Scotland's Curriculum Framework
curriculum improvement cycle
Frèam-obrach Curraicealam na h-Alba
cearcall leasachadh a' churraicealaim

Curriculum Improvement Cycle
Numeracy & Mathematics Update

25TH NOVEMBER 2025

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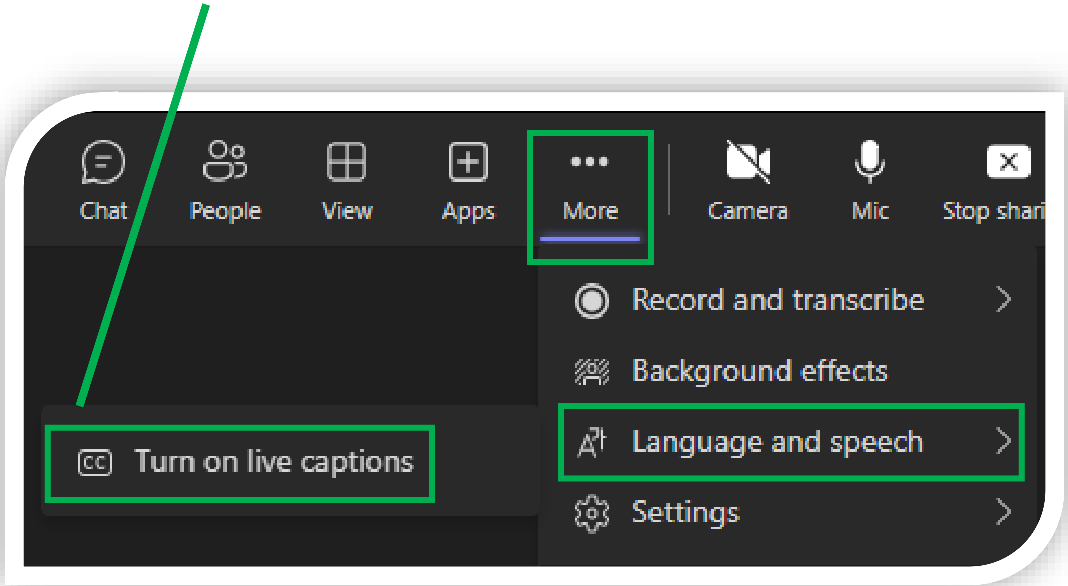

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Agenda

Input	Person	Organisation
Welcome and Plan for the Session	Andy Brown	Scottish Government
CIC Background and Scene Setting	Andy Creamer	Education Scotland
Process Overview	Maria Docherty	Education Scotland
Overview of the Illustrative Materials (including draft Layer 1, Layer 2 and Layer 3 material)	Maria Docherty Nanette Brotherwood Peter Valentine	Education Scotland
Cross-Curricular Learning	Jaclyn Andrews	Education Scotland
Partnership working - Academic Research	Dr Sinem Hizli-Alkan	Anglia Ruskin University
Next Steps, 'Takeaways' and Close	Andy Brown	Scottish Government

Aims

1. To raise your **awareness** of the overall **CIC process** and the place of Mathematics within this, by outlining the approach that has been taken so far.
2. To **familiarise** you with the new, evolving, curriculum and **technical framework** for Mathematics by presenting the different sections of the publication.
3. To consider next steps for attendees and how you might **support** this ongoing work.

Curriculum Improvement Cycle

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence

Into the Future

Students in Scotland (United Kingdom) engage in learning through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), which aims to provide them with a holistic, coherent, and future-oriented approach to learning between the ages of 3 and 18. CfE offers an inspiring and widely supported philosophy of education. Schools design their own curriculum based on a common framework which allows for effective curricular practices. In 2020, Scotland invited the OECD to assess the implementation of CfE in primary and secondary schools to understand how school curricula have been designed and implemented in recent y… More

Published on June 21, 2021

In series: Implementing Education Policies (view more titles)

Context

- Declutter the curriculum – prioritise and deprioritise
- Prioritise deeper learning focusing on conceptual understanding
- Transnational direction of travel
- Risks: prescriptive content focused model
- International advice
- High performing systems

Pilot Curriculum Reviews

Evolving the Technical Framework

Views of teachers from pilot curriculum reviews and CIC groups

OECD and other SG commissioned independent review recommendations

Analysis of international approaches to curriculum review

Engagement with international educators and education systems

Education Research and international evidence

Key features of high performing systems

Key principles for evolving the Technical Framework

Provide parameters for the selection of content as part of decluttering the curriculum

Clarify the knowledge (and skills) learners should have at key points in their learning

Outline what progression looks like within and between levels

Clearer, less and more coherent guidance

Ensure an evolved framework is adaptable to realities of the differing nature of subjects

Allows for flexibility and autonomy at the level below the key ideas

A 3-18 'framework': alignment and consistency between the BGE and Senior Phase

A clearer and coherent position for cross curricular expectations

(cross-curricular learning)

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Education Research and international evidence

Key features of high performing systems

Outline Technical Framework

UNDERSTANDING:

The Big Ideas and Concepts

SEQUENCING OF THE CONCEPTS:

Broad overview of what we what learners to know and be able to do at each level to develop understanding of concepts

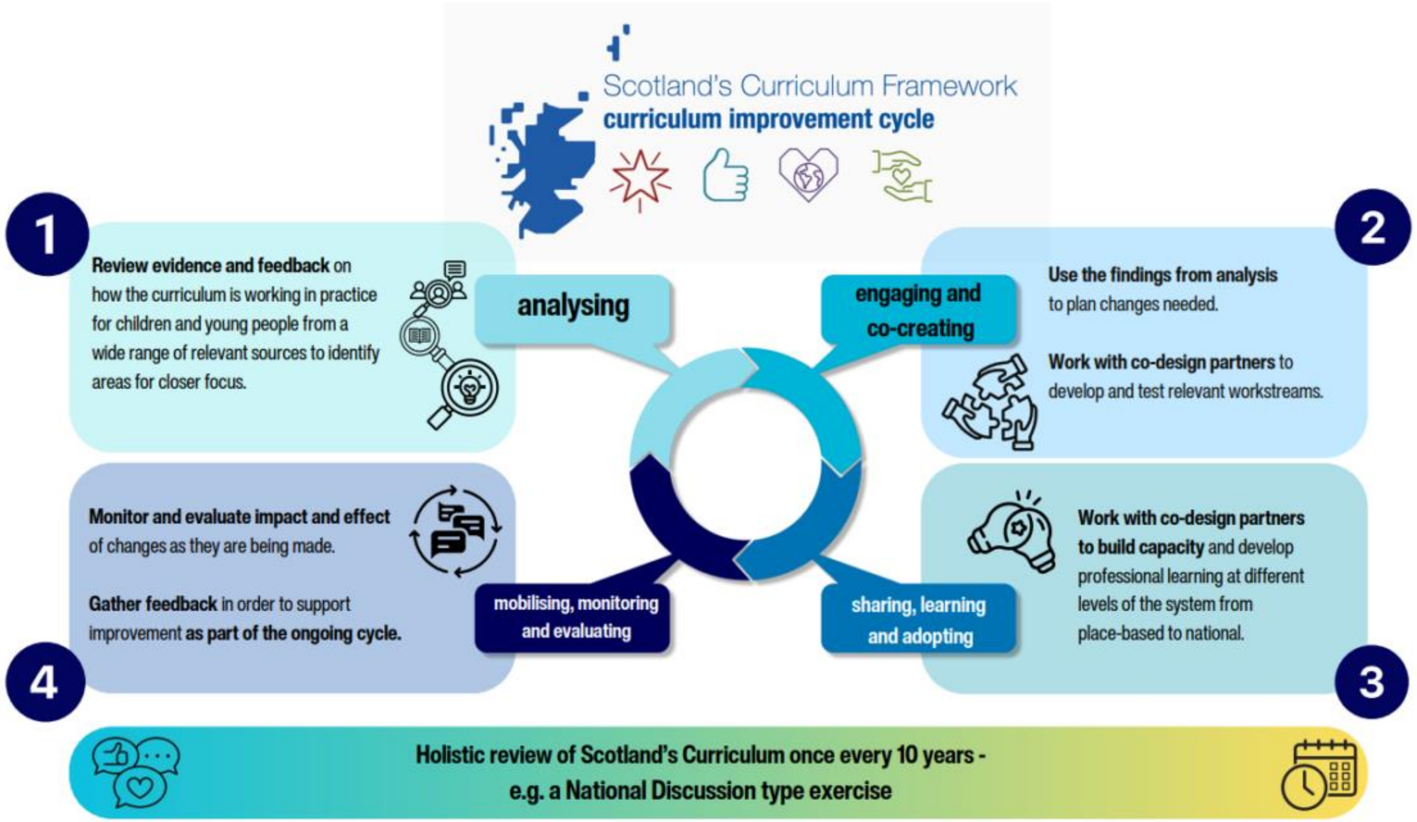
NATIONAL PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK:

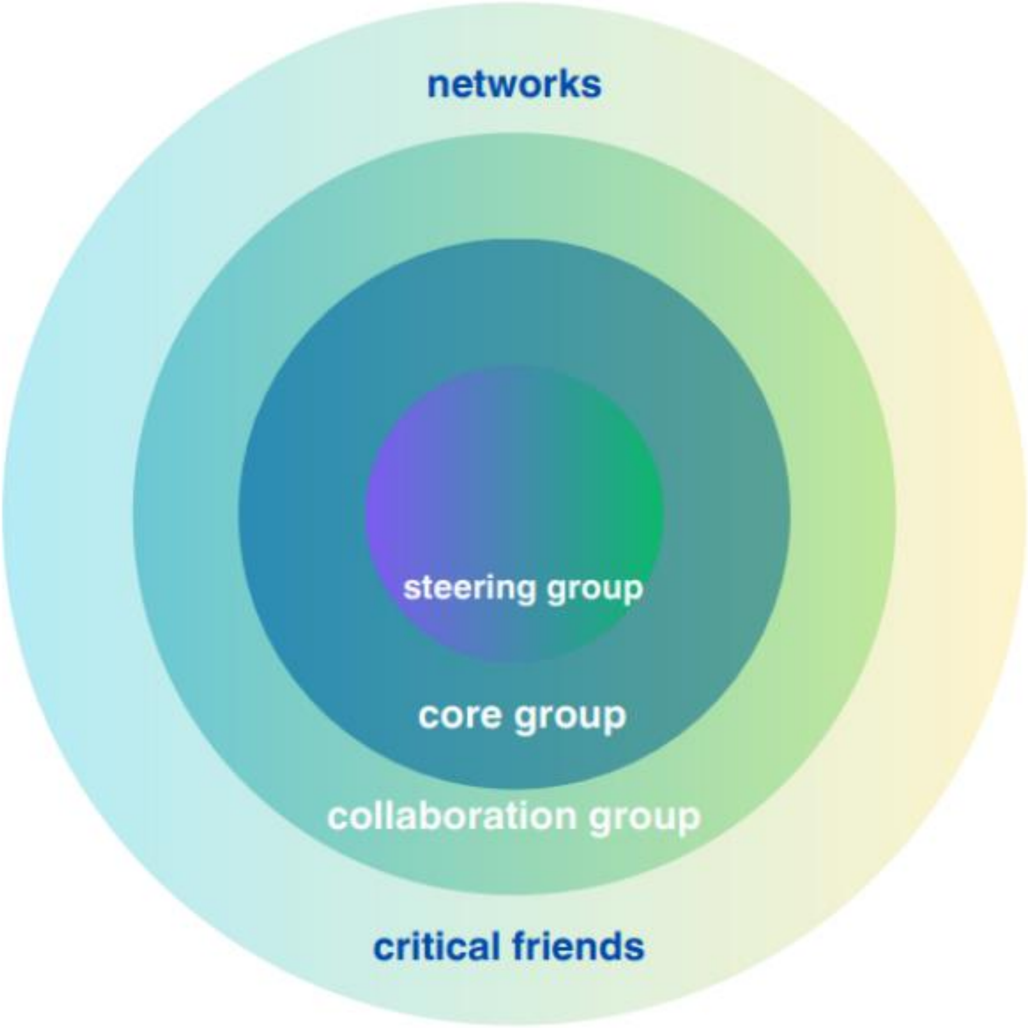
The knowledge and skills that will deepen understanding of concepts at each level.

How did we get here?

- OECD
- Pilot Reviews
- Cab Sec agreement
- International evidence
- International Educators
- Academics and Literature
- Development
- CAB Sub-Group
- Maths Core group
- Prototyping
- Testing – curriculum areas, sectors
- Curriculum & Assessment Board
- Ades CAQ
- Professional Associations
- Scot Gov
- Cabinet Secretary
- Ministerial Decision

Model for Curriculum Review





co-created outputs

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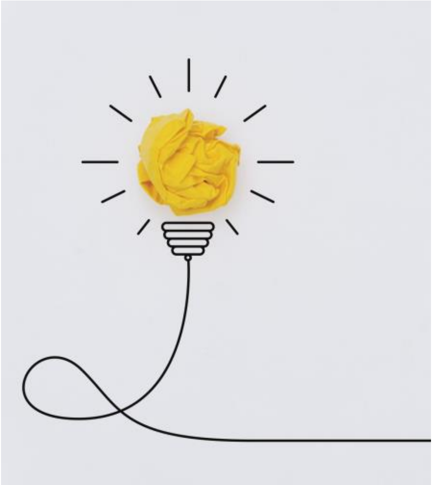
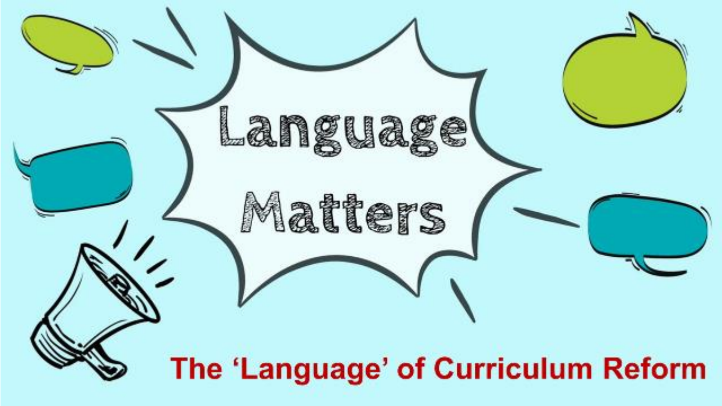
Purpose Statement

*'In Scotland we strive for **all** children and young people to develop as fluent mathematical thinkers and learners who can work both independently and collaboratively to reason, investigate, and build connections. This will enable children and young people to make informed decisions, solve problems, and appreciate the mathematical relationships that shape our world.'*

Big Idea

A 'Big Idea' captures the **core understanding** children and young people will develop in a particular area of the curriculum **from early years onwards**. It will set out **overarching ideas and concepts** and have **relevance and meaning** for learners. It will **support progression** and **guide the selection of content.**





DRAFT

Big Ideas in Mathematics

Quantity, Number, and the Algebraic Properties of Number

Shape and Space

Information, Data and Uncertainty

Mathematics is a Language

Mathematics is Interconnected

Mathematics is Meaning

Mathematics is Interconnected

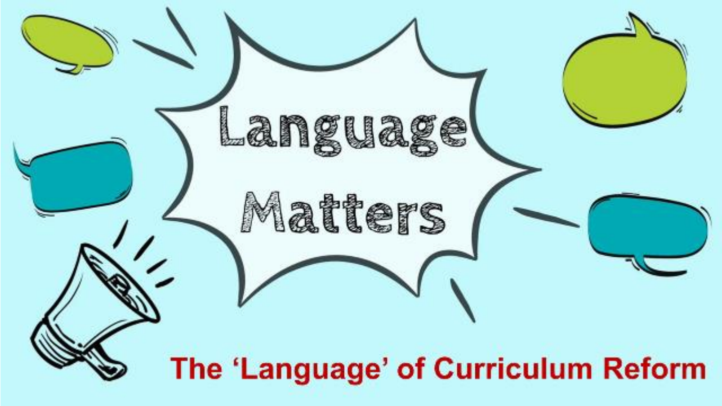
'Mathematics is a network of interconnected ideas that help us deepen our understanding, solve problems, and make links within and beyond the subject'

Mathematics is Interconnected

Mathematics is a web of connected ideas, relationships and concepts. Among these concepts is ‘Patterns and Sequences’, which helps us to notice and understand mathematical relationships, whilst ‘Proportional Reasoning’ involves understanding multiplicative relationships in a variety of contexts. We use different concepts and connections to solve problems in new and unfamiliar situations. Exploring the links between concepts can deepen understanding, develop reasoning, and support decision-making. Connections also extend beyond mathematics itself, linking to a variety of areas of learning including science, technologies and expressive arts. Noticing and communicating the connections is fundamental to sense-making and enhancing an appreciation of mathematics.

Concept

A 'concept' is a main idea or sequence of ideas that help to shape understanding. It clarifies meaning and is underpinned by knowledge. Concepts can be grouped or sequenced to develop schema that, for example, allow for the building of relationships.



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(Draft) Mathematics Concepts

Counting and Unitising	Types of Number	Structure of Number	Operations on Number
Estimation, Error and Accuracy	Comparison	Proportional Reasoning	Patterns and Sequences
Functions and Relationships	Position and Movement	Measures	Properties of Shapes and Solids
Symmetry	Equations and Expressions	Justification and Proof	Types of Data
Data Collection and Organisation	Data Analysis and Interpretation	Data Representation	Probability
	Money and Finance	Mathematical Modelling	

Evolving from Es and Os to Understand, Know, Do

Current Framework

Starting with the current framework we identified the strands which fitted into the Number and Algebra organiser

Extract knowledge statements

We started by pulling out the knowledge statements that were already there

Implied knowledge

We then started to write statements that were implied by the Es and Os and benchmarks and to fill in the gaps

Identifying the concepts

We grouped the statements into our concepts again filling in gaps as we identified them

Draft knowledge statements

Finally we arranged the statements to provide progression within the levels and checked for progression across levels again filling in knowledge gap as we identified them

ideas

Evolving from Es and Os to Understand, Know, Do

Draft knowlwdge statements

Starting with the draft knowledge statements we started to think about what we wanted learners to be able to do

Begin writing Do statements

We started to write statements which reflected what we wanted learners to **do** to develop and demonstrate their **knowledge**.

Refine knowledge statements

As we wrote the Do statements refinements continued to be made .

Draft evolved framework - Layer 3

Draft Know and Do to share with you today

ideas

Scotland's Curriculum Framework
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Development of the Patterns and Sequences Concept

Concept description:
Patterns, which occur in both nature and everyday life, are situations where actions, objects, colours, shapes or numbers repeat in a certain order. A sequence is a list or arrangement of elements that follow a particular pattern or rule. Known elements can be used to establish the rule which describes the sequence, to copy and continue the sequence and to predict other elements within it.

Layer 2 – Overview of development of Patterns and Sequences	
Early	**Patterns and Sequences:** The sequence of whole numbers can be seen, copied and continued. Numbers can be arranged in order of size. Whole numbers are either even, where they can be shared into two equal groups, or odd, where they cannot be shared into two equal groups.
First	**Patterns and Sequences:** A number sequence is an ordered list that follows a pattern or rule. Numbers in a sequence can be in ascending or descending order. The patterns used to generate number sequences can be based on any type of operation on number.
Second	**Patterns and Sequences:** A square number of items can be arranged in the shape of a square. The sequence of square numbers can be found by multiplying whole numbers by themselves. A triangular number of items can be arranged in the shape of a triangle. The sequence of triangular numbers (1, 3, 6, …) increases by one more each time. The next number in a Fibonacci sequence is found by adding together the two previous numbers in that sequence.
Third	**Patterns and Sequences:** An arithmetic sequence is one where the difference between two consecutive terms is always the same. An n^{th} term formula describes a sequence and is used to find any number in that sequence using its position.
Fourth	**Patterns and Sequences:** A geometric sequence is one where the ratio of two consecutive terms is always the same. Arithmetic sequences can be used to model real-life situations.

Summary of essential vocabulary for learners

Early	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Sequence Ascend Descend Odd numbers Even numbers	Pattern Ordered list Multiplicative number patterns Multiples	Decimal fractions Integers Square numbers Arrays Triangular numbers Cube numbers	Term Arithmetic sequence n^{th} term formula Consecutive terms Common difference	Geometric sequence Common ratio Gradient

Development of concept as we progress through the levels

Detailed Know and Do Statements

Patterns and Sequences concept

This is an illustration of part of the Mathematics technical framework, specifically the concept of Patterns and Sequences. A detailed glossary will also be produced to support the understanding of key words and phrases.

Layer 3 –Expected Knowledge and Skills/Procedures/Strategies which show progression within and across levels for the concept of Patterns and Sequences (Early to Fourth)

			End of Early Level	Start of First Level			
Know	**Do**	**Know**	**Do**	**Know**	**Do**	**Know**	**Do**
Sequences of numbers can be seen in the world around us.	Explore and identify number sequence in everyday situations and real-life experiences. For example, house numbers, page numbers, clocks and calendars.						
Number sequences can be copied and continued.	**Within the number range 1 to 5 and then 0 to 10:** Copy and continue number sequences through a range of songs, stories, rhymes and counting games. Notice and identify missing numerals when shown sequences which ascend or descend in ones. For example, 5, 6, ?, 8. Identify an error made in an ascending or descending number sequence in ones. For example, 4, 5, 6, '8', 9…	Number sequences can be copied, continued and extended.	**Within the number range 0 to 20:** When counting in ones, identify which number(s) comes next in ascending and descending oral and written sequences. For example, 13, 14, 15,? When counting in ones, identify missing numbers from ascending and descending oral and written number sequences. For example, 14, 15,?, 17 Recognise and explain an error made in an oral or written ascending or descending number sequence in ones. For example, 14, 15, 16, '18', 19…	A sequence is an ordered list of numbers that follow a specific rule. A number pattern is a rule that numbers follow which can be used to create a number sequence. For example, increasing by 5 each time.	**Within the range 0 to 100:** Identify next number(s), missing numbers and errors in number sequences that ascend and descend in ones. When choral counting, using concrete materials or looking at ordered lists of numerals, notice, discuss and identify the pattern and explain the rule. For example, the sequence of 8, 6, 4, 2 has the rule of decreasing by 2 each time. Recognise and explain an error made in an oral or written number sequence. For example, 10, 20, 30, '14', 50.	Skip counting is based on a number pattern. Number sequences can be generated by skip counting.	**Gradually increase t 1000.** Identify next number numbers and errors i sequences that asce descend in ones. Recognise and exten sequence of number skip counting, by app rule. For example, 3, Notice, discuss and i pattern within an ord explain the rule. For e the sequence of 100, 250 (has the rule of s in 50s).
		If a number is even, the total can be shared into two equal groups. If a number is odd number, it cannot be shared equally into two groups.	Identify and demonstrate if a number to 10 is odd or even using concrete materials and visual approaches. For example, pair-wise ten frames:  Identify the next odd/even number to 10 using mathematical tools to keep track. For example, a number track or number line. Identify and sort odd and even numbers from 0 to 10.	An even number has a ones digit of 0, 2, 4, 6 or 8. An odd number has a ones digit 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9.	Identify odd and even numbers based on the ones digit.		Continue to identify o even numbers based digit.

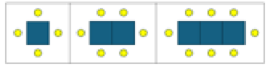
Patterns and Sequences concept

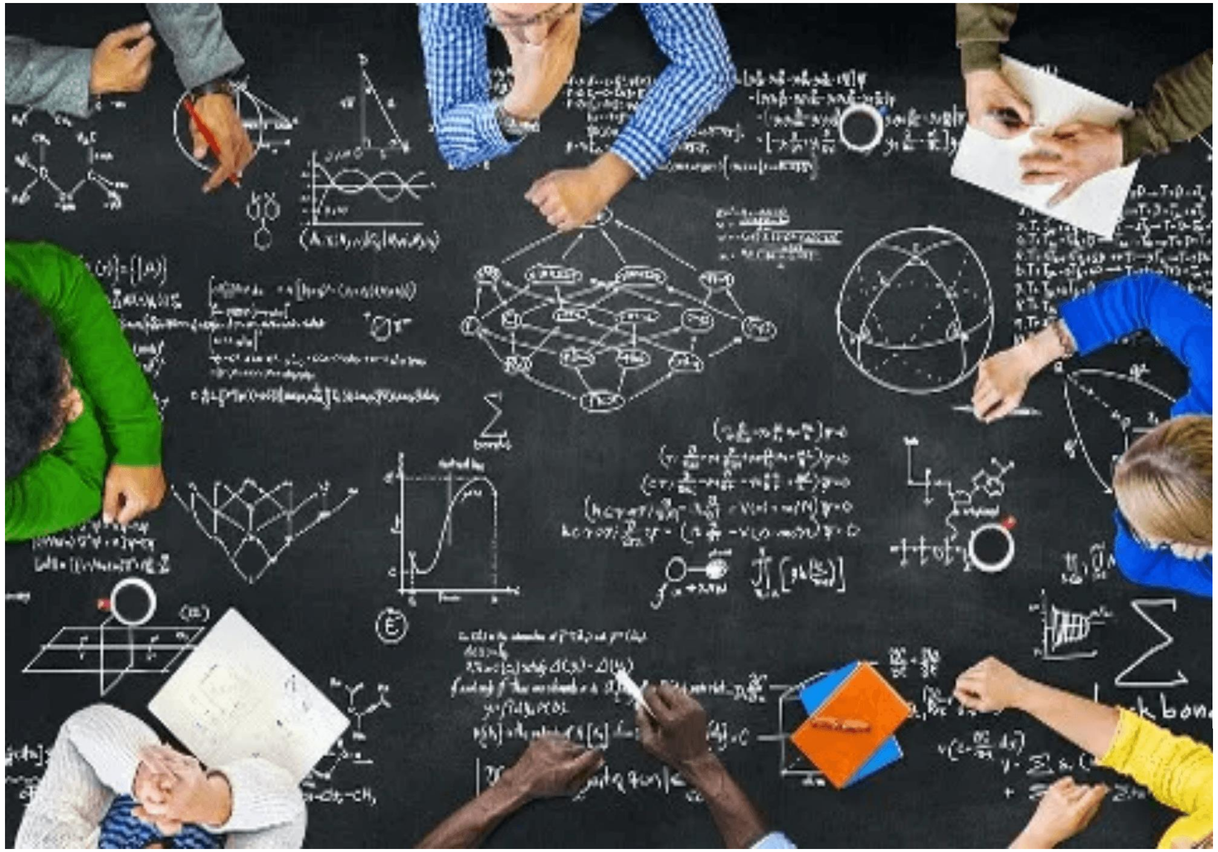
This is an illustration of part of the Mathematics technical framework, specifically the concept of Patterns and Sequences. A detailed glossary will also be produced to support the understanding of key words and phrases.

	End of First Level	Beginning of Second Level					End of Second Level
Know	**Do**	**Know**	**Do**				
	Within the range 0 to 1000: Identify next number(s), missing numbers and errors in ascending and descending number sequences based on skip counting. For example, 7,14, ?, ?, 35, …		**Within the range to 0 to 10 000:**		**Within the range 0 to 100 000:**		**Within the range -20 to 1 000 000:**
Number sequences can be generated based on addition or subtraction number patterns. Number sequences can be generated based on multiplicative number patterns.	Notice, discuss and identify the pattern within an ordered list and explain the rule. For example, the sequence of 72, 63, 54, 45 has the rule of subtracting 9 each time. When choral counting in multiples, record the count and explore the links and patterns. For example, notice the links between the multiples of 3 and 6. Recognise and extend a sequence of numbers by applying a multiplicative rule.		Continue to notice, discuss and identify the pattern within an ordered list and explain the rule. For example, the sequence of 800, 1700, 2600, 3500 has the rule of adding 900 each time. Identify the next number(s), missing numbers and errors in ascending and descending number sequences based on additive and multiplicative rules		Continue to notice, discuss and identify the pattern within an ordered list and explain the rule. For example, the sequence of 525, 2100, 8400 has the rule of multiplying by 4 each time. Continue to identify the next number(s), missing numbers and errors in ascending and descending number sequences based on additive and multiplicative rules		Notice, discuss and identify the pattern within an ordered list of integers and explain the rule. For example, the sequence of 23, 11, -1, -13 has the rule of subtracting 12. Identify the next number(s), missing numbers and errors in ascending and descending integer sequences based on additive rules
		A square number of items can be arranged in an array with an equal number of rows and columns:  A square number is found by multiplying a number by itself. This can be represented using a superscript 2 and is read as	Explain and demonstrate visually or with concrete materials what a square number is. Determine square numbers using arrays and known addition/multiplication facts. Explain and demonstrate visually or with concrete materials if a number is square or not. Calculate and record a range of	Triangular numbers describe the number of items that can be arranged in a triangle. The first row contains 1 item, the second row 2 items, the third row 3 items and so on: 	Explore and spot where triangular number patterns appear in real contexts. For example, snooker ball and bowling pin formations. Form triangular number patterns using physical objects. Explain and demonstrate visually or with concrete materials if a number is triangular or not. Explore strategies for calculating triangular numbers. Investigate classic mathematical problems involving triangular numbers. For example, Pascal's Triangle, the handshake problem.	A cube number of items can be arranged as a cube.  A cubic number is found by multiplying an integer by itself twice. This can be represented using a superscript 3 and is read as 'cubed' For example, $4 \times 4 \times 4 = 4^3$ is read as 'four cubed'. The next number in a Fibonacci sequence is found by adding together the previous two numbers in that sequence.	Determine cubic numbers using physical objects and addition/multiplication facts. Explain and demonstrate visually or with concrete materials if a number is cubic or not. Calculate and record a range of cubic numbers. Explore the history and application of Fibonacci sequences in the context of the natural world.

Patterns and Sequences concept

This is an illustration of part of the Mathematics technical framework, specifically the concept of Patterns and Sequences. A detailed glossary will also be produced to support the understanding of key words and phrases.

			End of Third Level		End of Fourth Level
Know	**Do**	**Know**	**Do**	**Know**	**Do**
The numbers in a sequence are called terms. A sequence can be described by its first term and the rule for finding the next term.	Find the first few terms in a number sequence given its first term and the rule for finding the next term. For example, starting with a first term 10, use the rule add 6 to find the next 4 terms in this sequence.			A geometric sequence is one where the ratio of two consecutive terms is always the same. The next term of a geometric sequence is found by multiplying the previous term by this common ratio.	Identify whether or not a sequence is geometric by looking for a common ratio. Explore contexts where geometric sequences occur. For example, the rice and chessboard legend, compound interest, inflation. Continue these sequences to solve related problems.
An arithmetic sequence is one where the difference between two consecutive terms is always the same.	Identify whether or not a sequence is arithmetic by looking for a common difference. In context, identify patterns that follow an arithmetic sequence. For example, the number of people that can be seated around an increasing number of tables:  Continue these sequences to solve related problems.	A rule can be described to find a number in a sequence by using its position in the sequence. This is called an n^{th} term formula.	Generate parts of a sequence using its nth term formula, arithmetic sequences only. For example, T = 4n + 6. Explore the relationship between the n^{th} term formula of an arithmetic sequence and its common difference. For example, for T = 4n + 6, the sequence has a common difference of 4. Explore the relationship between the n^{th} term formula of an arithmetic sequence and the sequence of multiples of its common difference. For example, for T = 4n + 6, all the terms in the sequence are 6 greater than a multiple of 4.	The common difference in an arithmetic sequence appears in its n^{th} term formula. When terms in an arithmetic sequence are plotted against their position in that sequence, a straight line is formed with a gradient equal to the common difference. (Link with Patterns and Sequences in Geometry and Measure).	Establish an arithmetic sequence that a physical or pictorial pattern, or real-life situation follows. Determine its n^{th} term formula and use it algebraically or graphically to solve related problems.



Mathematics is a Language

From Big Idea to Classroom Practice

Mathematics provides a shared, precise language to communicate about the world

Encompasses all mathematical concepts and supports the deepening of conceptual understanding across all areas of mathematics

Allows us to model and communicate solutions to real-world problems effectively across disciplines and cultures

Essential for conveying abstract concepts through using precise notation, symbols, and diagrams

About discourse and collaboration, communicating ideas and posing purposeful questions that promote curiosity and creativity

Underpins clear and visible thinking, informed decision-making, and the justification of mathematical reasoning

Curriculum design must intentionally build linguistic fluency alongside conceptual understanding

Learning Progressions

Explicitly plan for vocabulary development, mathematical syntax, and symbolic notation from early years onwards. Build language skills progressively from everyday words to formal mathematical terms.

Scope and Sequence

Shift emphasis from 'what' to 'why' and 'how'. Include opportunities for students to explain reasoning, justify solutions, and critique the reasoning of others throughout the curriculum.

Cross-Curricular Links

Mathematics as a language connects across the curriculum. Make these links explicit to help learners appreciate the power and utility of mathematical communication.

Assessment

Move beyond correct answers to evaluate ability to communicate mathematically. Use explanatory writing, oral presentations, and peer assessment to capture the full range of mathematical proficiency.

The classroom must become a place of mathematical discourse where learners actively make meaning together

Classroom Talk
Create language-rich environments to encourage elaboration, active listening, and building on each other's mathematical ideas.

Modelling
Teachers think aloud, making reasoning visible and modelling what it means to be a curious, persistent mathematician who uses precise language.

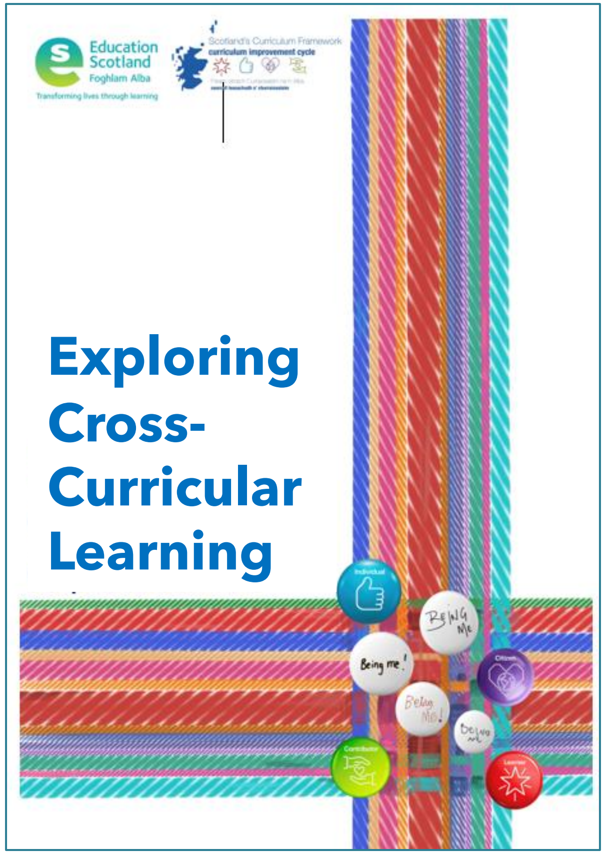
Task Design
Use open-ended problems, investigations, and collaborative tasks that provide genuine purposes for mathematical communication and discourse.

Representations
Provide multiple representations (objects, pictures, diagrams, symbols) and explicitly teach notation conventions to support understanding.

Effective Professional Learning Models

- Informational: Builds foundational awareness
- Formational: Aligns beliefs and pedagogy
- Transformational: Supports lasting classroom change
- Holistic approach ensures meaningful professional growth

Exploring Cross-Curricular Learning



Language and Communication

Numeracy

Mental, Emotional, Social & Physical HWB (MESP)

Learning for Sustainability

Creativity

Money and Finance

Digital Skills

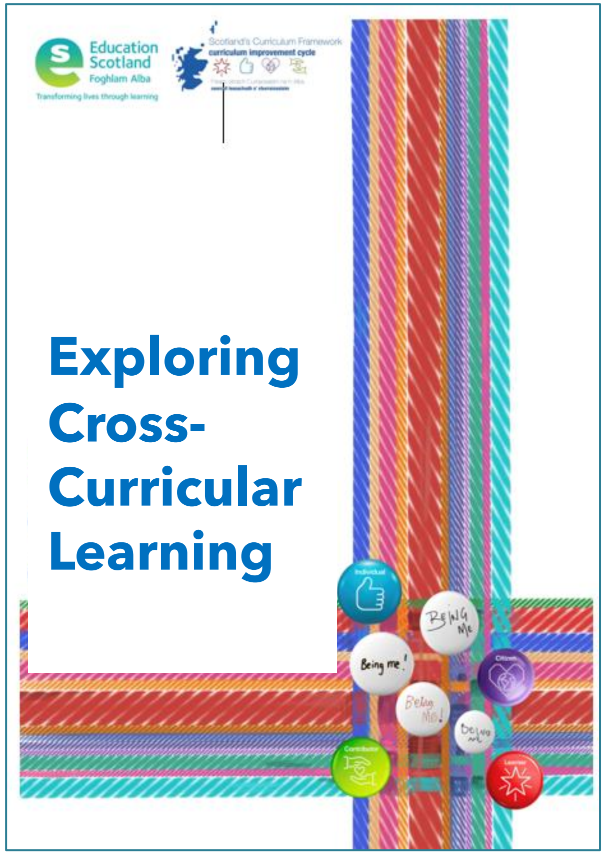
Careers and Pathways

Democratic Values

Social Justice, Rights & Equalities

Entrepreneurship

"Our main focus now is to ensure that these are embedded in the new technical framework and national guidance in a way that supports practitioners with planning and ensures universal access to this learning. This will support with de-cluttering the curriculum, a key aim of the CIC identified by teachers."



Exploring Cross-Curricular Learning
(Education Scotland, forthcoming)

Opportunities for Alignment

Information, Data and Uncertainty *Mathematics equips us to sort and interpret information, manage uncertainty, and make informed decisions.*
Data is everywhere, influencing our decisions and impacting our daily lives. An awareness of different types of data helps us analyse and interpret the information in the world around us. Mathematics supports us in making informed, evidence-based decisions and predictions by critically evaluating information. Probability helps us navigate uncertainty and risk. By providing structured methods, mathematics allows us to collect, organise and represent information accurately and objectively. Statistics help us identify and make sense of patterns and trends, measure variations, and draw reliable conclusions. We can make sense of information by constructing mathematical models to tackle problems and explore solutions. In areas such as finance, making sense of information is essential for interpreting data, managing budgets, assessing risks, and making informed choices.

Digital Skills

Creativity and communication

Having access to vast quantities of information, media and statistical data requires skills to navigate but also to scrutinise its reliability and veracity. Digital technology provides a wide range of media through which to express our thoughts, feelings and ideas and to engage with others' self-expression. Digital technology should be considered part of any a potential solution when problem solving or innovative thinking.

Democratic Values

Misinformation and disinformation

Information is increasingly used to influence our views and beliefs. Misinformation is inaccurate but does not seek to intentionally mislead, whereas disinformation has malicious intent and aims to manipulate by eliciting an emotional response. This manipulation can be countered when we develop our ability to identify and critically analyse misinformation and disinformation. This can include exploring alternative views and identifying the reliability and biases of different sources. Developing an empathic understanding of other viewpoints helps us to counter extremism.

Opportunities for Alignment

Mathematics is a Language

Mathematics provides us with a shared, precise language to communicate about the world around us.

The language of mathematics encompasses all mathematical concepts and supports the deepening of conceptual understanding. It allows us to model and communicate solutions to real-world problems. By using mathematical symbols, diagrams and accurate notation we can communicate effectively across disciplines and cultures. The use of precise notation and mathematical language is essential when conveying abstract concepts. As a collaborative practice, mathematics is about discourse, communicating ideas, and posing purposeful questions that promote curiosity and creativity. Precise mathematical language underpins clear and visible thinking, informed decision-making and justification.

Language and Communication

Using language and communication

Our language toolkit builds over time and comprises the vocabulary, skills, strategies and conventions that allow us to communicate in ways that are meaningful to ourselves and others. The nature of our toolkit will vary according to our needs and experiences. Learning to use these can support the ways in which we communicate meaning and collaborate with others.

Educators' Sense-Making of the Evolving Mathematics Curriculum in Scotland

Phase 1 (Completed)

- ✓ 1 pilot focus group interview
- ✓ 13 focus group interviews
- ✓ 29 educators across phases
- ✓ 7 stakeholders

Phase 2 (November-December)

- ❑ Large scale survey

Next step – Large Scale Survey

(will be advertised soon)

- Dr Sinem Hizli Alkan – sinem.hizli-alkan@aru.ac.uk
- Corinne Angier – corinne.angier@aru.ac.uk

Emerging findings:

- Positive emotions discussed more (e.g., hopeful, curious, enthusiastic) if there was involvement and familiarity with the process
- Engagement with networks play a key role to enhance sense-making and curriculum making capacity
- Differences across school phases - subject knowledge, subject specific professional learning, assessment culture, previous experiences

'Takeaways' – What might you do?

Share

Play

Explore

Feedback

Next Steps

We will continue **raising awareness** of this work through different channels (please sign up to the CIC e-bulletin: News Bulletin – Curriculum Improvement Cycle).

The **writing process** for mathematics (and cross-cutting learning) will continue in its current form, adapting to feedback as we progress, with the aim of further drafts being available in June 2026.

We will publish a populated **technical framework**, together with **refreshed curriculum guidance**, for the sharing and adoption phase of the CIC by January 2027, in line with the Scottish Government's timeline for curriculum and qualifications reform (June 2025).

Feedback

Education Scotland External Professional Learning Survey 2025-2026

Education Scotland External Professional Learning Survey 2025-2026

Question 6 – Title of Event

CIC Progress Update – Focus on Maths and Numeracy

Question 7 – Name of Presenter

Maths Team