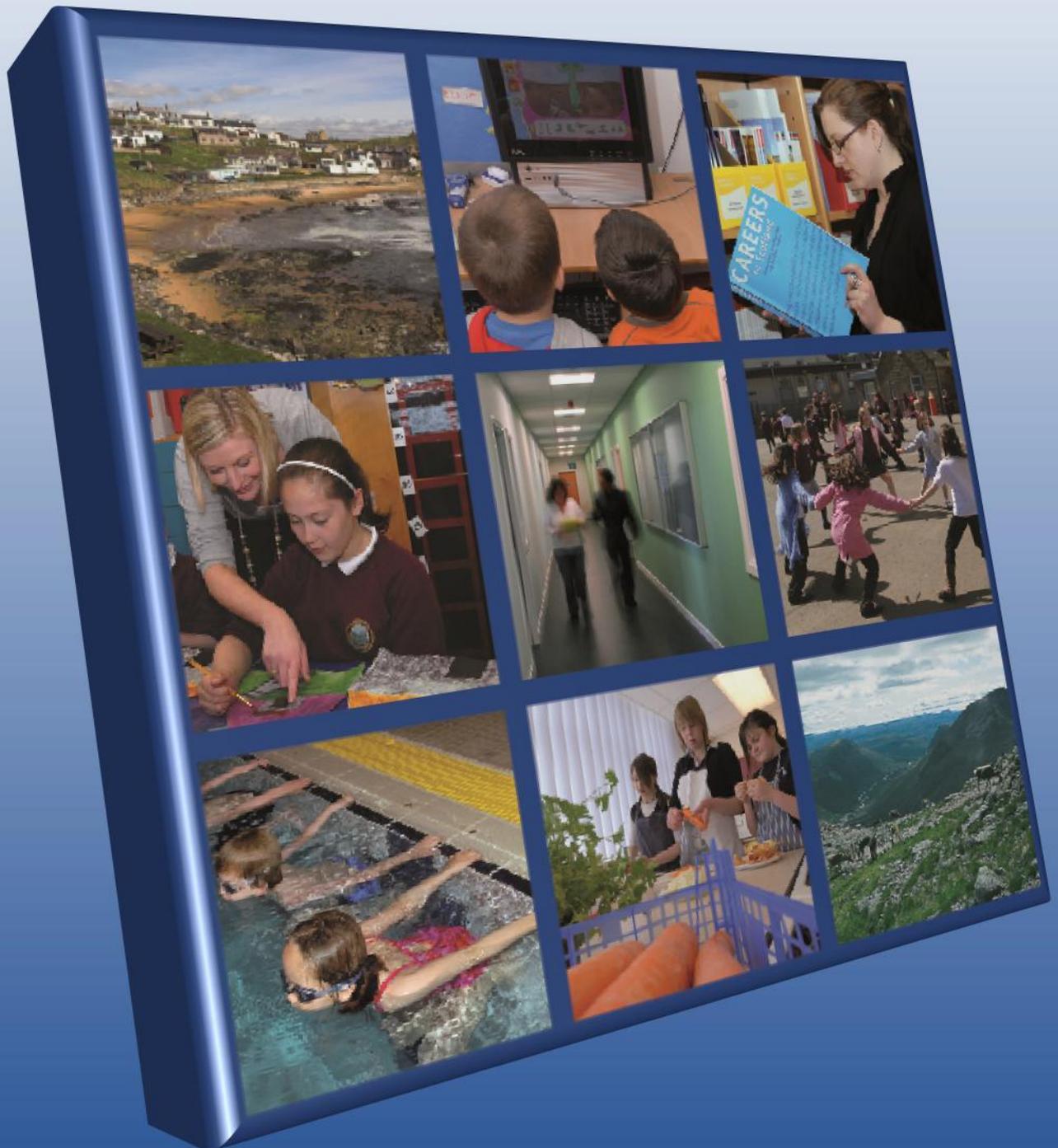


3-18

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Curriculum Policy



Dear Colleagues

Improving attainment and achievement remains a key priority for Education and Children's Services and curriculum development is central to achieving this. This Curriculum Policy document is a revision of the original policy, A Curriculum Framework 3-18 for Aberdeenshire that was ratified by Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure (E,L&L) Committee in December 2008.

Since the Framework was developed, a progressive series of national documents have been published by Education Scotland, notably the increased national expectations in inspections. The revised Curriculum Policy encompasses and personalises this national advice into our local context to support the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

The Curriculum Policy was commissioned by the 3 - 18 Curriculum Steering Group led by the Head of Service for Education. Members of the group prepared a draft Policy paper, which was then circulated to Senior Management, QIOs, Head Teachers, CLD, Early Years and the Learning and Leisure Management team for consultation. The responses to this consultation were collated and the Policy revised accordingly.

The aim of the Policy is to provide clear and concise guidance for all staff, across sectors and within the Service, who plan and design an appropriate and engaging curriculum for all children and young people.

An online interactive site has been created to make the Policy accessible to practitioners and support effective learning and teaching. This will allow additional resources and links to be added by practitioners to enhance the sharing of good practice and understanding.

It is my expectation that all staff in Aberdeenshire become familiar with this Policy and implement the advice it contains to further support effective and progressive curriculum development within Broad General Education and Senior Phase.

I commend this Curriculum Policy to you and I am sure you will find it useful.

Maria Walker
Director of Education & Children's Services



Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Policy

Introduction

The unique context of Aberdeenshire remains important for all schools and learning communities¹. This curriculum policy document is a revision of the original policy, A Curriculum Framework 3-18 for Aberdeenshire that was ratified by Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure (E,L&L) Committee in December 2008. Since its publication a large number of significant documents have been published by Education Scotland in support of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), notably the increased national expectations in inspections. This policy document is very closely aligned to these increased national expectations. It is anticipated that this document will be reviewed annually in line with future changes.

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance for the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector, Primary, Secondary and Community Learning and Development (CLD). It describes our curriculum, our learning, teaching and assessment and our responsibility for self-evaluation across the Broad General Education which takes place from the Early Years to the end of S3 and into the Senior Phase which incorporates secondary S4-S6, CLD and shared learning pathways in further education.

Throughout this document reference is made to 'staff'; this applies to all those who work with our learners in all our settings.²

Our Curriculum

In the design and delivery of our 3-18 Curriculum, all Aberdeenshire schools, partners and learning communities are required to meet the following expectations.

The Rationale and Design of the Curriculum

The curriculum is based on national advice, shared values, professional understanding and learners' entitlements, and develops the four capacities.

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/thepurposeofthecurriculum/>

¹ *Learning Communities applies to staff, children, young people, adult learners and family education and includes a wide range of learning environments / venues outwith schools.*

² *Throughout this paper, the term 'staff' or 'teachers' is used to refer to all staff involved in delivering the curriculum and in self-evaluation, including pre-school practitioners, CLD staff Librarians, Arts and Sports Officers and Museums and Heritage staff and other relevant practitioners.*

Our curriculum has a focus on effective learning and teaching to improve attainment and achievement for all, and progression to positive and sustained post-school destinations.

Staff have a clear and shared responsibility to develop and assess literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to ensure continuity, progression and achievement across the curriculum.

Our curriculum is based on the design principles of challenge and enjoyment, breadth, depth, progression, relevance, coherence and personalisation and choice for all learners. Staff and partners plan progression through meaningful learning across the four contexts of effective curriculum development i.e.

- **Interdisciplinary learning**
- **Curricular areas and subjects**
- **Ethos and life of the school**
- **Personal achievement**

Our curriculum is designed to establish a lifelong learning culture, raise standards of attainment and achievement, advance equality of opportunity, reduce disadvantage and meet the needs of all learners including those with additional support needs.

Broad General Education

Staff develop and evaluate our curriculum to ensure all children and young people benefit from their entitlement to a Broad General Education (BGE). This includes providing appropriate specialisation and continued breadth of experience across all curricular areas so that young people can achieve as well as they can, ensuring that they have a firm foundation for progression into their next stage of learning.

Senior Phase (S4 – S6)

Flexible achievement pathways are developed from the BGE into the Senior Phase, so that planned learning can contribute directly to qualifications and awards. Planned learning may involve collaboration and shared delivery with a range of partners which may include further and higher education, CLD, Culture and Sports partners.

The design of the curriculum in the Senior Phase enables young people to learn over variable time-frames (e.g. 1 or 2 year programmes) to meet learners' needs more appropriately. This creates space for more in-depth learning, and allows more time to be spent on challenging learning at higher levels. It ensures a continued focus on health and wellbeing, including physical education and the provision of religious and moral education, as well as opportunities for personal achievement and interdisciplinary learning.

The Development of our Curriculum

Staff and partners, through planned consultation, develop and refresh the curriculum on a regular basis and manage curriculum change and innovation. This includes improving the range and quality of outcomes for learners, to reflect their needs and to provide a coherent experience for them.

Planning for progression to meet the needs of all learners from Early Level through the BGE and into the Senior Phase is under constant review and development. This must be streamlined, effective and not overly bureaucratic or time consuming. Staff engage in professional dialogue, plan opportunities to collaborate, share resources and evolve practice at all stages of learning. They monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes of changes in the curriculum.

Staff in secondary schools, and their partners take account of the implications of, and changes to qualifications. This includes planning for and managing SQA policies and procedures related to verification of national courses, the exceptional circumstances consideration service, post results service and recognising achievement.

Learners' pathways are increasingly informed by realistic and manageable monitoring and tracking, and by profiling of their achievements and progress.

Programmes and Courses

In all sectors, staff and learners work together to create motivating and challenging learning experiences. Clear priorities and assessment procedures are in place for achieving breadth and depth across all curriculum areas.

Staff in learning communities and their partners consider the needs of all learners on how to deliver the entitlements to a Broad General Education and Senior Phase. Programmes and courses, informed by the Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os), or by qualifications and awards specifications, are designed and reviewed, and refreshed as appropriate. A coherent approach to learning, teaching and assessment is outlined by staff and partners to ensure the development of the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities encompassed by the four capacities.

Learners are supported to develop skills for learning, life and work as well as key skills in Literacy and Numeracy. Staff engage with learners to support the acquisition of these key skills by embedding and extending active approaches across the curriculum. They plan for progression and achievement, irrespective of where the learning takes place.

Well-planned interdisciplinary learning demonstrates curriculum progression and focusses on appropriately selected Es and Os. These enable learners to make meaningful links across different aspects of their learning, and provides opportunities to embed knowledge, understanding and the development of transferable skills which can be applied in new or unfamiliar learning.

Personal achievements promote learners' growth as individuals, and programmes of learning provide opportunities for developing the skills and attributes of the four capacities within and outwith our schools.

The Curriculum for Excellence Principles and Practice papers support staff to develop appropriate programmes and courses, which effectively balance the progression of knowledge and skills. There is flexibility for staff in choosing the content to be covered, provided that the context is relevant and appropriate to the learners' age and stage.

Progression pathways are developed to meet learners' needs allowing them to progress at different rates and at an appropriate pace to build on their prior learning.

Transitions

Curriculum transition procedures and programmes are developed through Learning Community Partnerships to meet the needs of all learners effectively. Learning is planned to ensure continuity and progression across all curriculum areas, particularly from pre-school into P1, from P7 into S1 and from S3 into the Senior Phase. They also take into account what is necessary for effective transitions within different stages of learning and between different learner experiences, as appropriate.

Arrangements for universal and targeted support, and induction into the next phase of learning, including preparation for the world of work and future careers, ensure our learners are creative, enterprising and prepared for positive and sustained destinations.

Learning communities are developing and embedding approaches to profiling. This involves providing a clearer focus on skills development and using profiling to inform and improve future learning. Ongoing profiling will support the summary P7 and S3 profiles. Through profiling, staff will support children and young people in developing an increased awareness of themselves as learners.

In S3, young people are increasingly involved in shaping their own learning to ensure they develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required for successful progression into qualifications in the Senior Phase. Independent learning across a range of wider learning environments, should be included in shared learning plans for young people.

Our Learning

Improvements in Performance

Aberdeenshire schools, partners and learning communities will ensure that learners are –

- **Achieving individual learning goals, including personal achievements, to develop the skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities**
- **Progressing and achieving well in their broad general education**
- **Making good progress through the levels in all curriculum areas, including progressing and achieving well in literacy and numeracy and developing the skills for learning, life and work**
- **Improving their attainment, including in national qualifications**

Learners' Experiences

In Aberdeenshire learning environments, partners and learning communities will ensure that learners are –

- **Taking increasing responsibility for their learning**
- **Actively engaged in their learning and assessment, including reviewing their learning and setting goals, identifying, planning and profiling their personal achievements**
- **Using technology to make learning more accessible, enjoyable and relevant**
- **Supported by co-developed planning and assessment, utilising the full range of Education and Children's Services**

Assessment Approaches, Accreditation and Achievement

In managing effective assessment, Aberdeenshire schools, partners and learning communities will ensure that they –

- **Use a range of approaches to assess the different types of achievement across the curriculum. This range allows learners to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. The results from all assessments provide additional information to support each pupil's learning**
- **Apply a range and variety of assessment approaches that take account of learners' prior experiences, interests and aspirations and links across learning where possible**
- **Use effective approaches to assessment including Standardised Assessment. These cover the core curricular areas of literacy and numeracy as well as aspects relating to thinking skills**
- **Consider learning in terms of breadth, challenge and application and decide when a learner has met agreed expectations and achieved a level in either part, or the whole of a curriculum area**
- **Provide opportunities for learners to apply what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations so that knowledge, understanding, attributes and skills become transferable and secure**
- **Provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate their learning is secure by -**
 - **achieving a breadth across the experiences and outcomes for an aspect of their learning.**
 - **responding to the level of challenge set out in the Es and Os or in the specifications for national qualifications**

Our Responsibilities

All staff and learning communities engage in purposeful planning and self-evaluation with a focus on positive outcomes for all our learners. Strong and effective leadership is required at all levels to deliver high quality learning and promote continuous improvement.

In the commitment to, and management of self-evaluation, all staff and learning communities are expected to meet the following:

Commitment to Self-evaluation

All staff, learners and stakeholders are involved in self-evaluation, are aware of resulting strengths and development needs and are committed to take action to effect improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision

Learning communities have good leadership at all levels with a vision for the outcomes of change. This vision gives direction to self-evaluation.

Good quality support for career-long professional learning is in place to promote improvement.

Management of Self-evaluation

All staff take account of current Aberdeenshire advice/guidance on aspects of quality improvement.

Self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of learners' successes and achievements. It draws on a wide range of advice and evidence from all partners. It is rigorous, systematic and transparent. Staff reflect on, and evaluate any new initiatives, ideas and changes which have been introduced. Above all, self-evaluation gives a high priority to the quality of learning and teaching.

Schools use a range of approaches to monitor and evaluate the impact of curriculum change in both the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase to inform on-going improvements to provision

Important strengths and areas for improvement are evidenced. Staff use effective arrangements to assess and track progress and achievement in the BGE and Senior Phase. They have clear knowledge and understanding about how learners are progressing and achieving at all levels.

Staff use self-evaluation and work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of standards. They consistently apply and improve standards and expectations through moderation, by sharing their practice and by benchmarking with other establishments.

In best practice staff are increasingly engaged in a range of quality assurance and moderation activities within and beyond their schools or learning communities to develop their skills and confidence.

Useful resources

What is Curriculum for Excellence?-the following website links will give an insight into understanding the curriculum, how it is structured, what can learners expect, and how progress is assessed. Reference is also made to professional standards and legislative advice for staff within sectors.

Curriculum for Excellence

www.curriculum-for-excellence.co.uk/

Curriculum for Excellence – SQA

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34714.html

Curriculum for Excellence – Scottish Government

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE

Information about the Curriculum in Scotland – Pre-birth to three

www.ltscotland.org.uk/understandingthecurriculum/index.asp

Building the Curriculum series

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/howdoyoubuildyourcurriculum/curriculumplanning/whatisbuildingyourcurriculum/btc/index.asp

HMIE CFE Briefing Statements

<http://bit.ly/1nGf6Dp>

Standardised Assessment Information for Parents

Professional GTCS Standards

Aberdeenshire Quality Improvement Framework

Cooperative Learning

Active Literacy

Learning in the Outdoors

Aberdeenshire Improving Learning Statement

Aberdeenshire Assessment Policy Statement

Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development

SSI Legislation for Community Learning and Development

Hyperlinks / Links to Other Professional Sources

- GTCS for Professional Standards Registration Documents
- Quality Improvement Framework