curriculum for excellence
building the curriculum 5
a framework for assessment: reporting

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Supplementary Information

In January 2010 *Building the Curriculum 5: a framework for assessment* was published. That document included a commitment to provide further guidance on reporting. This guidance fulfils that commitment and provides staff with advice on reporting to parents including information on reporting on progress within a level.

Some examples of practice in reporting are included within this document to illustrate approaches staff might take to put the advice provided into practice. These examples are not definitive but are provided to help staff as they begin to further develop their approaches.

The advice on reporting is part of a suite of documents on recognising achievement, reporting and profiling. *The Curriculum for Excellence* Management Board decided to publish the reporting section separately in advance of the whole document. The full suite of advice on recognising achievement, reporting and profiling will be made available later this year electronically and in hard copy.

Reporting to parents

the purposes of reporting to parents

Building the Curriculum 5: a framework for assessment outlines the key purposes and features of reporting within *Curriculum for Excellence*. The focus of reporting is to support and improve learning:

> "Reporting has two main purposes. Firstly, it provides clear, positive and constructive feedback about children's and young people's learning and progress, looking back on what has been achieved against standards and expectations. Secondly, it creates an agenda for discussions between learners and those teaching and supporting them about their next steps in learning."

Reporting allows information to be shared and exchanged among children and young people, parents and staff. At the centre of reporting are informed discussions between teachers and parents on their child's learning. It focuses on what information is needed to ensure that parents know what their child has achieved and how well he/she is doing against expectations. It provides a summary of what the learner has aimed for; describes progress in terms of what the learner has achieved so far; and sets out for the learner, parents and staff what needs to be done to ensure continued progress and improved standards of achievement.

Reporting makes the child's or young person's learning and achievement explicit to all and helps engage parents actively in their child's learning. It encourages active parental involvement as well as providing information and feedback to them on their child's progress and achievements.

a national framework for reporting with local flexibility

Schools, education authorities and other establishments will have flexibility within clear national expectations to determine the ways in which reporting shares children's and young people's progress, achievements and needs. As is current practice, the formats of written reports will be decided locally.

Reporting comprises a range of activities including, for instance, written reports, children presenting their learning to parents, parents' consultation meetings and on-going oral discussions. Staff should ensure that learners are involved in reporting activities in order to promote learners' ownership of their learning. These on-going reporting activities are closely linked to learners' reflection and dialogue about progress.

Providing a range of approaches to reporting to parents

In response to feedback from parents and staff, a primary school has reviewed its approaches to reporting to parents. Staff decided to provide more opportunities for oral discussions with parents about their child's progress and achievements. The school now provides an information session early in the school year to inform parents of the work to be covered and how they can help their child with their learning. Parent/teacher interviews are held twice a year in November and in June and parents receive a written report in March. Parents have responded well to this new pattern and feel they are more involved and get information earlier so that action can be taken to address any issues. Staff now spend less time writing reports and enjoy engaging in quality discussions with parents.

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Reporting on progress within 1st level social studies

The following details the feedback a P3 child's parents received at a parents' consultation meeting.

"Jane has made good progress within 1st level in social studies over the course of P3. In her study of 'My town' she worked well with her group to produce a colourful poster of Ayr showing a short timeline of important events in the past, information about Robert Burns and tourist attractions in the town today. She gave a short talk to the class about why she likes Ayr and what she had found out about it and produced a simple map showing where she lives in Ayr. She is developing her understanding of her place in the wider world in which she lives and is able to use simple sources of information to increase her knowledge. Over the course of P4 Jane should continue to extend her knowledge and understanding of the wider society of Scotland, its past and its present. She will also begin to learn more about other countries in the world."

Building the Curriculum 5 describes the national expectations within which education authorities and schools will determine their own policy and practice.

To inform parents and help them understand how they can support their child's learning, reporting will provide information on their child's progress and achievements in their broad general education:

> Progress in the curriculum areas: languages and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, health and wellbeing, expressive arts, religious and moral education, the sciences, social studies and technologies. Progress will be described in brief qualitative statements noting particular strengths, areas for development and achievements in challenging aspects and in the application of learning

> Achievement of a curriculum level, either in a part of a curriculum area such as reading, or in a whole curriculum area

> Achievement in different contexts and settings, including across curriculum areas, the life and ethos of the school and learning outwith the school, including in the wider community

> The nature of support being put in place to ensure each child or young person makes appropriate progress

> Any gaps in their child's progress and ways parents can help.

Reporting in the senior phase will reflect every learner's entitlement to opportunities to obtain qualifications as well as to continue to develop the four capacities.

Reporting should also:

> accentuate the positive, be constructive, be fair and minimise the use of jargon

> ensure that the description of learning provides a clear, concise and recognisable picture of the individual learner

> provide information on a learner's attributes and capabilities including attitude to learning and motivation

> provide opportunities for the learner to contribute, including to comment on written reports, when possible

> provide opportunities for parents to give their views on their child's progress, including through their responses to written reports.

Reporting on healthy eating in early years

In one pre-school nursery, staff use a 'Learning Wall' display for parents which details the experiences and outcomes the children are working on together with photographs of children's work. The monthly newsletter provides information on the learning over the month before and outlines plans for the next month. Each child has an 'I can' folder which is easily accessed by staff, parents and children. These include photographs and observations on the child's learning, children's comments are included and teachers identify next steps in learning. Parents are invited to add comments and the 'I can' folders are sent home regularly to encourage this dialogue. At the parents' evening which took place at the end of the healthy eating topic, many parents commented that their child's understanding of healthy diets and lifestyles had developed through the topic and was having a positive impact in the home.

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reporting to parents: putting the principles into practice

Periodically, staff will work together with learners to draw on a range of evidence to summarise learning and progress for reporting to parents and others. Learners should be encouraged and supported to contribute to decisions on what evidence is to be drawn upon, irrespective of where learning takes place. This will involve reflection and dialogue about learning. Those health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes which are specifically designed to help children and young people make informed decisions provide a useful focus for such conversations about learning. The processes by which learners contribute to reporting promote learner ownership without constraining the professional judgement of teachers to report on a learner's progress.

Revised approaches to reporting will build on current practice and will develop as *Curriculum for Excellence* is progressively implemented. Reporting which is proportionate to the needs of learners and parents must also be manageable for teachers. Within *Curriculum for Excellence* this should require a similar investment of teacher time and school resources to that of effective current systems. Education authorities, schools and partners should develop effective approaches to reporting. All those who provide and support learning should have an opportunity to contribute to reporting on a learner's progress and achievements.

As within current effective practice which places high priority on language and mathematics, reporting within *Curriculum for Excellence* gives high priority to literacy and numeracy within the learner's entitlement to a broad general education until the end of S3. Education authorities and schools will develop mechanisms for reporting on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing which draw on a range of available relevant information. It is not necessary or practicable that every secondary teacher report individually on these. However, as teachers develop their practice in relation to the experiences and outcomes they may find it appropriate to comment.

It will not be necessary or possible to summarise every aspect of learning and progress in every written report. In particular, staff and schools will not be expected to provide comments on each of the four capacities or to comment on every individual statement of experiences and outcomes.

Reporting progress in 2nd level expressive arts

The following is an extract from a written report to parents about a recent focus on drama in the expressive arts.

"In primary 5, Mark has gained confidence from his experiences in performing in a play with a theatre group. He demonstrated sound awareness of his role and the role of his group. He needs opportunities to communicate more effectively, using appropriate vocabulary to describe feelings and actions. He performed well to friends and family at the open day."

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reporting on progress and achieving a level

Reporting is based upon assessment of progress. Assessment takes place as part of ongoing learning, periodically and at points of transition. Assessment involves learners and staff regularly gathering, reflecting on and evaluating evidence of learning to describe learners' progress and to identify steps for raising their standards of achievement. Such practice underpins the approach to reporting developed in *Building the Curriculum 5*:

"From time to time teachers also take stock of their learners' progress and achievements in order to be able to plan ahead and to record and report on progress."

"This taking stock relates to broad standards and expectations, for example deciding whether a level for a curriculum area, or part of an area such as reading, has been achieved or what additional learning and support is needed. It involves teachers in evaluating a range of evidence produced over a period of time to provide a summary of progress and achievement, including for qualifications and awards. It can be carried out in a number of ways, including by weighing up all relevant evidence, taking account of the breadth, challenge and application of learning."

children and young people progress in different ways and achieve different levels of performance

The broad expectations about progression through curriculum levels are:

> the early curriculum level in the pre-school years and P1

> first curriculum level-to the end of P4

> second curriculum level-to the end of P7

> third and fourth curriculum levels-S1 to S3 (fourth curriculum level broadly aligns to SCQF level 4)

> the senior phase-S4 to S6, and college or other means of study

A broad general education includes **all** of the experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas up to and including the third level. These should be **experienced** by all children and young people as far as this is consistent with their learning needs and prior achievements. The arrangements for assessment should enable and motivate all learners to develop to their fullest potential across all aspects of the curriculum. Approaches to assessment should not create artificial ceilings which might limit expectations of what children and young people can achieve.

It is recognised that children and young people will progress at different rates: some will require additional support and may take longer for their learning to be secure at a particular level for some or all areas of the curriculum; others will achieve secure learning sooner. Most learners will progress into the fourth level in many aspects of their learning before the end of S3.

Building the Curriculum 5 notes that for learners to demonstrate that their progress is **secure** and that **they have achieved a level**, they will need opportunities to show that they:

> have achieved a **breadth** of learning across the experiences and outcomes for an aspect of the curriculum

> can respond to the level of **challenge** set out in the experiences and outcomes and are moving forward to more challenging learning in some aspects

> can **apply** what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations.

The focus is no longer on 'how fast' learners progress and achieve the levels since this can lead to superficial approaches to learning. Reflecting the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*, progress is now defined in terms of 'how much' and 'how well' as well as of learners' rate of progress. This approach will promote greater breadth and depth of learning including a greater focus on the secure development of skills and knowledge. It acknowledges that children and young people progress and achieve in different ways and at different rates.
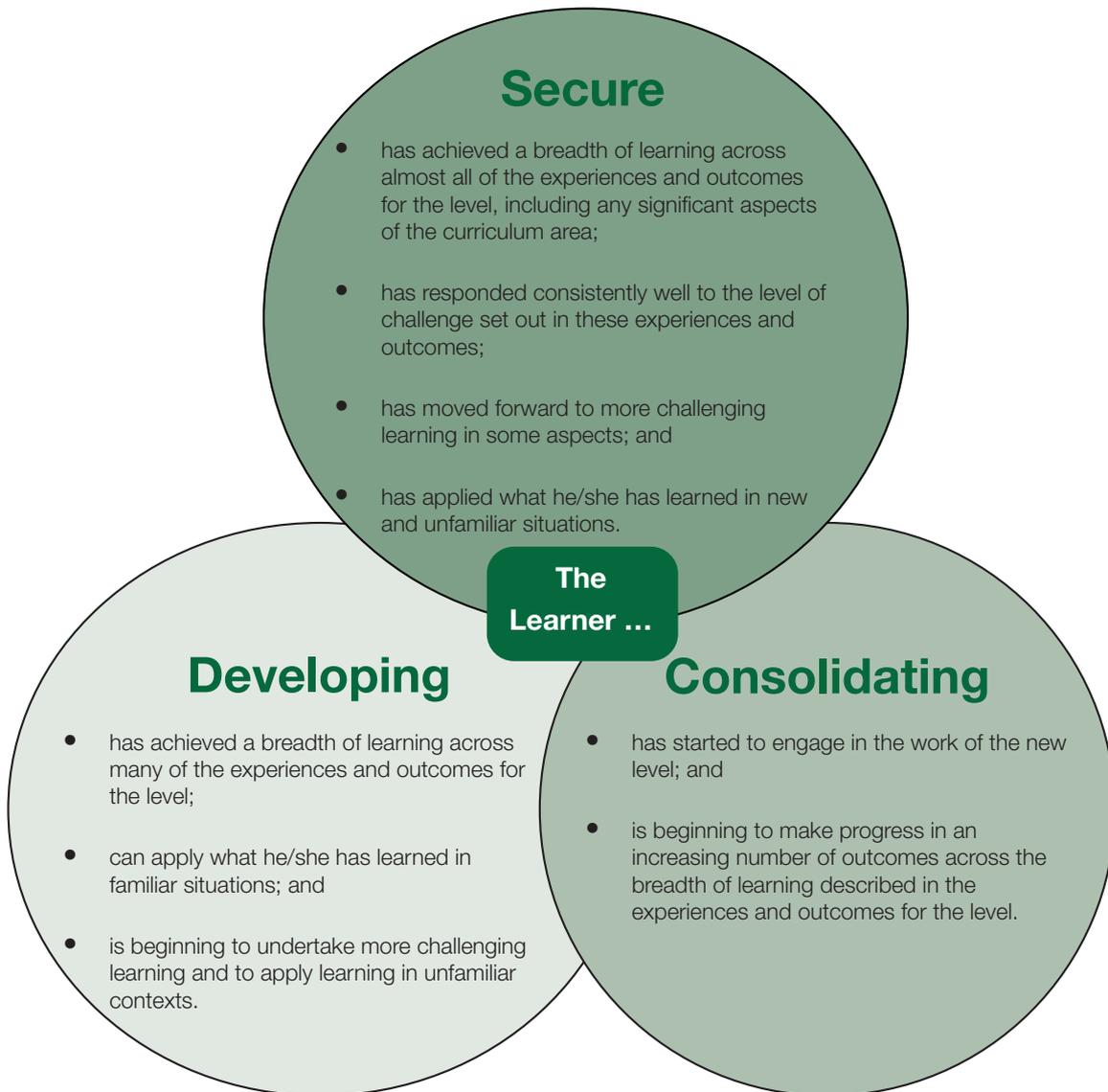
reporting on progress taking account of breadth, challenge and application of learning

In *Curriculum for Excellence* the standards expected for progression are indicated within the experiences and outcomes at the different levels which represent the breadth and depth of learning to be experienced by children and young people, typically over a three year period. This wider spacing of levels allows scope for children and young people to progress along different routes and pathways through the experiences and outcomes. It allows opportunities for enriching learning experiences and for consolidation and reinforcing learning. Reports to parents during such periods will focus on how well learners are progressing and becoming secure in their learning. The *Principles and Practice* papers in each of the curriculum areas include more specific guidance on features of progression.

When reporting, staff will provide a clear description of the learner's progress within curriculum levels and, in the senior phase, progress towards qualifications. A consistent approach to reporting will help children and young people as they move within and between schools. Education authorities and schools may therefore use the following approach illustrated in Figure 1 as a basis for developing their practice on reporting to describe progress within a level in part of a curriculum area such as reading, or in a whole curriculum area.

Figure 1

Secure

- has achieved a breadth of learning across almost all of the experiences and outcomes for the level, including any significant aspects of the curriculum area;

- has responded consistently well to the level of challenge set out in these experiences and outcomes;

- has moved forward to more challenging learning in some aspects; and

- has applied what he/she has learned in new and unfamiliar situations.

The Learner …

Developing

- has achieved a breadth of learning across many of the experiences and outcomes for the level;

- can apply what he/she has learned in familiar situations; and

- is beginning to undertake more challenging learning and to apply learning in unfamiliar contexts.

Consolidating

- has started to engage in the work of the new level; and

- is beginning to make progress in an increasing number of outcomes across the breadth of learning described in the experiences and outcomes for the level.

The diagram illustrates the interconnected nature of these categories. It emphasises that progression in learning is usually not linear and that children and young people will progress in different ways. Care should be taken in using these categories for reporting. It will be important to use these to help parents and others understand an individual learner's progress. Brief qualitative statements based on one or more of the bullets within each of the categories would be appropriate. Teachers could adapt these and could exemplify the context of learning, for example, applying money management skills in budgeting for a holiday.

achieving a level: secure learning

Teachers should report to parents on their child's achievement in terms of levels[1] as well as using brief qualitative comments to reflect 'how much' and 'how well' their child has achieved. A child or young person will achieve his/her level when their learning is secure as defined above. The levels are not there as hurdles to get over as quickly as possible but rather as staging posts on a journey which offers opportunities for challenge and depth.

Teachers will use a range of evidence focusing on breadth, challenge and application of learning to determine if a child has achieved a level, either in a part of a curriculum area or in a whole curriculum area. The *Principles and Practice* papers in each of the curriculum areas provide guidance on significant aspects of learning. For example, in the sciences, assessment evidence will focus on knowledge and understanding of the living, material and physical world, inquiry and investigative skills, scientific and analytical thinking skills, scientific literacy and general attributes.

Evidence will come from day-to-day learning as well as from specific assessment tasks, activities, tests and examinations. Teachers will take stock and use their professional judgement to evaluate a range of evidence when they believe that a child has a secure grasp of a significant body of learning. They should take a holistic approach to arrive at their overall judgement about achievement of a level. In each curriculum area, consideration needs to be given to those aspects of learning, knowledge and understanding and skills that are prerequisites to ensure successful progression. When children are secure in their learning in almost all of the experiences and outcomes at a particular level and have experienced sufficient breadth of activity they will be ready to move onto the next level.

Teachers' judgements will be supported by informed discussion with colleagues and moderation procedures to ensure that the learner's achievements are in line with national standards and expectations. Over time, education authorities, schools and staff will be able to draw on guidance, exemplification and support from the National Assessment Resource to inform their decisions about the quality and sufficiency of evidence required to achieve a level.

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1   Building the Curriculum 5 states: "In addition to individual reports on the progress of the child or young person, they will receive information on: how well all learners and particular groups of learners are achieving; the performance of children and young people in the school in relation to expected levels at particular stages in key areas such as literacy and numeracy; and how the school is applying national standards and expectations." It provides the following commitment: "To enable schools to use benchmarking information, the Scottish Government will develop from its previous work with education authorities a process to enable sharing of information about learners' performance at school level. The Scottish Government will not collate or publish aggregate information nationally."

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Reporting progress in 3rd level technologies

The following is an example of a written report to parents for a young person in S1.

"Petra has developed into a very confident learner in craft and design technology (CDT) this year and I enjoyed having her in my class. She clearly enjoyed the manufacturing elements of the course, though she needs to further develop her measuring skills. She should be prepared to spend more time on this part of the production process in future. She has good manual dexterity with woodworking tools and works safely. She applies her manual graphics skills very well in a range of contexts and her graphic communication work using the IT packages was excellent. She responded very well to the challenge of her final presentation which was of a high standard. However, the mathematical work involved in technological studies was difficult for her and she will need to work hard on this in S2. If she follows my advice in this report, I am confident that she will become secure in all parts of the CDT course at level 3 by the end of S2."

annex: references, publications and other websites

HMIE *The Child at the Centre 2*, HMIE 2007
http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/catcseey.pdf

HMIE *How Good is our School 3?* HMIE 2007
http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgiosjte3.pdf

HMIE *External Quality Arrangements for Scotland's Colleges*, HMIE, 2008
http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/eqafsc.pdf

HMIE *How Good is Our Community Learning and Development 2*, HMIE, 2006
http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hgio2cld.pdf

HMIE *Quality Management in Education 2 – Self-Evaluation for Quality Improvement*, HMIE, 2006
http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/j7354.pdf

The *Principles* and *Practices* papers and the experiences and outcomes describing the expectations
for learning in progression in all areas of the curriculum can be found at
http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/experiencesandoutcomes/index.asp

Building the Curriculum 5: a framework for assessment, Scottish Government, 2010
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/01/14141415/0

www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk

The Scottish Government

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