

# Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class



## Curriculum Rationale



**A Place of Enthusiastic Learning and Achievement!**

## Our Curriculum Rationale



### Why do we have a Curriculum Rationale?

We are fully committed to ensuring all of our pupils experience a broad, balanced and skill-based curriculum, which takes account of our school's socio-economic context and celebrates all aspects of learning which makes our school unique. We strive for excellence and equity for all of our learners, to allow us to deliver a curriculum which recognises the varied needs of our community and allows each individual to achieve their potential.

### Our School and Community Context

Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class is located in the Kilsyth area of North Lanarkshire, halfway between Glasgow and Stirling. It is a mainstream, non-denominational establishment. The school, initially an infant school, was built in 1972 with an extension built in 1986 to accommodate both junior and senior pupils. The school is situated within both local authority and private housing.

The school has a current roll of around 356 pupils and a 40/40 nursery. Approximately 13% of pupils live within the postcodes of deciles 1 and 2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and 14.4% of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals. We cater for children with a wide range of needs. The school is currently made up of 13 classes from Primary 1 to 7. Pupils transfer into Primary 1 from Balmalloch Nursery and nursery centres and classes around the Kilsyth area.



We are part of the Kilsyth Academy cluster and have good relationships with all primary schools with pupils transferring there, including two schools from East Dunbartonshire authority through the transition process. The school has very strong links with Kilsyth Academy, where the majority of pupils transfer at the end of Primary 7.

## WHAT DOES THIS RATIONALE COVER?

### **This rationale sets out:**

Our vision, values, aims and Motto

Our curriculum design

How we plan the curriculum

## HOW WE DELIVER THE CURRICULUM

### OUR VISION

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum within a stimulating and caring environment, promoting positive attitudes within the community to ensure that all children meet their full potential.

### OUR VALUES AND MOTTO

responsi**B**ility

gr**A**atitude

**BELIEVE IN YOURSELF**

hu**M**ility and forgiveness

persever**A**nce

**L**ove

**ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS**

h**O**nesty and generosity

**C**ompassion and respe**C**t

friends**H**ip

## OUR AIMS

To enable all in our care to reach their maximum potential educationally, socially and emotionally in a safe, happy, secure and trusting environment.

To ensure that children are given the opportunities to become **successful learners** through effective learning and teaching based upon clear aims, policies and through a structured learning programme which offers both challenge and support.

To encourage all children to develop an appreciation of self-worth, respect for themselves and others in an environment where success is celebrated and promoted thus encouraging all children to become **confident individuals**.

To strive to create and maintain a positive partnership between parents and the whole school community where each plays a vital role in the development of our children's moral and social values in order that they become **responsible citizens**.

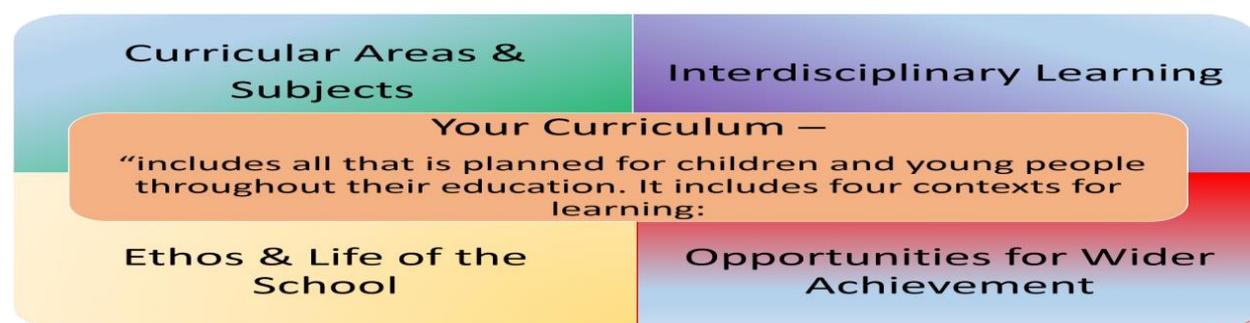
To foster independence and the development of positive attitudes and self-discipline within an agreed code of conduct to ensure that all children feel accepted and valued encouraging them to be **effective contributors** within their environment and the wider community.

## CURRICULUM DESIGN

### What are the under-pinning principles of the curriculum?

Since 2010, all Scottish schools have followed the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Its purpose is to ensure all children develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need in life, learning and work.

### Curriculum for Excellence



In designing our curriculum, we aim to deliver a broad, general education whilst ensuring **four different contexts for learning** to develop the Four Capacities; Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors.

## **The Four Contexts for Learning**

### **Curriculum areas and discrete subjects**

**There are eight curricular areas within Curriculum for Excellence:**

Health and Wellbeing (including Physical Education)

Literacy & Languages (including French and Spanish)

Maths and Numeracy

Expressive Arts (Drama, Art, Music, Dance)

Religious and Moral Education

Sciences

Social Studies

Technologies (including ICT and Food Technology)

### **Interdisciplinary learning (known as IDL to the children)**

This is a planned approach to learning which links different curricular areas to enhance learning by providing opportunities for challenge, application of skills and relevant contexts for learning. Experiences and Outcomes are bundled together across the 8 curriculum areas allowing staff to provide interesting, innovative and meaningful learning contexts. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the planning of all interdisciplinary learning.

### **Ethos and life of the school**

- Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class has a very positive, welcoming and inclusive ethos.
- Children are central to the life and work of the school.
- We provide a wide range of activities and clubs that take account of pupil interest; Dance, Drama, Cooking, Athletics, Cross-Country, Netball, Basketball, Football, Fundamentals, Yoga, Touch Typing, Digital Leaders, Gardening, HWB and Choir.
- We develop leadership skills in all our pupils through a range of committees; ECO Committee, Pupil Council, Sports Committee, Rights Respecting Schools, Digital Leaders, STEM Ambassadors and JRSO.
- Achievements are shared, celebrated and recorded.
- Developing a 'Growth Mindset' culture promoting a 'can do' approach to life and learning is central to our curriculum.

### Opportunities for personal achievement

- Children discuss their learning with teachers, senior leaders and visitors to the school and nursery.
- Key learning and pupil targets (Literacy/Numeracy/HWB) are shared with parents through 'Latest and Best' jotters.
- Skills for life, learning and work are developed through a wide range of extra-curricular and cross-curricular activities.
- Outdoor areas in the local community and educational outings further afield contribute positively to teaching and learning.

### What is the community context of our school?

Our school has a wide catchment area, with children from very differing socio-economic backgrounds. Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class has an excellent reputation in the area, reflected in the number of placing requests we receive. We have a strong presence in the community and are well supported by the local community, and shows and special events are well attended by parents and friends of the school. The school recognises the contribution that community partnership can make to enhance the learning experiences of our pupils, developing skills for learning, life and work.

Classes regularly visit Kilsyth Library to enhance learning throughout the curriculum. Educational outings also enhance the learning experiences of children in the local community and beyond; Colzium House, Kilsyth Town Centre and Woodland, Almond Valley - Harvest and Kilbowie P7 annual residential trip.

The range of after school clubs offered support the development of children's talents and skills, enabling them to participate in tournaments and events; Dance Mania, Sportshall Athletics, NLC Netball, Kilsyth Academy Primary Athletics and cross-country and NLC Football. Primary 5 pupils participate in swimming annually at Kilsyth swimming pool.

Civic Week is an annual event encouraging children to participate in a range of activities, representing Balmalloch Primary School in the local community; Poetry, Art & Design, Football and Swimming.

Our choir have opportunities to perform in the community, celebrating their achievements; Grandparents' Christmas Concert, Christmas Fayre, Christmas at Tesco, Co-op and Craig-en-goyne Care Home with funds raised given to various charities. Balmalloch Choir also perform with the Columban Singers Group through the annual event in Kirk and Old Parish Church.

A strong partnership exists between Anderson Parish Church and Balmalloch Primary School with attendance at church services throughout the year and support from our Minister Alan Vint for class assemblies.

The school will continue to build on these experiences further to enhance curricular experiences, improving outcomes for learners.

### How do we plan our curriculum?

The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is to ensure that all children develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need to become successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals. A key entitlement of Curriculum for Excellence is that all children should receive a broad general education. When planning for learning, staff should take into account the seven principles of:

COHERENCE	CHALLENGE & ENJOYMENT	BREADTH
	RELEVANCE	
PERSONALISATION & CHOICE	DEPTH	PROGRESSION

- Teachers work collegiately to ensure children progress in learning.
- Planning is based on CfE Experiences and Outcomes.
- We are currently reviewing our planning across curricular areas to ensure these are progressive (2019-20: Literacy and English, Numeracy and Maths, Art and Design, HWB, including Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport and Social Studies, Science & Investigation, STEM and Developing the Young Workforce).
- Resources and approaches are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate.
- We develop higher order thinking skills through Bloom's taxonomy.
- GIRFME plans support children requiring individual support with a clear focus on SHANARRI indicators impacting on progress. Experiences and Outcomes are used to set Long Term Targets and Benchmarks support the development of short-term aims.

Every learning experience/lesson will include some but not all of the following key elements to help ensure quality learning and teaching is taking place. (See Teaching and Learning Policy)

Creating a Positive Environment ↓	→ Active Learning	Feedback ↓
Clear Learning Intentions ↓	↑ Differentiation	Use of Digital Technology ↓
Success Criteria →	↑ Linking the Learning, Interdisciplinary Learning	Review Learning

## KEY FEATURES OF OUR CURRICULUM

### Learning and Teaching

- We nurture the whole child.
- We have a highly committed and effective staff that are keen to improve their own skills through professional review and development.
- We provide high quality learning in all curriculum areas.
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are used to ensure children know what and why they are learning and how to be successful.
- Opportunities are given to work independently, in pairs and groups, developing co-operative skills.
- Learning is experiential and active from nursery to Primary 7.
- Learning provides support and challenge through appropriate differentiation.
- We work closely with a range of partners to identify barriers to learning and address inequality, providing equity for learners.
- Children's learning experiences are shared at all stages through social media - Twitter.
- Planned learning is shared with parents at the start of term through a class newsletter.

## Assessment

- A range of formative and summative assessments are used to support the professional judgements of teachers and early learning practitioners.
- Teachers' judgements are based on assessments towards benchmarks.
- 'Latest and Best' jotters are used to record key learning experiences against focused benchmarks. 'Latest and Best' jotters are shared with parents/carers each term showing pupil progress towards achievement of a level.
- Children's progress is also shared with parents/carers through two parents' meetings in the session and a formal written report in May.

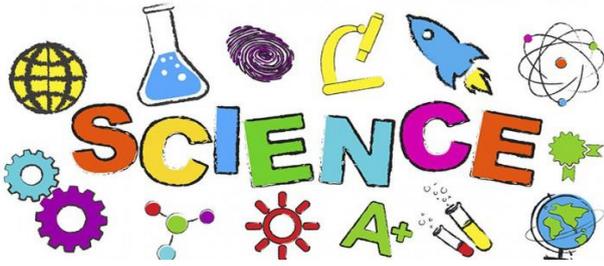


## Transitions

- All staff meet in June to ensure children's wellbeing is a key focus for the next stage in their learning journey, as well as continuity and progression in learning.
- Evidence and data are discussed to evaluate and improve closing the gap for all pupils.
- Balmalloch Nursery Class have an on-going yearly plan of transition events.
- Pupils begin transition to high school in Primary 6 through the annual Science Transition Event and 'The Key' Leadership Event. A varied programme of events are provided for Primary 7 during the course of the session. Enhanced transition programmes provide additional support for identified children. Regular cluster meetings support smooth transitions for Primary 7 children.
- Individual pupil files are transferred to Kilsyth Academy, together with levels of achievement, to ensure progress can be built upon.



## Sciences



- \* Planet Earth
- \* Forces
- \* Electricity and Waves
- Biological Systems
- \* Materials
- \* Topical Science

## Religious and Moral Education



- \* Christianity
- \* World Religions
- \* Development of Beliefs and Values

## Technologies



- \* Technological Developments in Society
- \* ICT
- \* Business
- \* Computing Sciences
- \* Food and Textiles
- \* Craft, Design, Engineering and Graphics

## Social Studies



- \* People, Past Events and Societies
- \* People, Place and Environment
- \* People in Society, Economy and Business

Each curricular area is made up of a range of experiences and outcomes (Es and Os) which describe the knowledge, understanding, attributes and skills expected. Within Curriculum for Excellence, there are five levels through which the children progress:

Early Level: Pre-school and P1, or later for some  
First Level: To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some  
Second Level: To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some  
Third, Fourth Level: S1 to S3 but earlier for earlier for some  
Senior Phase: S4 to S6

Teachers continue to have the flexibility, in consultation with pupils, to respond to their current interests and ideas they would like to explore. Staff have flexibility on how they wish to deliver the experiences and outcomes over a term.

### **How are we delivering the curriculum?**

In planning for, and delivering learning, staff will always take account of the individual needs of all pupils. The Experiences and Outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence are our starting point. Teachers plan learning with pupils and often find links across learning.

In addition, discrete subjects are taught using stand alone planning formats. We monitor and track pupil progress in literacy and numeracy through standardised data, reading bands and benchmarks. Staff meet with SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to discuss and record this data, identifying pupils who may require additional support or challenge. Staff use regular formative and summative assessment evidence to evaluate progress of pupils throughout each term, with attainment towards achievement of a level recorded on the school's database and this is monitored and tracked by SLT.

We have recently evaluated our process for staged intervention and our new monitoring and tracking system ensures support is timeous and appropriate. We continue to look for opportunities for our pupils to develop skills through enterprise, outdoor learning, after school clubs, celebrating pupil's wider achievements and making links with local community partners to enrich pupil's experiences.

Our curriculum is also delivered through multi-stage Pupil Voice Groups; Rights Respecting Committee, Sports Committee, Pupil Council, ECO Committee, Digital Learners Committee, STEM Ambassadors and Junior Road Safety Officers. Pupils work in groups to learn more about Health and Wellbeing, Eco, Outdoor Learning, Fairtrade and Global Citizenship. We have achieved Gold status of UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools and we look forward to embracing the next phase of our journey. We also achieved our 7th Green Flag from ECO Schools Scotland through the work of our ECO Committee. In 2019/20 we were awarded the School Sports Scotland Gold Award.

## **Equal Opportunities**

The curriculum offered to each child will be planned to provide a progressive balanced programme. Children who show a particular strength will be provided with challenge and children who experience will be supported in order to achieve their full potential.

We continue to evaluate and shape our curriculum to ensure that it responsive to the needs of all our children. All staff will continue to work collegiately to develop approaches to learning and teaching.

R. McCarthy  
Head Teacher  
March, 2020

Review Schedule: March 2021