

# curriculum for excellence: expressive arts

## principles and practice

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# Expressive arts

## Principles and practice

### What can learning in the expressive arts achieve for children and young people?

The inspiration and power of the arts play a vital role in enabling our children and young people to enhance their creative talent and develop their artistic skills.

By engaging in experiences within the expressive arts, children and young people will recognise and represent feelings and emotions, both their own and those of others. The expressive arts play a central role in shaping our sense of our personal, social and cultural identity. Learning in the expressive arts also plays an important role in supporting children and young people to recognise and value the variety and vitality of culture locally, nationally and globally.

Learning in, through and about the expressive arts enables children and young people to:

- be creative and express themselves in different ways
- experience enjoyment and contribute to other people's enjoyment through creative and expressive performance and presentation
- develop important skills, both those specific to the expressive arts and those which are transferable
- develop an appreciation of aesthetic and cultural values, identities and ideas and, for some, prepare for advanced learning and future careers by building foundations for excellence in the expressive arts.

*Building the Curriculum 1 [amended]*

The expressive arts are rich and stimulating, with the capacity to engage and fascinate learners of all ages, interests and levels of skill and achievement. It is therefore important that all teachers and educators look for opportunities within their own teaching approaches for interdisciplinary learning and to foster partnerships with professional arts companies, creative adults and cultural organisations.

### How is the expressive arts framework structured?

The expressive arts experiences and outcomes will support staff in planning challenging, inspirational and enjoyable learning and teaching activities. The initial statements are closely linked to the four capacities and can be used to help to plan a wide range of learning activities, which will enable our young people to become:

- **successful learners**, who can express themselves, think innovatively, meet challenges positively and find imaginative solutions to problems and who have developed knowledge and skills related to the different arts and broader skills such as the use of technologies
- **confident individuals**, who have developed self-awareness, self-discipline, determination, commitment and confidence through drawing on their own ideas, experiences and feelings, and through successful participation
- **responsible citizens**, who can explore ethical questions, respond to personal and social issues, and develop stances and views, who have deepened their insight and experiences of cultural identities and who have come to recognise the importance of the arts to the culture and identities of Scotland and other societies
- **effective contributors**, who can develop and express their creativity, work cooperatively and communicate with others, and in so doing, show initiative, dependability, leadership and enterprise.

The framework then begins with experiences and outcomes for presentation and performance across the expressive arts, followed by the experiences and outcomes in:

- art and design
- dance
- drama
- music.

This framework provides children and young people with opportunities to be creative and imaginative, to experience inspiration and enjoyment and to develop skills in each of these areas. Participation enables children and young people to experience and enjoy the energy and excitement of performing and presenting for different audiences and of being part of an audience for others.

The experiences and outcomes from each of the lines of development are complementary and interrelated and should be considered together when planning for learning.

The experiences and outcomes do not place ceilings on aspirations for progress and development. Through them, all learners, including those with particular skills, talents and interests and those with additional support needs, will have opportunities to nurture and develop their interests and skills.

## **What are the features of effective learning and teaching in the expressive arts?**

The framework of experiences and outcomes supports staff in meeting the needs of children and young people through providing a wide range of carefully planned, well-paced learning experiences.

Within a rich, supportive environment teachers will draw upon a skilful mix of approaches to promote a climate of creativity and innovation, including:

- active involvement in creative activities and performances
- tasks or performance opportunities which require a creative response
- opportunities to perform or present to an audience
- partnerships with professional performers or artists and other creative adults
- raising awareness of contemporary culture and connecting with young people's experiences
- appropriate, effective use of technology
- building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- both collaborative and independent learning
- establishing links within the expressive arts subjects and with the wider curriculum
- opportunities to analyse, explore and reflect.

The majority of activities in the expressive arts involve creating and presenting and are practical and experiential. Evaluating and appreciating are an integral part of the creative process and are linked to developing creative skills, knowledge and understanding and enhancing enjoyment.

## **How will we build on children and young people's prior learning in the expressive arts?**

Children and young people will come to their learning in the expressive arts with a range of different types and levels of experiences gained within and beyond the life of the school. Teachers will plan activities that take into account prior learning, achievement and interests.

At early to third level children and young people will enjoy activities that centre on expressing ideas, thoughts and feelings through creativity and self-expression. Development of skills is directly linked with opportunities for presenting and performing. Taken together, these experiences and outcomes from early to third level represent a broad general education in the expressive arts for all children and young people. With this in mind, the framework at the third level includes the expectation that each young person will enjoy the opportunity to contribute to a public presentation or performance in art and design, dance, drama or music, as a significant culmination of his or her broad general education. Similarly, some of the third level outcomes

draw together learning from two or three related lines of development into a single outcome before expanding into the fourth level.

Fourth level experiences and outcomes provide a basis for more advanced study and further scope for depth, challenge, enjoyment, personalisation and choice. Teachers have scope to plan and organise different combinations of these experiences and outcomes, both within and between aspects of the expressive arts, to meet the varied needs and interests of young people who choose to progress beyond third level. The level of achievement at fourth level has been designed to approximate to that associated with SCQF Level 4.

At all levels children and young people will develop new skills and consolidate prior learning. Some of these skills (such as skills of communication, evaluation and leadership) are transferable while others (such as specific performance and technical skills) are specific to one or more of the expressive arts.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that those with particular skills, talents and interests in one or more of the expressive arts have access to and can participate in arts experiences that accelerate, challenge and enrich their learning. This will include opportunities for some learners to build skills and qualities which will lead to their employment in the creative industries sector.

## **What are broad features of assessment in the expressive arts?**

Assessment in the expressive arts will focus on children and young people's skills and abilities to express themselves through creating, presenting, evaluating and appreciating. Approaches to assessment will also include a focus on their abilities to recognise, present and discuss their own feelings and emotions and those of others.

Teachers will gather evidence of progress as part of children and young people's day-to-day learning in art and design, dance, drama and music. They will also make use of specific assessment tasks in assessing some aspects of learning. From the early years through to the senior stages, children and young people will demonstrate their progress in developing their skills as they work individually and with others in creative activities including, for example, presentations to others. Discussions with learners and observations of their responses can support teachers and practitioners in the challenge of assessing learners' creative and aesthetic processes. Evidence of progress will also be demonstrated through learners' abilities and skills in communicating in different ways and settings, solving problems creatively, and justifying their opinions of their own and others' work.

Approaches to assessment should identify the extent to which children and young people can apply these skills in their learning and their daily lives and in preparing for the world of work. For example:

- How well do they demonstrate appreciation and understanding of cultural identity?
- Do they show awareness of the role and impact of creative arts on people's lifelong interest and enjoyment of the expressive arts?

Children and young people can demonstrate their progress in skills, knowledge and understanding as they develop their practical skills and express increasingly complex concepts and ideas. For example, they:

- apply their creative skills to produce and perform more complex pieces of work and to recognise creativity and skill in the work of other people
- demonstrate increasing skills and confidence in presentations and performances, and in appreciation of how the expressive arts relate to the wider world and different cultures
- show enjoyment of the expressive arts, for example through evaluating constructively their own work and that of others, and suggesting how it can be improved.

Assessment should also link with other areas of the curriculum within and outside the classroom and, for example, offer children and young people opportunities to become aware of the role of professional arts companies and cultural organisations in society and the economy.

## **How are the expressive arts connected with the other areas of the curriculum?**

Learning in the expressive arts offers rich and exciting opportunities for interdisciplinary work across art and design, dance, drama and music and with other areas of the curriculum. Ready examples include the opportunities for collaboration with technologies afforded by the study of design in a variety of contexts. As participation in dance activities contributes to children and young people's physical activity, experiences and outcomes in dance can be readily linked with those for physical education. Moving image media provides opportunities to explore dance, drama, music, art and design within another narrative medium and to combine these traditional expressive arts in film-making work.

Children and young people will develop, enhance and apply skills gained in the expressive arts in a very broad range of activities including role play, participation in whole school events, community events and outdoor learning. Such activities promote the development of skills in areas such as talking and working with others, and contribute greatly to children and young people's mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing.

## **How do the expressive arts provide children and young people with insight and experiences of Scotland's distinctive cultural identities?**

Learning in the expressive arts helps learners develop their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of contemporary and historical arts within their own communities, within Scotland and beyond. Children and young people will enjoy numerous and diverse opportunities to contribute to, reflect on and respond to the arts within their own and other cultures.

## **How important is inspiration and enjoyment?**

One of the main purposes of learning in the expressive arts is to develop lifelong appreciation of, and participation in, expressive arts and cultural activities. The framework therefore includes not only statements of the intended outcomes of learning but also statements of experiences which provide opportunities for inspiration and enjoyment.

Judgements about learning will be based on evidence derived from a broad range of sources and across a range of activities and will refer to the learner's progress over time. High quality learning experiences will generate inspiration and enjoyment which will motivate and support effective learning.

## **How can the expressive arts contribute to the curriculum in its broadest sense?**

Through their involvement in the expressive arts, all children and young people can express themselves in innovative, motivating ways, and experience enjoyment and enrichment in their lives.

The framework acknowledges that many children and young people will engage with the expressive arts in what were formerly seen as extra-curricular activities, and that the expressive arts can and should play an important part in the life of the school or early years centre. The experiences and outcomes relate to all aspects of participation in the expressive arts.