

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

An update of national and local progress

September 2010

MOVING FORWARD IN ABERDEENSHIRE

I am pleased to introduce the first newsletter of session 2010 -11 to you. I hope you find articles of interest which will stimulate thinking and nurture a sense of what we are working collectively to achieve. In this edition there is a focus on excellent and innovative practice through a range of approaches to show Curriculum for Excellence in action across Aberdeenshire.

These examples demonstrate how schools and partners are working together effectively to ensure learners are motivated, engaged and developing appropriate skills for learning, life and work.

Whilst we have many challenges to face, I am confident that we can work collaboratively and support each other in taking forward the 3-18 Curriculum Framework for Aberdeenshire.

You will be aware that in common with other local authorities we are facing budget cuts and will have to work to ensure best value in using the resources that are at our disposal, by focusing developments

on our core business of improving learning, teaching and assessment. Notwithstanding the wider context of economic constraints, the Scottish Government has managed to provide some additional resources to support local authorities in developing and implementing quality assurance and moderation. This will form one of our key areas for development in the coming session, as we work to take forward the assessment (as part of learning and teaching) agenda set out in BTC5. This work will also include a focus on wider achievement and a more detailed look at the emerging system of new national qualifications, supported by the work of our Curriculum Architecture groups and Professional Support groups.

The commitment and enthusiasm of staff in taking CfE forward in Aberdeenshire and making a real difference to the lives of all our children and young people is recognised and appreciated.

Laura Mason

Head of Education





Further examples of the 6 Determined to Succeed priorities

Theme 1

SKILLS FOR LIFE AND WORK

Newburgh Mathers Primary Goal Mouth Enterprise

Newburgh Mathers Primary pupils were getting fed up when the fences around their goals were being damaged. With the help of the teachers and janitors, pupils came up with a simple solution.

Using four large sheets of hardboard and using P2/3 pupils as templates, pupils designed and cut out football players which they drew onto the boards. First they gave the boards a coat of undercoat and then used bright coloured gloss paint for the action figures. The janitor attached wooden batons to the steel supports of the fence. The boards were then screwed on to these batons.

Pupils think they look good and now the fences don't need repaired!

Banchory Academy – Social Enterprise Group

A small group of S2 and S3 pupils from Banchory Academy decided to try various ventures and raise money for charity.

They agreed to split funds raised between Children 1st and Cancer Research.

A number of projects took place in different terms in order to raise the funds e.g. the Home Economics Department assisted in making and selling home bakes, the Technical Department assisted in supporting the pupils to make wooden blocks for a 'Lucky Square' competition, as well as cedarwood sweethearts.

The school was also lucky enough to receive a donation from Costco, Westhill of crème eggs, which dramatically cut the costs of making Easter gifts to sell.

Although the target of £200 was reached for the charities, plans have already been put in place to continue this work in raising funds to help others and for the group to learn more skills.



Please send any comments or ideas for future newsletters to:
moira.lawson@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Theme 2

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Many schools have held events to engage employers including Kintore Primary School and Ellon Academy:

Kintore Primary School's Business Breakfast

Primary 7's at Kintore Primary ran this event along with the school newspaper group. They invited some of the local businesses into school. Louisa Dunn and Murray Weir presented some information about their online newspaper and how they felt the businesses could help them. The children and adults had a chance to speak and the pupils were able to ask questions about their jobs. Some of the businesses bought advertising space in the newspaper. A vet, a farmer, a scientist and someone who used to work for Formula One were all involved!



Ellon Academy – Business Event

Ellon Academy hosted an exciting Business Event earlier in the year. Gordon Milne, another rep from SCORE (International Engineering Company) and Ian Morris from Ellon Rotary along with other employers visited Ellon Academy and were directed by pupils there on a management team building activity using spaghetti sticks and marshmallows to build a tower – the employers were in groups and the idea was to see which group could build the biggest tower. This was just part of a programme of presentations and activities put on to show the employers what Ellon Academy pupils could offer them. The reporter from Ellon Times also attended the event and was gathering opinions about the event etc. The pupils involved are part of the school's mixed age Young Chamber Group.

Inverurie Academy – Enterprise Group

Alba Hampers Young Enterprise group from Inverurie Academy winning the final of the Grampian Young Enterprise. The group went on to the National Final.



The Determined to Succeed Development Officer is Kay McIntosh who is based in Inverurie.
Email: k.mcintosh@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

A vet, a farmer, a scientist and someone who used to work for Formula One!

Theme 3

BROADENING THE REACH

Aberchirder Primary School – Cookery Classes

Cookery classes are helping to support pupils in bridging transition and involving parents in Healthy Eating at Aberchirder school. Upper stage pupils and children from early years have engaged in a food project which has involved shopping for ingredients, menu planning and hosting meals. Parents have come on board to work with the children and join in the fun!



Fishermoss School – Fishy Footprints Spy Trail

Pupils in Fishermoss primary school have developed a spy trail in and around Portlethen. The trail provides an excellent opportunity to get out and about in Portlethen. The pupils are now selling these 'Fishy Footprints' spy trails in school. More information can be found on the website:

www.fishermoss.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/fishermossfishyfootprintsprintsspytrail.html

Pupils from Catterline School have also undertaken a similar project in their local area.

Theme 4

EMBEDDING ENTERPRISE IN THE CURRICULUM

Westhill Primary School

As part of their Victorian project, Primary 6 pupils at Westhill Primary also made a film called 'Show Mercy' following research in the subject. Local writer Deborah Lesley helped the class to write a script for the film, and then went on to help edit, film and act in the film which was recorded by Gary Swan from Aberdeenshire Council Media Unit. The class held a 'Red Carpet Premiere' event at Haddo House, as this location was used in the filming. A DVD was produced and made available for parents.

This session, the school is planning to make a documentary film when classes are studying World War 2.



Victorian doll's house made by the pupils.



Meethill Primary School – ‘The Girl who had nothing’

Primary 4 and 5 pupils from Meethill Primary have written and starred in their own film called ‘The Girl Who Had Nothing’. The story is based on a girl who is being bullied by her peers at school and ends up stealing to be accepted and to have what others have.

The filming of the movie took place in the classroom, playground and the local supermarket, where staff were delighted to be involved in the project and allowed filming to take place.

The children were also involved in editing the film and presenting it at a ‘Premiere Evening’ for parents.

The film has been entered into several film festivals around the country and has been selected to be screened at the Loch Ness Film Festival in September 2010 as well as the prestigious Co-operative Film Festival in the National Media Museum in Bradford on 7 October 2010.



Theme 5

BUILDING CAPACITY

Anna Ritchie Car Valet Project

Mr Mackey’s class from The Anna Ritchie School (Pupil Council) came up with the idea of a Car Wash / Valet project to raise funds for the school.



They approached the Head Teacher, Mrs Cruickshank to ask for a loan to set up the Enterprise scheme. She was invited along to the next meeting where the pupils submitted their proposal to her. Mrs Cruickshank was suitably impressed with the enterprise idea and the pupils received £180 as a start up loan.

The pupils then went to work on their Market Research including internet research and a survey to staff. They decided that £3.50 was a reasonable price to charge for cleaning the outside of the cars and the same price for the inside.

Materials were purchased for the project and posters / booking forms were created and then pupils got to work!!! Plans are already in place to continue into the next term with the scheme.

Theme 6

ENHANCING OUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

Fetterangus Scarves

Fetterangus School worked in conjunction with a French school in Viroflay to design tartan scarves and a vote was held to identify the most popular pattern. The scarves were produced by Johnstons of Elgin and children from Fetterangus visited the factory during production. 50 scarves were exported to the design partners in France.

Here is a photograph of French children proudly wearing their Scottish scarves!!





Alford Academy

Following on from a very successful initial project to explore the opportunities of Arts across the Curriculum, Alford Academy continues to participate in this exciting and motivating approach working with the Cultural Co-ordinators. The first project was run in collaboration with a jazz musician and an S1 maths class. The pupils named the project 'Musimaths'. Young people were supported to focus on learning outcomes such as investigating musical notation through algebra, chord inversions, time signatures, Pythagorean theory relating length of a vibrating string to pitch of note produced, sequences in Music composition and calculating frequency.

(Further details of this project, can be found on the Interdisciplinary glow group.)

Currently, a visual artist is involved in the second stage of the project with S3 and S4 classes.

S3 pupils designed and made models of their visions for "School Buildings – Past, Present and Future" and then a series of board games was developed for use on the models, incorporating relevant Mathematical, Art, IT concepts and personal skills along the way.

**supporting
depth of
knowledge
and
enhancing
life skills**

S4 (Higher Unit 1) looked at artists who use maths in their work; combining art techniques and differential calculus to relate the graphs of functions and derived functions. They worked on a design project based on graphs they researched and the final task was to explore the fascinating history around the concepts of zero and infinity.

One of the aims for this class was to bring back pupils' enthusiasm and confidence, reinforce certain curricular areas and introduce new areas of maths. It also allowed less able pupils the opportunity to shine if they were artistic, encouraged pupils to ask more questions and support other pupils who had struggled with some Higher Maths concepts develop confidence and self esteem due to the different approach.

Teachers gained experience and knowledge of the arts as an educational tool in raising attainment, supporting depth of knowledge and enhancing life skills.

The continuity of the process supports more dynamic learning through team teaching with a variety of artists and art forms. This is a really powerful and exciting approach to the teaching of mathematics.



Supporting Senior Art & Design pupils

The following examples illustrate the collaborative approach taken by four of our Academies with the Arts Education team to meet the needs of senior students of Art and Design.

In these activities the PT/Faculty Head has discussed curriculum requirements with a Cultural Co-ordinator indicating where input from a creative practitioner may best enhance the programme; the Cultural Co-ordinator has then proceeded to identify and commission a suitable professional artist to participate in the project, which has been developed by the school with the Arts Education team and the artist.



Mearns Academy

The PT and the Cultural Co-ordinator have been developing and refining a programme of workshops to support senior pupils since 2008. In 2009 the aim was to focus on Expressive Arts and life drawing covering the themes of mixed media, portraiture, hands and feet, and sketch books to support pupils:

- to produce studies
- to influence their research and development work which will count as part of their Expressive unit

The result was a 6 week project consisting of two twilight sessions for pupils, due to the demand of pupils and teacher wanting to attend. These twilight sessions had a mixture of pupils from S2 to Advanced Higher and Teachers.

The 2010-11 project will consist of 6 weeks of portraiture development followed by 4 weeks for a small group of senior pupils to support portfolio work. The school is match funding the project.

Ellon Academy

Staff have recently started liaising with the Cultural Co-ordinator to support senior pupils in Design and Expressive Arts elements of the curriculum. The school is match funding the project.

Portlethen Academy

The project at Portlethen is a live project. The Principal Teacher was keen to commission art work for the entrance to the school. Funding was sourced through the Cultural Co-ordinator, Curriculum for Excellence and Maersk Oil North Sea UK.

Mintlaw Academy

Since the initial supported project work the school has hosted two Advanced Higher Portraiture Residencies with the one in 2009-10 being funded by DtS. The 2008-09 Residency is cited as an example of Good Practice on the HMLe website and is considered to be one of a number of measures that has improved attainment and cultivated a stimulating environment for young people in the school.

Pupils' needs are at the heart of learning. Relevancy, depth, breadth and enrichment inherent to the programme, comes through the artist mentoring on a one to one basis in core drawing and critical evaluation skills. This small group and individual approach allows confidence, practical skills and the creative process to develop within each young adult at their own pace with encouragement from peers. The pupils are supported in the transition stage from school to Art College by the work completed for their portfolios, critical evaluation skills developed, and through the relationship between pupils and artist which will be similar to student and tutor in Art School. This process supports a rooted foundation to stand them in good stead for their future endeavours.

Reporting

As part of the major focus on assessment, national reporting guidance has been published and we will hear shortly about national events to support this.

As part of the suite of assessment documents, further advice on Recognising Achievement and Profiling have still to be approved by the Management Board.

The additional in-service day has been granted, again to support schools in taking forward the assessment agenda as part of learning and teaching.

National Assessment Resource (NAR)

This is an online approach to support assessment practice in CfE at all stages, including in relation to National Qualifications within the senior phase and national monitoring (Scottish Survey of literacy and numeracy) arrangements.

The first phase NAR projects are now completed and exemplars of these resources will be shared at the Scottish Learning Festival in September when the NAR will be launched. Many examples are Kitemarked to indicate quality.

We are pleased to announce that Kintore Primary will be developing an assessment resource in Technologies at level 2 (August – October) as part of the next phase of NAR development.

10 Point Plan to support CfE

As part of the Cabinet Secretary's 10 point plan, HMIE will provide tailored support, working with each authority and with a focus on the secondary sector until December 2010. 15 Excellence groups have been established to support curriculum development as well as groups looking at Health and Wellbeing across learning, Higher Order Skills and Leadership – reports on progress are expected by March 2011

Scottish Qualifications Authority (New National Qualifications)

SQA work is continuing on developing National Qualifications through a comprehensive development process involving Curriculum Assessment Review groups (CARGs), Quality Development Teams (QDTs) and Subject Working Groups (SWGs).

There are opportunities for colleagues to participate and keep abreast of the process by setting up the 'My Alerts' or using the 'Have your say' facilities available via SQA web site. Recent publications include Qualifications Overview documents in each curriculum area, which define the range of courses and what will be available at different levels.

Further information can be found on the reviewed SQA website:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/34714.html>

The new National Qualifications will support the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and help raise overall standards. Further information on proposals for the future suites of National Courses will also be published on the website.

Learning and Teaching Scotland

An exciting refreshed LTS website has been launched to continue support for the implementation of CfE. The website brings together the information and resources from a range of former LTS sites including CfE, Glow Scotland, Enterprise in Education, Global Citizenship, Inclusion and Equality and many more. This approach has been taken to make it easier for practitioners to find what they are looking for and make links across all areas of learning.

There are now a range of curriculum plans in the 'Building your Curriculum' section and new 'Personal Support' and 'Community Learning & Development' areas to support staff.

www.LTScotland.org.uk

There is also a new Government website to stimulate and encourage debate about education for parents, children, young people and educators:

If you have views and suggestions about how Scottish Education is delivered make them known on this website:

www.engageforeducation.org