Inspection Advice Note 2014-15

This note provides local authorities, early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds, schools and learning communities with information on how inspections announced from August 2014 will take account of national expectations of progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). **Education Scotland recognises 2014-15 as a year of consolidation when many of the priorities identified in the Inspection Advice Note for 2013-14 remain work in progress.** All early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds, schools and learning communities are encouraged to the use the advice note to support self-evaluation, and to use evidence from their self-evaluation to identify priorities for improvement.

There is no change to the quality indicators (QIs) which are being used in school, early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds and learning community inspections. Inspection teams will continue to evaluate the current work of the school/centre[1] using the QIs from *How Good Is Our School?3 (HGIOS3)* and *Child at the Centre (CATC)* set out in *Arrangements for inspecting schools in Scotland (August 2011)* taking account of the context in which the school is working. However, see below for updated expectations relating to Q.I 5.1 and Q.I. 5.9. In *Learning community inspections*, Education Scotland will use the QIs which were revised and updated in October 2012, based on the QIs from *How Good is Our Community Learning and Development?2* and will discuss the implementation of CfE in the learning community as part of its work with the school.

It should also 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 a pre-school centre, school or learning community. Strong and effective leadership is required at all levels to deliver the promotion of continuous improvement and excellence for all learners expected through CfE.

Updated expectations for *The curriculum* and *Improvement through self-evaluation*

This paper provides additional advice about 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, and provides some minor adjustment of expectations from August 2014, in line with the CfE National Implementation Plan priorities for 2014-15. This includes ensuring manageable approaches to assessment and that planning, tracking, recording and reporting are not overly bureaucratic, in line with the *Report of Ministerial Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy*, published in November 2013. References and links are also included to key themes for improving teacher professional learning, as recommended in *Teaching Scotland's Future*.

In order to ensure that the National Performance Framework (NPF) QIs remain valid for national reporting purposes, there will be no changes to our expectations in relation to the three NPF QIs: QI 1.1, QI 2.1 and QI 5.3 as detailed in *HGIOS3 and CATC*. However, CfE should have an impact 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.

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[1] Throughout this paper, the term 'school' is 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.

How well does the school support young people to develop and learn?

5.1 The curriculum	**Updated expectations**

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.

Evaluations take account of the need for 'the curriculum to be dynamic, to reflect innovation and to be flexible to meet the needs and interests of children and young people' (*Improving our curriculum through self-evaluation,* page 8). **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 these.

Theme 1: The rationale and design of the curriculum

a. 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 of subjects/qualifications individual and groups of learners study throughout the senior phase takes account of partnerships with the local authority and other providers, and the views of parents and carers.

- Staff and partner providers are clear about the purposes of changes to the senior phase and their role in designing provision in line with the rationale.

b. Staff[2] have a clear and shared strategy for the development and assessment of literacy and numeracy to ensure smooth progression and achievement across the curriculum. They should also be evaluating 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.

c. An overall approach to assessment which is proportionate, reliable and manageable is implemented across the school or other setting. Assessment is planned as part of learning and teaching.

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

e. 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

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[2] Throughout this paper, the term 'staff' or 'teachers' is used to refer to all staff involved in delivering the curriculum and in self-evaluation, including pre-school practitioners, CLD staff and other relevant practitioners.

those with additional support needs. 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 BGE to ensure all children and young people benefit from their entitlement to a BGE.

- In early learning and childcare settings for 3-5 year-olds and primary schools, this includes providing coherent and progressive learning experiences in each curriculum area. Learning within an interdisciplinary context, ethos and life of the school and opportunities for wider achievements need to be well considered to ensure they provide coherence and progression in learning.

- In secondary schools, this includes providing 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 achievement 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 achievements in the BGE;
  - take advantage of local flexibilities in delivering the senior phase entitlements;
  - provide a range of flexible achievement pathways within and beyond the senior phase to meet the needs of all learners;
  - promote the highest level of attainment in literacy and numeracy for all;
  - meet the needs of young people who leave school at the end of S4;
  - build on college partnerships;
  - promote and support employability skills, skills for learning life and work, taking account in due course of the Scottish Government's response to the Wood Commission Report; and
  - take account of the transition and interim arrangements for the period of dual running of existing and new qualifications.

- The design of the senior phase curriculum:
  - enables young people to learn over variable time-frames (e.g. 1 or 2 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;
  - 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.

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 learners. Planning is as streamlined and effective as possible and not overly bureaucratic or time-consuming.

- Staff in secondary schools and their partners are building on their experiences of the first year of new National Qualifications, including reviewing approaches to assessment and verification, and ensuring they are manageable.

b. Staff work with a range of partners, including early learning and childcare settings for children aged 0-3, 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 placements, including in the senior phase, are of high quality.

- Staff work with parents to ensure there is a clear and shared understanding of the benefits to young people of planned changes to the curriculum.

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. Achievement pathways are increasingly informed by realistic and manageable tracking and monitoring of learners' progress through the BGE and senior phase.

e. Where the school/establishment is not yet delivering the CfE entitlements for all children and young people, there are clear plans in place to make further changes to the curriculum structures as soon as possible.

Theme 3: Programmes and courses

a. Staff are continuing to design and refresh programmes and courses using the Es and Os and qualifications and awards specifications (including for the new Highers) to plan a coherent approach to learning, teaching and assessment and to ensure the development of the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities.

b. 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. They have clear priorities and plans in place for achieving breadth and depth across all curriculum areas.

- At S1-S3, choices ensure young people receive their entitlement to the BGE with breadth and depth in learning and 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 and stretching into National 5 level work.

- Programmes and courses in the senior phase maximise the benefits of qualifications design, including the design of the new 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 at 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 should involve partners as appropriate.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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, engaging children and young people in applying their learning and developing their skills.

f. Staff are planning for progression through the CfE levels and into the senior phase with a range of provision and flexible 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 sustainability, enterprise, creativity and citizenship, including global citizenship, provide rich motivating contexts to develop children's and young people's wider 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.

- At S1-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 prepare 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 3-18 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*;* and
  ➢ take account of what makes for effective transitions into, during and beyond any stage of children and young people's learning including, where appropriate, shared placements.

- 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 are taking steps through work 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 in the senior phase ensures young people make informed choices and are aware of and have the opportunity to meet requirements for achievement 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 themselves as learners including through further developing profiling.

- Schools 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.

How well does the school improve the quality of its work?

> ### *5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation*   *Updated expectations*

The focus continues to be on improvement through self-evaluation emphasising leadership of self-evaluation, including effective support for career-long professional learning[3], 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

a. 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. Pupil voice is a strong feature of the school's approaches to self-evaluation.

b. **The school has strong leadership at all levels with a vision for the outcomes of change.** This vision gives direction to self-evaluation.

c. **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. 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 are aware of 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 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.

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[3] http://www.sssc.uk.com/Already-registered/already-registered.html (for early learning and childcare practitioners)

- Staff ensure appropriate [mentoring](#) and support for students and teachers in the early phase of their career.

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 use a range of approaches to monitor and evaluate the impact of curriculum change in the BGE and the senior phase to inform on-going 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 and achieving. In secondary schools this includes at department/faculty and whole school level across all curriculum areas and subjects.

d. 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. The school is ensuring that 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.

e. In secondary schools, all staff are beginning to use *Insight* as part of the school's self-evaluation approaches.

f. Staff work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of standards. Staff are increasingly engaged in a range of quality assurance and moderation activities within and between all learning settings, between authorities and colleges and at a national level to develop their skills and confidence in assessment approaches.

g. Following the experience of the first year 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: School/learning community 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.