

## Biggar Learning Community Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy

### Rationale

A community which nurtures all our young people, enabling them to become effective citizens, serving the common good, in a dynamic world.

The purpose of our Learning, Teaching & Assessment Policy is to promote a common understanding of what constitutes effective practice embedded across our Learning Community. To ensure the vision, values and aims ensure excellence and equity of opportunity for the learners of Biggar Learning Community.

### Aims

Improve teaching and learning through the collective resource of the Learning Community in order to:

- raise attainment and achievement
- equip children with the skills and knowledge to be confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and effective learners for learning life and work ready to grasp opportunities and reach their dreams
- provide our learners with the opportunity to learn from others, to be innovative, creative problem solvers who can apply their learning

### In Biggar Learning Community we will:

- Ensure our Learning and Teaching & Assessment Policy reflect the Quality Indicators from How Good Is Our School 4 and How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare;

Fig. 7: The quality indicators

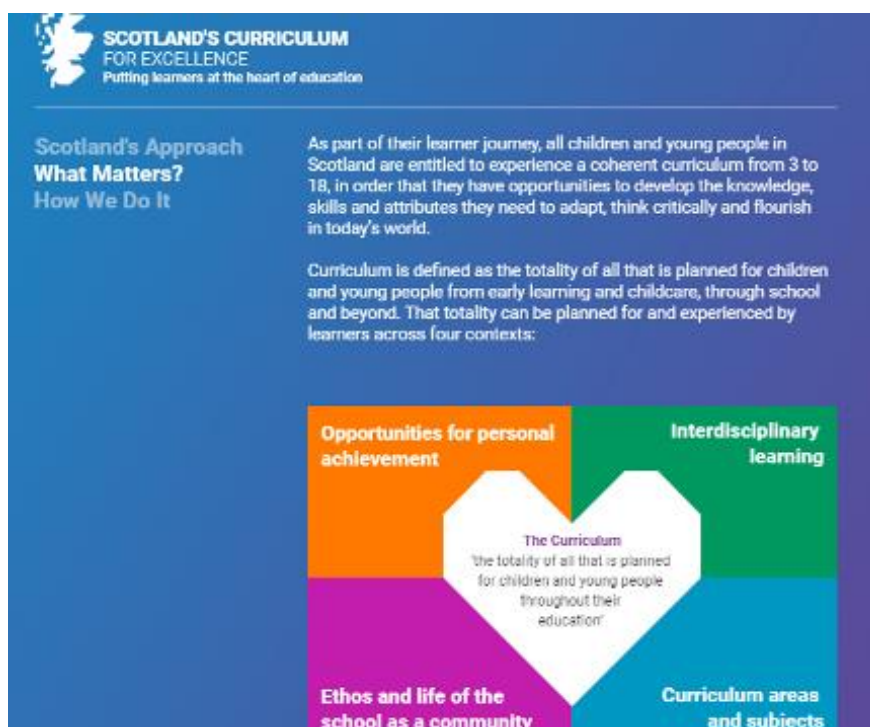
What is our capacity for improvement?		
Leadership and management	Learning provision	Successes and achievements
How good is our leadership and approach to improvement?	How good is the quality of the care and education we offer?	How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?
<b>1.1</b> Self-evaluation for self-improvement <b>1.2</b> Leadership of learning <b>1.3</b> Leadership of change <b>1.4</b> Leadership and management of staff <b>1.5</b> Management of resources to promote equity	<b>2.1</b> Safeguarding and child protection <b>2.2</b> Curriculum <b>2.3</b> Learning, teaching and assessment <b>2.4</b> Personalised support <b>2.5</b> Family learning <b>2.6</b> Transitions <b>2.7</b> Partnerships	<b>3.1</b> Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion <b>3.2</b> Raising attainment and achievement <b>3.3</b> Increasing creativity and employability

- Leadership of Learning & Curriculum (1.2, 1.3, 2.2) – endorse the values, principles and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence. We will endorse the SLC Policy on Leading Learning.

- Learning, Teaching, Assessment & Innovation (2.3, 3.3) – deliver well-planned, high-quality programmes of work which focus on learning experiences and learning outcomes. To provide dynamic and purposeful opportunities which motivate, including opportunities to think creatively and innovate learners to develop responsibility for their own lifelong learning. Effective assessment is an integral part of this process.
- Personalised Support & Universal Support (2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 3.1) – ensure we use a wide range of teaching strategies which meet individual learners needs by providing opportunities for interaction and regular feedback and taking account of recent developments in pedagogy. To have arrangements in place to ensure continuity in learning during transitions.
- Raising Attainment & Achievement (3.2) – set challenging but achievable expectations for all learners and recognise and celebrate individual and collective success.
- Safeguarding & Ensuring Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion (2.1, 3.1) – promote an ethos of achievement by creating a positive, inclusive learning environment where learners feel safe and well cared for through positive relationships.
- Family Learning & Partnerships (2.5, 2.7) – develop and promote partnerships, to engage in dialogue about learning and the life of the school to ensure that learners make the best possible progress.
- Self–evaluation for Self-improvement (1.1) – outline self-evaluation strategies which support staff and learner development and ensure continuous improvement & impact on learners.
- Leadership (1.2, 1.3, 1.4) – develop the shared vision, values & aims of our schools within the Biggar Learning Community by building & sustaining opportunities for all stakeholders to change & continuously improve.

## Curricular Design

Teachers within the Learning Community work in partnership to ensure that the curriculum reflects the refreshed narrative <https://scotlandscurriculum.scot/>





and the 7 design principles by:

- providing all learners with breadth, depth and progression at all stages;
- ensuring there is continuity and progression between stages and at key transitions;
- ensuring relevance and coherence to wider life;
- providing opportunities for pupils to exercise personalisation and choice;
- taking account of cross cutting themes and interdisciplinary learning to ensure challenge and enjoyment;

## Curricular Planning

In the Biggar Learning Community staff use the SLC/Establishment/LC Progression Frameworks, including Together We Can We Will as well as 'Realising the Ambition – Being Me in nursery, and Education Scotland Benchmarks as a "tool" for effective planning and assessment of our curriculum. Pupils value opportunities to have a say in what and how they learn.

## Learning & Teaching Approaches

We believe that learners within Biggar Learning Community learn best when:

- They are happy and feel safe.
- They explore, experiment and experience.
- There are clear and consistent high expectations.
- They are challenged and supported.
- They are interested, curious and motivated.
- They reflect on their mistakes and use them as learning opportunities.
- They experience high quality, well-paced lessons.

- The physical learning environment is stimulating and well resourced.
- They have opportunities to lead their learning.
- Pupil voice is central to learning.
- Pupils have the opportunity to work independently and collaboratively.

Children within the Learning Community are regularly consulted, and views sought, valued and acted upon how they learn best.

We have curriculum guidance which spans both the ELC sector and the early stages of primary school. Curriculum for Excellence 'early level' is intended to support the implementation of a responsive, continuous play-based curriculum for children aged three to six. It is important then that practitioners and teachers provide, through responsive and intentional planning, a blend of child-initiated and adult-initiated learning experiences. The emphasis should be on child-centred play pedagogy to ensure continuity in children's curriculum experiences.

Early Learning Centre's will provide both responsive and intentional learning for children in their day-to-day practice. They will respond to the needs of young children alongside planning and implementing intentional experiences to help them develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Responsive and intentional planning approaches start with observations and interpretations of the young child's actions, emotions and words. This tells us what the child needs for us to provide in their learning environment. A child-centred approach to planning learning will help the child connect each new discovery to what they already know.

**All staff working within classrooms use the L&T mat to embed the following in their practice:**

- Use the SLC/Establishment/LC Progression Frameworks to ensure a coherent and progressive approach to learning and teaching.
- Ensure planning builds upon children's prior learning using the information gained from appropriate assessments.
- Provide a balanced range of stimulating and motivating approaches to learning and assessment which should include active, collaborative, independent and written tasks.
- Take account of pupils' different learning styles.
- Ensure the children know the purpose of their learning by providing clear learning intentions, success criteria and quality feedback on how to improve.
- Use a range of strategies to meet the needs of all learners including those with additional needs.
- Use a range of assessment approaches which enable learners to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities.
- Provide opportunities for learners to be involved in reflection, planning and evaluation of their own learning and that of peers.
- Ensure learners are fully involved in decisions about what needs to be done and who and what can help them.
- Maintain and regularly review records of progress.
- Provide parents with clear information on their child's progress, next steps in learning and how they can support their child's learning.
- Regularly evaluate the impact of learning and teaching to inform next steps in planning.

### **To help our learners feel happy and safe, we will:**

- Treat them fairly and consistently.
- Show them that we work closely with their families in support of their welfare and education.
- Smile at them, greet them and ask about their welfare so that they develop positive, trusting relationships with adults.
- Value their ideas and opinions and make time to listen to what they have to say.
- Give them opportunities to be involved in developing & shaping the ethos and life of the school and community.
- Build children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Provide opportunities for relaxation/energising where appropriate.
- Ensure that the school is visually attractive and welcoming.
- Ensure that they feel 'ownership' through personal spaces, name tags, classroom responsibilities etc.
- Rigorously implement equalities and positive relationships policies.

### **To enable our learners to have high expectations of themselves and others we will:**

- Implement the school's vision, values and aims consistently.
- Give children clear goals and time limits.
- Have high and clearly communicated expectations that every member of the school community will set a good example.
- Involve them in self-assessment and target setting.
- Explain the learning expectations clearly.
- Ensure that they experience success and praise.
- Provide children with opportunities to develop leadership capacity.

### **Nurturing Principles**

In BLC we have adopted a nurturing approach within our schools and classrooms. The nurturing approach offers a range of opportunities for children and young people to engage with missing early nurturing experiences, giving them the social and emotional skills to do well at school and with peers, develop their resilience and their capacity to deal more confidently with the trials and tribulations of life, for life. The nurturing approach allows staff to develop and embed a nurturing culture throughout the school, promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people, all by focusing on emotional needs and development.

### **The Six Principles of Nurture**

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication

5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

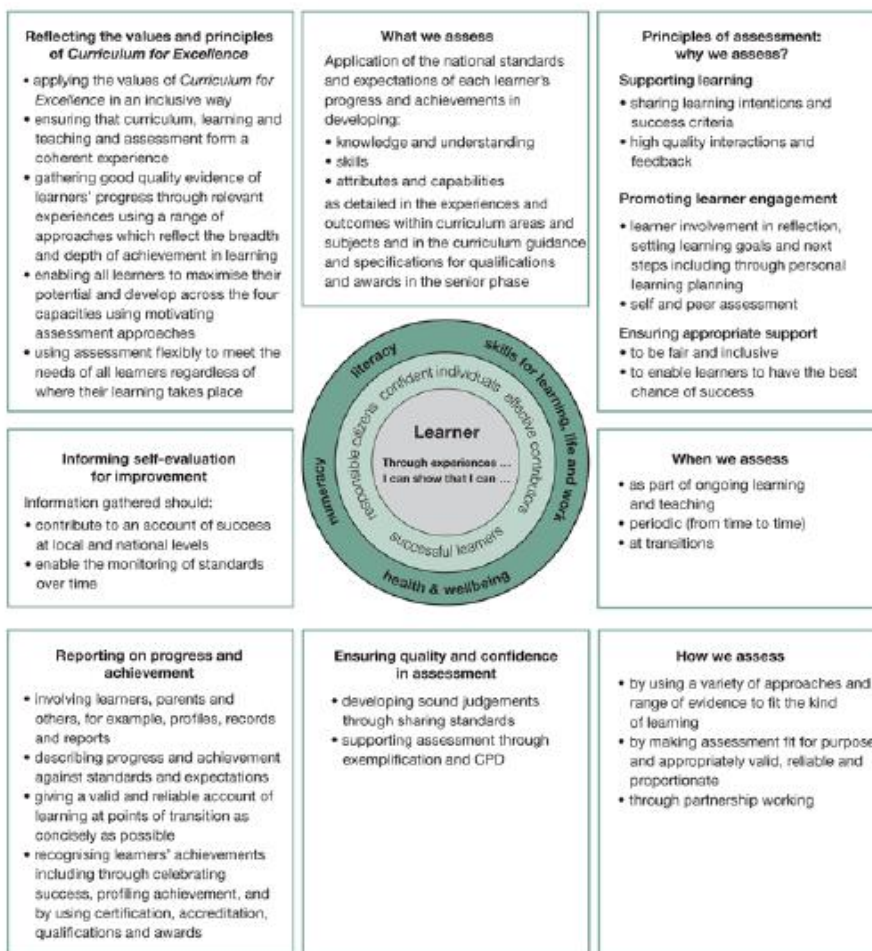
**To enable our learners to experience a high-quality curriculum we will:**

- Provide class teachers and support staff with day-to-day, line management support and a planned programme of career long professional learning opportunities.
- Fully implement the actions identified in the School Improvement Plan with opportunities to develop leadership capacity in all staff.
- Monitor the effectiveness of our learning & teaching through implementation of our quality assurance calendar which details regular self / peer evaluation opportunities, learning visits and other monitoring activities.

**Principles of Assessment**

Assessment practice will follow and reinforce the curriculum and promote high quality learning and teaching approaches. Assessment of children's progress and achievement during their broad general education 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. In nursery, assessment will take place through an ongoing process from key worker's observations. Nursery staff will reflect on their observations. Spending time reflecting on observations will enable us to consider what children are interested in or curious about, what ideas they are exploring, or skills they are developing. It may be that for some children, the observations give an insight into the schemas children are engaging in, or their dispositions for learning.

In Biggar Learning Community, assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. It helps to provide a picture of a child's or young person's progress and achievements and to identify next steps in learning. Assessment approaches promote learner engagement and ensure appropriate support so that all learners can achieve their aspirational goals and maximise their potential.



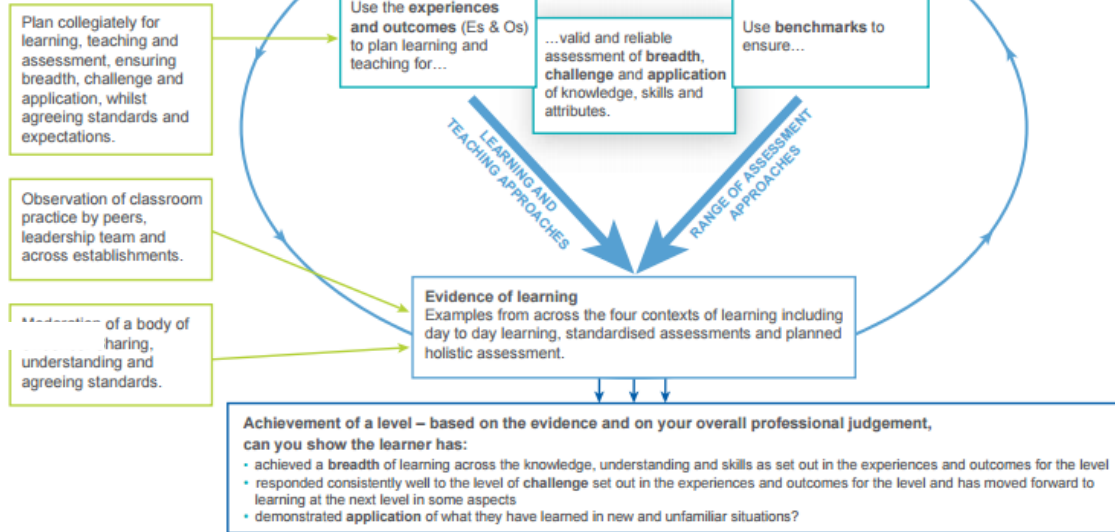
This diagram provides a summary of the national Framework for Assessment created to support the purposes of learning which we base our principles on. The standards and expectations that form our aspirations for all learners in Biggar Learning Community are set out for the whole curriculum in the experiences and outcomes and the nationally published Benchmarks of Curriculum for Excellence. In Biggar Learning Community, assessment approaches help learners to show their progress through the levels and enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways which are appropriate to learning. For learners to demonstrate that their progress is secure and that they have achieved a level, they will need opportunities to show that they:

- can apply what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations
- have achieved a breadth of learning across the experiences and outcomes for an aspect of the curriculum
- can respond to the level of challenge set out in the experiences and outcomes and are moving forward to more challenging learning in some aspects

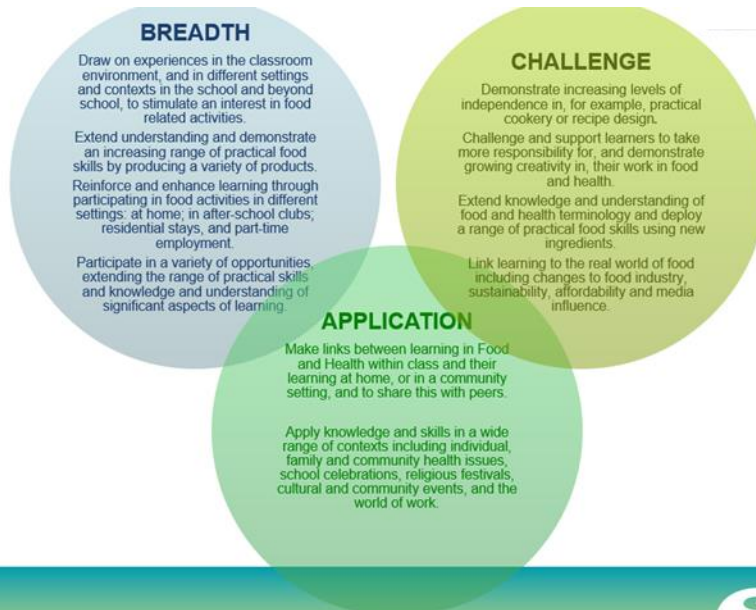
Teachers can use these three aspects to decide when a learner has met agreed expectations and achieved a level, either in a part of a curriculum area such as reading, or in a whole curriculum area. The slide below illustrates what breadth, challenge and application might look like when assessing if a child is secure at a level. The achievement of a level diagram also supports teachers in making a judgement as to whether a child is secure at a level or not.

# Achievement of a level

## Moderation



HWB Food



In all areas of the curriculum in Biggar Learning Community, Education Scotland Benchmarks of Curriculum for Excellence describe the expectations for learning and progression across all levels. The knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities that contribute to the four capacities\* are embedded in the experiences and outcomes and form the basis of day-to-day assessment.

\*Four Capacities –  
Responsible Citizens, Confident Individuals, Successful Learners and Effective Contributors.



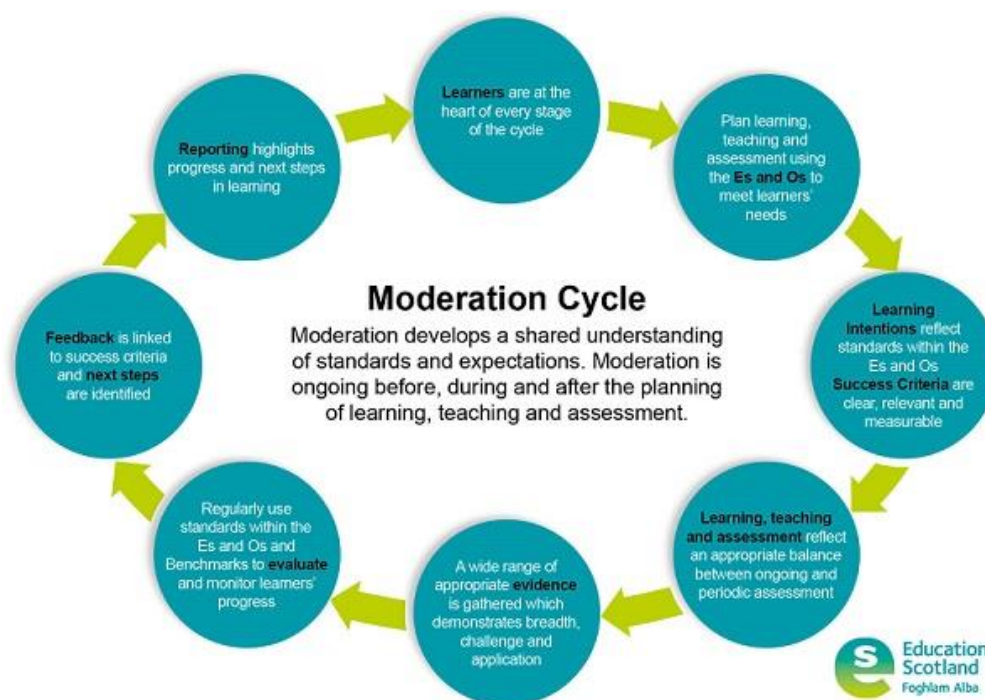
## How we assess

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle and is central to ongoing classroom practice. Standardised assessments are used annually in Literacy, Numeracy and Mathematics for all pupils. The Scottish Government has introduced a new system of standardised assessments, called the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA). The assessments are delivered by all SLC schools and involve all children at the P1, P4, P7 and S3 stages of their education, focusing on aspects of reading, writing and numeracy and mathematics.

Moderation is the term used to describe approaches for arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations for the broad general education. In Biggar Learning Community it involves teachers, and other professionals as appropriate, working together, drawing on guidance and exemplification (see achievement of a level diagram/benchmarks and breadth, challenge and application diagram) and building on existing standards and expectations to:

- Plan learning, teaching and assessment.
- Check that assessment tasks and activities provide learners with fair and valid opportunities to meet the standards and expectations before assessments are used.
- Sample evidence from learners' work and review teachers' judgements.
- Agree strengths in learners' performances and next steps in learning.
- Provide feedback on teachers' judgements to inform improvements in practices.

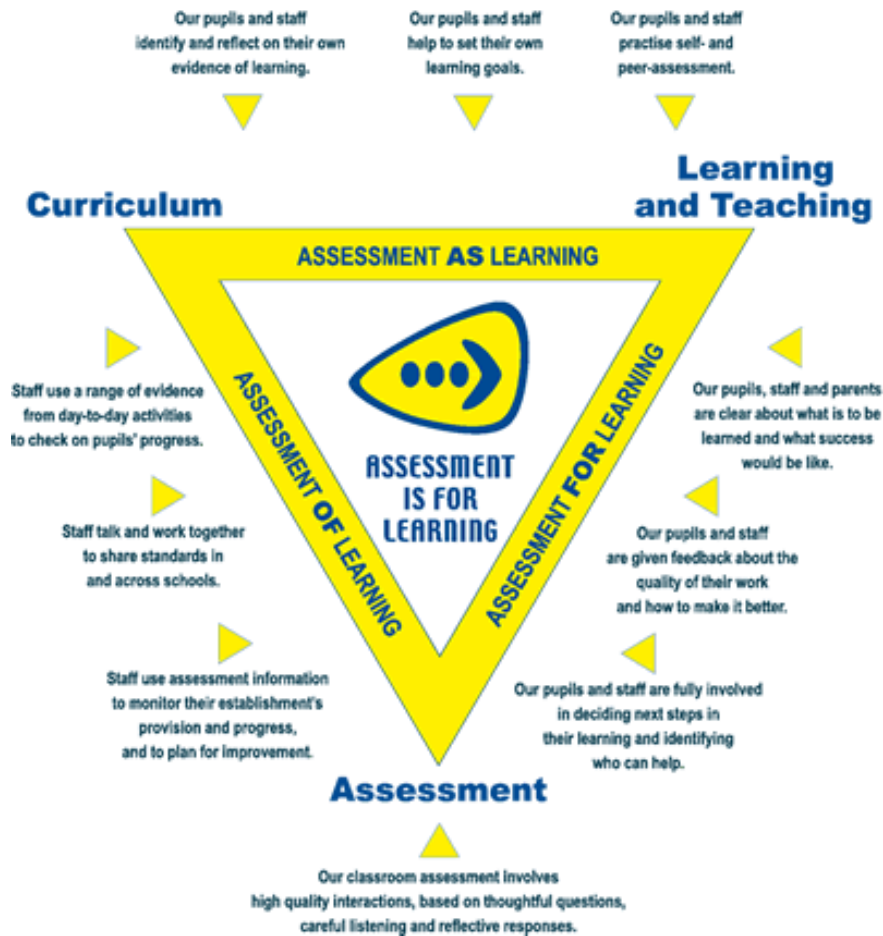
The Moderation Cycle/Learning, Teaching and Assessment Cycle is a tool used in Biggar Learning Community to place assessment and moderation within the process of teaching and learning, providing a **HOLISTIC APPROACH**. By ensuring that the Moderation Cycle/Learning, Teaching and Assessment Cycle is used, a firm foundation is in place to improve quality professional dialogue on teaching and learning.



Assessment for learning strategies, is an extension of formative assessment. It is the process of seeing and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. It is ongoing and part of effective learning and teaching.

# What is an AiFL School?

A place where everyone is **LEARNING TOGETHER**



## Why we assess?

### The purposes of assessment are to:

- support learning that develops the knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities which contribute to the four capacities.
- provide feedback to parents, children themselves, and others.
- provide a summary of what learners have achieved.
- contribute to planning the next stages of learning ensuring learning is coherent, has breadth and depth.
- inform future improvements in learning and teaching.

## Monitoring Standards over Time

All staff in Biggar Learning Community are dedicated to providing the children with the best possible opportunities for learning and are committed in raising standards.

As a learning community we work together and with our local authority officers to support the development of a shared understanding. This ensures we achieve consistency in standards and expectations. To build trust and confidence in our judgements and assurance, we are consistently applying national standards and expectations.

We track the progress of all our learners. For monitoring and tracking to be successful, we keep records of our learners' achievements and progress in and out of school. Staff use assessment information from a wide range of sources to monitor learners' progress and plan next steps in learning.

We are also involved in the Validated Self Evaluation (VSE) programme within South Lanarkshire.

Aims of the programme:

- To achieve a system which is centred on outcomes for learners
- To support establishments to secure improvements in performance
- To strengthen the establishment's self-evaluation processes and ascertain the capacity for further development and improvement

The intentions of the VSE model are:

- VSE will help establishments to confirm their self-evaluation work
- VSE has strong parallels with the new inspection model and new frameworks for Inspection however it is not a mini inspection
- Specifically the QIs and associated themes relating to the NIF – 1.3, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2 and to self-evaluation - 1.1
- In addition, establishments will be able to select a choice QI from which a theme can form part of the visit

### **Reporting on Progress and Achievement**

Assessment information is shared and discussed with the learner, parents, and partners involved in supporting learning. Parents receive regular information about their children's strengths, progress and achievements.