be able to speak Gaelic") or gaining in confidence. Some felt that younger pupils showed more confidence than did older pupils. Teachers felt that it was important, though, to keep the emphasis on oral/aural activities, as slower learners might be discouraged when having to do a lot of writing. Many felt that the pupils were very keen ("always wanting to know more"). One teacher reported that pupils were now confident enough to respond to her in Gaelic even outwith class times. There were some exceptions, however. One teacher felt that parents' influence was an important factor which influenced pupils' attitudes regardless of gender or ability. The itinerant teacher reported that slower learners were not able to retain vocabulary as easily, and that boys did not respond as favourably as girls to singing or colouring in when doing Gaelic.

*Whether GLPS is taught instead of MLPS (French, German, Spanish or Italian) or in addition to it*

61. The report of the Ministerial Action Group on Languages ('Citizens of a Multilingual World': SEED, 2000) favours an inclusive view of languages and suggests it is no longer fully appropriate to maintain a sharp distinction between so-called modern foreign languages and heritage languages (Gaelic, Scots) or community languages (e.g. Urdu, Cantonese, BSL). It was therefore of interest to ascertain whether GLPS would be in addition to or instead of an MLPS language such as French, German, Spanish or Italian. In fact, all of the teachers (30) responding to this item confirmed that GLPS was taught in addition to MLPS. Most felt that teaching Gaelic in addition to MLPS had or would have advantages, e.g. through an increase in pupils' linguistic awareness and improved listening skills. It was important, nevertheless, to use different materials for each language so as not to confuse children. One teacher, however, indicated that MLPS might be dropped in preference to GLPS because of time constraints (partly due to composite classes), and because, in her opinion, pupils preferred GLPS. The itinerant teacher was not sure if the classes at the two schools were to continue – she had not been informed. Pupils are beginning to make linguistic connections. Overall linguistic development has improved. Their cultural awareness has

improved. Some pupils think languages are 'the thing'! The more languages pupils learn, the better. There is a more informed choice of language in S1. On the other hand disadvantages were considered to be lack of time, and pressure on the curriculum

*Perceptions of the extent to which there were links with and continuity into secondary school*

62. Seventeen teachers registered 'none' in this respect. Six registered 'hardly any'. Four registered 'some'. Five registered 'a lot'. The lack of links with the local secondary school was a concern for most GLPS teachers. Where Gaelic was being taught at the younger end of the primary school the problem was not yet acute but there was a feeling that this was a gap needing to be addressed fairly quickly or continuity of learning into secondary would suffer and the benefits of the teaching at primary school would be lost. The itinerant teacher was concerned that neither of the primary schools where she had been teaching Gaelic were in the catchment area of the secondary school where pupils could have continued Gaelic. Another teacher in the same situation suggested video conferencing as a possibility to linking up with a secondary school where Gaelic was being taught.

*Teachers' recommendations for the further development of the GLPS training programme*

63. A wide range of responses was received. The following were mentioned most frequently:

- Continue with the teaching programme
- Split the groups by level of prior Gaelic knowledge
- A longer training programme
- Exposure to other native Gaelic speakers/immersion at end of course

Others were mentioned less frequently:

- Immersion courses
- Greater background component
- Time for reflection at end of course
- Time to prepare resources at end of course
- Opportunity to see GLPS in action by experienced teacher
- Optimum group size 8–10
- Better timing of courses (i.e. more class days in June)
- Split course into 2 x 10 week sessions, with teaching period in between
- Slow down pace of teaching
- Highlight relevance of Gaelic – point out job opportunities
- Provision of vocabulary lists & phonetic spelling
- Self-assessment throughout
- Extension of mini-lessons
- Maintenance of resources
- Self-assessment throughout
- More teachers to be trained

*Teachers' recommendations for further supporting GLPS in the classroom*

64. The following were mentioned most frequently:

- More resources, including ICT, to be made available
- Keep in touch with tutor
- Someone to turn to for help, e.g. pronunciation
- Someone to visit and give support
- Review of material so that it's kept up to date
- Presence of native speaker, e.g. parent, in class

Others were mentioned less frequently:

- More revision days
- More reading material
- More time to be made available for teaching in the school week
- Resources rationalised
- Better school organisation of GLPS
- Better contact with Gaelic department in secondary school
- 2-4 meeting days per year to update knowledge/network with other GLPS teachers

Two teachers specifically referred to feelings of isolation because no one else in the school spoke Gaelic, and there were not many native speakers in the area.

*Teachers' recommendations for further supporting their own continuing professional development (CPD) as GLPS teachers beyond the initial GLPS training programme*

65. Several responses were received, of which overwhelmingly the main one was:

- Further training, e.g. immersion courses at SMO

Other responses included:

- Addition of ready-made, tailor-made resources (many resources simply on worksheet, still had to be adapted for different age groups, laminated etc.)
- Sample lessons or lesson plans 'on a plate'
- Production of 'professional' CDs, with e.g. lively music
- One teacher suggested a regular newsletter or perhaps a website to alleviate the feeling of isolation
- Accreditation for courses undertaken
- More time to learn grammar
- Become proficient enough to help other staff
- Continuing contact with tutor
- Network of GLPS teachers
- More time to make up resources
- Visit other GLPS schools to see what's going on
- More knowledge about Gaelic culture
- Adult materials to develop language skills

In respect of the final point concerning adult materials to develop language skills, it should be added that some of the funding for 2002/3 was used to purchase six full sets of 'Speaking our Language' books, videos and tapes. These were given out initially to help those who were going to the Skye summer course. During session 2003/4 these will be distributed to new trainees who wish to borrow them

to use in their own time to learn more Gaelic than the training programme is offering, and those who have completed training or summer courses will be able to borrow the next level resources. It is also intended to purchase additional copies in 2003/4.

### *Teachers' final impressions*

66. Many teachers again praised their tutor. All expressed their desire to see the initiative continue, and even extended. Some suggested the purchase of books written in Gaelic as additional resources. There was recognition by some that the scheme would require financial support from the local authority or elsewhere. One teacher raised the concern that he was teaching Gaelic with a non-native accent but also claimed that there were now better job prospects for Gaelic speakers than for foreign language speakers.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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67. There is clear evidence that the primary school teachers who volunteered for the GLPS training reveal strongly positive attitudes towards this. It builds up their confidence and equips them with a sufficient amount of Gaelic to enable them to teach their pupils.
68. There is variation from one primary school to another in the amount of time made available in the week for GLPS, ranging from 20 minutes to 60 minutes or more. The main language skills on which GLPS teachers focus when teaching their classes are listening and speaking, with the explicit teaching of grammar playing a relatively minor role. There is also variation in the extent to which GLPS is integrated into the mainstream primary school curriculum or is taught separately. In several schools it is taught separately but in as many others there is a combination of integration and separateness.
69. The GLPS teachers believe that GLPS is bringing benefit to their pupils in a number of ways, e.g. a boost to their confidence, greater awareness of their cultural heritage, increase in language awareness and language skills, and broadening of horizons. Benefits are also perceived to the schools themselves, e.g. increase in status and in range of cultural activity such as participation in the Mod. Benefits are also perceived to local communities, e.g. revived interest in Gaelic tradition, history and culture.
70. So far as accreditation or recognition of the GLPS programme is concerned, it is recommended that the course tutor and members of the programme committee should contact the Chief Executive of the GTC for further exploration of possibilities.
71. GLPS does not appear in any of the participating schools to be in direct conflict with MLPS. In all cases, pupils receive both GLPS and MLPS. No clear disadvantages of this 'additive' approach have been identified, and the formula offers possibilities for encouraging synergies not only between Gaelic and the MLPS language but also between these and English, Scots and other community languages which may be represented in class. Pupils receiving GLPS+MLPS should expect a richer and more varied curriculum, an extension to their overall language learning experience, an increase in confidence and a greater awareness of other languages and cultures. There should be a clear benefit in their acquisition of higher order mother tongue skills, and a deeper appreciation of how language works. However, there is the possibility that, without proper commitment and awareness, both MLPS and GLPS could descend into token provision which would have adverse effects on pupils. In view of the fact that there is to be a review of the curriculum in Scottish schools, an excellent opportunity exists to think through what an integrated and inclusive languages education component might consist of.
72. While the picture generally is strongly positive, some areas have been identified which merit further consideration and action. These are:
- increasing the initial training from 20 to 24 days in order to allow for new sorts of activity (e.g. the mini-lessons which the participating teachers themselves

teach to their peers taking the same training course), the reinforcement of grammar and the greater development of Gaelic culture;

- provision of CPD support for teachers who have completed the GLPS training and who are teaching GLPS to their classes. This support should include further provision for the teachers' own Gaelic language and cultural development, their awareness of how GLPS might contribute strongly to the development of their pupils' trilingual (or plurilingual) and intercultural development. It should also include a system of supportive visits from the course tutor or other appropriately qualified persons, in order to observe classroom teaching and offer advice on the spot;
- links with secondary education, in order to achieve greater continuity and progression. In this respect, much remains to be achieved. Local authorities should ensure that appropriate cluster arrangements exist at present or are quickly put in place, with the full participation of associated secondary schools;
- although the course materials, initially developed through a Northern College pilot, have been well received by both the course tutor and the teachers, there is undoubtedly a case for extending and up-dating these, possibly with the support of Stòrlan (the National Gaelic Resource Centre, based in Lewis); and a shared GLPS website should be developed which teachers could access both for their own further learning of Gaelic and for sharing plans, ideas, materials in respect of teaching their pupils;
- the provision of information for primary school headteachers which will allay any concerns which they may have and which will enable them to feel well-informed about the potential benefits of pupils learning both Gaelic and a modern foreign language as well as English;
- the provision of additional GLPS trainers of high quality who will enable the scheme to be extended more widely both in respect of the initial training and follow-up CPD.

73. The present evaluation has focused exclusively on the perceptions of some but not all of the key stakeholders. In order to gain a more complete understanding of GLPS, it would be appropriate to investigate the following aspects:

- factual data on uptake of GLPS in relation to the number of schools participating, the numbers of teachers receiving the training, the numbers of teachers actually delivering GLPS, and the numbers of pupils learning Gaelic by means of GLPS (including information on the primary school year, e.g. P6, in which they begin); plus factual data on the extent to which this transfers through to Gaelic in S1;
- development of instruments and procedures for assessing the potential as yet unrealised demand for GLPS both in the five authorities and elsewhere, in order to project staffing and support needs and opportunities;
- perceptions of stakeholders not included in the present evaluation, in particular pupils, parents, primary school headteachers, key staff in secondary schools, local communities; plus further perceptions of the teachers featuring in the present study in order to track over a more extended

period of time their increasing experience of delivering GLPS in their schools and to project future needs and opportunities from this;

- observation and analysis of classroom processes in order to identify good practice on a systematic empirical basis;
- development of approaches and instruments for sensitive, pupil-friendly gauging of what it is that pupils are actually learning in relation to Gaelic language, Gaelic culture, general language and cultural awareness (supported by MLPS and English), and developing sense of self.

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# APPENDIX

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## COLLATING THE GLPS TEACHERS' INTERVIEW RESPONSES

*This form was completed by each person conducting the interviews with the GLPS teachers. It specifies the sorts of question which were asked in the interviews and indicates how the information was to be collated.*

In relation to the request **SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES** it would be helpful if in each case you could first summarise what is common across the responses and then how they vary from each other.

### PART ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<p><b>1. Name of school</b> <b>2. Your name</b> <b>PLEASE LIST THE TEACHERS AND THEIR SCHOOLS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE INTERVIEWS.</b></p>
<p><b>3. Are you in GLPS Cohort 1 or 2?</b> <b>STATE HOW MANY WERE IN COHORT 1 AND HOW MANY WERE IN COHORT 2</b></p>
<p><b>PART TWO: THE GAELIC LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMME</b></p>
<p><b>4. Did you know any Gaelic before taking the training programme?</b> . Yes? No? <b>STATE HOW MANY 'YES' AND HOW MANY 'NO'</b></p> <p>. If Yes, can you briefly describe how much? <b>SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES</b></p>
<p><b>5. As a result of the training programme, how confident do you feel about <u>your command of Gaelic</u> for teaching GLPS to your pupils?</b> <b>HOW MANY IN EACH OF THESE FIVE CATEGORIES?</b> . Very confident. . Quite confident. Neutral. Not confident. Not at all confident</p> <p>. Any further comments on this aspect? <b>SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES</b></p>
<p><b>6. As a result of the training programme, how confident do you feel about <u>your knowledge of Gaelic culture</u> for teaching GLPS to your pupils?</b> <b>HOW MANY IN EACH OF THESE FIVE CATEGORIES?</b> . Very confident. . Quite confident. Neutral. Not confident. Not at all confident</p> <p>. Any further comments on this aspect? <b>SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES</b></p>
<p><b>7. As a result of the training programme, how confident do you feel about <u>appropriate methods for teaching a second language such as GLPS</u> to your pupils?</b> <b>HOW MANY IN EACH OF THESE FIVE CATEGORIES?</b></p>

. Very confident. Quite confident. Neutral. Not confident. Not at all confident

. Any further comments on this aspect?  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**8. How effective do you feel the programme has been?**  
**HOW MANY IN EACH OF THESE FIVE CATEGORIES?**

. Very effective. Quite effective. Neutral. Not effective. Not at all effective

**9. What do you consider to be the programme's main strengths?**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

. Does it have any **weaknesses**? If so, can you please say what these are?  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**PART THREE: TEACHING GLPS TO YOUR PUPILS**

**10. How long have you been teaching GLPS to your pupils?**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**11. To which classes? P6? P7? Other?**  
**HOW MANY P6 AND HOW MANY P7?**

**12. How many minutes of GLPS do you do in an average week?**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**13. Which language skills (Listening – Speaking – Reading – Writing) do you teach?**  
. Rank them in order of priority, with 1 = top priority and 4 = lowest priority  
**HOW MANY AT 1, HOW MANY AT 2, HOW MANY AT 3, HOW MANY AT 4?**  
. 1. . . . . 2. . . . . 3. . . . . 4.

**14. What benefits, if any, do you think your pupils gain from GLPS?**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**What benefits, if any, has the school gained from GLPS?**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**What benefits, if any, has the local community gained from GLPS?**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**15. Has the introduction of GLPS caused any problems? If so, please specify.**  
**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**16. Is GLPS taught separately from other aspects of the curriculum, or is it in any ways integrated (or embedded)? If so, can you please specify?**

**HOW MANY 'SEPARATE' AND HOW MANY 'INTEGRATED'?**

- . Separate. . . . Integrated

**17. How motivated or otherwise do you feel your pupils are in respect of their GLPS?**

**HOW MANY IN EACH OF THESE FIVE CATEGORIES?**

- . Very motivated. . Quite motivated. . Neutral. . Not motivated. . Not at all motivated

If you have noticed any differences in motivation within your group of pupils, e.g. between boys and girls, or between faster and slower learners, can you please specify here?

**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**18. Is GLPS taught instead of MLPS (e.g. French, German, Spanish or Italian) or in addition to MLPS?**

**HOW MANY 'INSTEAD OF' AND HOW MANY 'IN ADDITION TO'?**

- . Instead of. . In addition to

If 'instead of', does this have any advantages or disadvantages? If so, can you please specify?

**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

If 'in addition to', does this have any advantages or disadvantages? If so, can you please specify?

**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

#### **PART FOUR: THE FUTURE**

**19. If you could make two recommendations for the further development of the initial training programme, what would these be?**

**LIST THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY**

**20. If you could make two recommendations for further supporting GLPS in the classroom, what would these be?**

**LIST THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY**

**21. If you could make two recommendations for further supporting your own professional development needs as GLPS teachers, what would these be?**

**LIST THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY**

**22. Links with and continuity into secondary school**

**SUMMARISE THE RESPONSES**

**FINAL IMPRESSIONS**

**If you have any final impressions which have not been entered into the responses thus far, please enter them here.**