



Curriculum for Excellence

Information Booklet

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Introduction

This booklet aims to provide some key information about the national Curriculum for Excellence programme and the new SQA exam structure that will be introduced in 2013-14.

The national Curriculum for Excellence programme has been introduced across Scotland to raise standards of learning for all 3-18 year olds. It aims to prepare your child with the knowledge and skills he/she needs in a fast changing world to ensure that they can be successful in learning, work and life in the future. It is now in the third year of development in secondary schools and will continue for three more years. The next phase will include the new national exam system.

This booklet is designed to explain some of the key elements of the new curriculum which is structured differently to the previous curriculum. I hope you will find this booklet informative and that it answers some of the questions you may have.

Inverurie Academy remains dedicated to providing a curriculum that enables all of our pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding and at the same time supports them within a positive and nurturing environment to achieve and attain their very best.

What is the Curriculum?

Curriculum for Excellence takes a much broader view of the curriculum than previously. It includes everything related to learning and incorporates four aspects of a child's experiences. These are grouped into four categories:

Curriculum Areas and subjects	These are the ways in which learning is organised and delivered in classes.
Interdisciplinary learning	There is much more joined up learning between and across subjects in the new curriculum. This helps make learning more relevant and realistic.
Ethos and life of the school	The positive atmosphere in our school is recognised and essential to support learning. A climate of trust and mutual respect in the school, and with all stakeholders, supports learning in its widest sense.
Opportunities for personal achievement	There are opportunities for achievement both in the classroom and beyond, giving your child a sense of challenge, satisfaction, motivation and resilience.

The curriculum areas and subjects

These form the main part of pupil timetables. There are eight curriculum areas in the secondary curriculum. Each contains a range of subjects. Pupils will have studied these curriculum areas at primary school.

The 8 Curriculum Areas	
Expressive Arts	Languages and Literacy
Sciences	Mathematics and Numeracy
Social Studies	Health and Wellbeing
Technologies	Religious and Moral Education

Each of the eight curriculum areas includes a number of 'Experiences and Outcomes' around which teachers plan their work with classes.

Within the new curriculum all teachers will focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. These three areas develop skills that underpin and support success in all other areas of learning.

The Four Capacities

You are probably already aware that the new curriculum aims to support the development of ‘four capacities’ in pupils as they move through their education. The knowledge, skills and attributes your child develops through the totality of the experiences described on the previous page will help them to become well-informed and responsible members of society.

The capacities and what they mean are explained below.

successful learners

with:

- enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- determination to reach high standards of achievement
- openness to new thinking and ideas

and able to:

- use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- use technology for learning
- think creatively and independently
- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasonable evaluations
- link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

confident individuals

with:

- self-respect
- a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being
- secure values and beliefs
- ambition

and able to:

- relate to others and manage themselves
- pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- be self-aware
- develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
- live as independently as they can
- assess risk and make informed decisions
- achieve success in different areas of activity

To enable your child to become...

effective contributors

with:

- an enterprising attitude
- resilience
- self-reliance

and able to:

- communicate in different ways and in different settings
- work in partnership and in teams
- take the initiative and lead
- apply critical thinking in new contexts
- create and develop
- solve problems

responsible citizens

with:

- respect for others
- commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

and able to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
- understand different beliefs and cultures
- make informed choices and decisions
- evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
- develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

Stages of Learning

The Curriculum for Excellence programme is written at 5 levels, with progression to qualifications through the senior phase. The Inverurie Academy curriculum is always evolving as we constantly strive to ensure our pupils get the very best of national and local policy entitlements. As your child progresses through the school, the curriculum structures may change a little reflecting changing circumstances.

Your child is already well underway with their learning journey. The diagram below shows key stages on that journey. It is important to recognise that the stages illustrated below will not represent every child's journey through the levels. This will be influenced by maturity and the changing ways in which he/she engages with learning and any learning needs they might have. Some children will start learning at these levels earlier and others later depending on individual need, capabilities and aptitudes.

Level	Stage
Early	The pre-school years and P1, or later for some.
First	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.
Second	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some.
Third and Fourth	S1 to S3, but earlier or later for some. The fourth level broadly equates currently to Standard Grade General work The fourth level experiences and outcomes are intended to provide possibilities for personalisation and choice.
Senior Phase	S4 to S6, Further Education or other means of study.

At Inverurie Academy we will largely focus on the Third, Fourth and Senior phase levels. It is important that all pupils' needs are catered for and we certainly do differentiate into Second and First levels as required. Your child can continue to expect to gain knowledge and skills whatever his/her individual circumstances.

The Secondary Curriculum Structure

The Secondary Curriculum is divided into two main stages as shown below.

S1-3	Broad General Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ All pupils follow a common course which includes study across all eight curriculum areas.➤ This builds on learning from primary school➤ Pupils will have increasing opportunities to achieve and study in depth as they progress through their Broad General Education➤ In third year pupils will have the opportunity for some personalisation of their learning. Towards the end of S2 they will choose courses from each curriculum area for study in S3.
S4-6	Senior Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ In the senior phase pupils will choose courses for qualifications. These will include the new SQA National 3,4 and 5 courses as well as Higher and Advanced Higher.➤ Pupils will experience greater depth of learning as they progress through the senior phase and achieve recognition of achievement via the new National Qualifications.➤ They will be supported in their choices towards the end of S3, S4 and S5 by their Guidance teachers and advice from subject teachers. We will continue to ensure you are kept fully involved in this process.

The Assessment System

Assessment in the Broad General Education continues to use the Curriculum for Excellence level system used in primary school.

Assessment in the Senior Phase may use a variety of qualifications but mainly the new SQA exam certificates.

Stage	Assessed by
S1-3 Broad General Education	<p>Mainly by Curriculum for Excellence levels 3 and 4</p> <p>Teachers use a variety of assessment techniques to determine pupil progress e.g. practical investigations, performances, reports, assessment tasks and tests, homework, oral presentations</p> <p>In order to progress through the levels your child will need to demonstrate that he/she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• has a breadth of learning gained through participation in challenging tasks and activities• can demonstrate a depth of knowledge, understanding and skills• is able to apply their knowledge in new and unfamiliar situations <p>What matters is how much and how well your child has learned and not how quickly they have mastered a level.</p>
S4-6 Senior Phase	<p>Mainly by SQA Exams at National 3,4,5 Higher and Advanced Higher.</p> <p>Other qualifications may include Skills for Work, Open University and Vocational opportunities.</p>

At the end of the Broad General Education parents and pupils will have:

- A Pupil Report in each year of S1-3, outlining progress and achievement in each of the subjects within the curriculum areas. This will be written by your child's subject teachers and his or her Guidance teacher.
- A Pupil Profile which is a summary of the learning journey the pupil has made during his or her Broad General education. This will be written and compiled by the pupil with the support and guidance of teachers.

The New SQA Exams

By the time your child is undertaking SQA examinations in S4 and beyond the old system of Standard Grades will have been replaced by the new National 3, National 4 and National 5 Qualifications. Higher and Advanced Higher will remain although they will be updated to reflect Curriculum for Excellence principles and, in particular, prior learning from the Broad General Education.

New Exams	Old Exams
National 3	Standard Grade Foundation or Access 3
National 4	Standard Grade General or Intermediate 1
National 5	Standard Grade Credit or Intermediate 2
Higher	Higher
Advanced Higher	Advanced Higher

The table below summarises the assessment system used by schools and SQA from 2013-14 onwards.

Course	Internal Assessment	External Exam
National 3	Yes	No
National 4	Yes	No
National 5	Yes	Yes
Higher	Yes	Yes
Advanced Higher	Yes	Yes

Aberdeenshire Council Education Learning and Leisure Policy for the Implementation and development of Curriculum for Excellence

All Aberdeenshire Secondary schools are required to follow the Council Policy and expectations for the new Curriculum that were published in May 2012.

The key points in this policy are –

- A Broad General Education at the end of S3 is essential.
- All schools will implement the new SQA Qualifications from 2013-14
- The experiences that pupils have in the Broad General Education should support the transition into the Senior Phase but should not pre-determine young people's options for qualifications from S4.
- All schools will run a combined Senior Phase no later than 2014-15.

This policy will ensure that there is consistency in the curriculum that is offered across all secondary schools in Aberdeenshire.

Summary of the overall plan for the Curriculum

The secondary curriculum consists of two stages

- S1-3 Broad General Education
- S4-6 Senior Phase

Stage 1 – The Broad General Education

What happens in the Broad General Education?

- Learning will take place across all eight curriculum areas from S1-S3
- In S1 and S2 pupils will follow a common course
- In S3 there will be the opportunity for some personalisation within the curriculum areas

How will pupils choose course for S3?

- S2 pupils will choose subjects for S3 towards the end of S2.
- Pupil choices must cover all curriculum areas
- Choice will be made on a structured choice form
- All pupils will do a 'core' of PSE, RME and PE

What happens in S3?

The level of work in S3 will mainly be Curriculum for Excellence level 4.

- Curriculum for Excellence Level 4 is broadly equivalent to the new National 4 so will support progress into Senior Phase courses
- Work will be monitored and assessed throughout the year
- There will be an S3 report and an S3 Profile
- At the end of S3 pupils will choose up to six SQA courses to follow in S4.

Stage 2 – The Senior Phase

What happens in the Senior Phase?

- Pupils will work towards SQA and other qualifications
- In Aberdeenshire there will be a combined S4-6 senior phase subject choice process in all schools
- This means that most courses will be open to pupils from any of the three year groups
- The benefit of this arrangement is that there will be a broader range of courses open to pupils as they move through the Senior Phase

When will pupils choose course for the Senior Phase?

- Towards the end of the school year in S3, S4 and S5 pupils will choose courses for S4, S5 and S6

What will pupils do?

- In S4 most pupils will follow six courses.
- In S5 and S6 pupils could follow up to five or six courses.
- Senior phase classes may include pupils from S4-6.
- We will seek to ensure that there are flexible pathways for pupils in the senior phase. This will enable pupils to achieve a broad range of qualifications to support their future plans as they progress through senior phase.
- Pupils will be able to return to a subject and level at a later stage during their senior phase to diversify their portfolio of qualifications
- Pupils may be able to achieve Higher qualifications at S4, or to pick up National 4 or 5 courses when they are in S5 or S6.

What are the Senior Phase 'Core' Courses?

- In S4 all pupils will do English and Maths.
- Pupils will also follow courses in PSE, RME and PE in the Senior Phase. These are a national requirement.

Further Information

The website addresses below lead you to a range of useful information including details about the new exam system.

www.educationscotland.gov.u/parentzone/index.asp

www.sqa.org.uk

www.sqa.org.uk/4616.html

Finally...

We hope you find the information in this booklet helpful and that it clarifies any questions you any have about how the curriculum is changing.

Change can cause concern but please be assured that we will keep you informed and up to date with the important details about the new curriculum.

It should also be reassuring to remember that the curriculum is changing as part of Scottish Government policy which local authorities are required to implement.

All secondary schools in Aberdeenshire are changing and developing their curriculum in a similar way in accordance with Council policy and expectations.