



Education  
Scotland  
Foghlam Alba

# The Scottish Education System and Scotland's Languages Policy

Louise Glen

Senior Education Officer: Languages

For Scotland's learners with Scotland's educators

# Scotland : An overview



- UK population – 65 Million
- Scotland - population : 5.5 Million
- 2000 primary schools : 400,200 pupils
- 359 secondary schools : 286,100 pupils
- 133 special schools : 68200 pupils

# Education Scotland - mission

...to provide the best blend of **national support and challenge** to inspire and secure continuous improvement in experiences and opportunities for all learners in Scotland.

# Structure of the Scottish education system

Age 0-3 for most

Age 0-2 for some :

Parent / private nursery/  
nanny/ child minder



Age 3-5 pre-school

Age 2-5 for some :

600 hours per year - £0

Not compulsory, but very  
high uptake

(>97%)



# Structure of the Scottish education system

## Compulsory : PRIMARY

Age 4/5 - 11/12

7 years, P1 to P7



## Compulsory : SECONDARY

Age 11/12 - 16

4 years, S1 to S4



# Structure of the Scottish education system

## Post compulsory choices :

- Stay on at secondary school for S5 and S6 (***most do this***) - gain more qualifications, leave school aged 17 or 18 - aim for Further or Higher Education i.e. college or university

OR

- Leave school aged 16 to enter employment, vocational education, apprenticeships, etc.

# Curriculum reform – towards a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

A long process !

2002 -National Debate on Education

2004 -National Curriculum Review group

2007 -Draft curriculum documents

2008 - Pilot implementation in some schools

2009 - Full implementation in all schools

**2014 - First pupils sit new National Qualifications**

**2015 - OECD review of Scottish Education**

## successful learners

### with

- enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- determination to reach high standards of achievement
- openness to new thinking and ideas

### and able to

- use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- use technology for learning
- think creatively and independently
- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasoned evaluations
- link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

## confident individuals

### with

- self respect
- a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- secure values and beliefs
- ambition

### and able to

- relate to others and manage themselves
- pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- be self aware
- develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
- live as independently as they can
- assess risk and take informed decisions
- achieve success in different areas of activity

To enable all young people to become

## responsible citizens

### with

- respect for others
- commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

### and able to

- develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
- understand different beliefs and cultures
- make informed choices and decisions
- evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
- develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

## effective contributors

### with

- an enterprising attitude
- resilience
- self-reliance

### and able to

- communicate in different ways and in different settings
- work in partnership and in teams
- take the initiative and lead
- apply critical thinking in new contexts
- create and develop
- solve problems



## Key features of Primary Education in Scotland:

The broad general education (BGE) from 3 -15

Developing the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence:

Successful learners

Confident individuals

Responsible citizens

Effective contributors

The curriculum provides the **breadth and depth** of education to develop **flexible** and **adaptable** young people with the **knowledge and skills** they will need to thrive **now** and in the **future**. It aims to support young people in achieving and attaining the **best they possibly can**.

# Key features of Primary Education in Scotland:

The broad general education (BGE) from 3 -15

During the broad general education, children and young people should:

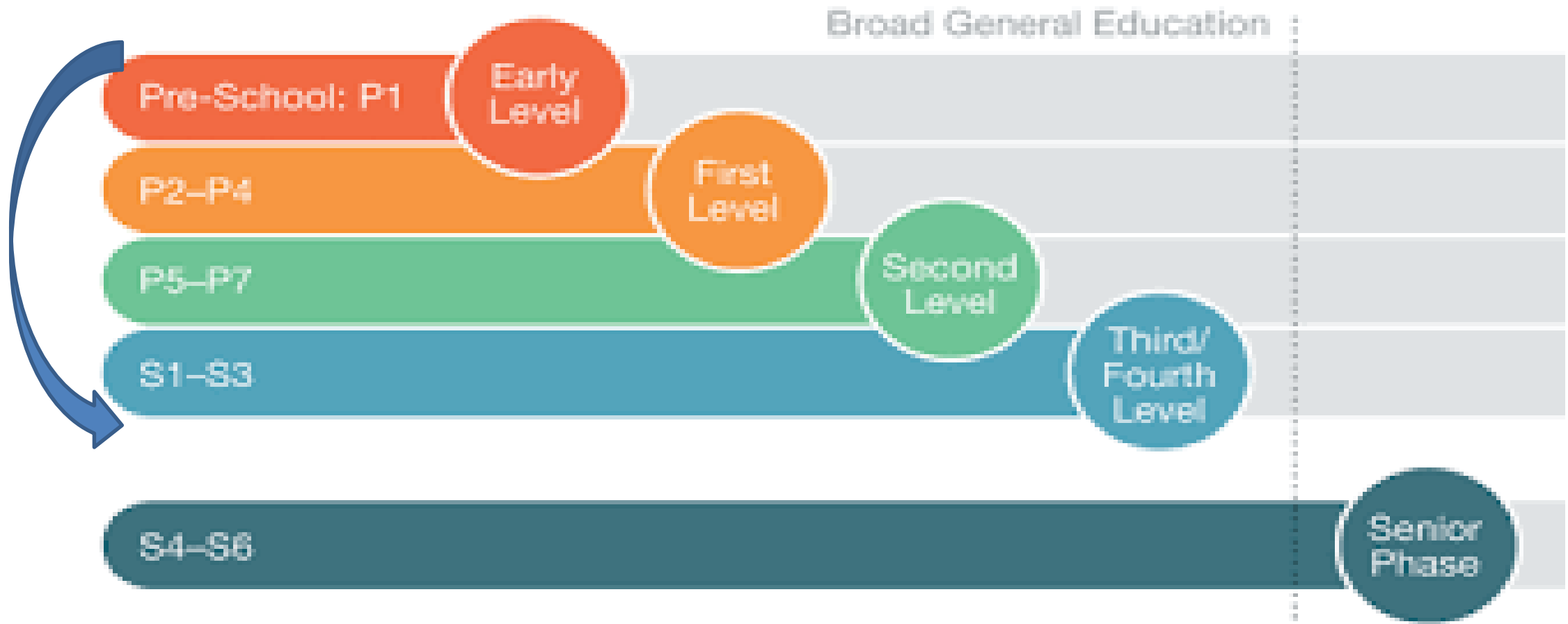
achieve the highest possible levels of literacy, numeracy and cognitive skills

develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

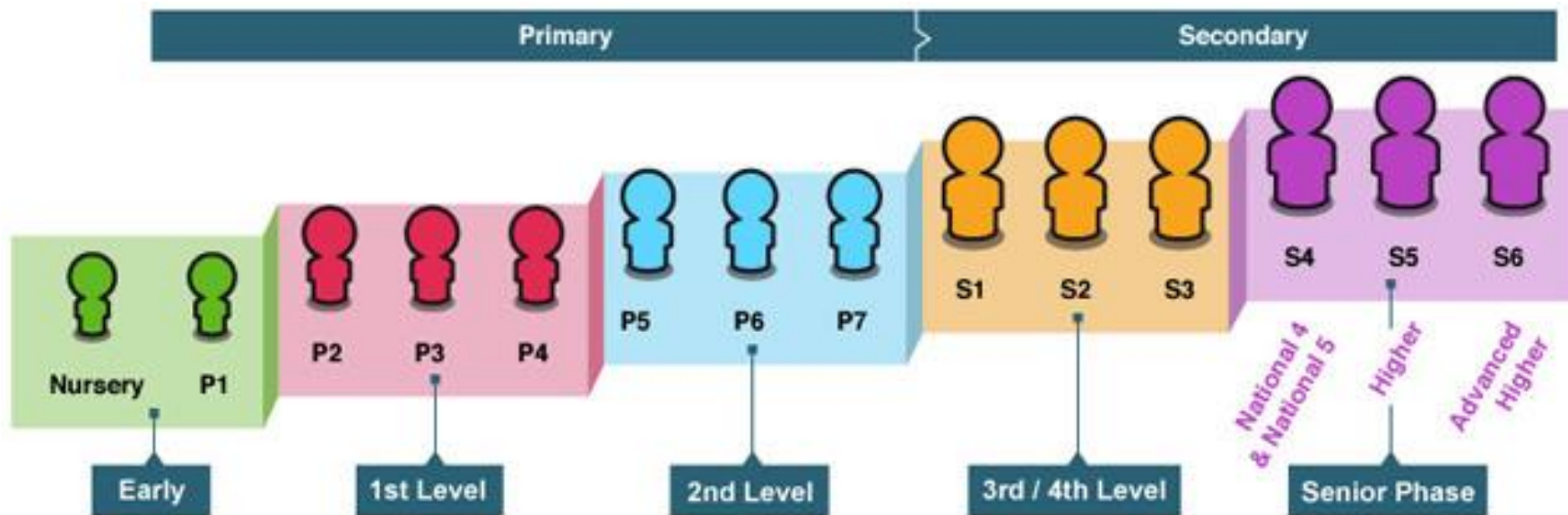
develop knowledge and understanding of society, the world and Scotland's place in it

experience challenge and success so that they can develop well - informed views and the four capacities.

# Curriculum levels - BGE



# Curriculum levels - BGE



# Curriculum areas

Languages / Literacy \* (includes English, Gaelic, modern and classical languages)

Mathematics / Numeracy \*

Expressive Arts

Technologies

Sciences





Social Studies

Health and Well-Being \*

Religious and Moral Education

# Experiences and Outcomes

e.g. **Social Studies-** People in society, economy and business

Early (Pre-school to P1) Age 3-5	First (P2-P4) Age 6 -8	Second (P5-P7) Age 9-11	Third (S1-S3) Age 12 to 15	Fourth (S3 – providing curricular choices ) Age 14/15
<p>By exploring my local community, I have discovered the different roles people play and how they can help.</p> <p><a href="#">SOC 0-16a</a></p> 	<p>I can contribute to a discussion of the difference between my needs and wants and those of others around me.</p> <p><a href="#">SOC1-16a</a></p> 	<p>I can explain how the needs of a group in my local community are supported.</p> <p><a href="#">SOC 2-16a</a></p> 	<p>I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed.</p> <p><a href="#">SOC 3-16a</a></p> 	<p>I can contribute to a discussion on the extent to which people's needs should be met by the state or the individual.</p> <p><a href="#">SOC 4-16a</a></p>

# The Senior Phase: S4 - S6 (ages 15-18)

All young people in Scotland have an entitlement to a senior phase of education which:

- provides specialisation, depth and rigour
- prepares them well for achieving qualifications to the highest level of which they are capable
- continues to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- continues to provide a range of activities which develop the four capacities
- supports them to achieve a positive and sustained destination.

# The Senior Phase: S4 - S6 (ages 15-18)

- In S4, learners usually take 6 - 8 National Qualifications, known as National 4 or National 5 (levels 4 &5)
- In S5, learners usually take 4 or 5 National Qualifications, known as Highers (level 6)
- Learners can also take a combination of Highers and N4/5 qualifications (levels 4, 5 &6)
- In S6, learners can take 4 or 5 National Qualifications, known as Advanced Highers (level 7)
- Learners can also take a combination of Advanced Highers, Highers and N4/5 qualifications (levels 4, 5, 6 & 7)



# Scotland's languages policy

# Scotland's indigenous languages

- **English** – fundamental to all areas of learning
- **Gaelic** – protect, stabilise and grow [Gaelic Language Act 2005, Gaelic Language Plan 2017-22]
- **Scots** - raise profile, value heritage [Scots Language Policy 2015-16, Scots Language Plan 2018-21]
- **British Sign Language** [BSL Act 2015, National Plan 2017-23]

# A brief history of modern languages in Scotland's schools :

**1977** S1/2: Compulsory  
S3/4: Elective but most able 'should be encouraged'

**1987** S1- S4: Compulsory

**1989** P6-S4: Compulsory

**1993** P6- S2: Compulsory

**2008 – present** S1-S3: Compulsory -  
*but not sustained in all schools yet...*

**From 2021** –P1- S3

## **2011: Scottish Government manifesto commitment**

**By 2021 :**

*“... a norm for language learning in schools based on the European Union 1 + 2 model ... every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. This will ... create a new model for language acquisition in Scotland.”*

# The vision for language learning

- To enhance the life chances of learners which may not have been available to them by knowing only their mother tongue
- To ensure that our learners are equipped to enjoy opportunities to be fully active in a global economy and be ready to communicate with global partners
- To continue to build on Scotland's reputation as a global market leader
- To enhance literacy skills and linguistic abilities and build on the curiosity of our learners

# What does this mean for languages in Scotland's schools?

- Modern languages now has a high political profile , backed by significant government funding
- Across the country a number of training models for 1+2 are emerging
- Generalist primary staff being asked to take on another role and become learners again
- Huge opportunity for the growth of modern languages

# Policy into practice :

**L2** (first additional language) - entitlement P1 to S3

**L3** (second additional language) - to be introduced from P5 at the latest

**L3** at some point in secondary BGE (S1-S3) - *in addition to L2*

# Modern languages available as L2 :

- **French**
- **Spanish**
- **German**
- **Italian**
- **Gaelic (learners)**
- **Urdu**
- **Mandarin**
- **Cantonese**



# What to expect in classrooms :

## PRIMARY:

- Target language (TL) embedded and used for class routines e.g. greetings, register, lunch checks etc. Increase in complexity of response.
- Discrete lessons (from about P3/P4 onwards) e.g. role play practice, looking at a grammar point etc within a theme.
- All four skills + grammar

## SECONDARY:

### Building from the Primary Language Learning experience ...

- TL used by teacher and pupils majority of the time.
- Lessons focussed around particular themes e.g. free time, healthy living, education, future plans etc. (themes increase in complexity as pupils mature)
- Progression in grammar

# Snapshot of L3 in P5-P7 across Scotland 2018

**Scots**

**Gaelic**

**British Sign Language**

**Russian**

**Polish**

**Japanese**

**Dutch**

**Mandarin**

**Arabic**

**Greek**

**Swahili**

**Portuguese**

**Swedish**

**Norwegian**

# Improving learning & teaching : Primary

## Primary Planning - Embedding

- Delivered by the class teacher- L2 as a natural part of wider learning
- The L2 becomes integrated into children's daily routines, resulting in 'normalisation' of the use and application of the modern language
- Teachers integrate the L2 into many everyday activities including:  
**register taking** - date and weather - **lunch routines** - PE 'warm ups' -  
**distributing resources** - **classroom commands** - **praise**  
staff greeting each other - **assemblies etc.**

# Improving learning & teaching : both sectors

- Contexts in which new language is practised and used should be appropriately challenging
- Address the needs of those who require more repetition and reinforcement so that they too make good progress
- Grammar should not be oversimplified or avoided
- Share good practice, share good resources
- Let learners see the progress they are making

# Improving learning and teaching : Secondary

- Know yourself- what are the strengths? How do you know? How do you measure? What do you do with the feedback? How will you improve from here?
- Pedagogy Pedagogy Pedagogy!!!
- Agree on department policies e.g. use of target language
- Agree on **course planning and assessment**
- Know your learners and build on their prior learning
  - ***no 'fresh start' in S1***
- Keep contexts for learning under review
- Resources - blending 'traditional' with I.T. based
- Ensure that grammar is taught sequentially within the context for learning

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT - INSPECTION

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

# The quality initiative in Scottish schools : a fundamental principle

“The most effective way of improving the quality of education is to expect schools to take responsibility for their own quality improvement.”



# Self-evaluation and inspection

- provide assurance to users on the quality of education
- promote improvement
- provide evidence to inform national policy development



## FINDING THE IDEAL BALANCE

# Accountability vs improvement

How best to ensure the ideal balance of support and challenge to drive school improvement, involving all the key stakeholders at national, local, and individual school level?



# What do we inspect?

- early years / childcare
- primary , some including nursery classes
- secondary (high) schools
- all through schools
- day special schools
- residential special schools
- colleges
- prison education
- learning communities
- children's services
- independent schools
- private English language schools

**How are  
we  
doing?**

**LOOKING INWARDS:**  
knowing ourselves  
inside out through  
effective self-evaluation



**LOOKING OUTWARDS:**  
learning from what  
happens elsewhere to  
challenge our own thinking

**How do  
we  
know?**

**LOOKING  
FORWARDS:**  
exploring what  
the future might  
hold for today's  
learners and  
planning how to  
get there

**What are we going to do  
now?**

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

# The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report 2015 on Scottish Education

✓ Recognised some key positive developments in Scottish education e.g. CfE

✗ Identified particular challenges to be addressed e.g. equality