

Inspection Advice Note 2015-16

This Inspection Advice Note provides local authorities, schools and early learning and childcare (ELCC) settings¹ with information on how inspections carried out from August 2015 onwards will take account of national expectations of progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), as outlined in the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan 2015-16. The key priorities in the Implementation Plan are focused on raising attainment for all, and on using the curriculum to close the gap in attainment between the most and least advantaged children and young people.

All schools and ELCC settings and are encouraged to use this Inspection Advice Note to support self-evaluation with their relevant partners and to use evidence from their self-evaluation to identify priorities for improvement.

Until further notice, inspection teams will continue to evaluate the work of schools/ELCC settings using the Quality Indicators (QIs) from How good is our school? (third edition) (HGIOS3) and Child at the Centre (CATC)_as set out in Arrangements for inspecting schools in Scotland (2011), taking account of the context in which the school/ ELCC setting is working. From September 2015, inspections of learning communities will no longer run concurrently with the inspections of non-denominational secondary schools. However, an inspector from a community learning and development (CLD) background will continue to contribute to secondary school inspections.

It should be noted that, although HM Inspectors do not apply a QI evaluation to leadership, it is well recognised that leadership influences all aspects of the work of schools/ELCC settings. Strong and effective leadership is required at all levels to deliver the promotion of continuous improvement and excellence for all learners expected through CfE.

The curriculum and Improvement through self-evaluation: updated expectations

There are no changes to our expectations in relation to QI 1.1 (improvements in performance); QI 2.1 (learners' experiences) or QI 5.3 (meeting learning needs) as detailed in *HGIOS3* and *CATC*. However, schools should be able to evidence the impact of CfE on the quality of learning, teaching and meeting learning needs, particularly the first theme of meeting learning needs, which relates to tasks, activities and resources. Schools will also be expected to have clear evidence on children's attainment.

This Inspection Advice Note outlines our updated expectations in relation to QI 5.1 (the curriculum) and QI 5.9 (improvement through self-evaluation). It replaces the illustrations of 'very good' for these QIs in *HGIOS3* and *CATC*, to reflect developing best practice and national expectations of progress in implementing aspects of CfE.

These updated expectations will apply from August 2015, and are in line with the CfE National Implementation Plan priorities for 2015-16:

- progression in learning and evaluating achievement 3-18
- supporting improvement
- literacy and numeracy including Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN)

¹ Throughout this Inspection Advice Note, the terms 'schools and ELCC settings' should be taken to include early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds, residential and day special schools (including secure provision) and primary and secondary schools.

- > career long professional learning (CLPL)²
- > support for engaging parents and carers
- senior phase pathways
- developing the young workforce (DYW) employability and skills³
- using data to support improvement
- tackling bureaucracy⁴
- > supporting the new National Qualifications.

This Inspection Advice Note includes references to a range of documents and reports relevant to the implementation of CfE, and themes covered in them. Links are included where relevant throughout the Inspection Advice Note.

² Teaching Scotland's Future

³ Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy (Dec 2014)
⁴ Report of CfE Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy (Nov 2013)
CfE Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy Follow-up Report (March 2015)

The focus continues to be evaluating the quality of the curriculum as experienced by learners across stages and transition points. There should be an emphasis on planning for progression, coherence and improving curriculum transitions. The curriculum is defined as the totality of learning experienced, irrespective of where the learning takes place. This includes learning in and out of school and that delivered through partnerships. *The curriculum should be designed to raise the attainment of all learners*.

Evaluations take account of the need for the curriculum to be dynamic, to reflect and to be flexible to meet the needs and interests of children and young people. **HM Inspectors do not promote or endorse any particular curriculum model.** While account is taken of the processes in place to develop the curriculum, HM Inspectors do not evaluate curriculum plans not yet being delivered, but will engage in professional dialogue about such plans.

Theme 1: The rationale and design of the curriculum

- The curriculum has a clear rationale based on shared values and learners' entitlements and develops the four capacities.
 - The rationale for the senior phase has a focus on improving attainment and achievement
 of all young people and progression to positive and sustained post-school destinations.
 The rationale for the number and type of subjects/qualifications individual and groups of
 learners study throughout the senior phase takes account of learners' needs,
 partnerships with the local authority, colleges and other providers, and the views of
 parents and carers
 - Staff⁵, the local authority and partner providers are clear about the purposes of changes to the senior phase and their role in designing and delivering provision in line with the rationale.
- Schools should have a clear and shared strategy for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff have a clear understanding of the expected standards in literacy and numeracy at all stages. Schools use a range of appropriate information, including the results from the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy, to inform their strategy for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff evaluate children's and young people's progress in health and wellbeing across the four aspects of the curriculum, including taking account of learners' self-evaluation of their own progress in this area.
- An overall approach to assessment which is proportionate, valid, reliable and manageable is implemented across the school or other setting. Assessment is planned as part of learning and teaching, and staff are making increasing use of the 'significant aspects of learning' to ensure approaches are manageable.
- The curriculum is based on the design principles of challenge and enjoyment, breadth, depth, progression, relevance, coherence and personalisation and choice for all learners.
 Staff and partners are further developing the curriculum to ensure coherence and progression in learning using the Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os) to provide well-

⁵ Throughout this Inspection Advice Note, the term 'staff' or 'teachers' is used to refer to all staff involved in delivering the curriculum and in self-evaluation, including ELCC practitioners, CLD staff and other relevant practitioners.

⁶ http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/apa

planned and joined up learning across curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning, personal achievement and the life and ethos of the school.

- The curriculum is designed to raise standards of attainment and achievement, advance equality of opportunity, reduce disadvantage and meet the needs of all learners including those with additional support needs. It aims to raise attainment for all, and to close the gap in attainment between the most and least advantaged children and young people. It is designed to deliver the entitlements and in particular the broad general education (BGE) and senior phase.
 - Staff continue to evaluate and further develop the curriculum to ensure all children and young people benefit from their entitlement to a BGE.
 - In early learning and childcare settings and primary schools, this includes ensuring
 coherent and progressive learning experiences, taking account of each curricular area.
 Learning within an interdisciplinary context, ethos and life of the school and
 opportunities for personal achievements need to be well considered to ensure they
 provide coherence and progression in learning.
 - Staff working in ELCC settings, primary or secondary school contexts are further developing a sound basis for young people to develop skills for learning, skills for life, and specifically in relation to Developing the Young Workforce Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy (Dec 2014), skills for work. They are evaluating and improving skills for work, based on the new national standard for careers education (3-18).
 - In secondary schools, staff provide appropriate specialisation and continued breadth of experience during S1-S3 so that young people can achieve as well as they can and to provide a firm foundation for progression into the senior phase.
 - Staff in secondary schools are further developing flexible progression pathways from the BGE to the senior phase so that learning planned and delivered using the Es and Os can contribute directly to qualifications and awards.
 - Secondary schools and partners are further developing the senior phase to:
 - > build on young people's achievements in the BGE;
 - > take advantage of local flexibilities in delivering the senior phase entitlements;
 - provide a range of flexible achievement progression within and beyond the senior phase to meet the needs of all learners;
 - > promote the highest levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy for all;
 - meet the needs of young people who leave school at the end of S4;
 - build on partnerships, including with colleges and employers.
 - Staff in secondary schools are beginning to use labour market intelligence and Regional Skills Assessments to support senior phase curriculum design. This evidence is informing decisions about which vocational qualifications schools offer, including in partnership with others.
 - The design of the senior phase curriculum:
 - ➤ enables young people to learn over variable time-frames (e.g. one- or two- year programmes) to meet learners' needs, creates space for more in-depth learning, and allows more time to be spent on challenging learning at higher levels;
 - recognises that learning can occur in a wide variety of contexts including on work placements, with training providers, through voluntary organisations, or in college;

- > enables the development and improvement of approaches to learning that motivate learners across the totality of their experiences; and
- ensures a continued focus on health and wellbeing, and the provision of religious and moral education/religious education (Roman Catholic) and physical education, opportunities for personal achievement and interdisciplinary learning.
- Schools with Gaelic Medium or Gaelic Learners provisions are taking account of Advice on Gaelic Education.
- Schools are using digital technologies, including Glow, to enhance teaching and enrich learning.

Theme 2: The development of the curriculum

a. Staff develop and refresh the curriculum on a regular basis and manage curriculum change and innovation effectively. Staff plan carefully, and in consultation with stakeholders, when introducing curriculum innovations and adaptations to meet the needs of learners. They provide opportunities for choice and, where appropriate, specialisation.

Schools and early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds, along with partners, are further developing the curriculum to improve planning for progression through the BGE across all four aspects/contexts for learning and through the senior phase to meet the needs of all children and young people. Planning is as streamlined and effective as possible and not overly bureaucratic or time-consuming.

Schools and early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds are taking account of Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy (Dec 2014) in developing the curriculum 3-18. This includes reviewing the curriculum to ensure an appropriate focus on employability and skills; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Secondary schools are extending the senior phase to include more vocational qualifications, particularly at SCQF level 5, and also with progression leading to and from level 5. Secondary schools have a clear rationale for which qualifications are on offer, taking account of all relevant information on skills and employment.

Staff in secondary schools and their partners are building on their experiences of the new National Qualifications, including reviewing approaches to assessment and verification, and ensuring they are manageable. This includes taking the actions outlined in CfE Management Board Report On First Year of New Qualifications

- b. Staff work with a range of partners, colleges and community learning and development (CLD), and stakeholders (including learners and parents) in curriculum change and innovation, to ensure the curriculum provides a coherent experience for learners.
 - Staff engage regularly in dialogue with other colleagues and partners (for example, through professional learning communities, cluster activities, planned collegiate meetings or similar) about the impact of curriculum developments on learning and teaching and helping children and young people achieve their learning goals.
 - Staff have planned opportunities to collaborate across schools and with partners and to share resources and evolving practice, including in the senior phase. Partners work together to ensure opportunities for shared experiences and work placements, including

in the senior phase, are of high quality.

- Staff are becoming familiar with the new national draft Standards for Career Education (3-18) and Work Placements⁷, and the guidance on school-employer partnerships (due for publication autumn 2015).
- c. Staff clearly identify the benefits to learners from planned curriculum change and innovation, including improving the range and quality of outcomes for learners.
- d. Staff monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes of changes in the curriculum, including in areas jointly planned and delivered by partners in an on-going way. They take any necessary action to ensure that curriculum planning and structures evolve progressively over time to deliver the entitlements of CfE for all learners. Progression pathways are increasingly informed by realistic and manageable tracking and monitoring of learners' progress through the BGE and senior phase.
- e. All schools and ELCC setting should be delivering the CfE entitlements for all children and young people.

Theme 3: Programmes and courses

- Staff are continuing to design and refresh programmes and courses using the Es and Os to plan a coherent approach to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure children and young people can develop the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities, and make suitable progress in learning. In the senior phase of secondary schools, they are also using qualifications and awards specifications (including for the new units and courses at National 1 and 2, the new Highers and Advanced Highers) for this purpose.
- Staff respond to and meet the needs of all learners and are delivering the entitlements to a BGE and senior phase:
 - Staff are using the Es and Os within and across curriculum areas and embedding them in learning in the BGE. Staff in all sectors continue to improve their use of the Es and Os across all curriculum areas to provide motivating and challenging learning experiences for children and young people. They have clear priorities and plans in place for achieving breadth and depth across all curriculum areas.
 - From S1 to S3, choices ensure young people receive their entitlement to the BGE. There is breadth and depth in learning, and young people are developing their ability to apply learning confidently in different contexts to provide a firm foundation for the senior phase.
 - At S3, the BGE programmes and courses are based on the Es and Os, typically at third
 and fourth curriculum levels depending on young people's prior progress and
 achievements. For some young people, appropriately challenging learning experiences
 involve extending the challenge of learning at fourth curriculum level Es and Os,
 ensuring depth of learning which provides suitable challenge and enables young
 people to make a successful transition to the senior phase and courses leading to
 qualifications.
 - Staff in secondary schools and their partners are building on their experiences of the

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⁷ http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/dyw/about/haveyoursay.asp

new National Qualifications, seeking to ensure good progression from programmes and courses in the BGE.

- Programmes and courses in the senior phase maximise the benefits of qualifications design, including the design of the new units and courses at National 1 and 2, the new Highers and Advanced Highers. They ensure opportunities for depth and application of learning, and skills development, including higher order thinking and application of learning, and skills development, including higher order thinking skills.
- At all stages, staff are planning coherent programmes and courses, ensuring depth and breadth in learning and embedding assessment, including reporting on progress and achievement of levels.
 - ➤ They are planning for appropriate progression through breadth, challenge and application in learning and further developing realistic and manageable approaches to assessing progress and achievement across all curriculum areas from early to fourth curriculum levels.
 - ➤ In the senior phase, young people can learn across Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework levels with flexibilities in relation to decisions about the level of qualification for which they are presented to encourage them to attain as highly as possible. This involves partners as appropriate.
- Staff are supporting learners to develop skills for learning, life and work and are using relevant Es and Os to help learners acquire the key skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, which allow for their application in a range of contexts.
- Staff are delivering a coherent experience, providing progression and well-planned, joined up learning within the four aspects of the curriculum.
 - They use the Es and Os to plan for progression and achievement, irrespective of where the learning takes place.
 - Well-planned interdisciplinary projects and studies focus on a selection of Es and Os and support learners in making links across different aspects of their learning and build in opportunities for progression in knowledge and understanding and skills.
 - Personal achievements promote learners' growth as citizens as detailed in the four capacities and in the Es and Os.
 - Programmes of learning in the senior phase provide progression through opportunities for personal achievement with a continued focus on developing the skills and attributes of the four capacities.
- Staff are developing programmes and courses to balance the progressive development of knowledge and skills as detailed in the Principles and Practice papers and in qualifications and awards specifications. They have flexibility in determining the content to be covered to provide stimulating, challenging, relevant and enjoyable experiences.
 - At all stages, learners' experiences promote independence, responsibility and collaboration in learning. They are engaged in applying their learning and developing their skills.
- Staff are planning for progression through the CfE levels and into the senior phase with a range of provision and flexible progression pathways to meet the needs of all learners.

Staff provide a range of progression routes to meet children's and young people's needs, allowing them to progress at different rates and in different ways at a good pace appropriate to their prior learning in line with the highest aspirations.

- Early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds and primary schools have clear
 progression pathways for all curricular areas to ensure progression and coherence in
 learning. Well-considered interdisciplinary learning allows children to make progress in
 the identified curricular areas, make links in their learning or apply learning in new
 motivating contexts. Staff make good use of all four aspects/contexts for learning and
 support children to develop a wide range of skills to meet individual their needs.
- Across all stages, cross-cutting themes such as equality education, sustainability, enterprise, creativity and citizenship, including global citizenship, provide rich motivating contexts to develop children's and young people's personal achievements, and provide rich contexts for learning. As children and young people move through the stages, they experience increasing levels of challenge in these cross-cutting themes.
- From S1 to S3 in particular, courses offering greater choice (including interdisciplinary
 projects and studies, short courses and electives) are designed to meet a range of
 learners' needs. They ensure learners can make suitable progress; allow them to revisit
 and consolidate their learning; and apply and extend their learning in more challenging
 contexts.
- In S3, young people have opportunities for increased specialisation that prepares them for the senior phase. Courses and programmes are designed to provide a continuum of learning leading to a range of flexible progression routes through different levels of qualifications in the senior phase.
- Programmes of learning in the senior phase are designed to meet the needs of all learners in progressing from their prior levels of achievement in the BGE and from S4 to S6.

Theme 4: Transitions

- a. Curriculum transition procedures and programmes effectively meet the needs of all learners, including those with additional support needs. Staff and partners collaborate in planning learning to:
 - ensure continuity and progression in learning across all curriculum areas particularly into P1, between P7 and S1 and from the BGE into the senior phase;
 - take account of what makes for effective transitions into, during and beyond any stage of children and young people's learning; and
 - > ensure partnership arrangements with other schools and providers lead to effective participation and achievement for learners.
 - The senior phase curriculum actively supports transition planning with partners beyond school so that young people have an appropriate place in learning, training or employment, including those with additional support needs.
- b. Arrangements for universal and targeted support and induction into the next phase of learning, including preparation for further and higher education, the world of work and future careers, ensure learners are creative, enterprising and prepared for positive and sustained destinations. Staff have taken steps to improve the curriculum in providing a range of opportunities for support and induction to the next phase of learning for all children and young people.

- Staff in early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds and primary schools are seeking opportunities to develop links with the world of work and supporting children in developing an increased awareness of skills for learning, life and work.
- In S3, there is an increased focus on support for making informed choices for progression into the senior phase based on reliable information about young people's learning and achievements.
- In secondary schools, staff working with appropriate partners to ensure their work/department/faculty has an impact on positive and sustained destinations for all learners, including 16+ learning choices with a focus on opportunities for all.
- The provision of universal support ensures young people make informed choices and are aware of and have the opportunity to meet requirements for progression pathways to support positive and sustained destinations.
- c. Staff are improving the curriculum to support children and young people in developing an increased awareness of their own progress and their strengths and next steps in learning, including through further developing profiling.
 - Schools and ELCC settings are further developing and embedding approaches to
 profiling, including, where appropriate, using e-portfolios, and improving the quality and
 impact of the profiling process and the P7 and S3 profiles. This involves providing a
 clearer focus on skills development and using profiling to inform and improve future
 learning.
 - In S3, young people are increasingly involved in shaping their own learning to ensure they develop the knowledge and understanding and skills required for successful progression into qualifications in the senior phase.
 - Schools are exploring ways to maximise the learning derived from work placements and other approaches to careers education for learners and practitioners.

The focus continues to be on improvement through self-evaluation emphasising leadership of self-evaluation, including effective support for career-long professional learning⁸ and evaluating its impact on the work of staff and the progress and achievement of learners. Ensuring shared self-evaluation with partners is especially important. Self-evaluation must give high priority to evaluating, and improving where necessary, the quality of learning and teaching. It must ensure that approaches to planning, assessment, tracking, recording and reporting do not become overly bureaucratic or take unreasonable time away from learning and teaching. Self-evaluation should provide sufficient information to inform planning to ensure all learners make suitable progress.

Theme 1: Commitment to self-evaluation

- All staff, partners, learners and stakeholders are involved in self-evaluation, are aware of resulting strengths and development needs and are committed to take action to effect improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision, including with partners, and to gather and respond to views of stakeholders. Learner voice is a strong feature of the school's approaches to self-evaluation.
- The school/ELCC setting has strong leadership at all levels with a vision for the outcomes of change. This vision gives direction to self-evaluation.
- High quality support for career-long professional learning is in place to support improvement:
 - Staff take ownership of professional learning, including reflection_on practice as an individual and with others, in order to engage more deeply and meaningfully with CfE.
 - Staff take part in a range of professional learning, including the right blend and balance agreed by each member of staff through effective processes for professional review and development_(PRD) and Professional Update appropriate to their position and professional registration. Whilst most professional learning will be practice based, it is important it includes an element of 'externality' (i.e. moving 'outwith' the setting, school or learning community where feasible in order to get a broader perspective) in addition to activities that are developed in-house using the resources to hand.
 - Staff can talk about the impact of their professional learning on their work and the experiences of learners.
 - Staff engage in joint professional learning with partners including in the senior phase.
 - Staff are engaging in a range of professional learning to support CfE implementation including using, sharing and developing good practice in

⁸ http://www.sssc.uk.com/registration/registrant-responsibilities/post-registration-training-and-learning (for early learning and childcare practitioners who are not GTCS registered)

- assessment and profiling; and continuing to work with the new qualifications, developing courses and programmes and improving learning transitions.
- Staff are ensuring a continued focus on support for leadership development, including leadership for learning and in particular for lead practitioners, principal teachers and faculty heads.
- Staff ensure appropriate mentoring and support for students and teachers in the early phase of their career.
- From late September 2015 onwards, staff are becoming familiar with How good is our school? (fourth edition) (HGIOS4) and other relevant new self-evaluation frameworks.

Theme 2: Management of self-evaluation

Self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of learners' successes and achievements. It draws on a wide range of advice. Staff reflect on current practice and evaluate any new initiatives, ideas and changes which have been introduced.

- a. Self-evaluation gives a high priority to the quality of learning and teaching. Staff maintain a strong focus on evaluation of practice to ensure a high quality of teaching, consistent with the Es and Os and qualifications and awards. Staff use self-evaluation to help share good practice. They also focus on the impact of changed methodologies on outcomes for learners.
- b. Schools and ELCC settings use a range of approaches to monitor and evaluate the impact of curriculum change in the BGE and the senior phase to inform ongoing improvements to provision.
- c. Staff identify important strengths and areas for improvement from a range of evidence. This includes using effective arrangements to assess and track progress and achievement in the BGE and senior phase. They have clear knowledge and understanding about how learners are progressing, developing and achieving *in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and across all other curriculum areas.* This includes data on overall achievement of CfE levels in literacy and numeracy at P1, P4, P7 and S3.
- d. Schools have a clear understanding about how learners from the least socially advantaged backgrounds are progressing and achieving in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- e. Schools and other settings are further developing approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress and achievement in the BGE to provide robust evidence of standards of achievement across all curriculum areas and trends over time. Approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress and achievement are manageable, and are not leading to overly-bureaucratic systems which take time away from learning and teaching. Staff are making increasing use of the 'significant aspects for learning' to make monitoring and tracking more manageable.
- f. In secondary schools, all staff are using Insight as part of the school's self-evaluation approaches.
- g. Staff work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of standards. Staff are increasingly engaged in a range of quality assurance and moderation

- activities with staff in other schools/ELCC settings, between local authorities and colleges and at a national level to develop their skills and confidence in assessment approaches.
- h. Following the experience of two years of new qualifications, staff in secondary schools and relevant partners have a better understanding of the assessment standards and verification procedures, and are working to ensure they are manageable.

Theme 3: Improvement

Staff are committed to acting on the results of self-evaluation and can show clear evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation. Staff can demonstrate the positive impact of self-evaluation on learning and teaching and the achievement of all learners. Improvements focus particularly on continuing improvements to learning and teaching and the achievement of all learners.

Appendix

New approaches to inspection and new self-evaluation frameworks

Schools

Following wide consultation with stakeholders throughout 2014-15, Education Scotland will publish *How good is our school? (fourth edition) (HGIOS4)*⁹ in September 2015, and will try out some new models of inspection over the period October 2015-March 2016. Further information on professional learning relating to *HGIOS4* and its future use in inspections, and on new models of inspection, will follow by the end of September 2015.

Learning Communities

From September 2015, inspections of learning communities will no longer run concurrently with the inspections of non-denominational secondary schools. However, an inspector from a community learning and development (CLD) background will continue to contribute to secondary school inspections. From September 2015, Education Scotland will try out new models of inspection in learning communities, linked to the publication of CLD Plans and the development of *How good is our Community Learning and Development (third edition) (HGIOCLD3)*. Further information on professional learning relating to *HGIOCLD3* and its future use in inspections, and on new models of learning community inspection, will follow by the end of August 2015.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) Settings

The Accompanying information for staff working in early learning and childcare, designed to supplement the Inspection Advice Note 2014-15, will be updated to supplement this Inspection Advice Note by the end of September 2015. The revised information will provide advice relating to learners 0-5 and beyond. Further information on new models of inspection in ELCC settings, and on a new ELCC self-evaluation framework and related professional learning will follow by the end of September 2015.

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⁹ www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/h/hgios4/