

Education Scotland

Curriculum for Excellence: Statement for Practitioners

August 2016

Curriculum for Excellence is leading to improved experiences for children and young people across Scotland. The range of learning opportunities and the breadth of children and young people’s achievements is greater than ever before. There has been a lot of very positive improvement work in early learning and childcare, schools and colleges on which we can continue to build. Within the curriculum framework, you are empowered to make decisions about how best to organise learning for children in your care. Make maximum use of this flexibility to meet the needs of individuals and groups of learners.

The purpose of this statement is to provide clear, practical advice for practitioners on planning learning, teaching and assessment in the **broad general education (BGE)** phase of the curriculum. Two top priorities within the BGE are:

- ensuring the best possible progression in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for every child; and
- closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

The guidance and support material for the curriculum is currently being significantly streamlined. The appendix to this statement summarises and clarifies the key information on the curriculum framework within which you are expected to teach. Moving forward, the two key resources which support teachers to plan learning, teaching and assessment are:

- **Experiences and Outcomes**
- **Benchmarks**

The following tables provide key messages on what you are expected to do to effectively plan learning, teaching and assessment for all learners, and also suggests what you should avoid doing. It intended to simplify the wide range of guidance and material which currently exists and support collegiate working within and across schools.

Planning learning, teaching and assessment using the Experiences and Outcomes

Key messages - what to do	Key messages – what to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use long term plans to outline the structure of the year and the ways in which learning is organised throughout the whole year. • Keep medium term planning short and focused on the main learning activities developed from the Experiences and Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing overly-detailed plans for the year ahead which limit flexibility to respond to children’s needs, interests and progression. • Planning for individual Es and Os or spending excessive time writing detailed descriptions of all learning activities.

<p>(Es and Os). Bundle Es and Os together in ways which best suits your learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term planning on a daily or weekly basis should be flexible and be regarded as working notes to help you to organise learning. • Evaluate learners' progress on an on-going basis and keep short concise notes to help planning for next steps in learning. • Work together with colleagues to both, review and reduce, any unnecessary bureaucracy on an on-going basis. • Plan and organise learning in a way which avoids each week at school feeling too cluttered. • Prioritise time to ensure that all learners make the best possible progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Ticking off' all of the Es and Os separately. • Spending excessive time completing detailed daily or weekly planning templates or writing detailed evaluations of plans. • Feeling that you need to cover everything all of the time, for example, in a primary school, covering all eight curriculum areas every week. Do not lose a clear focus on helping all children to achieve the highest standards in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing by doing too many other things at once.
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Planning assessment using the Benchmarks

The purpose of the Benchmarks is to set out very clear statements about what children need to learn to achieve each level of the curriculum. They streamline and embed a wide range of existing assessment guidance (significant aspects of learning, progression frameworks and annotated exemplification) into one key resource to support teachers' professional judgement. Assessment is an on-going process to support learning.

Benchmarks for each curriculum level in literacy and numeracy will be published by the end of August 2016. Benchmarks for the other curriculum areas will follow by December 2016.

Key messages - what to do	Key messages – what to do avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build assessment principles into learning and teaching. Use assessment to 'improve' not just 'prove' learning. • Work with colleagues to agree the range of assessment approaches you will use. Keep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not spend time on assessment activities which do not help to identify children's next steps in learning. • Do not over-assess learners or assess the same content repeatedly in different ways.

this very focused. Most of the assessment evidence you use will come from routine classwork; for example jotters, discussions, observations, presentations.

- Moderate your assessment judgements through working with your colleagues, taking account of a range of assessment evidence. Moderation is an on-going process and includes both formal and informal activities. Talk more with colleagues about standards and the progress of learners.
- Work with colleagues to develop simple approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Tracking needs to be as easy to use as possible. What happens after you have collated the tracking information is what really matters.
- Regularly discuss tracking information with colleagues to plan additional support and interventions to help improve learners' progress.
- Use the Benchmarks to help monitor progress towards achievement of a level.
- Use the Benchmarks to support your overall professional judgement of when a learner has achieved a curriculum level.
- Involve children and young people in leading their own learning and get them to create their own profiles of achievement as part of normal classwork.
- Reports to parents should highlight latest progress and next steps in learning. These should be short and focused.

There is no need to create large portfolios of evidence.

- Do not wait until learners have demonstrated absolute mastery of every criteria within the Benchmark before moving on to the next level.
- There is no need to spend time collecting a wide range of evidence for moderation purposes.
- Do not develop elaborate systems of tracking which involve recording progress against individual Es and Os.
- Keep paperwork or the use of electronic systems for tracking to a minimum.
- Do not spend time writing long reports for parents which describe lots of classwork or use professional jargon.

Appendix: Summary of the Curriculum Framework in Scotland – August 2016

This summary is for teachers and practitioners, including those in early learning and childcare, youth work and colleges. It provides clarity of the main messages required for those working across the broad general education. New information is highlighted in red.

(HL indicates where hyperlinks have to be added to the document)

Core information	Key messages
The curriculum	
<p>Purpose (four capacities) (HL) The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is to help children and young people to become:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Successful learners;</i> • <i>Confident individuals;</i> • <i>Responsible citizens; and</i> • <i>Effective contributors.</i> 	<p>Developing the capabilities and attributes (HL) of the four capacities is embedded across all learning.</p>
<p>Aim Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) aims to raise standards, to close the poverty-related attainment gap, and to prepare children and young people for their future.</p>	<p>Building on the messages of Building the Curriculum 3 (HL), the National Improvement Framework (HL) and Scottish Attainment Challenge (HL) give a greater focus to our aim.</p>
<p>The curriculum framework The curriculum includes all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education. It includes four contexts for learning (HL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Curriculum areas and subjects</i> • <i>Interdisciplinary learning</i> • <i>Ethos and life of the school</i> • <i>Opportunities for personal achievement</i> <p>The Experiences and Outcomes for each curriculum area (HL) illustrate the learning within each level. Our curriculum provides flexibility for schools and settings to plan learning suitable for their own context. The school community and partners are involved in this.</p>	<p>The curriculum framework, as laid out in the Building the Curriculum Series, (HL) remains the same.</p> <p>Teachers and practitioners provide a curriculum that is coherent, flexible and ensures appropriate progression and levels of attainment for all children and young people.</p> <p>All children and young people are entitled to experience learning up to the end of third level during the broad general education (3-15) (HL to May 2016 letter from Bill). Not all children and young people will achieve the outcomes up to the end of third level.</p> <p>The National Improvement Framework increases the focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and highlights the need to close the poverty-related attainment gap.</p>

<p>Children’s rights and entitlements (HL) are at the heart of the Scottish Curriculum.</p>	
<p>Planning learning, teaching and assessment</p>	
<p>Moderation (HL BtC5 addendum) Moderation is the term used to describe approaches used to arrive at a shared understanding of standards and expectations.</p> <p>Moderation takes place at local, regional and national levels, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers and practitioners at the same curriculum level, • across a school or setting, • across a group of schools / settings, • within local authorities, • through regional groups; or • via national groups. 	<p>Moderation is built into every stage of planning learning, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>The process of moderation is not an activity that happens only at the end of a block or year.</p> <p>Teachers and practitioners, with senior leaders, regularly consider the range of assessment evidence which demonstrates children and young people are making progress and achieving as well as they can in their learning.</p>
<p>Principles of curriculum design (HL) These apply at all stages of learning with different emphases at different times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>challenge and enjoyment;</i> • <i>breadth;</i> • <i>progression;</i> • <i>depth;</i> • <i>personalisation and choice;</i> • <i>coherence; and</i> • <i>relevance.</i> <p>Responsibility of all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literacy • numeracy; and • health and wellbeing. <p>There should be a continuous focus on these from the ages of 3 to 18.</p> <p>Children and young people are entitled to two hours of quality PE per week.</p>	<p>The principles are taken into account when planning learning for all children and young people.</p> <p>Teachers and practitioners identify what will be taught and how to best meet the needs of all learners. This is underpinned by a clear, shared understanding of progression and high quality learning and teaching.</p> <p>When planning learning, teaching and assessment Es and Os are grouped or bundled together.</p> <p>Building the Ambition (HL) provides guidance to those working in the early learning and childcare sector. It should be used in parallel with CfE guidance.</p>
<p>Assessing progress Assessment is integral to learning and teaching.</p> <p>It is an ongoing process.</p>	<p>Assessment judgements should be based on the expected benchmarks for each curriculum level.</p>

<p>Evidence of progress and achievement will come from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sampling learning experiences and outcomes; • observing day-to-day learning within, and outwith, the classroom; • coursework, including tests; • learning conversations; • planned periodic holistic assessments; and • information from standardised assessments. 	<p>A range of assessment evidence is used to plan next steps in learning. Next steps may entail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revisiting previous learning, ensuring a solid foundation to allow learners to move confidently on to new learning; and • increasing the pace and level of challenge. <p>Opportunities are planned for children and young people to demonstrate that they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieved a breadth of knowledge and skills; • responded well to the level of challenge; and • applied their knowledge and skills in new and unfamiliar contexts.
<p>Achievement of a level: (HL) Achievement of a level is based on evidence and on teacher overall professional judgement.</p> <p>Benchmarks (HL): The benchmarks are designed to support teacher professional judgement of both, progress towards, and achievement of a level.</p>	<p>A range of assessment evidence will be considered and teachers will make a judgement on whether a child has achieved a level. Some children may progress to experience learning in some areas at the next level, before they have achieved a previous level.</p> <p>The benchmarks build on the <i>Significant aspects of learning and progression frameworks</i>. They provide a more streamlined approach to supporting teachers' professional judgement</p>