



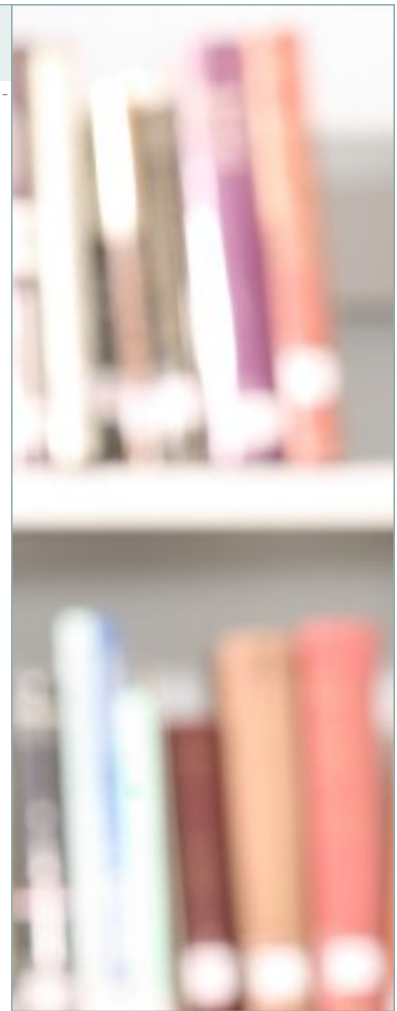
Hermitage Academy—a guide to Curriculum for Excellence

WHAT IS CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE?

‘Curriculum for Excellence’ is the term used to describe the experience children and young people will have in the Scottish education system from early years (pre-5) until the end of their secondary schooling.

Designed to provide Scotland with an education system fit for the 21st century, it will be a clearer, stronger curriculum which provides a coherent educational progression supported by an effective assessment and certification system.

There will be a change of emphasis within the curriculum to create a focus on skills development, particularly in those skills areas which underpin all others, Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well-being. In addition, the curriculum will seek to increase the engagement of children and young people with education to promote their development as independent learners.



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HOW WILL IT BE DIFFERENT?

All pupils at Hermitage Academy will still be able to access all of the subjects available in the previous curriculum – Art & Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Computing, Drama, English, Geography, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Modern Studies, Music, Physics, Physical Education and Technical.

In addition, in S4 and beyond, pupils can access Skills for Work and Skills for Life courses, including Childcare, Rural Skills, Digital Photography and Creative Writing, among others.

Currently, the secondary school curriculum is divided into three parts:

- ◆ S1 and S2 which follow the assessment requirements of the 5-14 programme;
- ◆ S3 and S4 which operate largely within the structure of the Standard grade course;
- ◆ S5 and S6 which provide access to National Qualifications in such courses as Higher and Advanced Higher. (All of these programmes have their own, quite distinct, assessment systems.)

“From pre-school until the end of S3 secondary, the curriculum will focus on the development of skills”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the school have sufficient resources to implement the Curriculum for Excellence?

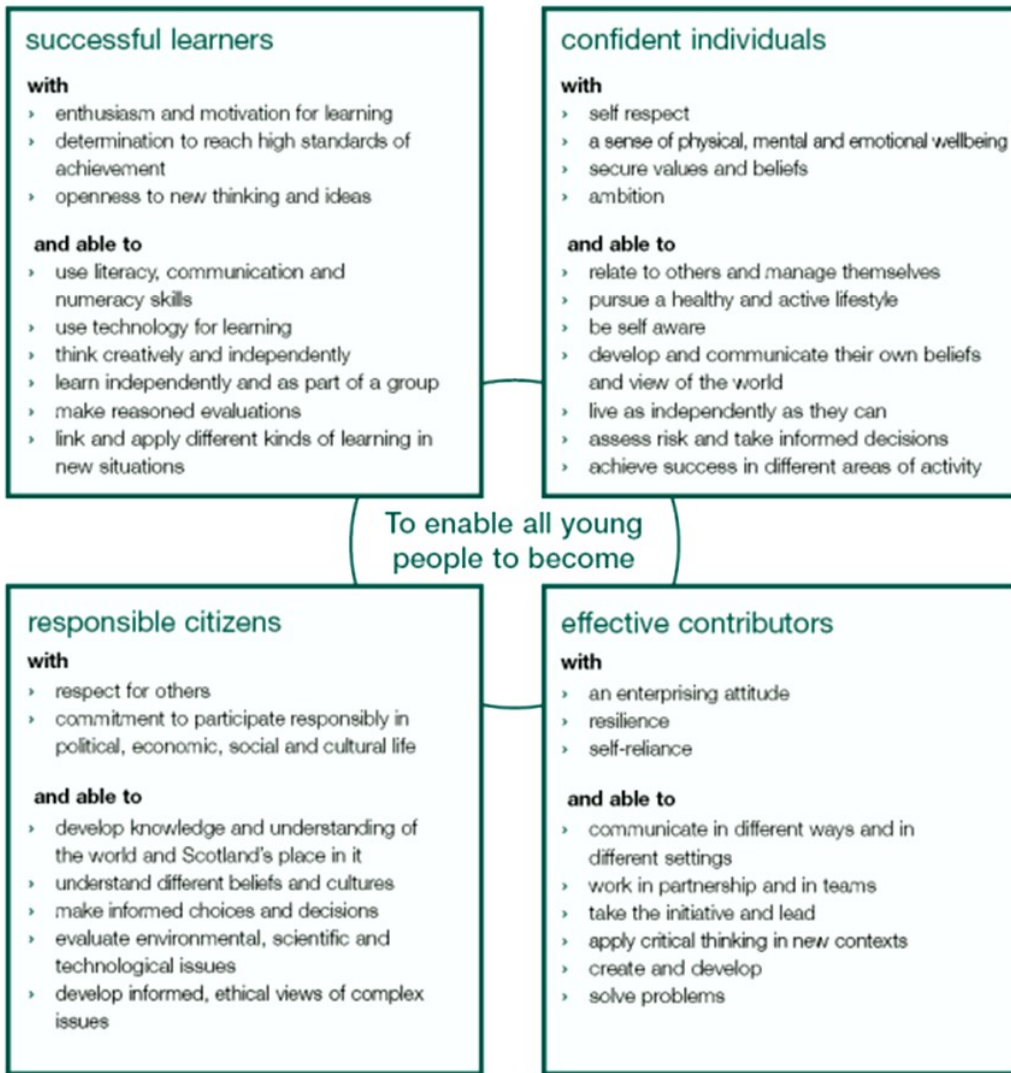
The Curriculum for Excellence does not require a major change in the content of what is taught in schools, more a change of focus to active learning and a skill-based approach. As a result, there is no requirement for significant changes to the materials used in class or to outfit departments with new teaching resources and no need to purchase new text books. The one resource which teachers will require is time – Hermitage Academy intends to go some way to meeting this need by ensuring that in-service days and departmental meetings will be used for this purpose in the coming session and beyond.

The new curriculum will be more streamlined:

- ◆ S1 to S3 will be part of a coherent structure which develops from pre-school, through primary education, to the end of S3, focussing on a broad general curriculum, but still subject based;
- ◆ S4 to S6 will allow pupils to pursue national qualifications in subjects which they have selected at the end of S3. (All pupils will be assessed using the four levels of Experiences and Outcomes which define the curriculum from early years until the end of S3 and which underpin the national qualifications in S4 to S6.)

From pre-school until the end of S3 secondary, the curriculum will focus on the development of skills, particularly in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. Junior School in the Academy will very much be about developing these basic skills and encouraging young people to develop their use across a range of different experiences. Consequently, pupils will find themselves engaging in activities which overlap a range of subjects and which require them to become independent learners.

All schools in Scotland will be seeking to develop pupils in what has come to be known as ‘the four capacities’ – as **successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors** and **responsible citizens**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if pupils don't like a subject? Will they have to do it until the end of S3?

As indicated above, pupils will not be able to 'opt out' of any subject area in S1 to S3. The approach taken in the classroom will be to equip young people with transferable skills which they can use in a variety of situations, many beyond the confines of a narrow subject specialism. With the senior school of S4 to S6 representing the transition beyond school to work, college or university, it is important that all young people have a wide skills-base from which to draw. Significant efforts will be made to ensure that choice and personalisation will be embedded in the classroom experiences with the intention of engaging young people as fully as possible in their education.

WHEN WILL IT BE BROUGHT IN?

Session	Current Qualifications					First CfE Year Group	New Access, National 4 & National 5	New Higher	New Advanced Higher
	Standard grade	Access	Intermediate 1&2	Higher	Advanced Higher				
2010/11						S1			
2011/12	↓					S2			
2012/13	final year	↓				S3			
2013/14		final year	↓	↓	↓	S4	first year		
2014/15			final year	final year	final year	S5		first year	
2015/16						S6	↓	↓	first year ↓

The timetable for the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence is given above.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do universities and colleges view these new developments?

As the universities and the colleges are all autonomous bodies, they will not express a single view which can be applied to them all: each will adopt their own position in relation to the proposed changes. It may be useful, however, to consider some of the planned changes in the light of current practice: currently, universities accept applications from young people who have been studying for a 'two-year Higher' – notably, many private schools use this approach with some success (indeed, there is no mechanism currently to identify how long a candidate has been preparing for a Higher examination); in addition, applicants with more than five Highers are usually assessed on the basis of the best five of whatever number of Highers they have gained; further, universities and colleges have expressed a desire that students become more independent in their learning, a key aim in the Curriculum for Excellence approach. In summary, while the position of universities and colleges may currently lack clarity, there is every reason to believe that the changes planned for Hermitage Academy will advantage our young people in that they will have the opportunity to study subjects in greater depth and detail and attain a number of awards which will allow them to compete successfully for university and college places with pupils from other establishments.

“Pupils will be studying for six nationally assessed qualifications”

The last presentation of Standard grade takes place in May of 2013. Pupils in S2 at this time will continue with their broad, general education, following all of the subjects they have been studying in S1 and S2, into S3.

In S4, pupils will be studying for six nationally assessed qualifications (see 'Pathways to Success' below). The replacement for Standard grade, the National 4 and 5, will be available for presentation in this year.

The National 5 course will operate at Standard grade Credit/Intermediate 1 level. National 4 will operate at Standard grade General/Intermediate 1 level.

Pupils will not be able to 'opt out' of any subject area in S1 to S3. As

indicated previously, the approach taken in the classroom will be to equip young people with transferable skills which they can use in a variety of situations, many beyond the confines of a narrow subject specialism. With the senior school of S4 to S6 representing the transition beyond school to work, college or university, it is important that all young people have a wide skills-base from which to draw.



“The Higher will continue to be the ‘gold standard’”

Significant efforts will be made to ensure that choice and personalisation will be embedded in the classroom experiences with the intention of engaging young people as fully as possible in their education.

The transition year of S3 will be vitally important in the life of the school in the future, with pupils graduating from junior school into National Qualification courses in senior school. A comprehensive programme of coursing and careers support will be provided over the course of this year.

The Higher qualification will continue to be the 'gold standard' in Scottish education and pupils will be presented for Higher examinations in S5, as they are currently. Indeed, the Higher courses will receive huge support from Curriculum for Excellence with the possibility of pupils studying for the exams over two sessions rather than one as at present.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

In Senior School, Hermitage Academy pupils will be able to achieve certification at a variety of levels and by a number of possible routes. For most pupils, fourth year will be a preparatory year for fifth year presentation, although national qualification course assessments will be undertaken at this time. In fifth year, presentations will occur for Higher and other national qualifications, as is the case currently. Sixth year will provide the opportunity for the study of Advanced Highers and the completion of other national qualifications.



“a variety of levels and by a number of possible routes”

National Qualifications			
	S4	S5	S6
Route 1	Higher, Year 1 – Course Assessments only	Higher, Year 2 – Course Assessments/ <u>Examination/Certification</u>	Advanced Higher – Course Assessments/ <u>Examination</u>
		National 5, Year 2 – Course Assessments/ <u>Examination/Certification</u>	Higher, Year 2 – NAB Assessments/ <u>Examination</u>
Route 2	National 5, Year 1 – Course Assessments only	National 5, Year 2 – Course Assessment/ <u>Examination/Certification</u>	
		National 4, Year 2 – Course Assessments/ <u>Certification (no examination)</u>	National 5 – Course Assessment/ <u>Exam- ination</u>
Route 3	National 4, Year 1 – Course Assessments only	National 4, Year 2 – Course Assessments/ <u>Certification (no examination)</u>	
		Access 3, Year 2 – Course Assessments/ <u>Certification (no examination)</u>	National 4, Year 2 – Course Assessments/ <u>Certification (no examina- tion)</u>

..... → Pupils who need more time to prepare for presentation can use the ‘safety net’ of 5 being assessed at the level below their starting course in the second year of the course.

HERMITAGE ACADEMY

Is there a danger that pupils will become guinea pigs for this new curriculum?

In no sense will any pupils of Hermitage Academy be used as 'guinea pigs' for the Curriculum for Excellence. Most of the changes implicit in the new curriculum draw on issues which are already part of existing good practice within the school – active learning, skills development, sound subject knowledge and understanding, interdisciplinary activities, personal learning planning, recognising achievement and presentation for national qualifications. Where new approaches exist – the adoption of the experiences and outcomes and the sharing of responsibility for Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing – staff have been fully involved in preparations and will continue to be supported in taking these forward. Curriculum for Excellence represents a considerable enhancement in the educational experience available to young people within Hermitage Academy and as many aspects of this curriculum as possible will be rolled out to all pupils of the school, whether they are in S1/2 and fully involved in the new curriculum, or in later years and following existing structures.

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Hermitage Academy Curriculum Vision Statement

Hermitage Academy aims to provide an education for all of our young people which will enable them to

achieve their potential,

experience success

***and be well prepared for
life beyond school.***

The key stages in this process are:

A transition from primary school into the Academy *which ensures the consolidation of already achieved knowledge and skills and which paves the way for their progressive development throughout Junior School*

A broad general education in S1 to S3 *which ensures the engagement of all pupils with the Experiences and Outcomes of all curricular areas in a manner designed to challenge and enthuse young people*

The provision of appropriate courses and levels in the Senior Phase *to allow progression from Junior School, including opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, moving towards successful national certification*

Where can I find out more about all this?

Anyone wishing to find out more about Curriculum for Excellence should access the Education Scotland website where further information is provided in comprehensive and exhaustive detail. The address is: educationscotland.org.uk

Information about the examination system and exams is also available from the Scottish Qualifications Authority at sqa.org

If you have any enquiries about the position of the Academy in relation to Curriculum for Excellence, please phone the school (01436 672145) and ask to speak to Mr. Cassells.