

experiences
teaching
active
Senior Phase
excellence
learning
numeracy
skills
literacy
achievement
cross-curricular
Broad General Education
life
interdisciplinary
outcomes
assessment
exams
work

Curriculum for Excellence A-Z

Auchinleck Academy



Active learning

Active learning is learning which engages and challenges children's thinking using real-life and imaginary situations. All areas of the curriculum can be enriched and developed through active learning. Young children learn best when they have scope for active involvement in a wide range of learning experiences. The learning environment - both indoors and outdoors - can provide challenge and opportunity to explore exciting learning possibilities.

Assessment is for Learning (AifL)

Research shows that children learn best when **they understand clearly** what they are trying to learn, what is expected of them, when they are given feedback and when they are advised how to make improvements. This may be expressed in schools as Learning Intentions and Learning Outcomes. Pupils engage in learning if they are involved in deciding what needs to be done next. This is reflected in Personal Learning Planning. More information can be found on the LTS [Assessment is for Learning](#) web page.

Broad General Education

A broad general education will include all of the experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas up to and including the third level. These should be experienced by all pupils, as far as this is consistent with their learning needs and prior achievements. The exceptions to this statement are where specific sets of experiences and outcomes are specialised: Gàidhlig, Gaelic (learners) and classical languages and religious education in Roman Catholic schools.

All children and young people in Scotland have an entitlement to a curriculum which will support them in developing their values and beliefs and enable them to:

- achieve the highest possible levels of literacy and numeracy and cognitive skills
- develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- develop knowledge and understanding of society, the world and Scotland's place in it
- experience challenge and success so that they can develop well-informed views and act responsibly.

The period of education from pre-school to the end of S3 has the particular purpose of providing each young person in Scotland with this broad general education.

Co-operative and collaborative learning

Ideas about the role of talking in the classroom have changed radically over the years. We no longer consider that a 'good' classroom is necessarily a quiet one; we understand that learning is frequently most effective when learners have the opportunity to think and talk together, to discuss ideas, question, analyse and solve problems. We promote the idea that young people's learning is best served when they have opportunities to learn with and from each other, and are shown how to do so effectively.

Critical Skills

The Critical Skills programme was introduced to the UK in 2000 and has been successfully adapted to the developing needs of Scottish education, especially in relation to Curriculum for Excellence. The CSP classroom model is based on four broad educational ideas, which provide purpose in the classroom, engage young people in their learning, enable classes to run more smoothly, address curriculum targets and focus on quality work.

- A collaborative learning community is an intentionally structured classroom culture within which teachers and pupils support one another in pursuit of clearly articulated goals.
- Experiential learning creates an environment in which pupils are able to interact in real-life contexts, to construct individual meaning, and to engage in complex actions that reflect life outside school.
- Results-driven learning engages pupils in thoughtfully designed experiences that ensure that they practise and develop desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Problem-based learning is the use of thoughtfully designed and related challenges as the primary (yet not exclusive) teaching approach. These challenges pose a problem for pupils to solve as individuals, in small groups, or as a full learning community. They create the 'need to know' - allowing pupils to develop and apply their knowledge, demonstrate skills and attitudes, attend to their process, and see the big picture that makes the work worth doing.

Curricular Areas

There are eight Curricular Areas - Languages, Mathematics, Health and Wellbeing, Expressive Arts, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Studies and Technologies. These relate to all ages 3 - 18. The Scottish Government has published Experiences and Outcomes for each Curricular Area, for each Curricular Level or Stage. Visit the LTS [Experiences and Outcomes](#) web page for further information.

Curricular Levels or Stages

These describe each child's learning journey. They generally span a three year period. Some children may require more time and support to move through the Levels; others may progress more quickly. This is set out at the [LTS website](#).

Curriculum Level Stage

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Early | Pre-School Years and P1 |
| First | To the end of P4 |
| Second | To the end of P7 |
| Third, Fourth | S1 to S3 |
| Senior | S4 to S6 and college or other means of study |

Framework for assessment

This Framework for Assessment described in Building the Curriculum 5 provides an outline of the approaches to assessment to support the purposes of learning 3 to 18.

It aims to create:

- a more effective assessment system which supports greater breadth and depth of learning and a greater focus on skills development
- through collaborative working, a better-connected assessment system with better links between pre-school, primary and secondary schools, colleges and other settings to promote smooth transitions in learning
- better understanding of effective assessment practice and sharing of standards and expectations, as well as more consistent assessment
- more autonomy and professional responsibility for teachers.



This diagram provides a summary of the national Framework for Assessment to support the purposes of learning 3 to 18.

Principles of assessment

Assessment practice will follow and reinforce the curriculum and promote high quality learning and teaching approaches. Assessment of children's and young people's progress and achievement during their broad general education to the end of S3 will be based on teachers' assessment of their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities, as described in the experiences and outcomes across the curriculum.

Teachers, along with pupils, will build up a portfolio of evidence which reflects the capability of the child.

Sources of evidence can include:

- observations of learners carrying out tasks and activities, including practical investigations, performances, oral presentations and discussions
- records (oral, written, audio-visual) created by children and young people which may include self assessment and/or peer assessment or may be assessed by the teacher
- information obtained through questioning in high quality interactions and dialogue
- written responses
- a product, for example, piece of artwork, report, project
- accounts provided by others (parents, other children or young people, or other staff) about what learners have done

This range allows learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

Interdisciplinary learning/Interdisciplinary topics/Rich tasks/Cross Curricular Learning

Interdisciplinary learning enables teachers and learners to make connections in their learning through exploring clear and relevant links across the curriculum. It supports the use and application of what has been taught and learned in new and different ways and provides opportunities for deepening learning, for example through answering big questions, exploring an issue, solving problems or completing a final project. Learning beyond subject boundaries provides learners with the opportunity to experience deep, challenging and relevant learning.

Teachers achieve this by:

- having a clear focus on a small number of different curriculum areas/aspects of a curriculum area or subjects, for example science and literacy
- making clear connections with literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across learning
- focusing on a few carefully selected and relevant experiences and outcomes
- choosing a theme or problem which requires knowledge and skills from different curriculum areas, aspects of curriculum areas or subjects
- capitalising on themes for development across learning, including developing global citizenship, financial education and outdoor learning
- responding to a significant event

For example, this may mean:

- Teaching probability in mathematics co-ordinated with science work on DNA and genetics - so that pupils better understand both probability as a mathematical concept and its application to genetics.
- A project for P6/P7 to create informative and attractive information brochures (or a website) for pupils in schools in a twin town in France, by using knowledge and skills developed in the study of local history, geography, art and design and French language.

Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS)

This is the public learning and teaching body which is funded by the Scottish Government. LTS advises Scottish ministers on matters related to learning and teaching, the curriculum, assessment and ICT and is responsible for reviewing the curriculum, developing assessment to support learning and providing national guidance and advice to the education system on the use of ICT to support learning and teaching. Find out more at the LTS website.

www.ltscotland.org.uk

National Assessment Resource (NAR)

This is a new online resource for teachers, which will build up a range of assessment material and exemplars across the curriculum areas, in order to establish national assessment standards.

National Qualifications

Scotland's qualifications system is changing to meet the needs of learners in the 21st century and to reflect Curriculum for Excellence where children will be learning across different subject areas from the age of 3 to 18.

The idea behind the new qualifications is not to sweep away everything from the old system, but to build on the strengths of the existing system. These changes will help all children gain both knowledge and skills for learning, life and work by the time they leave school.

What is changing?

- **National 4 and 5 qualifications** - to replace Standard Grade and Intermediate qualifications in the current system from 2013/14.
- Formal recognition of Literacy and Numeracy through the new qualifications system - as Units within English and Mathematics courses and as a stand-alone option.

The current qualifications at Access, Higher and Advanced Higher level will remain but they will be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the ideas behind Curriculum for Excellence.

When will these changes happen?

The National 4 & 5 qualifications and Literacy and Numeracy Units will be introduced in 2013/2014.

This means that children who were in Primary 7 in the 2009/10 school year will be the first ones to take the new national qualifications.

Developing the new qualifications

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is developing the new national qualifications. Since 2006, SQA has been engaging with partners, stakeholders and the teaching profession on the policy, design and development of the qualifications. To develop the new qualifications SQA has specific groups set up:

Curriculum Area Review Groups (CARGs)

Qualifications Design Team (QDTs) work on the design of qualifications within individual subjects such as Physics, History, English, Music etc.

Subject Working Groups (SWGs) carry out discrete pieces of work, for example the rationale and course summary, Unit specifications or Unit support packs for a particular subject area. Teachers and practitioners can nominate themselves to join these groups.

Work on the new qualifications is still at a high-level stage but when the detail becomes clear about what the new qualifications will mean for candidates, SQA will speak directly to parents and employers to give them the information they need.

You can keep up-to-date with all of the developments of the new qualifications on the SQA website.

All of SQA's documents and details of progress are published on the website at each key milestone. Visitors to the website can give feedback.

Outdoor learning

The journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences. Curriculum for Excellence offers opportunities for all children and young people to enjoy first-hand experience outdoors, whether within the school grounds, in urban greenspaces, in Scotland's countryside or in wilder environments. Such experiences inspire passion, motivating our children and young people to become successful learners and to develop as healthy, confident, enterprising and responsible citizens.

Peer Education

Peer education is a term widely used to describe a range of initiatives where young people from a similar age group educate and inform each other about a wide variety of issues. The rationale behind peer education is that peers can be a trusted and credible source of information. They share similar experiences and social norms and are therefore better placed to provide relevant, meaningful, explicit and honest information. The benefits for peer educators are widely recognised and can include positive changes in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and confidence.

As part of a whole school approach, peer education initiatives can play a major role in helping schools foster positive relationships between pupils and teachers. They can help schools to create a caring and safe environment that promotes the health of all its members.

Personal Learning Plans

A **Personal Learning Plan** is a document which provides an ongoing record of a pupil's learning progress. It belongs to the pupil and will stay with them throughout their time at school - even when they change teacher and/or schools. **PLPs** are individual to each pupil providing them with the opportunity to comment on key aspects of their lives both in school and out. By encouraging communication, **PLPs** are designed to:

- ◆ Stimulate discussion at a parents' interview
- ◆ Record achievement beyond a purely subject-based focus
- ◆ Plan for overcoming any barriers to learning
- ◆ Set realistic targets for the next stage and identify the person who can help them achieve it

Personal Learning plans are designed to enhance communication between pupils, teachers and parents. Every term pupils will spend time working with teachers and parents to agree on their personal targets. Throughout the term the pupils will work to achieve these targets. **PLPs** can also be used to record wider achievement both within and out of school.

Positive and sustained destinations

'Every young person is entitled to support in moving into a positive and sustained destination.'

The success of the education system will be judged on the extent to which it contributes to the national indicator on positive and sustained destinations. Skills for Scotland makes clear the Scottish Government's desire for all young people to stay in learning after 16. It makes a clear commitment to young people about the routes on offer to education, employment and training (and the

support they can expect) and recognises the need to focus on particularly vulnerable groups of young people.

16+ Learning Choices is the new model for taking forward the Skills for Scotland commitment. This model will ensure that there are clear, robust processes in place for ensuring that all young people completing compulsory education have an offer of a suitable place in post-16 learning, with a particular focus on providing more choices and more chances for those who need them. As such it will support the planning and delivery of a coherent and inclusive curriculum in the senior phase, irrespective of the setting.

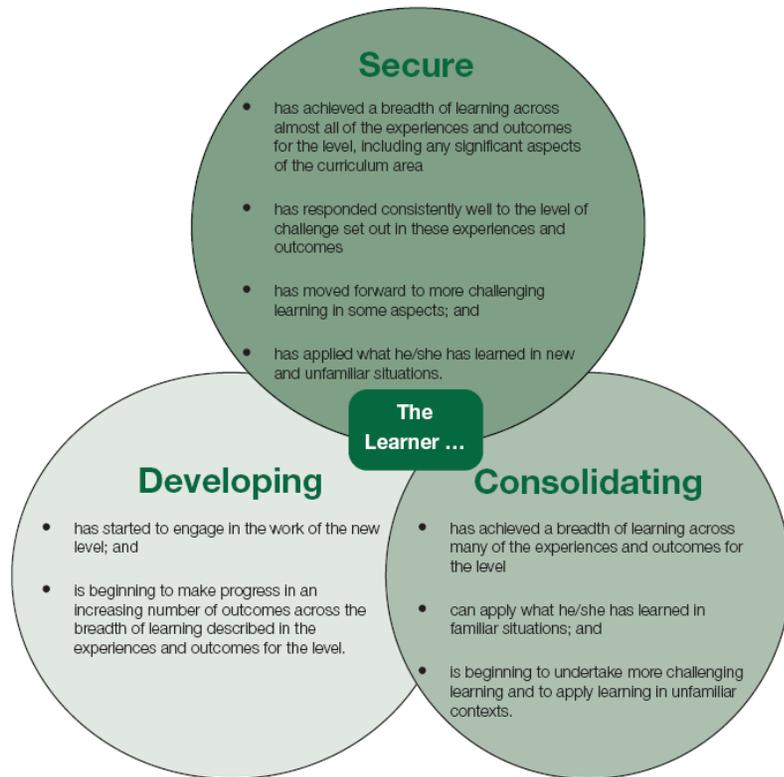
There are three crucial elements to ensure that this happens:

- Young people must have access to the right **learning provision** - which includes opportunities to continue to develop the four capacities through staying on at school, entering further or higher education, taking part in a national training programme, volunteering, participating in community learning and development, or following a more tailored programme of personal and social development.
- Young people must also have the right **information, advice and guidance** from Skills Development Scotland and other support agencies to help them make the right choices. Some may need ongoing support to help them sustain and progress their learning.
- Young people must also be able to access **financial support** so that staying in learning is a viable option.

Reporting to Parents

When reporting, staff will provide a clear description of the learner's progress within curriculum levels and, in the senior phase, progress towards qualifications. A consistent approach to reporting will help children and young people as they move within and between schools. Education authorities and schools may therefore use the following approach illustrated in Figure 1 as a basis for developing their practice on reporting to describe progress within a level in part of a curriculum area such as reading, or in a whole curriculum area.

Figure 1



Senior Phase

All young people in Scotland have an entitlement to a senior phase of education which:

- provides specialisation, depth and rigour
- prepares them well for achieving qualifications to the highest level of which they are capable
- continues to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- continues to provide a range of activities which develop the four capacities
- supports them to achieve a positive and sustained destination.

The senior phase, which takes place from S4 to S6 in schools and includes ages 16 to 18 out of school, is the phase when the young person will build up a portfolio of qualifications. It is the stage of education at which the relationship between the curriculum and National Qualifications becomes of key significance. The curriculum framework and the qualifications system will provide a range of opportunities to meet the needs of all learners, whether aspiring to achievements at SCQF level 1 or at SCQF level 7.

The curriculum in the senior phase comprises more than programmes which lead to qualifications. There is a continuing emphasis, for example, on health and wellbeing appropriate to this phase, including physical activity and opportunities for personal achievement, service to others and practical experience of the world of work.

Useful links and information:

GENERAL: Parentline Scotland: 0800 800 2222
www.parentingacrossscotland.org
www.stepfamilyscotland.org.uk (advice for step parents)

EDUCATION: Big Plus 0808 100 1080 (reading/writing)
www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone (education changes)
www.parentforumscotland.org (National Parent Forum)
www.sptc.info (parent-teacher councils)
www.sqa.org.uk and www.scqf.org.uk (qualifications)
www.careers-scotland.org.uk (careers)
www.enquire.org.uk (additional support for learning)
www.hmie.gov.uk (monitor education standards)

HOMEWORK – ask your school for ideas too!
www.homeworkelephant.co.uk/teachers
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/homework
www.gridclub.com
www.channel4learning.net/apps/homeworkhigh

EMPLOYMENT – making connections with employers
www.employersandyoungpeople.org