

Curriculum for Excellence factfile

the Secondary experience



What can young people expect at secondary?

From age 3-18, Curriculum for Excellence aims to develop all young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. At secondary, this means offering inspiring learning opportunities to explore new subjects and ways of learning, kindle ambition, extend talents and interests.

How are secondaries preparing for change?

Schools have been preparing for change over a number of years, supported by their local authorities and national bodies. HMIE – the inspectors of education – have been monitoring progress. They are now working with councils, schools and teaching staff from August-December 2010 to offer additional support for implementing change.

What will children learn from S1-S3?

All learners are offered a broad, deep, general education from S1-S3, building on previous learning. They will experience a wide range of subjects across eight curriculum areas – expressive arts, languages and literacy, health and wellbeing, mathematics and numeracy, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies, and technologies. This provides a good foundation for moving on to study for qualifications, at the right level for the pupil, in the later stages of secondary.

When and how do learners choose subjects?

Learners and teachers, in partnership with parents, decide if and when learners should begin to specialise in a subject during S1-S3. This increasing specialisation allows for learning across and within subjects at a more advanced level, depending on ability and interest.

How do children choose their subjects?

Teachers offer support and guidance on choices. Sometimes a young person wants to drop a subject early. We encourage pupils – and teachers – not to close down options too soon. Adults too should ensure that children are supported to learn things they find challenging – especially when it can help them in later life. Conquering a tricky subject can be particularly rewarding and may develop confidence for tackling other challenges. There is potential too not to drop entire subjects – creative combinations can extend learning across the curriculum.

Who decides what subject options are available?

There have never been fixed rules on option choices (subject columns). This is up to the school, college or community learning service. Nationally, schools are sharing creative ideas on timetabling options that could offer greater variety and choices. Subjects don't have to follow the same pattern. Timetables could include short courses, integrated projects or concentrated, shorter periods of learning in specific subjects.

Autumn 2010

Curriculum for Excellence in action
Bringing life to learning and learning to life

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What happens from S4 onwards?

The senior phase – from around age 15-18 – aims to enhance knowledge, understanding and skills through qualifications and other learning. Staying in learning after 16 offers young people the best chance of long term employability and Curriculum for Excellence will offer all young people appropriate, relevant and attractive choices to continue their learning when they reach 16. This individualised approach to learning will enable all young people, including those in need of support, to achieve qualifications, skills and experiences to prepare them for learning, life and work. National agencies are developing models which will show a number of different learner pathways and we will share these on websites listed below.

What's changing around qualifications?

There will be new and updated qualifications under Curriculum for Excellence, building upon pupils' learning in S1-S3 and ensuring smooth progression from one level to another. These will be available at a range of levels on the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF), linking with other qualifications at college and university:

| | <i>SCQF level</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Advanced Higher | 7 |
| Higher | 6 |
| National 4 & 5 | 4 & 5 |
| Access 1-3 | 1 -3 |

The ability and aspirations of the learner – rather than year group – should determine the qualifications they take from S4 (eg the most able learners could bypass Nationals and begin Highers over 1 or 2 years). Schools and colleges will decide the number and range of qualifications they offer, in consultation with learners, parents and councils. (See factfile on Assessment and Qualifications for more information).

How and where can young people learn?

Young people will have a range of options around how and where they learn, including staying on at school, going to college or university, work-based learning, community-based learning, volunteering or a combination of these. Working with partners can offer a broader range of experience, eg Skills for Work courses. There is no single model, though guidance sets out expectations about learners' entitlements.



Curriculum for Excellence in action

Watch films and hear teachers and young people talk about their experience of Curriculum for Excellence in secondary.
www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Curriculum for Excellence is intended to encourage teaching staff to be ambitious for learners, challenge them to learn and achieve, and support them where needed.

What's the timing of change?

Young people starting S1 in 2010 will experience changes in learning and teaching throughout their secondary education and will be first to experience the senior phase and take the new qualifications in 2013. Young people currently in S2 and above will still benefit from changes to learning and teaching coming into place as part of Curriculum for Excellence.

Do teachers have to teach new subjects?

No. Teachers will teach their specialist subjects as before. Curriculum for Excellence encourages 'interdisciplinary working', including making connections between subjects as in real life – like geography and languages. There's a stronger focus on literacy and numeracy and every teacher will be expected to support pupils with these skills, just as they'll be expected to support learners' health and wellbeing.

Where can I get information or ask a question?

Speak to your local school or visit:

www.youngscot.org (learners)

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk (parents and carers)

www.employersandyoungpeople.co.uk (employers)

www.sqa.org.uk (information on qualifications)

www.hmie.gov.uk (standards, inspections)

www.itscotland.org.uk (teaching practice and support)

www.engageforeducation.org (share ideas and questions about education issues)

www.scotland.gov.uk/cfeinaction (examples of CfE in action and signposts to further information).

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