

Curriculum for Excellence Factfile – Overview of Key Terms and Features



Curriculum for Excellence (often shortened to CfE) is the curriculum in Scotland which applies to all children and young people age 3-18, wherever they are learning. It aims to raise achievement for all, enabling young people to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to succeed in learning, life and work.

This factfile explains some of the terms that are used in CfE. You can contact your own school or nursery for more information or go to www.LTScotland.org.uk/Parentzone.

The Four Capacities – the curriculum aims for all children to become:

- Successful Learners
- Confident Individuals
- Responsible Citizens
- Effective Contributors

The Seven Principles of Curriculum Design – all learning must take account of these principles:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

The Eight Curriculum Areas – containing a range of subjects:

- **Expressive Arts** – including art and design, dance, drama and music
- **Health and Wellbeing** – mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing, PE, food and health, substance misuse and relationships, sexual health and parenthood
- **Languages** – listening and talking, reading and writing in literacy and English and modern languages, plus classical languages and literacy and Gàidhlig/Gaelic learners (where available)
- **Mathematics** – including analysing information, solving problems and assessing risk
- **Religious and Moral Education** (denominational and non-denominational) – learning about Christianity, other world religions, and developing values and beliefs
- **Sciences** – understanding important scientific concepts across planet Earth, forces, electricity and waves, biological systems, materials and topical science
- **Social Studies** – understanding people, place and society in the past and present including history, geography, modern studies and business education
- **Technologies** – including computing science, food, textiles, craft, design, engineering, graphics and applied technologies

www.LTScotland.org.uk/commstoolkit

Curriculum for Excellence

Bringing life to learning and learning to life

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In addition there are three key areas which are covered by all teachers/practitioners:

- **Literacy across learning** – talking, listening, reading and writing (including using digital communications)
- **Numeracy across learning** – including money, time, and measurement
- **Health and Wellbeing across learning** – including making informed choices for a healthy lifestyle

Important themes across the curriculum are creativity, enterprise and global citizenship, which includes sustainable development, international education and citizenship.

Experiences and Outcomes – each curriculum area is broken down to a set of experiences and outcomes (often referred to as the 'Es and Os'):

- **Experience** – describes the learning
- **Outcome** – what the learning will achieve. This is often explained, from the pupil's perspective, as an 'I can' statement.

Curriculum Levels – there are national levels to describe different stages of learning and progress. For most* children, the expectation is:

- **Early Level** – pre-school to the end of P1
- **First Level** – to the end of P4
- **Second Level** – to the end of P7
- **Third and Fourth Levels** – S1 to S3, with the fourth level broadly equivalent to SCQF (see abbreviations section) level 4
- **Senior Phase** (see *Entitlements*) – S4 to S6, and equivalents in other settings, where they can continue to develop the four capacities and achieve qualifications

*but can be earlier/later for some as applicable, depending upon individual needs and aptitudes



Entitlements – all young people are entitled to:

- **A coherent curriculum** – smooth progression through the experiences and outcomes
- **A broad general education** – the period from age 3 to the end of S3, covering all of the experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas up to and including the third level, and further experiences and outcomes at the fourth level, chosen to provide greater specialisation and depth
- **Support** – assistance to help learners access the curriculum, for example because of short- or longer-term needs or circumstances, and help to build resilience
- **Skills for learning, life and work** – to develop pre-vocational, enterprising and employability skills, personal skills, high levels of cognitive skills and the opportunity to put learning into a practical context
- **A senior phase** – to prepare for qualifications and develop skills for future learning, life and work
- **Positive destinations** – to support young people to move successfully on to work or further study

Learning Differently – CfE represents a different approach to learning in schools intended to help learners develop skills, knowledge and understanding in more depth.

Examples of how they will learn differently are:

- **Using technologies in learning** – to find material, communicate, create and present
- **Active learning** – being actively engaged, whether mentally or physically, using real life and imaginary situations
- **Cooperative learning** – encouraging thinking and talking together, to discuss ideas and solve problems
- **Interdisciplinary learning** – using links between different areas of learning to develop, reinforce and deepen understanding
- **Outdoor learning** – making use of the outdoor environment for learning
- **Personalisation and choice** – being given choices and being involved in planning how and what they learn. Not 'one size fits all'
- **Skills** – CfE emphasises the development of skills for learning, life and work. These include higher order skills – thinking about complex issues, problem solving, analysis and evaluation; creativity; and critical thinking skills – making judgements and decisions, developing arguments and solving complex problems

Assessment is crucial to tracking progress, planning next steps, **reporting** and involving parents and learners in learning. Evidence of progress can be gathered by learners themselves, and by fellow pupils (peers), parents, teachers and other professionals, e.g. staff who provide youth development opportunities such as the John Muir Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

- **Self assessment** – learners will be encouraged and supported to look at and revisit their own work, to develop a better understanding of what they have learned, and what they need to work on
- **Peer assessment** – learners will be encouraged and supported to work together to help others assess what is good about their work and what needs to be worked on
- **Personal learning planning** – pupils, teachers and parents will work together to develop planning for next steps in learning
- **Profiles** – a statement of achievements both within and out with school, to be introduced at P7 (2011/12) and S3 (2012/13). Profiles may be produced at other significant points in a learner's education. A range of formats can be used, including ePortfolios.

Reporting informs parents of progress. This could be through a range of approaches, such as at meetings, at parents' evenings, in written form, 'Learning Wall' displays and 'I can' folders. Key phrases that could be used in reporting are:

- **Developing** – where the learner is working to acquire skills or knowledge
- **Consolidating** – where the learner is building competence and confidence in using the skills or knowledge
- **Secure** – where the learner is able to apply the skills or knowledge confidently in more complex or new situations

Qualifications – the new approaches to learning that CfE brings requires new assessment methods and qualifications, which are being developed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). SQA is working with parents, teachers, colleges, universities, employers and the Scottish Government to make sure national standards are maintained.

The new qualifications:

- **National 4 and National 5** – will replace General and Credit Standard Grades and Intermediate 1 & 2 and will be introduced in 2013/14
- **Literacy and Numeracy** – will be recognised as units within English and Mathematics courses



- **Access** (available in 2013/14), **Higher** (available in 2014/15) and **Advanced Higher** (available in 2015/16) – will be revised to reflect CfE principles

For more information on development of the new National Qualifications see www.sqa.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence.

A leaflet for parents, *Qualifications are changing – A guide for parents and carers*, has been distributed to schools and can be downloaded from the SQA website at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46161.html>.



Factfiles – you can get more detailed information in a series of user-friendly information sheets that can be found on the Parentzone website at www.LTScotland.org.uk/Parentzone.

Partners – CfE is not just about schools and nurseries. Different people can be involved and are often described as partners, e.g. local businesses, national and community organisations, employers, colleges, universities, training providers, parents, Parent Councils etc.

Education Scotland – the new national organisation responsible for leading and supporting implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and providing guidance and support to teachers, other learning practitioners, schools and local authorities.

Abbreviations that you may also see or hear:

ASN – Additional Support Needs

ASL – Additional Support for Learning –

See www.enquire.org.uk

GIRFEC – Getting it right for every child – the Government's plan to improve the lives of children

MCMC – More Choices, More Chances – the Government's action plan to prevent young people leaving school without a positive and sustained destination

SCQF – Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
www.scqf.org.uk

SQA – Scottish Qualifications Authority – www.sqa.org.uk

Further information online:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk – the new national body responsible from 1 July 2011 for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching from early years to adult and community learning.

www.enquire.org.uk Enquire – the national advice service in Scotland for additional support for learning

www.LTScotland.org.uk/Parentzone Parentzone – information for parents on all aspects of children's learning

www.LTScotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum – more detailed information on Curriculum for Excellence

www.sqa.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence – latest information on the new qualifications

www.hmie.gov.uk – information on inspection and evaluation of education provision

www.employersandyoungpeople.org – making connections with employers to support learning

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple> and www.LTScotland.org.uk/supportinglearners/choicesandchanges/16pluslearnchoices/index.asp – 16+ Learning Choices programme (learning opportunities for young people from age 16)

www.playtalkread.org – ideas to help parents of young children

www.parentingacrossscotland.org/publications/top-ten-tips.aspx – top ten tips for parents series, including starting primary and secondary school

Homework/Learning at home

www.homeworkelephant.co.uk/teachers

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/homework

www.gridclub.com

www.channel4learning.net/apps/homeworkhigh

Have your say – if you would like to contact Education Ministers to have your say on any aspect of Scottish education you can do so at www.engageforeducation.org



Curriculum for Excellence is a major change to the education system in Scotland that aims to raise standards of learning and teaching for all 3-18-year-olds, wherever they learn. In this factfile we sometimes use the term 'parents' for short – we mean all parents and carers. When we talk about 'learners' we mean all young people learning in nursery, school, college, community learning, training, special schools, extended support and secure settings. 'Teachers' or 'teaching staff' means all staff who support young people's learning e.g. lecturers, nursery staff, trainers, youth workers, learning support personnel, among others.