

Our Curriculum Rationale at Fintry Primary School and Nursery Class



Foreword

Fintry is a small village in Stirlingshire. Most families live close to school and walk or cycle to school, a few children come by taxi as their home is situated outside the village.

At Fintry Primary School and Nursery Class we appreciate and enjoy our rural countryside setting and the privileges provided by the outdoor space and scenery. The countryside is on our doorstep providing excellent opportunities for learning. Additionally, the school is very close to Stirling, Glasgow, and Edinburgh so we try to take advantage of the facilities each city has to offer to deliver aspects of the curriculum through school trips. Parents feel connected as a community and work together to support children to achieve their best. Parents support the school and nursery, 69% of parents participate in our Parent Council and/or our Fundraising Committee.

In June 2022 we shared a survey with our Parent Forum on the curriculum. We followed this up with a small focus group asking parents what the curriculum should look like for our children in the future. The response to the survey was 38% of our parents responded which represented 19 children from 54 children at the school and Nursery. A small group of 3 parents attended the focus group.

The Principal Teacher surveyed the children across all classes from P1 to P7. Almost all learners shared that they are happy at school, the older class shared that they would like more opportunities to learn through play and inquiry based activities.

The Principal Early Childhood Educator surveyed the children in the Nursery Class.

Teachers shared their expertise discussing the responses to the surveys, and contributed to the development of a new curriculum plan.

Survey Findings

Most families have two parents in employment. In our survey, 35% of our families' work in Stirlingshire and 35% do not. Another 30% of parents are home working with employment outside Stirlingshire. Reflecting our rural location, several parents manage farms that have been in their family for generations. A few parents work in the National Health Service. Several parents work in schools and universities. Several families run their own creative businesses. Fintry is a creative community with artists, musicians and a drama club. A significant number of parents have commercial jobs in business or are in the public sector working within the central belt of Scotland. A few parents choose to be 'a stay at home parent' while their partners work. All parents strive to balance family life with work.

Parents live in Fintry because it allows a village lifestyle in a very safe environment for their children. Parents choose a small rural school for their children's education because they believe that their children will benefit from small classes in a family environment, everyone knowing each other well and supporting their children to achieve their best. Some families have attended Fintry Primary School for several generations and choose to continue to raise their children in Fintry. Parents shared:

We live in Fintry because it's a great place to raise a family, breathe the outdoors, be one with nature and be a part of a great community that support the school.

We have lived in Fintry for 12 years and love the local scenery, wildlife and outdoor spaces. As a small village it feels safe, there is a strong sense of community spirit and people look out for each other.

We live in Fintry for the space it allows us, we're not overlooked can have a large garden and can grow our own food. We have lovely neighbours and good friends we've made in the village. I grew up in a similar sized village.

Parents are knowledgeable about the 4 capacities, one parent shared that it is important that children are well rounded with good social skills.

Developing resilience and life skills are identified as important by almost all parents. Budgeting, money and finance are considered important life skills which should be included in the curriculum. Teaching Health and Wellbeing to ensure physical, social, emotional and mental health for children is agreed as essential by all parents in the survey.

Parents strongly feel that gardening and self-sufficiency are important as part of the curriculum to reduce climate change. Some parents feel that children should have more information about foods and their production to help children make good choices for their health. To ensure sustainability is threaded across the curriculum, Fintry Primary School works in partnership with Fintry Development Trust who play an important role in encouraging sustainable living in Fintry.

Parents who responded to our survey, shared that Literacy and Numeracy should be at the heart of their child's education. Parents shared that repetition and practice are important to support progress in literacy and numeracy. Since our last survey, digital skills and safety online are now cited as an important part of the curriculum. There is increased understanding of STEM subjects and acknowledgement that these are taught well in school. A parent praised learning through play as 'outstanding'. All 8 curricular areas were understood as important to their child's learning and progress.

Parents agree that post Covid, they would like to see their children demonstrating their skills as effective contributors and responsible citizens within the Fintry community. Additionally, parents felt that the local community has a lot to share with the children in school and would like to see them contributing to learning in school.

Almost all learners shared that they are happy at school, the older class shared that they would like more opportunities to learn through play and inquiry based activities.

Consultation on our Curriculum has been positive, we have planned our curriculum to meet the needs of our families in Fintry. A new curriculum plan sets out our curriculum from P1- P7. (appendix)

By **Curriculum** we mean, what learners are learning about in school across each level: early, first and second. By **Curriculum Rationale** we mean, that everyone involved with the school can answer the questions 'What is it we want for learners?' and 'What are we going to do to achieve it?'

Our Curriculum Rationale

What is it we want for our learners?

Our school values are shared by the community to show safe, responsible, hardworking, resilient and respectful. Curriculum for Excellence is at the heart of Fintry Primary School and Nursery Class.



Our Aims

- teach children the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to thrive in our interconnected, digital and rapidly changing world;
- nurture children to become part of an inclusive school through promoting positive relationships within a democratic community where everyone's rights are respected;
- foster children's confidence and resilience to encourage risk taking, learning from mistakes and enjoy challenges;
- support children to know themselves to become successful unique individuals; and
- enable children to be responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Our Objectives

To meet our aims, our curriculum is delivered across the four contexts for learning:

- Personal achievements
- Ethos and Life of the School
- Curriculum areas
- Interdisciplinary learning

Progression frameworks in Languages and Mathematics alongside yearly overviews across all curricular areas ensure there is *Breadth; Progression; Depth; Challenge and Enjoyment; Coherence; Relevance; Personalisation and Choice*.

All staff work together to set out clear targets for learners. Teachers and educators plan and assess the learning and teaching in meaningful contexts to meet the needs of our learners. To ensure progress is made across early, first and second levels, we use the *experiences, outcomes* and benchmarks from Curriculum for Excellence. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are shared in every lesson and children know what they are learning about and what they need to do to be successful.



What are our learners learning?

Our teaching and learning ensures the development of each individuals' knowledge, skills and attributes.

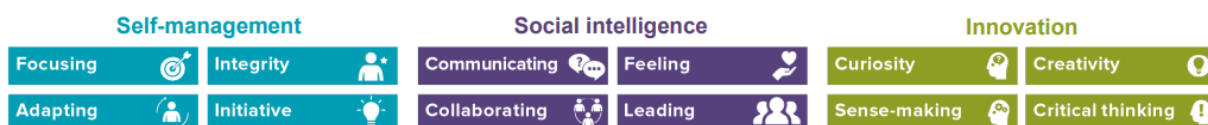
Why is learning knowledge Important?

- We know that learning factual knowledge is key to developing our memory. Facts and accompanying information, built up over time, allows us to think more powerfully and engage critically to solve problems or share opinions. Curriculum for excellence develops knowledge across 8 subjects:

Well-being and health; Languages; Mathematics; Expressive arts; Sciences; Technologies; Social Studies and Moral and Religious Education.

Why are skills important?

- The key message is that knowledge on its own is not enough. *Skills for Life Learning and Work* are fundamental to children's adaptability when experiencing challenges in the future.
- The meta skills from Skills Development Scotland are shared with learners to create adaptive learners and promote success in whatever context the future brings.
 - ***Self-management: Manage the now***
 - ***Social intelligence: Connect with the world***
 - ***Innovation: Create our own change***



Why are developing attributes important?

- The 4 capacities reflect and recognise the lifelong nature of education and learning.
- Learners who have developed as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors will be able to contribute socially, culturally, politically, sustainably and economically to their lives in the future.



How do our learners learn and how is the teacher facilitating their learning?

Teacher and educator knowledge of the learner and their stage of development is the starting point. Determining what children already know about a subject is also crucial before planning teaching and learning. Next the teacher or educator scaffolds, chunks down manageable sections of learning, to ensure success. The teacher or educator facilitates the learning depending on the experience of the learner, e.g. if a learner is learning something for the first time, their learning will be more teacher led. As learners become more confident and experienced in a subject area, the teacher will promote inquiry, investigation and collaboration to ensure breadth and depth of learning. Learners will continually be learning new knowledge and skills on their learning journey so teachers and educators will weave together a variety of teaching methods and the curriculum to make learning fun and challenging.

Specialist teachers, parent and partners support our curriculum delivery. Music and PE specialists teach lessons. Parents share their skills with classes. Active Stirling encourage fitness and interests in sport. The local community contribute to our curriculum; including the Fintry Development Trust which supports Sustainability learning.

With what do our children learn?

At Fintry Primary hands on, active learning is embedded in our learning and teaching. We are developing a play based learning approach across all stages; starting in early years and transitioning to inquiry learning from P1 to P7. Concrete materials, visual supports are key foundations of learning before working on abstract ideas. Additional classrooms allow more space to encourage collaborative learning and group work. Curiosity and Creativity are a focus as a whole school and we continue to encourage children to develop their skills. A snug provides a safe space for quiet and calm.

Outdoor Learning is developing within our curriculum to benefit the mental, social, emotional and physical health of our children. We know that green space and gardening have health benefits and we want our children to have these opportunities. To support healthy attitudes, the children take part in the daily mile. We have developed our Outdoor Learning to include a variety of experiences in the school grounds and local surrounding area. We also encourage daily excursions linked to our curriculum and a residential visit in P7.

How do we use assessment in learning to ensure success?

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for learners. Teachers use assessment to track progress, plan next steps, and involve children in their learning. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are shared in every lesson and children know what they are learning about and how success can be achieved. Assessments are based on the Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.

The teacher's role is knowing what the learner has achieved through observations, questioning, classroom tasks, dialogue. Teacher feedback will always be supportive to move the learner forward.

In the classroom, learners are encouraged to support each other, first of all helping each other understand what they need to do to be successful and achieve their targets. The teacher helps clarify what the learning is and learners have a role in communicating this to each other as well. Peer Assessment supports learning across the curriculum.

Teachers model key skills of reflection and self-assessment so that learners can be owners of their learning. Teachers teach metacognition so that learners are equipped with important strategies they need to use to be successful.

Children in P1, P4, P7 complete the National Standardised Assessments for Scotland. These are online standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy as part of everyday learning and teaching. The assessments help to identify children's progress, providing diagnostic information to support teachers' professional judgement.

Occasionally, diagnostic assessments will be set for learners to ensure we '*get it right for every child*' (GIRFEC). Assessment information can be used by teachers to make decisions about the next steps in learning.

Working with Parents to deliver the Curriculum

An active Parent Council supports the school in its work.

Each Term, targets across the 4 contexts of learning is shared with parents to communicate the next steps in learning and how they can support their children at home. We aim to build good partnerships with parents and encourage parents to share their knowledge and skills to support our termly targets.

