

# *Curriculum for Excellence Explained*

• EDINBURGH •  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL







Welcome to '**Curriculum for Excellence Explained**'.

We hope you will find this guide useful and clear.



*Curriculum for Excellence* will place children and young people at the heart of Scottish education. The new Curriculum is built around four 'Capacities' or objectives for all children and young people. We are committed to giving every child the best possible chance to realise their full potential and become:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens
- effective contributors

We very much look forward to working in partnership with you at this exciting time of change and opportunity to enhance our children's learning experiences.

Gillian Tee, Director of Children and Families,  
City of Edinburgh Council



## **‘Curriculum for Excellence Explained’:**

### **Your Questions Answered**

What is <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> ?	Page 3
What will <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> look like?	Page 4
How will <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> be organised?	Page 5
How will literacy and numeracy be delivered?	Pages 6–7
How will health and wellbeing be delivered?	Page 8
How will we know children are making progress?	Page 9
How will learning and teaching look?	Page 10
How will pupil progress be recognised?	Page 11
How will pupil progress be reported?	Page 12
What will learning look like for senior pupils?	Page 13
How will pupils’ learning support needs be met?	Page 14
How can parents and carers get involved?	Page 15
Where can we find more information about <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i> ?	Page 16



## What is Curriculum for Excellence?

*Curriculum for Excellence* will improve education for children and young people by putting learning experiences at the heart of education. Some important changes of emphasis will refresh learning and teaching. Key factors are:

- The new Curriculum 3–18 will ensure continuity in each child’s learning
- Children are at the centre of teaching and learning
- Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing will be delivered across learning and will be the responsibility of all
- Six Curricular Levels or Stages set out the learning progression clearly for each child from 3 to 18 years
- There are eight Curricular Areas: sciences, languages (English, Gaelic, classical and modern languages), mathematics, expressive arts, social studies, technologies, health and wellbeing, religious and moral education.
- Each Curricular Area contains a series of ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ which describe children’s learning and achievements from a pupil’s perspective. These take the form of: ‘I can...’ or ‘I am able to...’



## **What will Curriculum for Excellence look like?**

The Curriculum structure is based on national and local guidelines. School leaders will also take into account their school context and the needs of learners in their schools when organising the delivery of the Outcomes and Experiences.

The pupil learning journey is the focus of *Curriculum for Excellence*. This ensures that children and young people are at the heart of learning and teaching.

The Experiences and Outcomes in each Curricular Area will be the same across Scotland. Schools will create learning opportunities for pupils which span, and make connections across, the Curricular Areas. This means that, for example, pupils might undertake research in social studies, producing statistics which in turn involve mathematical or computer analysis. A French lesson may include learning about French-speaking African countries.

The new Curriculum will offer more opportunities for pupil personalisation and choice. For example, pupils might choose to study a particular text, or select from a range of physical education activities.

‘In PE, we could choose what we were going to do for a six week block. I chose basketball, and my friend, who doesn’t normally enjoy PE, chose dance. We both really liked our different activities’. (S4 pupil)



## **How will *Curriculum for Excellence* be organised?**

The learning journeys of children and young people will progress through six Curricular Levels or Stages from the age of 3 to 18. Each of the Levels or Stages generally spans three years. However, children progress at different rates and some may need additional support, while others will achieve confident learning skills sooner.

The **Early Level** covers the pre-school years and Primary 1.

The **First Level** runs until the end of Primary 4.

The **Second Level** runs until the end of Primary 7.

The Third and Fourth Levels cover from Secondary 1 to S3.

The **Senior Phase** runs from S4 to S6 in school and college, or other means of study, up until the age of 18.

Effective transition arrangements are especially important in *Curriculum for Excellence* to ensure continuity of learning for each pupil. Key transitions are the Early Level (from pre-school to primary), from primary to secondary (moving from the Second to the Third Level of learning) and during the Senior Phase to ensure a positive destination into higher education, work, training or college.



## **How will literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing be delivered across learning?**

It is the responsibility of every teacher in all Curricular Areas to support children and young people as they develop literacy and numeracy skills, and as they learn about looking after their own health and wellbeing. There are separate Experiences and Outcomes for these three core *Curriculum for Excellence* themes which are described as being the ‘responsibility of all’.

### **Literacy across Learning**

Literacy is essential for learning. Children and young people need literacy skills to access learning and equip them for life. Delivering literacy across learning means that all teachers will help learners to improve their literacy skills by creating opportunities which extend pupils’ experiences of reading, writing, talking and listening.

The literacy expectations will be the same across all Curricular Areas. For example, written reports of scientific experiments and reports of social studies investigations will share the same literacy Outcomes.

Literacy also enables children and young people to describe their own understanding of their learning, feelings and thoughts. It equips them with skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.





## **How will literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing be delivered across learning?**

### **Numeracy**

To face the challenges of the 21st century, each young person needs to have confidence in using numeracy skills. Numeracy is important in everyday life. It equips us with the skills we need to interpret and analyse information, simplify and solve problems, assess risk and make informed decisions. These skills are relevant to all areas of learning and teaching.

Numeracy is visible in many Curricular Areas. Measuring, calculating and weighing feature in activities and subjects as diverse as cooking, craft and design, physics, physical education, chemistry, personal finance and accounting as well as in mathematics. Understanding statistics and tables are useful skills across learning, from social studies to health and wellbeing. By inviting teachers and pupils to be alert to numeracy in a range of contexts, pupils will enjoy developing and applying their numeracy skills.

For example, to develop their problem-solving and mathematical thinking skills, children and young people will be encouraged to explore different options by asking questions such as: 'What would happen if ...?'



## **How will literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing be delivered across learning?**

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Mental, emotional, social and physical health and wellbeing are essential for learning and for life. Pupils will be supported in their learning experiences so that they can make informed choices throughout their lives.

There is a shared responsibility within schools and partners to take a holistic approach to ensure that children and young people are:

Nurtured	Active
Respected	Responsible
Included	Safe
Healthy	Achieving

All practitioners will contribute to supporting children and young people in their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing; as they plan for choices and changes; as they undertake physical activity and sport; in their relationships with others.

There is also a set of health and wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes, such as physical activity and sport, which will continue to be delivered through Curricular Areas within schools.



## How will we know children are making progress?

An important focus of *Curriculum for Excellence* is pupil participation in setting learning targets, reflecting on their achievements and taking responsibility for their own learning. It is part of *Assessment is for Learning* (AifL). This is why the Outcomes and Experiences use phrases such as ‘I can...’ and ‘I am able to...’ Greater ownership of personal learning leads to confidence and a sense of success through achievement. The process of self-assessment, goal-setting and celebrating success is called Personal Learning Planning.

Across learning, children will make progress by developing their learning and thinking skills. These are described in the Outcomes and Experiences by the use of verbs. For example, a pupil may begin by remembering information, then move on to *understanding* it, before *applying* it, *analysing* it, *evaluating* it and finally *creating* a new idea with it. The development of thinking skills is crucial to *Curriculum for Excellence*. These transferable skills will equip pupils for the world of further and higher education, for work and for life.

There will also be formal monitoring and tracking of pupils’ learning progress which will be reported to parents and carers. This is called ‘assessment’.

‘Together, my teacher and I discuss my progress and we agree targets. I like knowing where I stand and what I am aiming for. It makes it easier to speak up if I am stuck, because I want to meet my targets.’ (P7 pupil)



## How will learning and teaching look?

*Curriculum for Excellence* is refreshing learning and teaching. There is more emphasis on how children learn. Pupils' learning journeys will be characterised by seven attributes. Learners will be:

- Engaged and active
- Set challenging goals
- Sharing expectations and standards
- Receiving timely and accurate feedback
- Involved in establishing and taking responsibility for their learning intentions, success criteria and personal learning planning
- Collaborating with others
- Reflecting on learning preferences

For example, active engagement of children and young people will be demonstrated by the use of action verbs. Activities such as discussing, explaining, interacting, investigating, exploring, creating, collaborating, evaluating and analysing ensure that pupils are engaged. Some of these verbs are used in the Experiences and Outcomes to illustrate pupils' learning journeys as they acquire and develop new skills.

'I really like working in a group because you can share ideas. It's nice to work together because it's friendly and we help each other and puzzle things out'. (P6 pupil)



## How will pupil progress be recognised?

Assessment – the monitoring and tracking of pupils’ learning progress – will be undertaken by teachers throughout the Curriculum 3–18.

- From ages 3 to 15, this will be carried out within schools and centres. National examples and standards will be used which will be available to teachers on the National Assessment Resource, a new website portal for assessment in Scotland.
- Assessment will involve looking at a range of evidence, such as pupil folios of work, rather than concentrating on test results. Assessment will investigate how well pupils learn, how much they learn and how their learning and thinking skills are developing
- Pupils and parents will be involved in monitoring and tracking progress, as pupils agree and work towards targets
- Increasingly, computer tracking of pupil progress will ensure information is readily available
- From ages 15 to 18, assessment will continue but qualifications will be externally assessed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, as currently happens.

‘I got to choose the work I was most proud of to put in my folio. When my dad admired my work at home, I really did feel proud and pleased with myself’. (P5 pupil)



## How will pupil progress be reported?

Reporting-to-parent arrangements are currently being worked on by schools and by the Children and Families department to reflect *Curriculum for Excellence* Experiences and Outcomes.

It is likely that reporting will take the same form as the Experiences and Outcomes and will describe achievements from a pupil's point of view: 'I can....' and 'I am able to...'

This may already feature in the reporting to parents in some schools. It is probable that many of the current reporting methods will continue – parent consultations, reports on learning progress, children's learning profiles. These may be supplemented by other types of information-sharing.

Pupils' achievements and life outside school will also be recognised as contributing to the learning journey of children and young people. A wider and more whole-person approach to learning will be taken.

It is important that parents and children are fully informed about learning and progression, that any issues are identified early and that communications between home and school are good.

'I prefer it when I already have good communications with my daughter's teachers. It helps to know someone a bit before a problem comes up'. (Parent of S4 pupil)



## How will learning look for senior pupils?

Qualifications in the Senior Phase (ages 15 to 18) of *Curriculum for Excellence* may include both familiar and new qualifications. Experiences will be delivered to pupils through a range of learning, training and work-related opportunities.

Qualifications will be designed to reflect the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence and to develop skills for learning, life and work. The qualifications framework will include:

- The introduction of literacy and numeracy qualifications from S3 onwards (under review)
- The replacement of Standard Grades by National 4 and National 5 qualifications (new)
- Access
- Highers
- Advanced Highers

The new qualifications will slot into the existing Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for secondary, higher and further education. Initiatives such as *More Choices, More Chances and Jobs, Employment, Training* (JET) provide important opportunities for young people as they make effective transitions into positive destinations such as work, college or training.



## **How will pupils' learning support needs be met?**

*Curriculum for Excellence* is based on principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity. These principles support the learning needs of every child. Supporting learners is the responsibility of all practitioners.

The *Curriculum for Excellence* framework is flexible. Careful planning for those with additional support needs will ensure that each child can progress on his or her learning journey and can experience appropriate choices and opportunities. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 sets out broad definitions of additional support for learning needs. These include short-term or long-term emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties as well as support for gifted and talented pupils. Edinburgh's implementation of the Act is set out in the document *In On the Act*.

*In On the Act* describes the procedures involved in supporting pupils with additional needs. For example, in some cases pupils are supported by a named individual. Other children are supported through partnership working with a range of specialists who can provide additional support.





## **How can parents and carers get involved?**

Children and young people need to be properly equipped for learning – well-rested, enjoying healthy food, organised, feeling positive and supported. A strong partnership between home and school, based on caring for children and sharing useful information, is the best way to support children and young people in their learning and in their personal development. Pupils, parents/carers, teachers and school staff all have a responsibility to monitor the engagement of children and young people in learning. Effective communication pathways between home and school are essential for sharing both achievements and concerns.

Each school makes its own arrangements for informing parents about, and involving them in, *Curriculum for Excellence*. Parents and carers will generously continue to share their skills, their time and their commitment to the life of their children's school communities. The national intranet, Glow, will create further opportunities for parental involvement as it provides a platform for sharing good practice and information across Scotland.

To complement school-based arrangements, the City of Edinburgh Council's website [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/curriculumforexcellence](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/curriculumforexcellence) includes comprehensive information on *Curriculum for Excellence*, its development and its implementation.



## **Where can we find more information about *Curriculum for Excellence*?**

Ask at your school. Visit our website [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/curriculumforexcellence](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/curriculumforexcellence) for more details. Other useful sites and pages include:

- The Parentzone section of Learning and Teaching Scotland's website: [www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/index.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone/index.asp)
- Curriculum for Excellence 'Building the Curriculum' documents: [www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence)
- A Parental Toolkit on Curriculum for Excellence has been produced by Learning and Teaching Scotland: [www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/buildingthecurriculum/engagingwithparents](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/buildingthecurriculum/engagingwithparents)
- Information on the Experiences and Outcomes for Curricular Areas: [www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/experiencesandoutcomes/index.asp](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/experiencesandoutcomes/index.asp).
- Assessment and qualification information: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2941.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2941.html) and [www.scqf.org.uk/AbouttheFramework/Levels.aspx](http://www.scqf.org.uk/AbouttheFramework/Levels.aspx)
- Glow is the world's first national intranet for education. It is being rolled out in Scottish schools. Further information will follow. <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/glowscotland/index.asp>





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MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব

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