

Curriculum for Excellence



**Renfrewshire
Council**

Education and Leisure Services

Learning and Teaching

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Foreward

Welcome to another in our series of guidance papers focusing on implementing curriculum for excellence. Throughout the current session staff in all establishments in Renfrewshire have been working very hard in ensuring they are ready for the next phase of implementing curriculum for excellence. The recent publication of the experiences and outcomes emphasises again the importance on the quality of learning and teaching in every classroom. By far the most important thing that anyone can do at this time is to reflect on their own practice so that the quality of the learning experience continues to improve for all children and young people. This is why we have been seeking to support staff through appropriate professional development opportunities focussing on the quality of learning and teaching. Whether it has been active learning, Joyning the Learning or cooperative learning, staff across Renfrewshire have been developing innovative and creative approaches to teaching. As we continue to implement curriculum for excellence we have a great opportunity to continue to improve our practice through the use of learning visits and the reflective discussions that take place as a result of these visits.

This guidance paper focusses on learning and teaching and includes a number of case studies of work being undertaken in Renfrewshire. I hope you find this paper interesting and helpful as you continue your own professional development journey.

Gordon McKinlay – Education Manager: Learning and Teaching

Since its launch, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) has placed focus on the value of learners' experiences and the role of the teacher in generating inspiring, challenging and motivating learning and teaching opportunities in ensuring that all children and young people achieve their full potential.

Why?

The world is constantly changing and young people today face new influences and challenges. To prepare children and young people we need to evaluate the ways in which we help them to understand the world, do the best that they can, equip them for work and learning throughout their lives and encourage them to enjoy learning at appropriately challenging levels.

The values, purposes and principles of CfE impact all aspects of learning and will shape practice in all sectors and stages. Guidance regarding the progression and content of learning can be found in the Experiences and Outcomes of Curricular Areas, however, the changes driven by CfE go far beyond the content. In order to support pupils' development in the four capacities and to ensure that learning is relevant, challenging and enjoyable whilst allowing for personalisation and choice, teachers and those working with young people need to look beyond Curricular Guidance and consider how the learning experiences that they facilitate for young people support their progress as they develop the skills and attributes in the four capacities.

How?

The schematic guide for curriculum planners (Building the Curriculum 3, p.13) lists 7 key factors for effective learning and teaching:

- Engaging and active
- Setting challenging goals
- Shared expectations and standards
- Timely, accurate feedback
- Learning intentions, success criteria, personal learning planning
- Collaborative
- Reflecting the ways different learners progress

This not only illustrates the need for Assessment for Learning (AfL) to be embedded in learning and teaching but also emphasises the value of opportunities

to collaborate and the need to make learning relevant, fun and challenging.



Principles for curriculum design outlined in Building the Curriculum 3 (see table on back page) guide planning which embraces both the how and the what of CfE. The principles can be used when reflecting upon the effectiveness of curriculum planning and implementation e.g. How do you ensure appropriate levels of challenge and enjoyment for learners?

Building the Curriculum 3 outlines key focus areas which when developed, can support effective learning and teaching:

Active Learning and Collaborative Learning Theories

Building the Curriculum 2(2007) defines active learning:

...is learning which engages and challenges children's thinking using real-life and imaginary situations. It takes full advantage of the opportunities for learning presented by:

- Spontaneous play
- Planned, purposeful play
- Investigating and exploring
- Events and life experiences
- Focused learning and teaching

Far from being limited to early years, active learning permeates all sectors and stages of education. Active learning experiences promote the purposes and principles of CfE and should inform planning across all curriculum areas.

Collaborative learning theories (Vygotsky, Piaget etc.) promote learning as an active, social process and the result of a dynamic interaction between task, instructor and learner.

Enterprising Learning and Teaching

Enterprise in Education supports CfE collaborative learning and teaching methodologies in many ways and suggests four key strands of entitlement:-

- Enterprising teaching and Learning
- Entrepreneurial learning
- Work-based vocational learning
- Career Education

Far from the traditional view of “Enterprise” as a money making or awareness raising venture, Marie Wilson, Enterprise Development Officer, defines enterprising learning as being embedded into every learning experience and dialogue.

Enterprising Learning and Teaching:

Can do, Will do, Be all you can be

By fostering a ‘can do, will do, be all you can be’ attitude within all our young people and no longer thinking of enterprise being solely for financial gain we can support our pupils to achieve all they aim to.

Enterprising Learning should:

- Encourage pupils to take initiative and responsibility for their learning
- Develop skills in working with others
- Encourage pupils to learn from success and failure
- Understand the world of work
- Recognise the values of opportunities

Enterprising teachers should:

- Encourage innovation
- Provide and seek regular feedback
- Act as role models and mentors
- Realise that failure is a learning opportunity
- Know how to help pupils to make things happen
- Support experiential learning

TOPICS in schools could be

Social, community, ethical and financial enterprise activities

Involvement in entrepreneurial experiences

Creativity challenges

Interdisciplinary projects and studies

Opportunities for Personal achievement

Opportunities linking citizenship, health and eco issues with Enterprise

Visits to places of work including voluntary and council organisations

Visits to schools by employers, employees, voluntary and community organisations

Careers education

Marie Wilson

Marie Wilson produces the monthly *Reaching for Excellence* newsletter which shares good practice across the authority. Copies are available on the Renfo website and via the Enterprise Glow Group.

Interdisciplinary Learning

Building the Curriculum 3 describes 5 key aspects:-

- One off projects or longer courses of study
- Planned around clear purposes
- Experiences and outcomes from different curriculum areas or subjects within them
- Ensures progression in skills, knowledge and understanding
- Opportunities for interest-based, mixed stage learning

Interdisciplinary learning is believed to support greater coherence in learning, motivate pupils with interesting and relevant contexts, help link learning and enable the application of skills and strategies in different settings/curricular areas i.e. literacy, numeracy, aspects of Health and Well-being and use of information technology.

Timetabling and planning of interdisciplinary projects require collaboration, creativity and commitment. Such challenges are greater in the secondary sector where pupils work with a range of staff over different disciplines. In Primary, Pre 5 and SEN sectors (where 1 or 2 teachers plan for the majority of a class’ learning and pupils are in the same class group for most, if not all, of the time) providing an integrated curriculum requires less collaboration and can make greater use of flexible timetabling to promote fusion of curricular experiences and outcomes i.e. learning about bar graphs during a science/geography lesson on the effects of equatorial proximity on climate.

Assessment is for Learning (AiFL)

AiFL was founded on the evidence of research which emphasised four big ideas about learning:

Learners learn best when:

- They understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them
- They are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better
- They are given advice about how to go about making improvements
- They are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next, and who can give them help if they need it.

Assessment is for Learning is fundamental to Curriculum for Excellence. Assessment should support the curriculum and learning and teaching. The range of assessment purposes and aspects of assessment should reflect the values and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence. This means that at all times the learner should be at the centre. Assessment needs to be inclusive. There has to be a broad range of assessment approaches and so that assessment does not drive but reflects the curriculum.

There is a great deal of good practice in the authority in terms of assessment and how it helps learning. Learners’ self- evaluation should be very much part of the assessment process. Through the self evaluation of learner and teacher, schools will gain knowledge about their children’s learning and this will inform next steps.

Judgements being made about learning should be sound, relevant, reliable and valid. Schools should review their assessment practice in terms of how well it reflects the values and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence.

Janice Neilson, Education Officer

What have we been doing?

Across Renfrewshire there have been many projects and initiatives developing all aspects of learning and teaching within CfE including:

- *Joining the Learning* – Learning Unlimited
- *Pre 5 Vygotsky Approaches*
- *Active Learning in Early Years*
- *Early Years Thinking Books* – Mindstretchers
- *Skills for Work Courses* – Reid Kerr College
- *Cooperative Learning Methodologies*
- *The Motivated School Initiative* - EPS
- *Interdisciplinary projects in Secondary Schools*
- *Enterprise in Education* – DtS

The following extracts from practitioners across all sectors illustrate experiences and aim to prompt reflection about local initiatives and possible ways to adapt practice. The exciting and varied programme for the February Inservice day further illustrates the extent of Renfrewshire's progress with CfE implementation and development.

Vygotskian based Methodology

Ten nurseries in Renfrewshire have been working on a Vygotskian based pilot on Story Grammar, designed to raise children's achievement and attainment in storytelling skills.

Using fairy tales the programme scaffolds/supports children's progress in storytelling and deepens their understanding of story structure.

Children develop a range of language skills as they develop their understanding of the story. Aspects of the story are then substituted by an *external mediator* (i.e. geometric shapes to represent characters and objects) as children retell the story.

As children's understanding of the story structure grows, so does their confidence allowing them to enjoy retelling the story in different ways: using the story episode cards, substitute shapes, puppets, writing stories and dressing up to dramatise the story.

Story Grammar permeates all areas of the nursery curriculum as children begin to use construction to build houses for the little pigs, make porridge for Goldilocks or begin to create their own stories and books at the writing table.

The response has been so positive from practitioners that the pilot is now being rolled out to some Primary 1 classes.

Jan Mair

Talking and Thinking Floorbooks

Many nurseries within Renfrewshire have been using Claire Warden's *Talking and Thinking Floorbooks* (Mindstretcher's) approach to engaging children in learning whilst developing thinking and language skills, creativity, imagination and confidence.

The "Floorbook" consists of large sheets of paper – the content is entirely dictated by the child. Key features of a Talking and Thinking Book are:

- Children's ideas and thoughts without re-framing or interpretation so that they are a **genuine record of their thinking**.
- **Open ended questions** that are created in response to an interest from the children.
- Higher order thinking: encouraging **links in learning**.
- **Depth** - allowing children time to explore their own thinking and embed their knowledge.
- **Collaborative learning** - large pieces of blank paper that enable children and adults to record their ideas as a group.

Talking and Thinking Floorbooks can only be viewed as positive initiative which places children at the centre, and actively engages them in their own learning and the planning process for this using THEIR thoughts, THEIR feelings and THEIR ideas!

Julie Munro – Paisley Children's Centre

Integrated Learning Contexts

Kersland School has been piloting a **whole school approach to support the implementation of the CfE**. This term we have been using *Storyworld* as our whole school theme translated by classes into separate stories relevant to the age and stage of the pupils ie Nursery Rhymes, Goldilocks, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Romeo and Juliet etc. Learning outcomes and experiences are broken down to more clearly defined learning objectives by staff to suit the needs of their specific pupil group.

The Harry Potter topic, which was the focus for my own class (supported by Learning Unlimited's *Magic Castle Joining the Learning*) inspired a range of learning opportunities and scope for challenge and enjoyment, coherence, personalisation and choice.

The classroom was turned into the Great Hall with Pumpkins and bats hanging from the ceiling (and characters flying through the air!). Each lesson created learning opportunities for the pupils including planned and purposeful activities, investigating, exploring and focusing on events and life experiences. Learning occurred by doing and thinking and through quality interaction, setting challenging goals and sharing expectations and standards.

Fiona Marshall - Kersland

Cooperative Learning

The Cooperative Learning (CL) approach structures **collaborative working methodologies** with the development of social skills and promotes the value of enjoying learning whilst being supported and encouraged by peers.

The **3 day Cooperative Learning Academy** develops a wide range of cooperative strategies and teaches the 5 Basic Elements of Cooperative Learning which provide the framework which distinguishes CL from traditional group work.

In a cooperative group, learners support each other towards achieving a common goal whilst participating equally in the task. Team and class building activities are a key part of CL and regular processing of social skills developed supports development of collaborative working.

Cooperative Learning strategies can be applied in all sectors, stages and curriculum areas. The cross sectoral nature of the Learning Academies' participants provides for interesting group work and promotes coherence in the 3 – 18 curriculum.

Following the 3 day academy, participants attend a recall day to share experiences and extend their repertoire of strategies.

The third Academy took place in December 2008 with further training planned for 2009. A range of twilight sessions are also planned.

Marel Harper

Personalisation and Choice

One of the many ways in which CfE is being taken forward in Mary Russell School is by developing courses which will increase personalisation and choice for our secondary pupils. These new courses will be delivered on a Friday afternoon over 2 periods and will last for 10 weeks. The CfE principles of relevance, coherence and challenge and enjoyment have been in the forefront when planning the content and delivery of these new courses. Pupils will choose from a framework which is based on curriculum modes eg:

Express Yourself - Creative Dance, Art for purpose, Drama for performance, Music compilation

Keep in Touch - Animation, film and photography, School Web Site, Multi-media presentation, Internet Use

Fit and Well - Healthy Me, Ready Steady Cook, Aerobics, Swimming, Football

Respect - Eco School, School Environment, Enterprising Activities

Many of the outcomes will involve an interdisciplinary approach and will help our young people to become more confident individuals, responsible citizens, successful learners and effective contributors.

Alison Ralston – Mary Russell



Secondary Cooperative Learning Project

Project Gazump from Renfrew High School is an intra-departmental S1 Advertising project developed to meet the aims of CfE which sees each class involved transformed into an *Advertising Agency*.

Working in specific *design teams* pupils design an exciting new product for a teenage market, create an advertising campaign for it and by using persuasive techniques, convince a select audience that their product is a winner. Groups must work co-operatively with other members of their team and work against the clock to meet strict time deadlines.

During the 5 week period, groups produce a poster, deliver a group presentation and individually complete a piece of functional writing and personal writing. Finally, each group delivers a sales pitch for their product to their class with pupils selecting two teams to represent their agency. The two winning teams from each class present their product and pitch to a panel of judges and an audience.

Sally Law – Renfrew HS

The Motivated School Initiative

The Motivated School (TMS) approach (McLean, 2003) is supported by materials which are used to help schools review and develop their approach to motivation and learning in the classroom.

The **Educational Psychology Service (EPS)** and the **Educational Development Service (EDS)**, supported by the **Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team**, have developed a collaborative approach to implementing and evaluating TMS materials which combine training for relevant staff, support to schools and "teacher-researcher" evaluation. The 3 year initiative comprised a first year pilot in a limited number of schools, followed by 2 years of further development in interested establishments. 2009/2010 is the third year of the initiative.

In general, school staff felt that TMS ideas can be used flexibly and with a wide age range of pupils. Projects focused on a variety of topics from motivational 'stances', to 'classroom drivers' and the use of 'hooks'. The main objective of all projects was to improve pupils' learning through the exploration of motivation.

The variety of projects undertaken in the first two years illustrate that TMS can be used flexibly with teachers, pupils and parents in Primary, Secondary and Special school settings. The majority of schools involved continue to take projects forward. Some have extended the ideas into whole school policies, while others have developed ideas while working with different groups of children.

**Michael E Harker
Dorothy Lowe
Marianne Paul**

Full report available online at:
www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/edpsych

These extracts represent a fraction of the innovative and exciting work being developed in our educational establishments and with partners. Additional guidance papers on Glow and Early Years practice are planned for this session to illustrate the progress and promote further development in these areas. A range of excellent practice was shared and discussed on the February Inservice Day and we continue to encourage staff to use Glow to engage in discussions and share ideas.



Questions for Discussion and Reflection

- Do you provide experiences with sufficient emphasis on active, enterprising learning approaches that encourage creativity and innovation?
- How are you supporting learners' progress within the four capacities?
- What kind of feedback do you provide for learners and how does this impact their future learning?
- How effectively do you make clear to learners what they are learning, what success looks like and what is expected of them?
- How well is AiFL embedded in learning and teaching?
- How can you use/be involved in interdisciplinary working which improves coherence of the curriculum?

What Can You Do?

- Reflect on the guidance provided in Building the Curriculum 3
- Evaluate your own learning and teaching (Principles' Grid p7)
- Seek opportunities to develop interdisciplinary projects
- Seek opportunities for continuing professional development in Cooperative Learning methodologies
- Visit Glow groups and share practice, the more people that visit them the better they become!
- Maintain professional reading as a core element of CPD
- Seek opportunities to observe learning in action i.e. peer observation

Further Reading

Building the Curriculum 2 – Active learning in the early years

Building the Curriculum 3 – A framework for learning and teaching

Curriculum for Excellence website:

www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/

Journey to Excellence website:

www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk

Learning about Learning website:

www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningaboutlearning/

Principles and Practice Papers and Experiences and Outcomes for all 8 curricular areas available from:

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/>

What is Collaborative Learning? Smith, B L and MacGregor, J T. (1992)

Available as pdf from:

<http://learningcommons.evergreen.edu/pdf/collab.pdf>

Improving the Curriculum through Self Evaluation HMIE (2008)

Available from:

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/iocts.pdf>

Professional Development

As well as Cooperative Learning Academies in March and June, Cooperative Learning Catch Up Twilights and a series of *Joyning the Learning* twilights, there is a range of CPD available via the CPD online website.

Staff should seek opportunities to share practice and discuss developments with colleagues whilst exploring materials available online which promote self evaluation and stimulate discussion.

Any Comments?

If you would like to comment on any aspect of this guidance please contact Marel Harper (Curriculum for Excellence Development Officer) in EDS.

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Reflecting the Principles in Practice

	Description	Reflect
Challenge & Enjoyment	Children should find their learning challenging, engaging and motivating. The curriculum should encourage high aspirations and ambitions for all. At all stages, learners of all aptitudes and abilities should experience an appropriate level of challenge, to enable each individual to achieve his or her potential. They should be active in their learning and have opportunities to develop and demonstrate their creativity. There should be support to enable children to sustain their effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you know that learners are challenged, engaged and motivated by their learning? • Are we able to use existing resources to challenge young people and promote fun in the classroom?
Breadth	All children should have opportunities for a broad, suitably weighted range of experiences. The curriculum should be organised so that they will learn and develop through a variety of contexts within both the classroom and other aspects of school life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does your current practice ensure that literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are developed progressively at all stages and in a range of contexts?
Progression	Children and young people should experience continuous progression in their learning from 3 to 18 within a single curriculum framework. Each stage should build upon earlier knowledge and achievements. Children should be able to progress at a rate which meets their needs and aptitudes, and keep options open so that routes are not closed off too early.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do to ensure progression across transitions? • How do AiFL strategies inform next steps in learning and teaching?
Depth	There should be opportunities for children to develop their full capacity for different types of thinking and learning. As they progress, they should develop and apply increasing intellectual rigour, drawing different strands of learning together, and exploring and achieving more advanced levels of understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know what is the right amount of depth? • How can you plan greater variety of contexts, depth and greater challenge into experiences and outcomes for more able children and those who progress quickly?
Personalisation & Choice	The curriculum should respond to individual needs and support particular aptitudes and talents. It should give each child increasing opportunities for exercising responsible personal choice as they move through their school career. Once they have achieved suitable levels of attainment across a wide range of areas of learning the choice should become as open as possible. There should be safeguards to ensure that choices are soundly based and lead to successful outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do you ensure that children and young people are partners in the learning process? • 2008's course programme/lessons should be different to 2009's – why and how? • How does your planning reflect the changing needs/interests of learners?
Coherence	Taken as a whole, children's learning activities should combine to form a coherent experience. There should be clear links between the different aspects of children's learning, including opportunities for extended activities which draw different strands of learning together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would coherence look like from a learner's or a teacher's perspective? • What implications does coherence have for school timetables/planning?
Relevance	Children should understand the purposes of their activities. They should see the value of what they are learning and its relevance to their lives, present and future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What experiences do we need to provide young people with to prepare them for their future?

		Early Level	Levels 1 & 2	Levels 3 & 4	Secondary Senior Phase
Application of Design Principles (Summary of Building the Curriculum 3 p30 – 37)	Challenge & Enjoyment	Active learning within relevant and varied contexts stimulated by child centred and responsive planning. Planned opportunities to explore different activities, materials and contexts and imaginative, creative use of both indoor and outdoor learning environments.	Experiences and outcomes provide opportunities for active, enjoyable and challenging learning. Imaginatively designed and used resources responding to needs of learners and community. No low level, repetitive tasks.	Encouraging creativity and innovation through opportunities for challenge, success and personal achievements. Planning demonstrates high expectations for all and encourages innovation & creativity.	Young people will experience challenge and enjoyment through learning which is appropriate to their stage of development and relevant to their future pathway.
	Breadth	Experiences and outcomes in the 8 curriculum areas are a key tool for curriculum planners. Establishments have flexibility in timetabling a balance of learning experiences appropriate to the needs of learners, establishments and communities (continued aim towards 2 hours' PE). Literacy, Numeracy, aspects of Health and Wellbeing and ICT responsibility of all teachers.			Within the specialised framework, planners and guidance staff should ensure that the young people continue to experience a broad curriculum.
	Progression	Learning activities provide rich opportunities for progression and depth. Skilled interaction with adults and stimulating activities and surroundings (indoor and outdoor) ensure that learning is secure and extended when appropriate. Pupils' learning and progress shared and discussed with parents.	Teachers recognise opportunities for extending learning. Use time to deepen learning by discussing learning, explaining to others, applying what has been learned in different contexts and probing and researching issues further. Teachers make professional judgements about when children benefit from further learning contexts at one level and when to progress to the challenges of the next level.	Planning will support pupils' experience of a suitable gradient and pace of progress. Young people will enter S1 and progress to third level outcomes & experiences. Most will move on to fourth level outcomes in chosen areas at appropriate areas during this phase. Most learners should achieve fourth level outcomes in literacy and numeracy.	Progression ensured through more specialised experiences and outcomes at fourth level which provides a good basis for qualifications in S4 onwards. Some young people will enter the senior phase with learning at a level below the fourth level outcome.
	Depth	Adult role can vary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe and support Facilitate and skilful intervention Extend activities and learning Direct teaching and focused group/individual support 	Personal Learning Planning involves pupils and parents in making decisions/choices regarding future learning.	Increasingly challenging contexts, interdisciplinary learning and opportunities for specialisation at fourth level of outcomes.	Increased levels of pupil choice enable specialised programmes and provide opportunities to deepen learning.
	Personalisation & Choice	The learning environment promotes a high degree of personalisation and choice. Pupils' continued involvement in planning also contributes to personalisation and choice. Use of AiFL strategies and Personal Learning Planning.	Teachers' depth of knowledge about pupils supports personalisation & choice within teaching and feedback. Pupils may have choices within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole school issues/projects Personal projects Activities Personal Learning Planning/AiFL 	Choices in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning approaches/activities Roles within collaborative/inter disciplinary tasks Personal Learning Planning Participation in school community ie Pupil Council, Committees etc. 	Extensive opportunities for informed choices towards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further/Higher education and next steps in lifelong learning. Choices should enable a well balanced, coherent programme of study relevant to the young person's future pathway. Planned opportunities for personal achievement and increasing contributions to the school and the community.
	Coherence	Learning activities build on what is familiar to the child or young person and local environment and events can be used to provide interesting, real-life contexts for learning. Learning across the curriculum supports and reinforces the development of literacy, numeracy and health and well being across the curriculum.	Inter disciplinary opportunities maximised with flexibility of timetabling. Teachers' overview of learning across the curriculum and flexibility in daily timetabling are major strengths.	Collaborative approaches with staff and partners to enhance connections in different areas of learning.	
	Relevance	Curriculum planning connects with the young person's experience and interests in and beyond school. Contexts, themes and activities develop learners' experiences and interests ensuring relevance. Appropriate use of ICT and development of relevant skills, the four capacities, knowledge and understanding. Opportunities to apply informed views to relevant ethical and moral issues and vocational experiences.			

