

curriculum for excellence  
building the curriculum 3  
a framework for learning and teaching:  
key ideas and priorities

- > SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS
- > CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS
- > RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS
- > EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

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The Scottish Government and its partner organisations would like to thank Keir Bloomer and David Cameron for producing this summary text. The ADES-led Partnership endorses the publication and distribution of this document.

Throughout this paper, the term 'school' is taken to include pre-school centres, residential and day special schools (including secure provision) and primary and secondary schools. The term 'staff' or 'teacher' in this document is used to refer to all staff involved in assessment and includes pre-school practitioners, college lecturers, Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff and other relevant practitioners.

The term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

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ISBN: 978-0-7559-9370-3

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Produced for the Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland  
DPPAS10070 (05/10)

Published by the Scottish Government, May 2010

Further copies are available from  
BookSource  
50 Cambuslang Road  
Cambuslang Investment Park  
Glasgow G32 8NB

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## What is *Building the Curriculum 3* about?

*Building the Curriculum 3* offers a basis for planning for learning and to provide tools to do so through establishing principles and advice for designing learning. The clear aim is to improve standards of learning and teaching and raise achievement for all learners.

The purpose of the curriculum, planned on this basis, is to make sure that learners acquire the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence* to be:

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

They will demonstrate this by becoming more independent and successful in their learning, by having greater knowledge and more secure understanding, and by being able to use the knowledge that they have more effectively. They will be able to process new information more easily and apply knowledge in different contexts from those in which the knowledge was acquired. They will be able to learn more independently.

They will be more confident in tackling new and more challenging tasks and dealing with new situations, and will have a better understanding of their responsibilities within society.

They will be more able to control their own lives and to be active in society, particularly in contributing to the economy, but also in their awareness of wider issues that affect them.



## What does it say?

The *curriculum* is defined as all the experiences that are planned for learners wherever they are being educated. It can take account of all the experiences that learners can have through learning outwith school and in activity that would previously have been thought of as extra-curricular. The document recognises four different contexts for learning through:

- > the ethos and life of the school as a community
- > curriculum areas and subjects
- > interdisciplinary learning
- > opportunities for personal achievement.

It also stresses the need to make connections between these.

The curriculum must be designed around the experiences and outcomes. They should be used to identify essential content, key skills and experiences. An emphasis on active learning provides a platform for developing a wider range of skills, as well as deeper knowledge and understanding. The experiences and outcomes should then be used to establish progression for learners by setting out the main elements which differentiate performance as learners progress within, and through, the levels. The needs and abilities of the learner should dictate the pace and nature of their progress through the experiences and outcomes.

The curriculum must include the sciences, languages and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, social studies, expressive arts, health and wellbeing, religious and moral education and technologies. All of these elements must be part of every learner's broad general education from early years up to the end of S3, although there will be opportunities for some specialisation within areas to reflect the learner's progress and interest.

In the senior phase, learners can reduce the curriculum areas covered, but they must have the sort of experiences that will further develop the four capacities. This is an entitlement for all learners at all stages of their education.

One of the key ideas in *Building the Curriculum 3* is the concept of learner entitlements. This must be the basis for detailed planning at each stage, building on all the learner achieved at the previous stage. Planning the curriculum for learners must consistently take account of the need to develop wider skills in all subjects and courses. All teachers need to identify the best opportunities to develop skills in literacy and numeracy and to support understanding of health and wellbeing.

Wherever possible, Scottish contexts and examples should be used to develop the learners' sense of themselves as part of that society.

Every learner is entitled to personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that *Curriculum for Excellence* offers. The reduction in prescription provides the flexibility to take greater account of individual needs.

The curriculum should be designed on the basis of the following principles:

- > **Challenge and enjoyment**
- > **Breadth**
- > **Progression**
- > **Depth**
- > **Personalisation and choice**
- > **Coherence**
- > **Relevance.**

## A curriculum framework to meet the needs of all learners 3 to 18

### A schematic guide for curriculum planners

#### Values

Wisdom, justice, compassion, integrity

The curriculum must be inclusive, be a stimulus for personal achievement and, through the broadening of experience of the world, be an encouragement towards informed and responsible citizenship.

#### The curriculum: 'the totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'

- Ethos and life of the school as a community
- Curriculum areas and subjects
- Interdisciplinary learning
- Opportunities for personal achievement

#### Learning and teaching

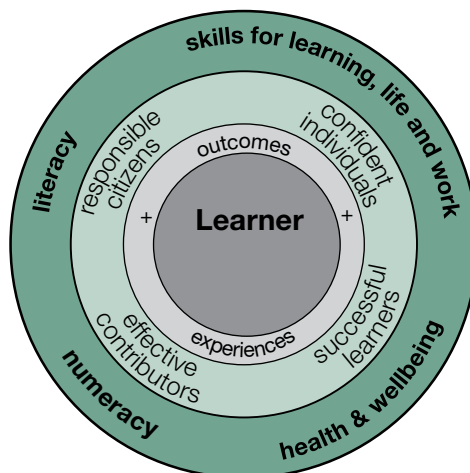
- Engaging and active
- Setting challenging goals
- Shared expectations and standards
- Timely, accurate feedback
- Learning intentions, success criteria, personal learning planning
- Collaborative
- Reflecting the ways different learners progress

#### Experiences and outcomes set out expectations for learning and development in:

- Expressive arts
- Languages and literacy
- Health and wellbeing

- Mathematics and numeracy
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies

Curriculum levels describe progression and development.



#### All children and young people are entitled to experience

- a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18
- a broad general education, including well planned experiences and outcomes across all the curriculum areas. This should include understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it and understanding of the environment
- a senior phase which provides opportunities for study for qualifications and other planned opportunities for developing the four capacities
- opportunities for developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- opportunities to achieve to the highest levels they can through appropriate personal support and challenge
- opportunities to move into positive and sustained destinations beyond school

#### Personal support

- review of learning and planning of next steps
- gaining access to learning activities which will meet their needs
- planning for opportunities for personal achievement
- preparing for changes and choices and support through changes and choices
- pre-school centres and schools working with partners

#### Principles for curriculum design:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

#### Arrangements for

- Assessment
- Qualifications
- Self-evaluation and accountability
- Professional development

**support the purposes of learning**

## What is new or different?

The main elements of *Building the Curriculum 3* which are different from current frameworks are:

- > The design principles for *Curriculum for Excellence* are different and change the emphasis of curriculum design significantly with the emphasis on breadth, challenge and depth and on the entitlements of learners rather than on curriculum content, although key areas of knowledge are defined.
- > It offers to all learners a clear entitlement to a broad general education including all the experiences and outcomes up to and including the third level<sup>1</sup>, as far as that is consistent with their learning needs and prior achievement.
- > It requires support for all learners in developing skills for learning, life and work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. All teachers have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in these areas.
- > It places the responsibility for innovation at the level of the school and allows greater autonomy. SQA qualifications will be designed to provide progression from the experiences and outcomes and their assessment will be valid, reliable and fit for purpose. Programmes can be planned confidently on that basis.
- > It allows learning to be organised more flexibly. Classes do not need to be based on age cohorts. This is intended to make personalisation and choice easier rather than to allow streaming. There will be discussion with higher and further education providers to establish clarity about how they intend to deal with qualifications acquired at different stages in the senior phase.

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1 The exceptions to this statement are in the specialised areas of literacy and Gàidhlig, Gaelic (learners), classical languages and religious education in Roman Catholic schools.



- > It encourages learning to take place in the outside world, including through work experience, not only in the formal classroom.
- > It offers learners access to a wider range of experiences and recognises achievement across a range of learning.
- > It encourages schools to be more than just the providers of learning experiences and to broker a range of experiences in other contexts, working as active partners with other providers.
- > It emphasises the importance of well planned interdisciplinary learning as well as subject-based learning. There are good examples of interdisciplinary learning available based on strong subject themes, as well as project-based approaches.
- > The important aspect of interdisciplinary learning is that there is the opportunity for progression in skills and understandings, especially in literacy and numeracy, and that learners are given the opportunity to apply these skills and understandings in a range of contexts and make connections between different areas of learning.
- > It encourages schools to take steps towards the personalisation of learning through the personal support that they offer to learners, including the necessary support in moving to positive and sustained destinations when they leave school.



## What actions do you need to take?

1. Schools need to think about how they plan and structure learning across the experience of learners from 3 to 18. This needs to involve other partners, including parents, colleges, other agencies and the wider school community.
2. Many current programmes of study in primary schools and courses in secondary schools can be reviewed against the experiences and outcomes and will still provide a sound basis for planning. Any review of existing provision needs to be detailed and thorough as the experiences and outcomes, along with the principles for curriculum design, are the main basis for all curriculum planning. There is support available for this planning through the principles and practice documents and through examples of emerging practice available in the 'Building Your Curriculum' section of the *Curriculum for Excellence* website.
3. Assessment will need to focus on all the skills and knowledge within the experiences and outcomes and all will have to be explored. This means more appropriately paced progress through levels, allowing broader and deeper learning. There should be no early presentation for examinations unless in exceptional individual circumstances.
4. Well planned and rigorous subject teaching in secondary schools and discipline-based courses in primary schools offer viable means to deliver *Curriculum for Excellence*, but there needs to be joint planning between teachers to make sure that links across learning are made and that there is progression in the skills and understandings that should permeate all provision.

5. All involved need to agree what the learning routes are for children and young people, recognising that not all children and young people will follow the routes in the same way or at the same pace.
6. They need to agree the standards that they would expect to see from learners at each level in terms of literacy, numeracy and other essential skills for learning. These skills are set out in detail in *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*.
7. Teachers need to report to each other on the progress that learners are making and ensure that they are building on the progress that learners have made. The requirements associated with assessment are set out in *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*.
8. They need to agree the contexts in which learning will take place to make sure that learners have broad experience of the world of work and that they exercise skills in career planning and management, and lifestyle choices affecting health and wellbeing.
9. Individual teachers and teams of teachers need to reflect on their approaches to learning, taking account of good practice and existing tools for self-evaluation including *How good is our school?*, *The Journey to Excellence* and the Standard for Full Registration from GTCS.

This should be reassuring to those already committed to self-evaluation and development. The main commitment for many will be to joint planning and this must be taken into account in improvement plans. Teachers also need to take account of this in their preparation.



## The purpose of the curriculum – the four capacities

### successful learners

#### with

- › enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- › determination to reach high standards of achievement
- › openness to new thinking and ideas

#### and able to

- › use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- › use technology for learning
- › think creatively and independently
- › learn independently and as part of a group
- › make reasoned evaluations
- › link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

### confident individuals

#### with

- › self-respect
- › a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- › secure values and belief
- › ambition

#### and able to

- › relate to others and manage themselves
- › pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- › be self-aware
- › develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
- › live as independently as they can
- › assess risk and take informed decisions
- › achieve success in different areas of activity

To enable all young people to become

### responsible citizens

#### with

- › respect for others
- › commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

#### and able to

- › develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
- › understand different beliefs and cultures
- › make informed choices and decisions
- › evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
- › develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

### effective contributors

#### with

- › an enterprising attitude
- › resilience
- › self-reliance

#### and able to

- › communicate in different ways and in different settings
- › work in partnership and in teams
- › take the initiative and lead
- › apply critical thinking in new contexts
- › create and develop
- › solve problems

[www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk)



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APS Group Scotland  
DPPAS10070 (05/10)

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