

2008–2009

# Creating a Curriculum for Excellence

## Part 1: 3–18 Curriculum Framework



**PERTH &  
KINROSS  
COUNCIL**

Education &  
Children's Services

This paper is the first in a series of 5 papers which, when taken together, outline Education & Children's Services framework and guidance for the development and implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* in Perth and Kinross.

It provides a curricular framework for education in Perth and Kinross. It reflects the values, purposes and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004) and builds on the best of current national and local curricular policy development. It also takes account of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Report on Scottish Education (2007). This report raised a number of challenges for Scottish Education, namely to address underachievement; to provide more choices and more chances for all; to provide more opportunities for vocational learning and to promote greater flexibility and creativity.

The curriculum must provide learning opportunities that meet the needs of all children and young people<sup>1</sup> in a planned and coherent way, within the context of the Perth & Kinross Council Education & Children's Services - Policy Framework, namely:

- ❑ *Learning: Realising Potential*
- ❑ *Learning: Developing Communities*
- ❑ *Inclusion and Equality*

*Curriculum for Excellence* endorses our view that all of our children and young people can succeed and that all partners in the learning process - pupils, parents and teachers - must continually search for ways to encourage, motivate and involve each learner in Perth and Kinross.

Against this background the purpose of this paper is to provide a framework for schools to develop the curriculum in the coming years. It also identifies areas for action that are the responsibility of schools and of the education authority. The education authority will support headteachers and school staff in developing and sharing good practice and will identify areas requiring further investigation and subsequent development.

The key issues to be considered in this framework document relate to:

- ❑ *Learner entitlements*
- ❑ *A rationale for the curriculum*
- ❑ *Principles for the design and delivery of the curriculum*
- ❑ *Principles for the management and evaluation of the curriculum*
- ❑ *Summary of the curricular framework*

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<sup>1</sup> In Perth and Kinross we recognise the wide range of different groups of learners or individuals which may include children with a range of additional support needs; children of different ethnic groups; refugees; Gypsy/Traveller children; looked after children; those for whom English is an additional language; pupils with disabilities; those with irregular attendance caused by illness, family circumstances or respite care; boys and girls at risk of underachieving; and any other potentially vulnerable groups.

## Learner Entitlements

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All children and young people have an entitlement to equity of access to an appropriate curriculum which offers breadth, depth and a balance of relevant learning opportunities - not all of which will be confined within traditional subject boundaries - combined with motivating, active learning experiences. The curriculum should provide a range of key experiences (see section 4.2). Achievement through those experiences will be recognised by the Perth and Kinross Learning Diploma. The Diploma, which is linked to a young person's development in the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence, will be awarded at the point of exit from secondary education.

## Rationale

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Changes in the educational environment have clear implications for any statement of the nature and purpose of the curriculum. The most significant recent change has come with *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE). The *Assessment is for Learning Programme* (AifL) has also had a significant impact on the learning and teaching which takes place in our schools.

The rationale for the curriculum in Perth and Kinross must have regard to the needs of the individual and society. This will be achieved through the development of:

- ❑ *Curriculum aims*
- ❑ *Curriculum outcomes*

### 3.1 Curriculum Aims

*“The curriculum reflects what we value as a nation and what we seek for our young people. It is designed to convey knowledge which is considered to be important and to promote the development of values, understanding and capabilities. It is concerned both with what is to be learned and how it is taught.”*

*(Curriculum for Excellence, Scottish Executive 2004)*

In Perth and Kinross, the curriculum will comprise all the learning experiences and opportunities planned by schools to promote and facilitate learning. It will be challenging, flexible, appropriate to learner needs, progressive and coherent. It will be inclusive, broad and balanced and aim to:

- ❑ *lay the foundations for lifelong learning;*
- ❑ *improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens;*
- ❑ *promote confidence and a desire for success in our learners;*
- ❑ *develop learners as active, responsible citizens;*
- ❑ *reflect the diverse nature of our society;*

- ❑ *promote environmental sustainability;*
- ❑ *prepare learners for changing patterns and demands of employment, optimising economic performance.*

### 3.2 Curriculum Outcomes

The broad purposes of education are defined in *Curriculum for Excellence*; these are to develop the attributes and capabilities in all children and young people enabling them to become:

- ❑ *successful learners*
- ❑ *confident individuals*
- ❑ *responsible citizens*
- ❑ *effective contributors*

These are known as the four capacities. Learning across the range of curricular areas - expressive arts, health and wellbeing, languages, mathematics, religious and moral education (religious education in denominational schools), science, social studies and technologies - will support the development of the skills and attributes of the four capacities.

## Curriculum Principles and Framework

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In order to deliver the aims, outcomes and experiences, certain principles underpin the design and delivery of the curriculum.

### 4.1 Principles for Curriculum Design

Clear guiding principles are required to assist the education authority, schools and teachers to provide agreed parameters for the curriculum. *Curriculum for Excellence* provides an opportunity to think more creatively about the curriculum, its design and its delivery. It sets out seven key guiding principles which should apply to the curriculum at national, education authority, school and individual levels, these are:

- ❑ *Personalisation and choice*
- ❑ *Challenge and enjoyment*
- ❑ *Breadth*
- ❑ *Depth*
- ❑ *Progression*
- ❑ *Coherence*
- ❑ *Relevance*

Curriculum design will involve looking at the interconnectedness of different subject areas in order to make learning more accessible and meaningful. It will require a clear focus on transition points between early years and primary, primary and secondary and secondary onwards, to ensure a smooth transition for children and young people progressing to the next stage of education, training or employment.

The education authority will provide support and challenge to schools in altering their existing curricular structures to provide learning opportunities which motivate and engage all of their young people based on the following principles.

#### 4.1.1 Personalisation and Choice

The curriculum should respond to individual needs and support particular aptitudes and talents. It should give each young person 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, however, be safeguards to ensure that choices are soundly based and lead to successful outcomes. Choice can also be defined as:

- choice about what is learned;*
- choice about how learning is undertaken;*
- choice of location, where learning takes place, whether in school, college or with another provider;*
- choice of contexts for learning.*

In designing for personalisation and choice there needs to be consideration given to:

- personal support;*
- meeting the needs of learners with additional support needs;*
- active learning;*
- vocational learning;*
- assessment as, of and for learning.*

#### 4.1.2 Challenge and Enjoyment

Children and young people 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 their potential. They should be active in their learning and have opportunities to develop and demonstrate their creativity. There should be support to enable young people to sustain their effort.

### 4.1.3 Breadth, Depth and Progression

Children and young people, at all stages, should be offered a broad curriculum which introduces them to a variety of ways of examining forms of knowledge, developing skills and generally making sense of their experience. They should have the opportunity to study areas in appropriate and developing depth. The curriculum should enable learners to build on prior experiences and develop their skills, attitudes and knowledge progressively. Teaching and learning should be so organised as to facilitate learners' progress.

### 4.1.4 Coherence and Relevance

Taken as a whole, learning activities should combine to form a coherent experience. Schools should recognise and build upon the harmonious and supportive relationships of all curriculum areas. Links between school experiences and the wider opportunities for out of school and community-based learning should also be developed. Children and young people 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.

In addition, Perth and Kinross consider flexibility and innovation to be important factors when designing the curriculum.

#### **Flexibility**

The curriculum at each stage should be capable of adaptation in order to ensure that it remains appropriate to the particular learning needs of individuals.

#### **Innovation**

The curriculum should be capable of supporting and sustaining new methodologies and approaches to curriculum delivery and of incorporating current research into existing good practice.

## 4.2 Principles for Curriculum Delivery

The principles for curriculum design and delivery are complementary and embrace issues critical to the development of children and young peoples' learning. In this context the following principles are key to effective delivery:

- ❑ *Children and young people should have ownership of their own learning and should be able to have genuine opportunities to specify what and how they learn.*
- ❑ *Children and young people should be supported in their learning to ensure appropriate progression.*
- ❑ *Education is concerned with the development of the whole person and the whole range of learning experiences - social, creative, cultural, sporting, academic, moral and spiritual - should be valued equally.*

- ❑ *Learning is not restricted to classroom activities but occurs in a wide range of contexts within and beyond school walls.*
- ❑ *The development of self-esteem, confidence, motivation, resilience and a positive sense of community are critical aspects of raising achievement.*
- ❑ *Intelligence is not fixed.*
- ❑ *Emotional intelligence is as important as academic intelligence.*
- ❑ *The recognition and celebration of achievement must be supported over a wide range of contexts.*
- ❑ *All individuals are of equal worth and have equal rights to have their needs developed and their potential realised.*
- ❑ *Parents have a crucial role in supporting young people's learning.*
- ❑ *Not all learning experiences need take place within a school setting.*
- ❑ *Support for learning strategies are very important in helping young people to overcome learning difficulties.*
- ❑ *Feedback, assessment and reporting encourage effective learning.*

#### **4.2.1 Key Experiences**

The following key features are central to the experience of all children and young people:

- ❑ *A curriculum which is designed to enable learners to acquire an increasing depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding, skills and capabilities.*
- ❑ *Programmes of work which fully engage learners.*
- ❑ *High quality teaching which responds to learners' needs and promotes effective learning.*
- ❑ *Involvement of learners in planning their own learning.*
- ❑ *Learning experiences which are selected, structured and presented in a coherent way.*
- ❑ *Appropriate use of new technologies.*
- ❑ *An appropriate breadth and depth of learning experiences for each learner, including:*
  - *Personal and social education*
  - *Active learning*
  - *Outdoor learning*
  - *Enterprise activity*
  - *Cultural events and activities*
  - *Team and individual sports*

- *Environmental activity*
- *Residential experience*
- *A range of work-related activities*
- *Participation in local, national and international community initiatives*
- *Careers education*
- *Experience of further/higher education*

### 4.3 Principles for Curriculum Management and Evaluation

Curriculum design and delivery must be accompanied by review and evaluation of the effectiveness of curriculum provision, including the use of *How Good is our School?* and other quality indicators. These central principles must be at the forefront of planning curriculum and timetabling structures across the authority.

The development and implementation of curriculum policy - design, management, provision and evaluation - is the responsibility of headteachers and senior staff in schools, working in collaboration with all staff, parents, learners and other partners.

The importance of on-going evaluation, review and refreshment of the curriculum cannot be sufficiently emphasised to ensure that every learner benefits fully from what is planned.

The effectiveness of a school's curriculum will be determined by the degree to which the school:

- maintains a focus on the key outcomes;*
- provides a range of essential curricular experiences;*
- structures and delivers the curriculum in ways which are consistent with the principles outlined above.*

The role of the school as a learning community with a firm emphasis on a positive and inclusive ethos is essential. Such an ethos recognises and places value on a wide range of achievements and also motivates and enables all pupils to achieve high levels of attainment. Such a learning community also values partnerships with the extended community, defined in the widest possible sense.

Perth & Kinross Council supports its schools in designing and implementing a curriculum which aspires to:

- ❑ *meet the needs and expectations of all learners;*
- ❑ *encourage increased achievement and commitment to learning;*
- ❑ *provide an effective basis for lifelong learning;*
- ❑ *take account of current and future local and individual circumstances;*
- ❑ *meet the demands of stakeholders and society;*
- ❑ *take account of national curriculum and assessment developments;*
- ❑ *meet the requirements of national certification of achievement and attainment.*

### 5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

In so doing, the Authority will:

- ❑ *support all schools in a planned, systematic way;*
- ❑ *provide the opportunity for teachers to be trained in co-operative learning;*
- ❑ *review and consult on the nature and structure of the school day, week and year;*
- ❑ *review and consult on the means by which resources may be matched to developments;*
- ❑ *revisit the use of specialist teacher provision, including support for learning, linked to building school capacity;*
- ❑ *develop an authority strategy for providing a range of learning environments for young people eg libraries, social work centres, residential homes;*
- ❑ *develop a Perth and Kinross 3-18 profiling approach to recording, tracking and reporting pupil progress linked to the roll out of SEEMIS;*
- ❑ *continue to lobby appropriate national agencies to influence 3-18 curriculum, assessment and qualification developments.*

Early years settings, primary and specialist provision will:

- ❑ *fully embed the principles of AifL;*
- ❑ *consider the nature of summative assessment in light of CfE;*

- ❑ *ensure there is an appropriate balance of discreet subject and inter-disciplinary approaches to learning;*
- ❑ *revisit the use of specialist teacher provision, including support for learning, linked to building school capacity;*
- ❑ *move towards fully integrated working practices within the early years;*
- ❑ *provide an improved learner experience at all points of transition;*
- ❑ *provide a differentiated curriculum suitable to each learner's needs taking account of their interest, enthusiasm and ability.*

Secondary and specialist provision will:

- ❑ *fully embed the principles of AifL;*
- ❑ *work to a broader definition of the curriculum which contains an appropriate range of experiences, including:*
  - *a balance of subject-based and meaningful cross-curricular learning*
  - *the reduction of the number of compulsory areas of study. (NB English and Maths would remain mandatory until such time as pupils achieve appropriate levels in Literacy and Numeracy. PE and PSE would remain mandatory until S6 and RME until S4. Within the context of PSE there should be a continuing element of RME.*
  - *the provision of appropriate enterprising and vocational experiences for all*
  - *courses and certification beyond curriculum areas*
  - *the involvement of learners in deciding what and how they learn*
  - *innovation and the development of unique contexts for learning*
- ❑ *seek to reduce the assessment burden within the certificated curriculum in line with relevant and appropriate national advice;*
- ❑ *structure use of the opportunities provided within the collegiate calendar, by reduced class sizes, revised management structures and the potential reorganisation of the school day/year to improve learners' experiences of the curriculum;*
- ❑ *provide an improved learner experience at all points of transition;*
- ❑ *develop and maintain partnerships with FE Colleges, employers, training providers and community agencies in the provision of an appropriate curriculum.*

In the light of all of the above, all schools should:

- ❑ *take account of authority policy as well as authority and national guidance;*
- ❑ *review their curriculum;*
- ❑ *consult with stakeholders;*
- ❑ *consider training and resource implications.*

Every school has a different local context and is at a particular stage of readiness in relation to Curriculum for Excellence. It is the responsibility of each school to plan an appropriate course of action which will allow all children and young people to develop the attributes and skills of the four capacities.

Examples of short and medium-term actions which schools, supported by the authority, may undertake in implementing this guidance are grouped here under three question areas:

Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions
<b>What?</b>	
<p><b>All Schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Trial experiences and outcomes from CfE</i></li> <li>• <i>Consider existing programmes in light of the draft experiences and outcomes</i></li> <li>• <i>Discuss progression routes pre-school to P1 and P6-S1</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide quality experiences in PE for each learner</i></li> <li>• <i>Consult with stakeholders</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop PKC Learning Diploma</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop coherent curricular programmes pre-school to P1 and P6-S1</i></li> <li>• <i>Integrate stakeholder views</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement PKC Learning Diploma</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop target-setting and tracking the progress of all learners in relation to attainment and achievement</i></li> </ul>

Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions
<p><b>For Primary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Make effective use of curriculum flexibility, eg responding to spontaneous learning opportunities</i></li> <li>• <i>Consider the opportunities offered by the removal of time allocations</i></li> </ul> <p><b>For Secondary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review curriculum structures</i></li> <li>• <i>Debate and plan cross-curricular approaches in S1</i></li> <li>• <i>Debate and plan the timing of option choice</i></li> <li>• <i>Consider and develop opportunities for alternative accreditation within the curriculum</i></li> <li>• <i>Review, plan and develop an integrated approach to the provision of vocational learning opportunities for all learners in all schools</i></li> <li>• <i>Review course choice booklet</i></li> <li>• <i>Review timetable structure</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Implement changed structures</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement cross-curricular approaches in S1</i></li> <li>• <i>Consult on timing of option choices and implement as appropriate</i></li> <li>• <i>Consolidate and extend opportunities for alternative accreditation within the curriculum</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement Enterprise and Vocational Education</i></li> <li>• <i>Produce revised booklet</i></li> <li>• <i>Produce revised timetable structure</i></li> </ul>
<b>How?</b>	
<p><b>All schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Recognise and develop learning programmes which take account of learners' preferred learning styles</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement Setting the Standard for Learning</i></li> <li>• <i>Consider and develop flexible planning approaches</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement the co-operative learning strategies as staff are trained</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Implement learning programmes which take account of learners' preferred learning styles</i></li> <li>• <i>Agree the parameters of whole school approaches to planning</i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to implement until all staff are trained</i></li> </ul>

Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions
<b>How?</b> <i>(continued)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Assist learners in developing transferable skills and knowledge</i></li> <li>• <i>Recognise importance of learners' emotional, spiritual and moral wellbeing</i></li> <li>• <i>Further develop partnerships with local businesses, colleges, training providers and the wider community</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop coherent cross-curricular Literacy, Numeracy, Health &amp; Wellbeing programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Promote and seek appropriate recognition of the wide range of school achievement</i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to develop peer observation of classroom practice</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure provision of appropriate infrastructure eg GLOW</i></li> <li>• <i>In response to the evolving role of the teacher, require joint working (planning &amp; teaching) amongst staff</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage and support staff participation in authority leadership development programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure learners have a voice in their learning</i></li> </ul> <p><b>For Secondary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Publicise, promote and support whole-school role of Principal Teachers</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Plan and implement learning experiences to support learners' emotional, spiritual and moral development</i></li> <li>• <i>Implement coherent cross-curricular Literacy, Numeracy, Health &amp; Wellbeing programmes</i></li> <li>• <i>Seek to gain appropriate quality awards eg Eco School awards, Charter Marks, Health Promoting School, Enterprising School</i></li> <li>• <i>Establish pattern of teachers routinely observing, analysing and reflecting on each other's lessons</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop professional networking opportunities via the internet and GLOW</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop the school as a "learning community" in which all staff, parents and learners see themselves as learners</i></li> <li>• <i>Build distributed leadership into staff remits and review at regular intervals</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure all learners have the opportunity both to teach each other and learn from each other</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop whole-school role of all Principal Teachers</i></li> </ul>

Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions
<b>Where?</b>	
<p><b>All schools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the creative use of space, facilities and resources to maximise the impact of the learning environment</li> <li>• Authority to join national GLOW initiative</li> <li>• Build on existing good practice in school website development</li> <li>• Build on existing good practice in pursuing Eco School status, Enterprise initiatives, community involvement etc.</li> <li>• Create and support further opportunities for Outdoor Learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to GLOW for all pupils and staff</li> <li>• Extend all school websites to form community learning portals</li> </ul>

## Further Information

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