

curriculum for excellence: Gaelic (learners)

principles and practice

www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk



Gaelic (learners)

Principles and practice

What can learning Gaelic enable children and young people to achieve?

Learning Gaelic as an additional language contributes to learners' wider education and life experiences.

Language lies at the centre of our thinking and learning. The interconnected nature of language learning lies at the heart of the Gaelic (learners) experiences and outcomes in *Curriculum for Excellence*:

When they begin to learn another language, children and young people need to make connections with the skills and knowledge they have already developed in their own language. To help this, teachers can make use of the diversity of languages which children and young people may bring to school.

Building the Curriculum 1

By the time they begin their study of Gaelic, children will have acquired their home language(s) and will have begun to study English in a school context. Both primary and secondary teachers will support children and young people to reflect on what they have already achieved in English and in other home or community languages and will help them understand how this helps them to learn Gaelic. Learners will also recognise the links between Gaelic and English through, for example, place names.

The study of Gaelic supports learners to gain a deeper understanding of Gaelic language, culture and heritage. Children and young people will enjoy Gaelic as a living language with a rich culture and heritage. Teachers will use the framework of experiences and outcomes to heighten the awareness children and young people have of what is special, vibrant and valuable about Gaelic culture and heritage.

As children and young people use Gaelic in real and relevant contexts, they will see a purpose to their language learning and develop skills that they can use and enjoy in work and leisure throughout their lives.

How is the Gaelic framework structured?

The experiences and outcomes for Gaelic (learners) are described from early to fourth levels. These represent an appropriate level of proficiency at each level but do not place a ceiling on achievement. The range of experiences within the framework supports different rates of progression.

Learners' knowledge of Gaelic will range across the spectrum from some who are able to use Gaelic appropriately in limited contexts to those with no Gaelic. Some children will begin to learn Gaelic from the early years of primary while others may start in late primary or early secondary. The framework provides suitable routes for all learners. This framework can be used in association with the literacy and Gàidhlig framework as appropriate.

The experiences and outcomes in Gaelic use the same organisers as in literacy and Gàidhlig, literacy and English and modern languages. The three organisers are:

- listening and talking
- reading
- writing.

The balance between reading, writing and talking and listening will be different at different stages. Teachers will plan teaching and learning in an integrated way: for example, learners may be engaged in talking to prepare for reading an unfamiliar text, in reading to gather information for a presentation, or talking to prepare for writing.

Experiences and outcomes within each organiser are subdivided to group together similar skills. Teachers will use these lines of development to support and track progression in each skill across the levels. The level of achievement at the fourth level has been designed to approximate to that associated with SCQF level 4.

How does the Gaelic (learners) framework support effective teaching and learning?

The structure supports teachers and learners to become aware of:

- the links between the study of Gaelic and the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*
- the need to promote a positive attitude to language learning so that pupils retain their initial enthusiasm
- the need to develop effective language learning skills for learning languages throughout life
- the use of ICT as an effective learning and teaching tool to establish links with Gaelic speakers.

Teachers will use the framework of experiences and outcomes to create relevant, enjoyable, coherent and successful learning experiences which will encourage children and young people to develop:

- awareness of the skills required to be an effective learner of languages
- awareness of social and cultural aspects of Gaelic culture, heritage and tradition
- knowledge about Gaelic language structure and idiom that allows the learner to check the accuracy of her/his language use and to create new language
- the ability to communicate in relevant and realistic contexts.

The four elements should be present in the learning experience at all stages but teachers will vary the balance among them to meet the needs of learners at different stages.

Which learning and teaching approaches should be adopted?

Teachers will draw on a wide and varied range of approaches, including:

- active learning and planned, purposeful play
- the development of problem-solving skills
- the use of appropriate contexts and experiences familiar to children and young people
- embedding ICT in all learning and teaching
- building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- both collaborative and independent thinking and learning
- developing children and young people's understanding of how they have acquired and learned their first language and how this relates to their study of Gaelic.

Teachers will support learners of Gaelic in developing sufficient confidence to use their newly acquired Gaelic. They will provide opportunities for children and young people to hear, speak, read and write in Gaelic in a variety of contexts whilst accessing a range of texts. To increase learners' confidence and feeling of success, teachers will give them opportunities to practise their newly acquired language with fluent Gaelic speakers as well as with other Gaelic learners.

As teachers use the statements of experiences and outcomes to plan learning, their teaching approaches will:

- establish a solid foundation by the end of primary school for the lifelong learning of languages which encourages young people to learn, should they choose, additional languages later
- promote enjoyment through games, stories, poems, songs and stimulating tasks, and an awareness of the life and culture of countries where Gaelic is spoken
- ensure a smooth transition from P7 into S1 with secondary experience building on prior learning and on learning and teaching approaches.

How is progression supported through and across levels?

At the early and first levels teachers will build on children's natural curiosity for exploring and enjoying sounds and words and their strong desire to communicate. The experiences and outcomes at these levels are designed with this in mind.

Because the development of skills in listening and talking provides the foundation for the development of reading and writing skills, the experiences and outcomes have been written at early level in an integrated way and are repeated across listening and talking, reading and writing.

In the early years of primary school, children further develop generic skills in their first language which continue to be relevant when learning another language. These include engaging in conversation, developing reading skills, listening skills and knowledge about language. Teachers will ensure that learners take part in enjoyable practical activities, for example playing games or singing songs, and use their growing language skills in the everyday interactions of the classroom. The emphasis at this stage will be on experimenting with and enjoying the new language and building confidence through positive feedback.

Within the Gaelic framework pupils will show their progression as they move through levels in terms of:

- increasing independence and reduced level of support, including peer or teacher support, and support through wordlists, dictionaries and writing frames
- increasing length and complexity of text and task in listening and reading
- increasing length, complexity and accuracy of response in talking and writing
- new areas of language content and language use
- increasing awareness of language rules, including knowledge about language
- increasing confidence in taking the initiative and sustaining communication.

At all levels, the breadth of the experiences and outcomes ensures that learners develop their skills with increasing depth over a range of contexts. Teachers will plan to meet the needs of individuals, recognising that the learning curve for a new language may require additional support at different times.

What are broad features of assessment in Gaelic (learners)?

Assessment will focus on children and young people's skills in listening and talking, reading and writing. Teachers will gather evidence of progress as part of children and young people's day-to-day learning as they observe the responses of children and young people engaging in conversation or correspondence with peers and adults, planning and carrying out enquiries about people, daily life and places where Gaelic is spoken, and through talk, writing, and presentations, using ICT as appropriate. Specific assessment tasks will also be helpful periodically to provide evidence of progress.

Approaches to assessment should identify the extent to which children and young people can apply their skills in their learning and their daily lives and in preparing for the world of work. For example:

- How capable are they in communicating with increasing confidence, accuracy and fluency?
- To what extent are they exploring and enjoying Gaelic poetry and song, and stories of increasing complexity and variety?
- Are they extending their vocabulary, developing their understanding of language structures and rules and applying these accurately in familiar and new real-life situations?

Teachers will also observe the progress made by learners in the ways in which they apply their skills in their learning across the curriculum and in cultural activities.

Assessment should link with other areas of the curriculum, within and outside the classroom, offering children and young people opportunities to demonstrate their growing knowledge and skills in Gaelic in a wide range of contexts. Their responses will also show their enthusiasm and motivation for Gaelic learning and their developing cultural awareness. Assessing and promoting these aspects and their willingness to try out Gaelic in other areas of the curriculum and beyond school will be indicators of their long-term success as Gaelic learners.

What connections can be made across the curriculum?

The study of Gaelic plays a central role in the development of literacy skills. It can contribute to the development of numeracy skills through, for example, learning and exploring the use of number systems. It provides valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary work by providing a strong cultural dimension to a variety of curriculum areas such as social studies or expressive arts. Making connections between different areas of learning and developing relevant learning activities will be important in attracting our young people to learning Gaelic and sustaining their interest.

What is meant by 'texts'?

The definition of 'texts' needs to be broad and future proof. Therefore, within *Curriculum for Excellence*:

a text is the medium through which ideas, experiences, opinions and information can be communicated.

Reading and responding to literature and other texts play a central role in the development of learners' knowledge and understanding. Texts not only include those presented in traditional written or print form, but also orally, electronically or on film. Texts can be in continuous form, including traditional formal prose, or non-continuous, for example charts and graphs. The literacy and Gàidhlig framework reflects the increased use of multimodal texts, digital communication, social networking and the other forms of electronic communication encountered by children and young people in their daily lives. It recognises that the skills which children and young people need to learn to read these texts differ from the skills they need for reading continuous prose. Examples are given below.

Examples of texts
novels, short stories, plays, poems reference texts the spoken word charts, maps, graphs and timetables advertisements, promotional leaflets comics, newspapers and magazines CVs, letters and emails films, games and TV programmes labels, signs and posters recipes, manuals and instructions reports and reviews text messages, blogs and social networking sites web pages, catalogues and directories

In planning for learning in any curriculum area it is important for practitioners to ensure that children and young people encounter a wide range of different types of text in different media. As they progress in their learning, children and young people will encounter texts of increasing complexity in terms of length, structure, vocabulary, ideas and concepts.