





### CURRICULUM LINKS

Many Forest School leaders come from a background outside the formal education sector. Understanding the concepts and language of education is vital for Forest School Leaders so that they can build on the learning and teaching that happens within school through their outdoor programmes.

Scotland now has a single coherent curriculum for all young people aged 3-18 called 'A Curriculum for Excellence' (ACfE). <http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/index.asp>

This new curriculum presents a challenge for classroom practice and an opportunity to demonstrate the Forest School approach as a key tool to deliver ACfE.

It aims to provide more freedom for teachers and greater choice and opportunity for pupils, and challenges us to think differently about approaches to learning and teaching. Within this curriculum, the benefits of outdoor learning are endorsed in 'Taking Learning Outdoors' which has sprung from the Outdoor Connections programme initiated in 2005 and is being led by Learning Teaching Scotland. (<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/takinglearningoutdoors/index.asp>).

Forest School reflects this approach to taking Learning Outdoors perfectly, as an innovative teaching method providing significant benefits for children's learning and personal development. Forest School offers a creative way to link to the 3-18 Curriculum for Excellence and to whole school initiatives (e.g. Eco-schools, Enterprise, Active Schools, Health Promoting Schools). It is also an innovative way to work with children with additional support needs or challenging behaviour.

Forest School is applicable to all ages. A Curriculum for Excellence brings together the curriculum for the pre-school sector and the early years of primary as one level. Pre-school approaches (which include learning through play) are now being extended into the early years of primary school. In Scotland active learning is seen as an appropriate way for children to develop vital skills and knowledge and a positive attitude to learning, and this fits naturally with the child led approach and hands-on approach of Forest School.

Exploring new approaches to learning and teaching in the classroom is Assessment is for Learning (AifL) - a national initiative with representation from all parts of the Scottish education community. AifL supports learning how to learn, effective teaching methods, and ways to review the learning and teaching. Elements of this can translate effectively to the Forest School process where the Leader supports the participant's learning in the outdoor environment and helps



the learner identify his or her favoured learning styles, and review the learning and emotional development that has taken place. For more information see <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/assess/about/index.asp>

Other cross curricular initiatives with information links include:



- Citizenship 'Developing capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, social, economic and cultural life'. <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/citizenship/index.asp>
- Enterprise in Education 'Fostering an enterprise culture where young people are determined to succeed' <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/enterpriseineducation/index.asp>
- Sustainable Development Education 'Future-friendly living' <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment/index.asp>
- Health Promoting Schools 'Taking a whole school approach to promoting the physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional well-being of all pupils and staff.' <http://www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk/index.asp>

The purposes of the Scottish curriculum are to enable all young people to become:

- ▶ successful learners
- ▶ effective contributors
- ▶ confident individuals
- ▶ responsible citizens.

The key aspects of each of these 4 capacities are listed in <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/nq/nqframework/acfe/introduction.asp> and can be summarised for the outdoor context as follows:

#### **Successful learners:**

- Outdoor learning develops knowledge and skills in ways that add value to learners' everyday experiences in the classroom.
- It has a positive impact on long-term memory.
- It reinforces links between the affective and the cognitive, with each influencing the other and providing a bridge to higher order learning.
- It fosters the development of specific academic skills, as well as improved engagement, achievement and stronger motivation to learn.

**Confident individuals:**

- Outdoor learning impacts positively on young people's attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions, for example independence, confidence, self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy, personal effectiveness and coping strategies.
- It yields benefits in the promotion of positive behaviour and improved physical self-image and fitness.

**Responsible citizens:**

- Outdoor learning has a positive effect on social development and greater community involvement.
- It raises learners' attainment, improves attitudes towards the environment, and creates more positive relationships with each other, with teachers and with the wider community.
- It renews learners' pride in their community and fosters a greater sense of belonging and responsibility.

**Effective contributors:**

- Outdoor learning impacts positively on young people's interpersonal and social skills, such as social effectiveness, communication skills, group cohesion and team work.

(Source: Learning and Teaching Scotland website May 2007 Learning Outdoors page).

Curriculum for Excellence is based on seven principles which will underpin all the learning experience of children and young people throughout their 3-18 education. These principles have been extended to the following nine 'outdoor learning design principles' described in *Taking Learning Outdoors partnerships for excellence*:

*Challenge and enjoyment*: active learning, engaging motivating

*Coherence*: draws on different strands of learning, often into a single extended experience

*Relevance*: contextualises learning to the world and life beyond the school

*Choice*: opens horizons to the variety of learning for life beyond the class setting

*Breadth*: a wide variety of contexts and environments for learning and experiences exist over the doorstep

*Progression*: for all young people from 3 to 18 demands a wide range of outdoor learning experiences...progression to different settings, from didactic to self led pedagogy...progression in values and content

*Depth*: direct experiences of the complex interdependence of life on earth enables reinforcement of the link between cognitive and effective learning, providing a bridge to advanced understanding

*Expression and creativity*: through working in smaller groups and responding imaginatively to stimulating settings, contexts and activity

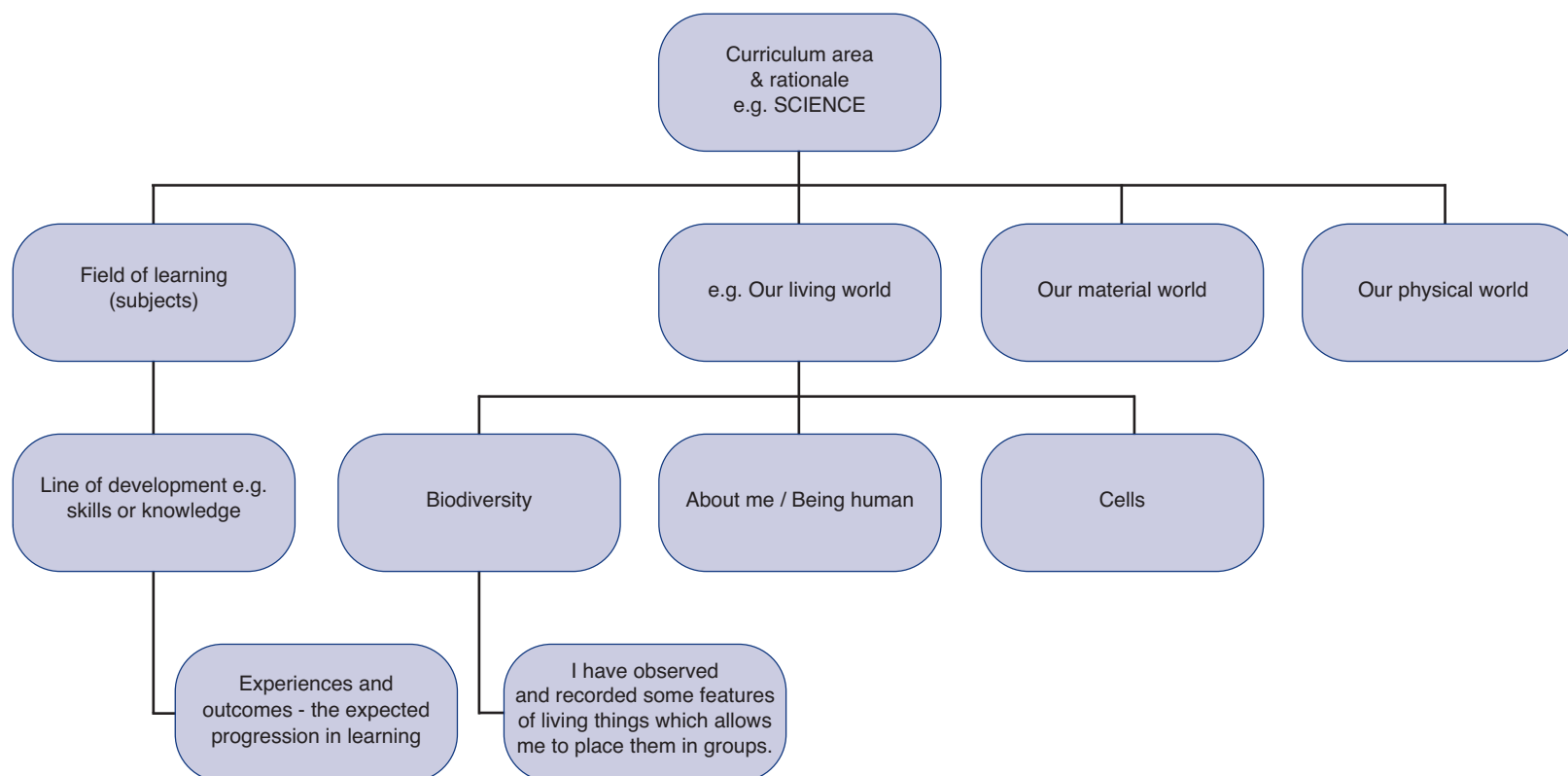
*Holistic*: intellectual, physical, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual development can occur together

The full Taking Learning Outdoors partnerships for excellence report can be viewed or downloaded at <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/takinglearningoutdoors/about/nationaldocuments/partnershipforexcellence.asp>

The eight curriculum areas are:

- ▶ Expressive Arts
- ▶ Health and Well Being
- ▶ Languages
- ▶ Maths
- ▶ Religious and Moral Education
- ▶ Science
- ▶ Social Studies
- ▶ Technologies

Planning the Curriculum is organised in the following guidance framework. An example is given from the Science area of the curriculum:



Each Curriculum Area is divided into experiences and outcomes. The draft experiences and outcomes describe expectations about learning from 3 to 15. The draft experiences and outcomes provide for progression and seek to convey the values, principles and purposes of Curriculum for Excellence. They build on the best of existing guidance while introducing areas of change.

They are designed to express an approach to learning that is clear to the teacher, experiences that will enhance learning, and outcomes that are meaningful to the young person. They are designed to encourage a range of learning and teaching styles, whilst at the same time actively encouraging participation and the development of a range of skills.

There is emphasis on developing understanding of the 'big ideas' in each subject area, and connections made to enable and encourage interdisciplinary work.

Draft experiences and outcomes for the curriculum subject areas can be accessed on the Learning Teaching Scotland ACfE pages <http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/outcomes/index.asp>

Levels of achievement for the experiences and outcomes for most children or young people have been set:

<b>Early</b>	- in pre-school and in primary 1
<b>First</b>	- by end of P4, but earlier for some
<b>Second</b>	- by end of P7, but earlier for some
<b>Third</b>	- in S1-S3, but earlier for some
<b>Fourth</b>	- fourth level broadly equates to SCQF level 4
<b>Senior</b>	- in S4-S6, but earlier for some

In secondary education, students work towards their national qualifications (NQ). National qualifications are one of the three main groups of qualifications awarded by the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk). The other two groups are Higher National Qualifications (usually taken at college) and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (work based qualifications). Information on NQ can be found on <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/nq/index.asp> and subjects studied are shown on <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/nq/subjects/index.asp>

Examples of Forest School programmes for different ages and abilities of children and young people, reflecting planning around these experiences and outcomes, is shown in the next section of this Handbook.