

Improving Practice: Developing a curriculum rationale for Gaelic Medium Education

The purpose of this collaborative professional learning activity is to support practitioners with developing a curriculum rationale for Gaelic Medium Education (GME), including the impact that this will have on those learning in English medium education (EME). It comprises a case study showing one school's approach: a presentation on developing a curriculum rationale bespoke to GME and challenge questions.

1. One school's approach to developing a rationale

Extracted from Education Scotland National Improvement Hub

“From the outset the school was very clear that the rationale for the curriculum should be based on the school’s shared vision: Working together to nurture every child towards reaching their full potential and enabling them to have the skills and confidence to embrace the world in which we live.

Using that as a starting point, the school community came together to design a rationale. The process centred around dialogue focused on what everyone wanted to achieve for the children in the school and what was involved in providing a high-quality education for all learners. It was essential that everyone understood the purpose and principles of Curriculum for Excellence. All staff were involved in the self-evaluation process, evaluating the current curriculum and identifying best practice. Views were sought from children, parents and the wider school community on what they felt the key features were that brought the curriculum ‘alive’.

From the wide range of information gathered during the consultation period the curriculum rationale aim was created:

To deliver excellence in learning and teaching and expect all learners to be actively engaged in their own learning.

- Where the curriculum focuses on the child as learner, and allows breadth and depth of learning, offering challenge and enjoyment, personalisation and choice
- With progression through levels being closely monitored and tracked to ensure the opportunity of attainment at the highest level

Following that came the creation of the rationale itself. Its design promotes the 7 principles and **supports children’s development of skills and knowledge well across all areas**, takes account of the school’s local circumstances and of local and national advice. It is both a flexible framework and working document which leaves scope for teams and individual teachers to introduce well-considered innovations to meet the needs of all learners and for the school to keep it under review to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The rationale has ensured that the whole school community has a shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve. As the school moves forward it recognises the importance of taking quality time to evaluate and review curriculum innovation and learn from evolving best practice. Actively sourcing good practice and continuing to have staff involved in strategic development at school, cluster and authority level will allow for true reflection and the opportunity to refine and further develop a curriculum which will meet the challenges of the 21st century”.

2. HM Inspectorate Presentation on developing a curriculum rationale

Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Achieving Excellence and Equity

Current expectations in delivering a 3-18 curriculum for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in a setting with English medium education (EME)

Joan Esson HM Inspector of Education
Lead Officer

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Expectation: Strategic leadership of continuous and sustained improvement, including for the curriculum

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The Curriculum HGIOS 4

Level 5 Illustrations, features of highly-effective practice, Challenge questions

Level 5 Illustration:

Features of highly-effective practice:

Challenge questions:

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Be clear on the big picture: GME is based on CFE through immersion

Values
Wisdom, justice, Compassion, integrity

Experiences and outcomes
Benchmarks and SAL

Support
for learning through choices and changes into positive and sustained destinations

The curriculum is all that we plan for children and young people's learning – across 4 contexts and capacities

8 curriculum areas and 3 other contexts

Challenge and enjoyment
Breadth
Progression
Depth
Personalisation and choice
Coherence
Relevance

Effective teaching and active, sustained learning

5 Entitlements
Including broad general education: Senior phase; Skills for learning, for life and for work, including literacy, numeracy and hw; Entitlement to support; positive destinations

Assessment, qualifications
Self-evaluation and Accountability, Professional development
aligned with purposes of learning

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The rationale for a GME curriculum...

- sets a **clear purpose** and strategic overview of what we do in the **GME curriculum** and how the **EME curriculum rationale articulates to support GME**
- is developed with **all stakeholders** and based on **national advice** while taking account of **local context** and **uniqueness** of the school and its community
- is based on **shared vision, values and aims** which **articulate to GME and EME**, resulting in a shared understanding across the whole-school community

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The rationale for a GME curriculum...

- is the **totality of all learning** irrespective of where the learning takes place, including learning delivered through partnerships.
- assists staff in continuing to **refresh and review the curriculum** by ensuring **regular, systemic, rigorous and outward-looking use** of the rationale as part of an appropriate range of self-evaluation activities.

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Suggested national advice to use in creating and refreshing a GME rationale

- Building the Curriculum series
- Building the Ambition
- HM Inspectors' Advice on Gaelic Education

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Suggested national advice to use in creating and refreshing a GME rationale

- New self-evaluation framework: How good is our .. school, early learning and childcare centre, third sector?
- Girfec
- Developing the Young Workforce

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Suggested national advice to use in creating and refreshing a GME rationale



Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

'Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respects for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.'



1+2 Approach to Languages



Education Scotland online services

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What are the local and unique features of your context on which your curriculum rationale should build?

- How will the **SIMD** of young people influence the curriculum rationale, particularly in **closing the gap**?
- How can you use the trends in the **sustained positive destinations** to which young people progress?
- What are the **local employment opportunities**? What skills and qualifications do young people need to be equipped for local employment?
- How is the school's **data** influencing the curriculum, for example, **attainment, improving fluency in Gaelic, achieving equity, achievements and accreditation, and health and wellbeing**?

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What are the local and unique features of your context on which your curriculum rationale should build?

- How well are you using the results of **monitoring and tracking progress** and attainment to adjust the curriculum?
- Are there features of the **local area's history, language, culture, heritage and traditions** that should be part of the curriculum rationale?
- Is there a particular staff or partner expertise from which your young people would benefit?
- Are you picking up on **Gaelic in your locality** and its use in the community?

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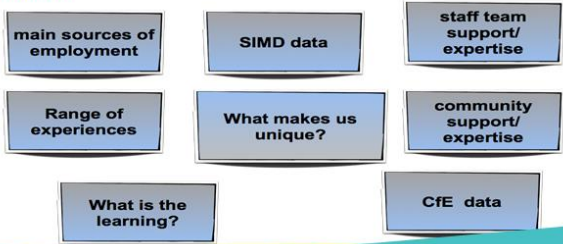
What are the main drivers of your curriculum?

- Ensuring high-quality **learning, immersion and progress** for all
- **Raising attainment** and closing the gap
- Addressing **inequity**
- Improving **skills** in literacy and numeracy
- **Children's rights**, Rights Respecting School
- Ensuring a **sustainable community**, Eco-schools Scotland
- **Scotland's and Gaelic's identity** through language, music, culture and music
- **Digital learning**, especially with the impending impact on the curriculum with e-sgoil

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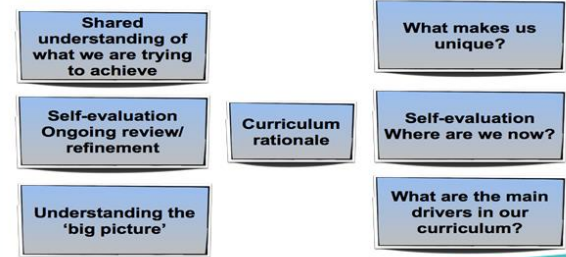
An overview of making the curriculum rationale local to your context



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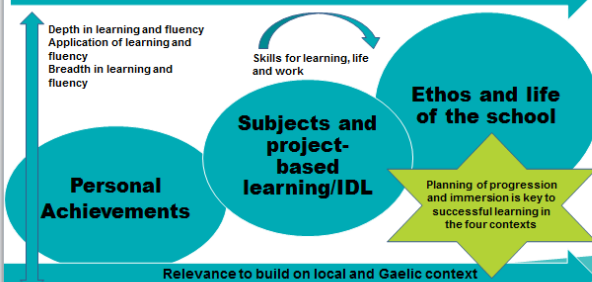
An overview of building a curriculum rationale



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Progression, Total immersion and immersion, Personalisation and choice, Challenge



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Discuss the unique features and drivers of your curriculum

'The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives'
--Robert John Meehan

You may view short films of headteachers talking about their curriculum drivers here: ow.ly/RhYxf



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Where are you now with your curriculum and where do you want to be?

Immersion

A curriculum framework to meet the needs of all learners 3 – 18
A schematic guide for curriculum planners

<p>Values</p> <p>Wisdom, justice, compassion, integrity</p> <p>The curriculum must be inclusive, fair, respectful for gender and of particular use of the curriculum and responsible</p>	<p>The curriculum: the reality of all</p> <p>Must be planned for children and young people through their capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure and fit the school as a community • Consider every child's • Opportunities for personal achievement 	<p>Learning and teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and active • Learning developmental goals • Using appropriate methods • Using appropriate materials • Using appropriate language • Addressing the ways different learners
<p>Experiences and outcomes set out expectations for learning and development in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and teaching • Learning and teaching • Learning and teaching • Learning and teaching • Learning and teaching <p>Curriculum levels describe progression and development</p>		<p>All children and young people are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A central national curriculum from 3 to 18 • A central national curriculum from 3 to 18 • A central national curriculum from 3 to 18 • A central national curriculum from 3 to 18 • A central national curriculum from 3 to 18
<p>Personal Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of learning and teaching of each subject • Review of learning and teaching of each subject • Review of learning and teaching of each subject • Review of learning and teaching of each subject • Review of learning and teaching of each subject 	<p>Principles for curriculum design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and engagement • Participation • Collaboration • Flexibility and choice • Inclusivity 	<p>Arrangements for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation • Accountability • Professional development • Support the purposes of learning

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Expectation: Immersion translating to fluency and attainment

“Gaelic Medium Education is high-quality learning through immersion. Alternative models lead to the dilution of standards and as such are non-compatible with the development of strong and sustained GME”
 HM Inspectors

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Discuss how well the reviewing and refreshing of the curriculum in your school is including Gaelic?

“It’s a curriculum that is not imprisoned by the past or the context it’s in” Graham Donaldson

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3. Challenge Questions for reviewing your curriculum rationale

- i. How well is, and how do you know, that the rationale and design of the curriculum is
 - understood by all practitioners, children and young people, parents and partners
 - providing a strategic overview of the shared purpose and design of the curriculum for those in GME and English medium
 - reflecting the “big picture” for GME
 - taking account of local and national policy
 - recognising the unique contexts of the school
 - built on the principles of immersion with children and young people learning through Gaelic across the totality of the curriculum
 - promoting an understanding for those in English medium education of the purpose of GME and bilingualism

- promoting equity, excellence and the best possible attainment
- promoting knowledge, skills and understanding in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- enabling application of knowledge, understanding and skills through Gaelic
- enabling breadth, challenge and application across the four contexts of learning
- enabling partners to contribute in a planned and progressive way to children and young people's learning
- taking account of cross-cutting themes such as enterprise, creativity, international engagement and sustainable development education
- meeting the needs of all learners
- promoting an awareness of the world of work, particularly the employment opportunities that are available for those fluent in Gaelic
- resulting in strong outcomes for children and young people
- linking and connecting across 3-18 GME provision
- resulting in strong transitions which is ensuring that children and young people remain in GME
- embedding Gaelic language, culture and heritage
- based on self-evaluation and continuous improvement?

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