

# *Curriculum for Excellence:* The Broad General Education Explained







## Welcome to '**Curriculum for Excellence: The Broad General Education Explained**'

We hope you find this guide useful and clear.



*Curriculum for Excellence* places children and young people at the heart of Scottish education. The new Curriculum is built around a commitment to giving every child the best possible chance to realise their full potential and become:

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

These **Four Capacities** govern the entire curriculum from age 3 to 18 and aim to raise the standards of achievement for all school pupils.

This booklet will give you the information you need to help you understand the Broad General Education phase of learning, and how it will affect your child.

Gillian Tee  
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## ***Curriculum for Excellence: The Broad General Education***

Your questions answered.

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## The Broad General Education: Overview

Curriculum for Excellence is defined as:

*'The totality of all that is planned for children and young people throughout their education'*

The opportunities for learning and teaching are governed by the Four Contexts for Learning, which ensure that the education your child receives is informative, interesting, relevant and fun.

These contexts are:

- ❖ Ethos and life of the school as a community
- ❖ Curriculum areas and subjects
- ❖ Interdisciplinary learning
- ❖ Opportunities for personal achievement

### What is the Broad General Education?

The Broad General Education (BGE) is the first phase of two closely connected phases of education. The BGE phase stretches from age 3 until the end of S3 after which learners move into the Senior Phase which starts in S4, where they work towards national qualifications

### What are the Curriculum for Excellence levels?

The curriculum in the BGE is split into four levels:

- ❖ **Early level** pre-school to P1
- ❖ **First level** to the end of P4
- ❖ **Second level** to the end of P7
- ❖ **Third and fourth levels** S1 to S3



## **Curriculum Areas and subjects**

The BGE is delivered via 8 curricular areas which, in secondary school cover years S1 to S3, and may be subdivided further into individual subjects.

The 8 curricular areas are:

- \* Expressive Arts
- \* Languages and Literacy
- \* Health and Well Being
- \* Mathematics and Numeracy
- \* Religious and Moral Education
- \* Sciences
- \* Social Studies
- \* Technologies

## **Experiences and Outcomes**

The BGE in secondary school builds on previous learning from P7. Each curricular area is broken down into a set of Experiences and Outcomes, often called Es and Os.

- \* **Experiences – describe the learning activities which the learner is developing**
- \* **Outcomes – state what the learner will be able to explain, apply or demonstrate**



### For example

In English a lesson may focus on developing reading skills in Level 2 and may be designed to provide learners an experience of ENG 2–19a:

‘I can discuss structure, characterisations and/or setting’ and  
‘I can recognise the relevance of the writer’s themes and how this relates to my own and others’ experiences’ and  
‘I can discuss the writer’s style and other features appropriate to genre’

To teach the above an English teacher may choose to use the class novel *Holes* by Louis Sachar as the reading resource.

In order to give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their learning, the assessment tool could be a character poster of Stanley, the central character. The poster must accurately reflect Stanley’s physical description, character and personality and should outline the key conflicts he experiences. All of which must be supported by appropriate quotations from the text. The teacher may, of course, choose to design and plan other assessment tools to capture this learning.

From S1 to S3 learners will have the opportunity to work within the range of **Experiences** and **Outcomes** across the eight curricular areas up to level three and, for some learners, level four.



## **Does the BGE mean that one type of education suits all?**

No, in designing the BGE, schools will ensure that learners can progress in different ways and at different rates. Schools will still provide differentiated, motivating and challenging learning experiences which meet all learners' needs. Schools will continue to develop a curriculum structure which best suits their own school context.

However, the curriculum in every school is governed by the same seven principles:

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

The seven principles apply to all stages of learning and create a broad framework within which schools can develop a range of learning opportunities and learning pathways which are focused upon the entitlements and the needs of their learners.





## **Moving to Secondary School**

### **How do secondary schools find out information about previous learning?**

All assessment information is transferred from the primary school to the secondary school your child will attend. This information will be used to guide the discussions teachers have with your child and help them to make the right decisions about their learning.

The **P7 Profile** which your child completed will also be transferred to their new school.

### **What is the P7 Profile?**

P7 pupils create a statement of their achievements both in and out of school. This profile will help secondary teachers understand your child better. Achievements in S1–S3 will be detailed in an S3 Profile.

Learners will continue to build on their achievements in the Senior Phase in preparation for their application into employment, university, college or other training.



## **What will reports look like?**

Reports inform parents of progress. This could be done through a range of approaches, such as at meetings, at parents' evenings, or in written form.

Key phrases used in written reports are:

- ❖ **Developing – where the learner is working to acquire skills or knowledge.**
- ❖ **Consolidating – where the learner is building competence in using the skills or knowledge.**
- ❖ **Secure – where the learner is able to apply the skills or knowledge confidently in more complex or new situations.**

For more information refer to the Parents' Booklet '*Curriculum for Excellence: Assessment and Reporting Explained*'.

## **What is standardised testing?**

Almost all pupils take part in standardised testing at particular stages. The standardised tests used in Edinburgh provide a benchmark of a pupil's achievement in reading and numeracy at a particular point in time and when used in conjunction with teachers' observations and judgements they contribute to measuring a pupil's progress.



## **Learning within the Broad General Education**

### **How is secondary school different from primary school?**

Learners will continue to work across the curricular areas and continue to develop their skills and knowledge at the level which best suits their progress. The main difference is that, due to the subject specialism of secondary teachers, learning generally takes place in clearly defined subject areas.

**There continues to be a strong focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing across all aspects of learning and every teacher will support learners with these skills.**

### **How will my child be involved in their own learning?**

Through discussion with teachers as part of their personal learning planning, when planning for choices which take place within curricular areas and at important points in the year where wider choices are made.

### **Personalisation and Choice**

Learners will have the opportunity for personalisation and choice across many aspects of their learning from S1 to S3. This means learners are actively involved in choices about their own learning. This can include choices within a lesson, about topics, between subjects or from a group of **electives**. Learners will also have opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and take part in a variety of activities which they undertake for personal achievement.



### **What is an elective subject?**

As part of their personalisation and choice, learners to choose from a group of activities which are designed to give them opportunities to take part in activities which help broaden their achievements.

### **Does the BGE introduce new subjects?**

Yes, there may be subjects taught in the secondary school which were not taught in primary. However, your child does not need to cover all of the subject areas in the same depth. The Es and Os are not subject defined and have been designed to create a broader experience across the whole curriculum.

**There will continue to be opportunities for interdisciplinary working which allows teachers to make learning real by making connections between subjects as in real life.**

### **When will my child make subject choices?**

Schools will offer different opportunities for curricular reviews for learners, perhaps leading to a degree of subject choice across S1–S3. This will take place in partnership with the learner, teacher and parents. Choices made within the BGE will prepare young people for the subject choices they will make at the end of S3 for their senior phase of learning.



## **The Broad General Education and the Senior Phase of Learning**

### **How does the BGE link to the Senior Phase?**

The BGE allows learners to develop their learning through the Es and Os up to level 3 or 4 and, for some learners this will mean an opportunity to begin to specialise.

Courses in the senior phase build on from the Es and Os in the BGE, although there is no simple one-to-one relationship between Es and Os and the new National Qualifications/Courses. Each learner will take those National Qualifications in S4 for which they are best prepared.

### **How can I help my child?**

The partnership of learner, parent and teacher is the most effective way to ensure that young people maximise their opportunities in school and achieve the best they can. Sharing information is the key to making this partnership work.

To help you guide your child's choices, your school will hold information evenings and parents' events at key points in your child's school career. Other information may be shared by letter or leaflet, or on the school's web site.

Of course, in order to maximise achievement in school, good attendance, punctuality and doing homework are a must!



## **How can I help at my child's school?**

Schools work with partners to enhance the school's learning opportunities and wider achievement and partners can be involved in many different ways. For example: assisting with reading programs, mentoring individual learners or helping out with extra curricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. If you would like to find out more about how you could help in your child's school, please contact the Head Teacher or the Chair of the Parent Council.

**If you have specific concerns or wish to share particular information which affects your child, you should discuss this with your child's Pupil Support Teacher.**





## HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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