

# Curriculum and Assessment Information for Highland Parents and Carers

## How is learning organised?

### The Curriculum

For the first time in Scotland, the curriculum is arranged in progression 'straight through' – from nursery to 18. There are six curricular **levels**:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Stage</b>
Early	The pre-school years and P1
First	To the end of P4
Second	To the end of P7
Third and Fourth	S1 to S3
Senior Phase	S4 to S6

There are eight **curricular areas**:

Sciences, Languages (including English and Gaelic), Mathematics, Expressive Arts, Social Studies, Technologies, Health and Wellbeing, Religious and Moral Education.

For each curricular area, within each curricular level, there are **Experiences and Outcomes**. These describe young people's learning from a pupil perspective and take the form of 'I can . . .' or 'I am able to . . .' statements.

Learning and assessment takes place in school and out in the community.

#### **Examples of Experience and Outcome from Sciences:**

Early Level (pre-school to P1): 'I have helped to grow plants and can name their basic parts. I can talk about how they grow and what I need to do to look after them.'

Fourth Level (S1 to S3): 'Through investigating the nitrogen cycle and evaluating results from practical experiments, I can suggest a design for fertiliser, taking account of its environmental impact.'

# Curriculum and Assessment

## Information for Highland Parents and Carers

### Why do we assess?

To make sure that learners are being challenged and are progressing, it is important to check on development at key points. This is assessment.

Assessment enables schools and teachers to:

- plan suitable next steps for learning
- support learning effectively
- track progress
- recognise and celebrate achievement.

Assessment takes place continuously throughout learning. Some **computer-based testing** also takes place in P3, P5, P7 and S2. This testing is low key and undertaken by almost all young people in Highland. It gives teachers extra information about abilities in reading and mathematics to match against what they know from ongoing everyday assessment. This helps to build up a 'whole picture' of the young person and what he or she can do. Computer-based testing information about your child is available from your school on request.

#### **Example of a block of learning**

S2 pupils research on the Internet current advice about healthy eating and nutrition and how these affect our bodies. The pupils discuss the choices faced by young people. They research the food available to them in school and around the school and how much it costs. They carry out a survey of what young people eat at lunch-time and where they buy it. They use their learning about nutrition, healthy eating and costs to produce a DVD about the school's 'nutrition profile'. This is shown on the large screens in the school social areas.

## Curriculum and Assessment Information for Highland Parents and Carers

### How do we go about assessment?

- Teachers and other professionals assess work
- All learners assess their own work
- Often, learners assess the work of their friends.
- Often, parents and carers are asked for their comments.

Learning intentions and success criteria are discussed and agreed with learners. This means that learners have a very good idea of what they need to do to succeed. They then discuss how they performed against these success criteria. They set next steps in learning and target set for the future.

Through this discussion of what success will look like, learners gain **self-awareness, confidence** and a sense of **ownership** of their learning. They take more **responsibility** for what they do.

### What does assessment look like?

It is no longer just about 'tests' using pen and paper – even in Senior Phase award courses. Assessment is based on a variety of sources of evidence. These sources are chosen to best reflect the learning that has taken place. For example:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| • a learner may have some written evidence       | WRITE |
| • a learner may make a model                     | MAKE  |
| • a learner may have given a verbal presentation | SAY   |
| • a learner may have completed an experiment     | DO    |

#### Example of what assessment looks like in practice

In S1 and S2 learners develop literacy skills in their art class as they learn about Van Gogh and his painting. They discuss the topic in class and identify questions they want answered [SAY]; they research his life on the Internet and prepare a power-point using their own images and writing [MAKE, WRITE]; they give presentations to parents [SAY]. Learners self and peer assess their work using success criteria at each stage of learning agreed with the teacher. They agree next steps and target set for future work.

## **Curriculum and Assessment Information for Highland Parents and Carers**

### **What evidence of progress will we see as parents and carers?**

Much assessment involves the learner and teacher in discussing what is the best evidence of progress at a particular point. It is important that the learner is engaged in gathering this evidence. This helps to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Work is gathered, recorded and saved as a **portfolio of work**. Within this portfolio we might see:

- written work – reports, stories, letters, instructions . . .
- presentations – power-point, notes . . .
- photographs and DVDs
- drawings, diagrams, sketches, plans . . .

This portfolio may be paper-based or held electronically online.

To accompany this portfolio, in P1 – S3 we see a **Profile and Report**. This summarises progress and is produced and updated by the learner and teachers. It includes a snapshot of a learner's best achievements at a given point of time. The Profile and Report contains:

- information on progress across curricular areas
- information on progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- a learner's statement outlining best achievements in and out of school
- a record of awards and qualifications.

The Profile and Report may be held on paper or electronically online.

#### **Learner's Statement Evaluation**

'I felt very proud when I put examples of my work in my Portfolio and described my best achievements in my Learner's Statement. It was the first time I had mentioned my martial arts awards in school. My dad was also proud.' P7 pupil

## Curriculum and Assessment Information for Highland Parents and Carers

### How is progress reported to parents and carers?

The Profile and Report may be available to you online (See Page 4). It will certainly be sent home for you to read and discuss with your child at least once a session.

The Profile and Report contains Summary of Personal Progress statements. This is unique to Highland. The teacher makes a judgement about whether your child is working to potential in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. This appears as one of the following statements:

<i>is consistently achieving his / her potential.</i>	<i>is achieving success but has the potential to achieve more.</i>	<i>is only sometimes achieving his / her potential.</i>	<i>is yet to achieve his / her potential</i>
---	--	---	--

The teacher also makes a judgement about how your child is doing compared to expectations for his/her age group. This appears as one of the following statements:

<i>is consistently performing at the expected standard for his / her Primary Stage and sometimes beyond.</i>	<i>is sometimes performing at the expected standard for his / her Primary Stage.</i>
<i>is consistently performing beyond the expected standard for his / her Primary Stage.</i>	<i>is not yet performing at the expected standard for his / her Primary Stage.</i>

The teacher adds his or her own comments to explain these statements further.

The Profile and Report is not the only way schools report progress. They do this throughout the session by:

- sending the learner's work home to be discussed
- sending the learner's 'learning log' or 'learning diary' home to be discussed
- sending the portfolio home to be discussed
- interim reports – short snapshots of progress and achievement
- teacher presentation and discussion at parents' evenings and open days
- online records, blogs and wikis.