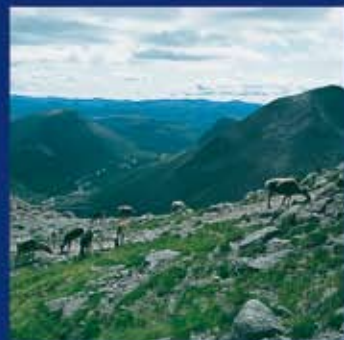


Towards the very best...

**Delivering a
Curriculum for Excellence
in Aberdeenshire
enhanced by our roll out strategy
of Journey to Excellence Part 5**



Aberdeenshire 
COUNCIL

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea - the very best of Scotland

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1. INTRODUCTION

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Service has welcomed the opportunity to develop a roll-out strategy for the HMle Journey to Excellence on-line digital resource. Officers have found this to be a rewarding and valuable experience in enhancing and reflecting on existing practice and taking forward quality improvement across the service. Work continues on embedding the strategy and supporting schools, partner centres and agencies to make best use of Part 4 Planning for Excellence and Part 5 which looks closely at exemplifying best practice to support learners in the ten dimensions of excellence and demonstrates how the four capacities of a Curriculum for Excellence can be achieved. The E, L&L Service continues to promote and sustain partnership working to meet the needs of all our children and young people. It has been gratifying to note the number of establishments and agencies who are making use of the on-line resource at staff development sessions and with parents. Management teams are now recording their use of JtE in school improvement action plans and sharing evidence of how the resource is making an impact in the quality of the provision.

2. CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

Aberdeenshire Education, Learning & Leisure (E, L&L) Service is making good progress in taking forward the national Curriculum for Excellence programme. This is an aspirational programme with ambitious goals for Scottish Education to deliver transformational change in how we plan and enrich the curriculum and provide a more coherent and relevant set of life experiences for all our children and young people.

This exciting development is encompassed within a strategic review by the Service of curriculum policies and the creation of an Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Framework for learning and teaching in the 21st century. These key documents take account of the unique and dynamic natural, cultural, economic and social context of Aberdeenshire and the rationale pays close attention to defining the educational experiences to which our children and young people are entitled. It gives clear guidance on embedding the key principles of effective learning, teaching and assessment and scope for more personalisation and choice. The documentation will provide clarity for all staff about what we seek to achieve in developing the potential of every child and to meet their needs more effectively. It is designed to give parents a clear understanding of the learning opportunities children and young people should have and ways in which they can support this learning. The policies will also place emphasis on the principles that all establishments should apply to the design and delivery of the curriculum. Aberdeenshire's Curriculum Framework 3-18 is now out for consultation and the views of all stakeholders will be taken into account.

The documentation outlines the integral elements of a coherent and effective 3-18 curriculum which provides:

- A broad education from age 3 through to S3
- A senior phase with a qualifications framework
- Innovative and engaging learning and teaching of Curriculum for Excellence planned experiences and outcomes
- The development of skills for learning, life and work
- Effective transitions to support continuity in learning
- Personal access to and opportunities to use new technologies to enhance learning
- Quality cultural and outdoor learning experiences accessing Aberdeenshire's unique natural environment
- Access to a range of vocational learning and opportunities for direct engagement with employers.
- Support to move into positive and sustained destinations.

Curriculum for Excellence challenges us to think differently about the curriculum and how we engage and motivate children and young people to develop their skills for life. It aims to provide more freedom for teachers to lead learning in innovative and creative ways; gives greater choice and opportunities for young people to be fully involved in applying their learning in new and challenging contexts and to work within a single coherent curriculum from aged 3-18. Currently in Aberdeenshire, many schools and nurseries are actively involved in exploring, assessing and trialling the Curriculum for Excellence draft outcomes and experiences across the main curriculum organisers. A range of Primary and Secondary schools are specifically trialling Science and Technologies and are being supported by the Authority to share their findings. To enhance our development of Curriculum for Excellence and to support change and improvement, the Service is involved in piloting the national roll-out strategy of the HMIE "Journey to Excellence" resource.

Effective learning, teaching and assessment is at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence and the in-depth development of the four capacities, successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The Service is committed to developing Curriculum for Excellence in its widest sense, focusing on the many talents of all our citizens, recognising and celebrating achievement and giving real purpose to preparing our young people for a changing world.

In Aberdeenshire the E, L&L Service is well placed to provide a curriculum which complements the important contribution of families and communities, and works closely with partner agencies. By relating the Service Plan to community planning, the work of the E, L &L service is linking more effectively to wider policies including those on Health, Integrated Children's Services and community safety.

Further to the agreed period of consultation and giving recognition to the responses from all stakeholders in evaluating the Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Framework, the documentation will be presented for consideration by the Education, Learning and Leisure Service Committee. Subject to Committee approval the Framework will begin to be implemented in schools and learning communities in August 2009.

The Aberdeenshire Curriculum Framework 3-18 will incorporate the new emerging National Qualifications Framework in S4-6 and the Scottish Baccalaureate in languages and the sciences.

It was agreed that the EL&L Service needed to establish, at the start of the process, baseline information from schools, pupils and parents on their knowledge of Curriculum for Excellence and in particular the HMI Journey to Excellence online resource.

The success of the strategy, both in terms of enabling improvements in the level of awareness of JtE amongst stakeholders and, more importantly, in encouraging and supporting establishments to adopt JtE as an essential part of their improvement planning, will be evaluated by re-running a modified version of the original 'baseline' survey, in 2009.

Journey to Excellence Data

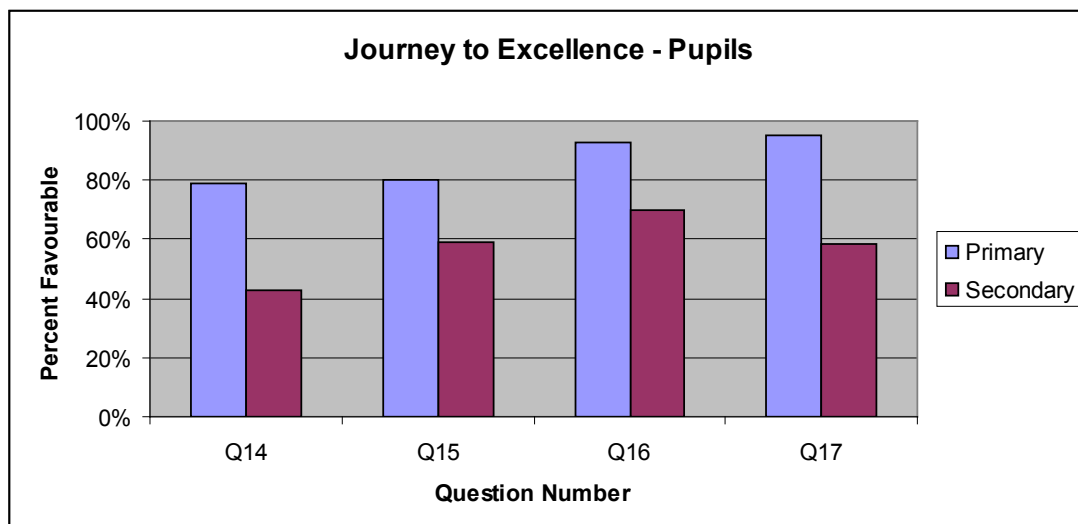
Pupils:

Q14. I have been able to suggest improvements for my school

Q15. My school has a statement of its aims that has been shared with pupils

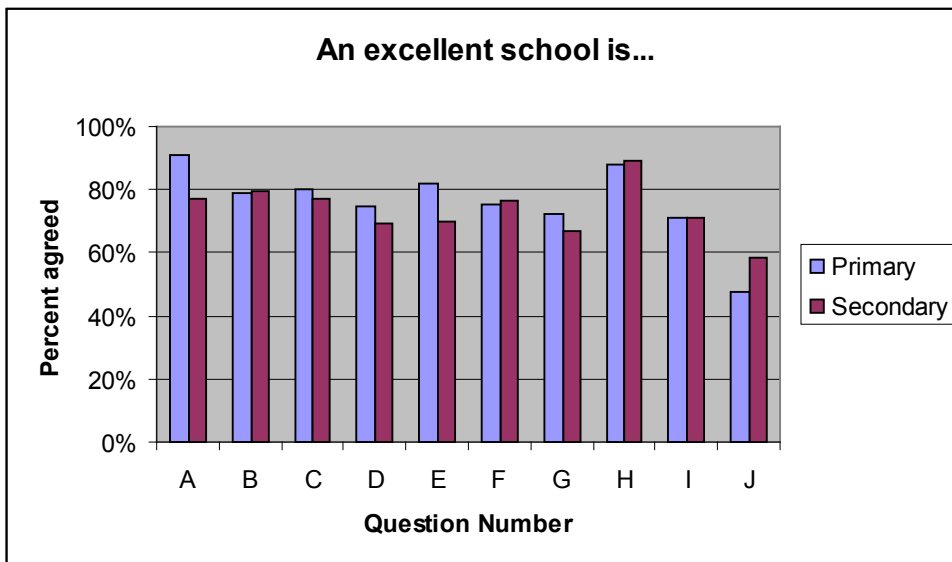
Q16. I am proud of my school

Q17. My school provides an excellent education



Q18. What do you think makes an excellent school?

- A. Teachers and other staff who make learning exciting and enjoyable
- B. Encouragement to achieve the best you can
- C. A welcoming environment
- D. Individuals getting the support that helps them learn
- E. Children working together
- F. Respect between pupils and staff
- G. Everyone listens and understands you
- H. Having fun while learning
- I. Boosts confidence
- J. High test scores



Staff:

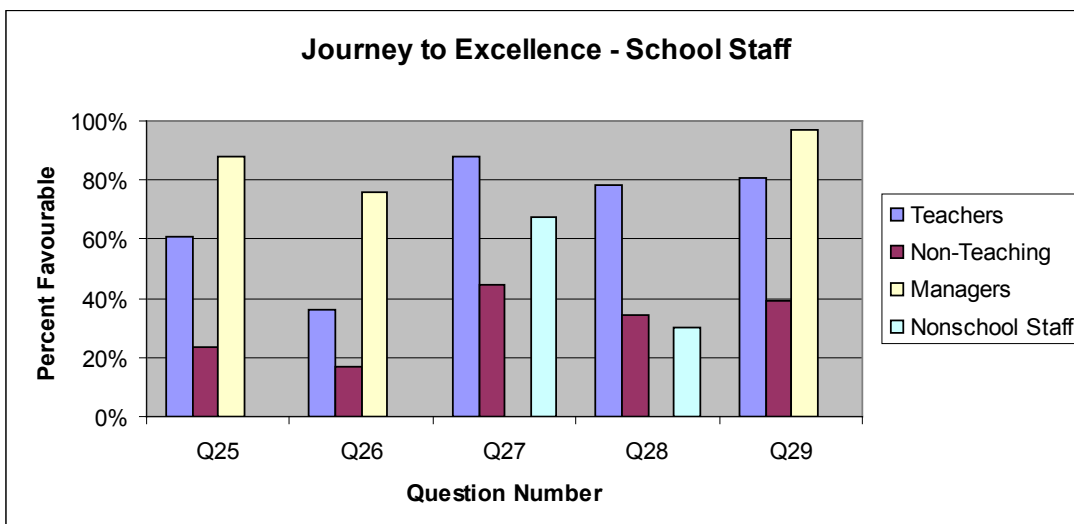
Q25. My team has made use of Journey to Excellence Part 4: Planning for Excellence to support Improvement Planning

Q26. My team has accessed the online resource Journey to Excellence Part 5: Journeys to Excellence to support Improvement Planning.

Q27. My staff team regularly evaluates its performance.

Q28. I am involved in evaluating the implementation of the improvement plan.

Q29. A Curriculum for Excellence is having an impact on our Improvement Planning.



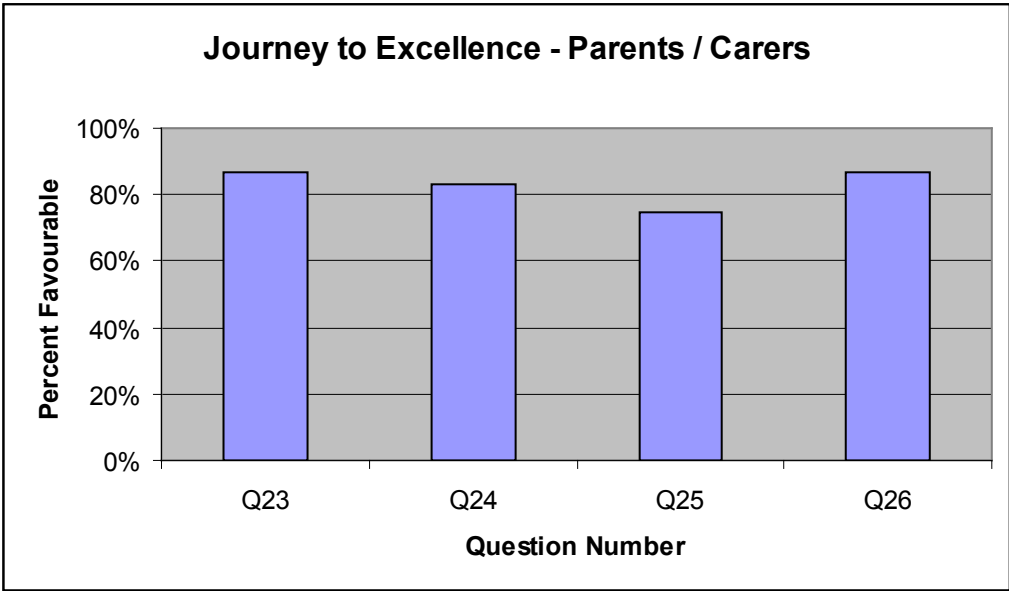
Parents / Carers:

Q23. My child's school has a clear and coherent statement of its aims.

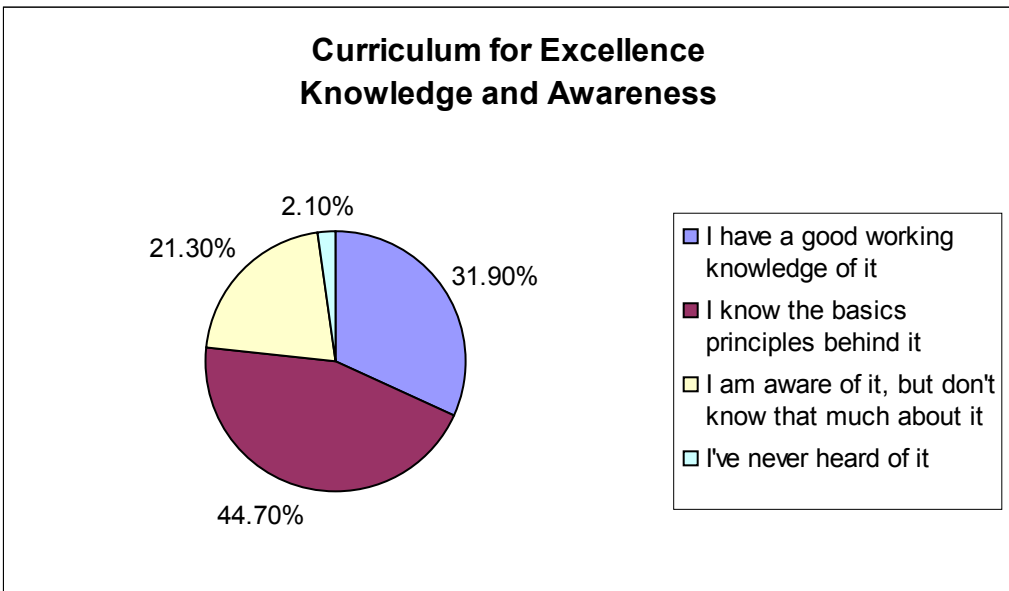
Q24. Information about the performance of my child's school is communicated with parents/carers.

Q25. I have an opportunity to contribute to evaluations of my child's school.

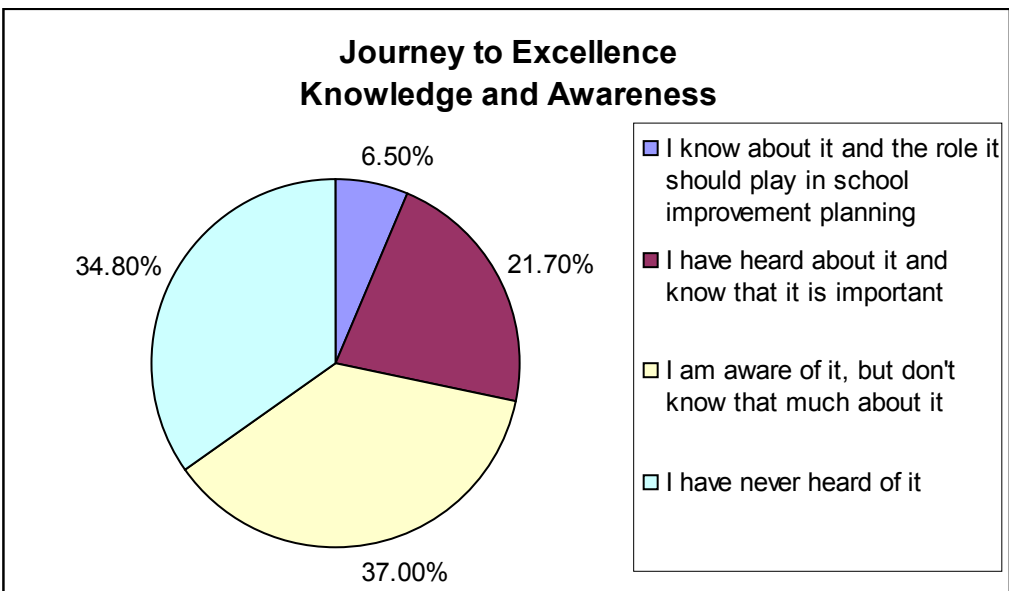
Q26. Parents/Carers have a good relationship with the school.



Q27. Level of awareness and knowledge of the “Curriculum for Excellence” programme.



Q28. Level of knowledge and awareness of “Journey to Excellence”



3. JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE SURVEY 2007 – 2008

Pupils:

Primary pupils were more positive than secondary pupils across the board, but there were similar trends. Almost all primary students are proud of their school and believe their school provided an excellent education. Most say their school has a statement of aims and that they are able to suggest improvements.

Most secondary pupils are also proud of their school but only 58% think their school has a statement of aims or that it provides an excellent education. Less than half said they were able to suggest improvements for the school.

Points of Success:

- 1) School pride
- 2) Primary pupils' belief of excellent education

Points for Improvement:

- 1) Opportunities for improvement suggestions, especially in secondary schools
- 2) Sharing of statement of aims, especially in secondary schools
- 3) Secondary pupils' belief of excellent education

Staff:

Almost all school management responses said that Curriculum for Excellence was having an impact on improvement planning. School management had the highest opinions, followed by teachers. Non-teaching staff and non-school staff had similarly low opinions.

Most teaching staff felt the same. However, less than half of non-teaching school staff said it was having an impact.

Most school managers said that they made use of Journey to Excellence Part 4 to support improvement planning. Sixty percent of teachers said the same but only 20% of non-teaching school staff had used the support material.

Most school management also had used Journey to Excellence Part 5 to support improvement planning. However, less than half of teaching staff and few non-teaching school staff had used the support material.

Most teachers regularly evaluated performance. Non-school staff was also quite favourable with 67% evaluating their performance. However, less than half of non-teaching school staff said they assessed their performance.

Most teaching staff was also involved in evaluating the implementation of the improvement plan. On the other hand, non-teaching school staff and non-school staff had only a third reporting favourably.

Points of Success:

- 1) School management usage of Journey to Excellence tools
- 2) Impact of Curriculum for Excellence on improvement planning for teachers and school management

Points for Improvement:

- 1) Access to Journey to Excellence Parts 4 and 5
- 2) Non-teaching school staff and non-school staff participation in evaluation and improvement planning.

Parents / Carers:

Parents and carers responded quite positively with most saying their school had a clear and coherent statement of aims, that they had a good relationship with the school and that they were informed about performance of the school. Only slightly less said they had an opportunity to contribute to evaluations of their child's school.

Points of Success:

- 1) School's relationship with parents
- 2) Clear and coherent statement of aims held by schools

Points for Improvement:

- 1) Opportunities for parents to contribute to evaluations of schools

Most parents and carers were knowledgeable of the Curriculum for Excellence programme with 76% saying they had a good working knowledge of it or that they knew the basic principles behind it. A fifth said they were aware of it, but didn't know much about it and only 2% said they had never heard of it.

Knowledge of Journey to Excellence was much lower with only 6.5% saying they knew about it and the role it had in school improvement planning. Over half of the respondents said they had heard of it and its importance or were aware of it, but didn't know much about it. Over a third said they had never heard of it.

Points of Success:

- 1) Knowledge and awareness of Curriculum for Excellence

Points for Improvement:

- 1) Knowledge and awareness of Journey to Excellence

4. REPORT ON ROLL-OUT STRATEGY FOR JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

October 2008

As part of the national pilot, involving the four identified Education Authorities, Aberdeenshire EL&L Service continues to be pro-active in taking forward this initiative.

During session 2007-08 a number of awareness raising seminars were held for Primary and Secondary Head Teachers and Quality Improvement Officers. Meetings were also held with relevant Heads of Service to plan a further timetable of presentations for Officers across the service including Community Learning and Development, Children's Services and Services represented on the Joint Management Group, which includes colleagues from Educational Psychological Service, Health, Social Work, Child Protection, Police and Disability teams have also been offered Journey to Excellence staff development.

A staff, parent and pupil survey was conducted in June to collate information about stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of both Curriculum for Excellence and Journey to Excellence Parts 4 and 5 (see attached).

The results of the survey have clearly identified that whilst Head Teachers are reporting on the successful use of JtE in evaluating performance and taking forward school improvement, there is a clear need to provide parents, practitioners and support staff with opportunities to find out more about JtE and how it can be effectively used across the service as a tool in self-evaluation and quality improvement at all levels. A further survey will be conducted next year as part of the on-going involvement of our stakeholders in Aberdeenshire's quality assurance processes.

In the light of this evidence during session 2008-09 we are continuing to roll out the programme of seminars to Depute Heads in Primary and Secondary and Principal Teachers. Additional CPD twilight sessions are being organised for practitioners and support staff. Further to a review of Improvement Planning, action plan proformas now require schools to identify how JtE is used in staff development and in improving the quality of the provision. QIOs will follow through on the use of JtE on Quality Improvement visits. The EL&L Service is currently in consultation on the proposals in the Aberdeenshire 3-18 Curriculum Framework, available on www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk. This document places particular emphasis on curriculum design and entitlements for children and young people. JtE parts 4 and 5 will be key resources in taking forward our plans and aspirations for Curriculum for Excellence.

All JtE presentations are now available on the Aberdeenshire GLOW site. Head Teachers have been provided with a JtE presentation to share with Parent Councils and JtE was shared with parents at the Aberdeenshire Parental Involvement Conference in September.

This document is also available on Aberdeenshire Council's web site:

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk