

High Quality Learning, Teaching & Assessment at Portlethen Academy

• BACKGROUND

At Portlethen Academy, our shared vision is to **'be the very best we can be'**.

To achieve this, we are **READY**:

- Ready for learning.
- Ready to contribute to our local community.
- Ready to overcome challenges.
- Ready for life and the world of work.

This is underpinned by our 3 Core Values (**Respect, Responsibility and Resilience**), which helps to generate engaged, knowledgeable, and motivated young people who are equipped with qualifications and skills for life, learning and work beyond school.

Before the active learning and teaching begins, staff refer to our 'Ready for Learning' and pupils know their responsibility in this routine/expectation.

Our **Ready for Learning** statement was co-created by staff and pupils: "Pupils and teachers have a positive attitude, supported by consistent habits, and work hard; high expectations are shared to raise aspirational targets."

Ready for Learning

STEP 1
Arrive to lessons on time and sensibly find your seat
Meet and Greet with your Teacher.
Check-in for the day and lesson ahead.

STEP 2
Outdoor Clothing Removed
Including all Jackets, Hoodies and Hats.
Showing that you are ready to learn!

STEP 3
Mobile Devices Away
All phones on silent and away from desks, in pockets or bags.
All Air Pods and ear phones removed.
Devices only used with Teacher permission.

STEP 4
Resources out and organised
Maximise your time in the lessons with being prepared and organising everything that you need.
Good routines and habits for each subject.

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The classroom environment will be one which has positive relationships and evidences our [Expectations of All](#). Classroom routines are known and help provide structure to lessons.

- **6 ASPECTS OF HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT**

All staff were involved in bringing together the following standard for lessons at Portlethen Academy. Using [HGIOS 4](#) illustrations and challenge questions and [Aberdeenshire's key features of Learning Teaching & Assessment](#) staff shared practice and highlighted what they considered key requirements for high quality learning, teaching and assessment experiences in our classrooms.

All statements and suggestions were grouped and revised, with a focus on high expectations, aspirations, and good practice to ensure our pupils have the best learning experience at all levels. These 6 aspects also help to ensure our pupils receive a consistent classroom experience across the school.

The definitions that sit alongside each of the six Aspects were shared with and agreed by pupils in the Portlethen Pupil Action Group (PPAG) and with parent/carer representatives on the Parent Council.

Ready for Learning – pupils and teachers have a positive attitude, supported by consistent habits, and work hard. High expectations are shared to raise aspirational targets.



Purpose

- * Learning is contextualised to give relevance, and to prepare pupils to be Ready for Life and the World of Work.
- * Purpose of learning is engaging, thought-provoking and imaginative.
- * Prior knowledge is recognised and built upon with pupils knowing what to do to fulfil the shared Learning Intentions.

Challenge & Support

- * Differentiation is evidenced to meet the needs of all learners.
- * Staff and pupils have high expectations of all, and learners are challenged appropriately eg. through Higher Order Thinking Skills and effective questioning.
- * Pupils are encouraged to overcome challenges (with appropriate support) and show resilience in their learning.

Evidence of Learning

- * Teachers clarify and check for understanding regularly, to ensure appropriate pace and challenge in order for Success Criteria to be met.
- * Pupils are actively engaged – taking ownership and leadership of their learning.
- * Engaging classroom discussions are enhanced by well-structured questioning.

Assessment

- * Assessment is meaningful and effective – both formative and summative –that informs planning and next steps in learning and teaching.
- * A variety of forms of Assessment are used as tools for learning and measuring progress.
- * AfL strategies are continuously used to gauge understanding.

Feedback

- * Teachers provide ongoing quality feedback that challenges and supports, allowing learners to move forwards in their learning.
- * Pupils can give feedback as well as act on feedback given.
- * Pupils know their next steps in their learning in order to be aspirational and successful.

Application

- * Skills are highlighted and exemplified where relevant.
- * Pupils are aware of what they are learning and how it can be applied to wider contexts and new situations.
- * Pupils are motivated through contextualised learning, with a focus on DYW.

- **CURRICULUM**

Portlethen Academy has a broadening curricular offer that enhances learning opportunities in a real-life and relevant context, and we are working on developing further links in and around our community that support skills development, pathways, and work-based experiences for our young people. This policy highlights how we deliver this curriculum in the classroom context.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Themes:

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of teaching
- Effective use of assessment
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements.

How Good Is Our School (4th edition) p.36

Pupils in S1-S3 receive a broad, general education, that covers well planned experiences and outcomes from across all the curriculum areas. In all subject areas, pupils will have opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work (including career planning skills) with literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing being threaded throughout. As a result of thorough and reflective planning, pupils are supported and challenged at an appropriate pace. The planning should demonstrate the principles for curriculum design: challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; personalisation and choice; coherence; relevance.

Whilst the majority of subjects are taught by specialist teachers in discrete periods, here at Portlethen, we are striving to make changes informed by research which will allow deeper pupil inquiry, application of transferable skills, and learning linked to relevant and meaningful projects through Project-Based Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning.



Curriculum Rationale

Within our school, we aim to provide a curriculum that is both inclusive and ambitious for all – a curriculum which is both academically challenging as well as providing opportunities to develop skills for learning, life, and work.

Our curriculum will be based around the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and the refreshed Curriculum Narrative ([Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence \(scotlandscurriculum.scot\)](http://scotlandscurriculum.scot)) – to ensure our pupils are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens. Our curriculum will also reflect the principles of curriculum design to ensure breadth, depth, personalisation & choice, challenge & enjoyment, progression, coherence, and relevance. We will, therefore, have a curriculum which we will adapt continuously over time to meet the needs of our pupils.

Our curriculum is designed based on the following 7 principles:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

The following table outlines our current curriculum structure (correct as of Session 2022-23):

Portlethen Academy Broad General Education Curriculum																														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
S1	English		Mathematics			Science			Social Ge Hi Mo			Exo Arts Art Dr Mu			HE		Technologies Bu Co Te			Mod Lan			PE		RE	PSE				
S2	English		Mathematics			Science			Social Ge Hi Mo			Exo Arts Art Dr Mu			HE		Technologies Bu Co Te			Mod Lan			PE		RE	PSE				
S3	English		Mathematics			Subject 1			Subject 2			Subject 3			Subject 4		Subject 5			Subject 6			PE		RE	PSE				
Portlethen Academy Senior Phase Curriculum																														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
S4	English			Mathematics			National 1			National 2			National 3			National 4			PE		RE	PSE								
S5	National / Higher 1			National / Higher 2			National / Higher 3			National / Higher 4			National / Higher 5			Enrichment			Em	PSE										
S6	Nat / High / Ad High 1			Nat / High / Ad High 2			Nat / High / Ad High 3			Nat / High / Ad High 4			Self Study			Enrichment			Le	PSE										

- **THEME 1: LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT**

Through using our Expectations of All and our 6 Aspects of Learning, Teaching & Assessment, we strive to have a shared, consistent ethos and culture. Positive relationships in classrooms are built, valued, and respected. Such relationships allow staff and pupils to work together with a shared understanding of what they are learning and why. Through elements of personalisation and choice, pupils are given the opportunity to have their voices heard and to become leaders of their own learning. The use of digital technologies allows pupils to become more independent in their learning and take increasing responsibility. Teachers also use digital technologies that encourage engagement and enhance learning, teaching, and assessment experiences. Learners' experiences should allow pupils to be effective contributors, successful learners, confident individuals, and responsible citizens (The 4 capacities from [Curriculum for Excellence](#)).

Broad & General Education Curriculum Map (**will be completed and published in Term 4, Session 2023-24*)

Our BGE S1-S3 Curriculum Map outlines the different experiences and outcomes covered by individual subject areas. Having an overview of all [benchmarks](#) covered allows us to show the breadth and depth to our curriculum, as well as progression provided through assessment and moderation. With Health and Wellbeing, Literacy, and Numeracy being the responsibility of all, our Curriculum Map helps with collegiate working between staff to create meaningful interdisciplinary learning projects or make meaningful links between courses. Using the Curriculum Map allows staff to ensure there is progression in not only knowledge and understanding but in the development of skills.

Interdisciplinary Learning and Project-Based Learning allow staff and pupils more meaningful opportunities to work with partners who can enrich the learning experiences for our pupils and enhance their engagement with our local and wider community.

Building the Curriculum 3: A framework for learning & teaching (2008)

Project-Based Learning & Interdisciplinary Learning

Lessons can take the form of individual one-off projects or over longer courses of study. They are planned with clear purpose and are based upon experiences and outcomes drawn from different subjects or curriculum areas. Project-based learning approaches allow for pupil-led inquiry, peer assessment, partner involvement and fulfils the Curriculum for Excellence Four Capacities as well as covering a number of the 7 Principles of Curriculum Design.

From Session 2024-25, we will be introducing a double period of Project-based Learning/Interdisciplinary Learning for S1/2 pupils, based on key driving questions, focusing on skills development, and developing a more creative curriculum to progress from the BGE phase into our widening Senior Phase curricular offer.



Digital Technologies/Learning

The use of digital technologies to enhance the quality of learning, teaching, and assessment is a continual area for development, looking at ways in which staff and pupils can utilise technology to make learning more accessible, creative, and engaging. A Digital Technologies strategy will be considered for our context, based on the [Digital Learning & Teaching Strategy for Scotland](#) and using Education Scotland's '[Features of Highly Effective Digital Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Schools](#)'.

Currently, staff use Microsoft Teams or Google Classrooms to ensure learning is accessible to all and as an additional channel for communication for pupils. It is expected that staff upload class materials for pupils to access for study, revision or consolidation.

Teaching staff promote the use of online learning to pupils through ESgoil, Achieve, BBC Bitesize & SCHOLAR, and parents are also informed of the additional supports available to their young person, for example [letters home](#) or at Information Evenings. The school promotes various digital resources and supports to pupils through Assemblies, Clan, Daily Bulletin, and to parents via the school [website](#).

144 Portlethen Academy pupils were in receipt of a Chromebook via the Connecting Scotland initiative which was rolled out during lockdown. We are continuing to redistribute these devices to pupils most in need (financial hardship, sharing devices at home, attending college or Foundation Apprenticeships).

• THEME 2: QUALITY OF TEACHING

Our teaching is underpinned by our vision and values – through mutual respect, shared responsibility, and increased resilience. Using our 6 Aspects of Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, the purpose of what and why we are teaching and learning is clear, pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations and supported accordingly to meet those challenges; effective questioning is used to promote oracy and higher order thinking skills, encouraging engagement, and evidencing learning at all levels. Assessments and feedback are given to aid progression and help pupils understand and lead their next steps in learning.

Here at Portlethen Academy, we have a calendar of quality assurance and self-evaluation which help us reflect on our practice and through direct observation, triangulate with other evidence to measure how good our learning provision is and inform our improvement priorities. Staff observations form part of this process, with observations happening between colleagues to share good practice and identify areas for improvement. Principal Teachers of Faculties and members of the Senior Leadership Team also carry out observations to work together to ensure a consistent high standard of learning and teaching is understood and maintained.

LEARNING, TEACHING & ASSESSMENT BULLETINS

Termly bulletins are shared with a variety of ways in which staff can access professional reading and research on pedagogical theories which, with practical examples, staff can use to inform their practice.

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Learning, Teaching & Assessment Bulletin | Term 1 2023 / 24 | Introductory Bulletin (no specific focus)

<p>Something to share</p> <p>Accelerate. A display board is now on the wall beside the library door/display windows. It recognises our partnership with The Wood Foundation - their investment in staff professional development, engaging with PBL & Oracy pedagogy that informs practice, building positive partnerships that enhance the experiences for our young people.</p>	<p>Something to read</p> <p>Teaching Delusion. A short article from Bruce Robertson about the importance of Learning Gain Starters. https://theteachingdelusion.com/2022/03/26/the-importance-of-learning-gain-starters/</p>	<p>Something to watch</p> <p>The Power of Crew. Crew is the structure that informed our Clans. https://eeducation.org/resources/we-are-crew-chapter-1-creating-a-culture-of-crew Shortcut to 12 minute video: https://vimeo.com/423825675</p>
<p>Something to listen to</p> <p>Questioning in the Classroom. Kate Jones and Michael Chiles, representing Evidence Based Education. Teachers ask questions every lesson, every day so it's important to make sure that teachers and students are asking the right questions to move learning forward. Recording can be found here. (50 minutes)</p>	<p>Something to do</p> <p>Core Thinking Routines. Try one of the Core Thinking Routines in your classroom. Some of these routines are similar to AifL techniques and Oracy and some will suit different contexts better than others. https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines</p>	<p>Digital ditties</p> <p>Twitter follow: @ImpactWales Digital technology to enhance LTA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plickrs Formative assessment in a snapshot • AnswerGarden • Mentimeter • Digilearn

I like, I notice, I wonder... if you have any thoughts to share on any aspect on this term's bulletin, please leave a comment in '[bulletin@lether](#)'

Session 23/24

Term 1 – introductory bulletin with a general focus

Term 2 – “Purpose” with a focus Project-Based Learning

Term 3a – “Challenge & Support” with a focus on differentiation (pre-mid-term)

Term 3b – “Evidence of Learning” with a focus on Oracy (post mid-term)

Term 4a – “Assessment” with a focus on AifL and Assessment as Planning

Term 4b – “Feedback” (change of timetable)



STAFF CLPL

Career-Long Professional Learning linked to Learning, Teaching and Assessment is valued and encouraged at all levels.

Opportunities for staff include:

- **Staff Leadership Group:** The purpose of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Leadership Group is to lead, develop and share good practice in learning, teaching and assessment across the school. This involves action planning towards collegiate sessions, differentiation, project-based learning, Oracy Leads, digital technologies/literacy and more.
- **Project-Based Learning:** has included 2-day intensive PBL training provided by The Wood Foundation as part of our Excelerate partnership. All staff have completed PBL ‘Splash’ introductory session and 11 staff have completed 2-day intensive PBL101 workshops.
- **Oracy:** 3 members of staff have been trained in Oracy, 2 of whom are now being trained as trainers. These staff have responsibility to cascade the training to rest of staff in school.
- **Professional Reading Group:** meet once a month to discuss professional reading.
- **LTA Bulletin:** as explained on page 6.

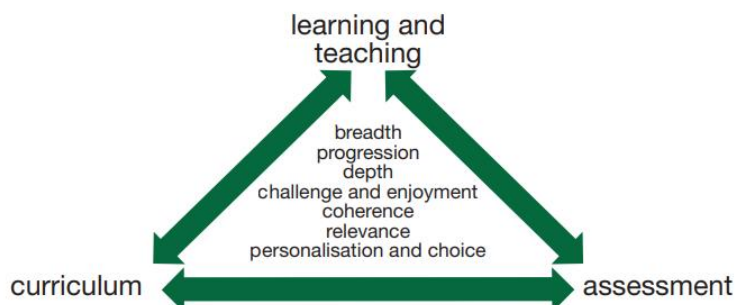
The staff who have had formal training in PBL and Oracy then lead in-house sessions as part of our “Lunch ‘n’ Learn” series within our whole-school CLPL calendar.

Staff are encouraged to attend a variety of CLPL sessions linked to their classroom practice and areas of interest – at school, authority, and national level.

Focus areas for CLPL are generated from self-evaluation evidence such as faculty PRD summaries, observations, and development areas identified through our annual surveys. All staff are involved in identifying areas of strong practice to be shared with colleagues.

• THEME 3: EFFECTIVE USE OF ASSESSMENT

A coherent approach to planning the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment is necessary, as illustrated in the following diagram:



In order to gather good quality evidence of learners' progress through relevant experiences, staff will plan to use a range of approaches that reflect the breadth, challenge and application of learning and the wide range of skills being developed. The active involvement of children and young people in assessment is essential to ensure they have a well-developed sense of ownership of their learning and help one another.

Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment. Pg.6. (2011)

Assessment approaches should help learners to show their progress through the levels and enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways which are appropriate to learning. For learners to demonstrate that their progress is secure and that they have achieved a level, they will need opportunities to show that they:

- have achieved a breadth of learning across the experiences and outcomes for an aspect of the curriculum.
- can respond to the level of challenge set out in the experiences and outcomes and are moving forward to more challenging learning in some aspects.
- can apply what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations.

Teachers can use these three aspects to decide when a learner has met agreed expectations and achieved a level, either in a part of a curriculum area such as reading, or in a whole curriculum area. (BtC5. Pg.12)

Principles of assessment

The principles of Curriculum for Excellence apply to assessment in a way that achieves coherence across experiences and outcomes, learning and teaching and assessment practice. Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. It helps to provide a picture of a child's or young person's progress and achievements and to identify next steps in learning. Assessment approaches need to promote learner engagement and ensure appropriate support so that all learners can achieve their aspirational goals and maximise their potential. (BtC5. Pg.18)



In Portlethen Academy, staff use a variety of assessment approaches to inform next steps in both learning and teaching. Assessments, both formative and summative, are used as a tool to aid planning and gauge understanding.

Formative assessment strategies, such as AifL (Assessment is for Learning) techniques are embedded into classroom practice, to aid planning and next steps. Further supported by more formal, summative assessments such as end of topic tests, together allow for shared understanding between teacher and pupil as to what has been achieved and what is needed to make further progress.

Our BGE Curriculum Map (due for publication May 2024) will show when key assessments and homework will take place in each subject and highlight what can be accessed by pupils and parents to support the preparation for these. Assessment is ongoing throughout the Broad General phase and is a continuous process which influences the goals set for your child.

Throughout the year, staff take part in moderation of coursework, benchmarks, and assessments. This is done through a variety of channels – within their own faculty, more widely across the school, with Cluster schools, and subject-specific networks within the authority and nationally, ensuring we have a shared understanding of standards.

Pupils move through the curriculum at their own pace. A wide range of assessment techniques are used in school depending on what is being assessed and the reason for the assessment e.g:

- Observation of what the pupils “say”, “write” and “do”.
- Homework
- Self and peer assessments
- Marking of class work and other individual/class assessments
- Ongoing tracking and monitoring procedures in school
- National Standardised Assessments for Scotland (P1, P4, P7 and S3)

Progress will be evidenced using a variety of approaches that best reflect the learning that has taken place and will track the skills that your child or young person is developing.

Staff have opportunities to moderate within Faculties, across school, cluster, and authority which helps gain a shared understanding of standards. The [moderation cycle](#) will continue to prompt professional discussion, ensuring standards and learning needs are met.

- **THEME 4: PLANNING, TRACKING & MONITORING**

Through the cyclical process whereby assessment informs planning and teaching, assessment is continuous with formative approaches used daily as well as summative at key points in learning. Classroom teachers continually track pupil progress which feeds into the more formal tracking and reporting points throughout the year.

The results of children's achievements are discussed with them regularly so that they are involved in taking responsibility for their own learning. This may take the form of oral discussion and/or written comment. In this way, it is hoped to assist the pupil identify what has been learned and the next steps to their learning. Children regularly set targets in their work.

Parents will be informed of progress:

- through parent consultation evenings and other meetings
- through curriculum/learning events/parent workshops
- by tracking reports (2) and a full written report (1) annually with clearly identified strengths and next steps
- Individual Education Plans and associated documents

In the Senior Phase pupils embark on the National Qualifications. As pupils enter this phase, they are set an aspirational target grade for each subject they are studying. This forms the basis for learning conversations between staff and pupils to discuss progress and identify next steps. This is shared with parents/carers through Tracking Reports.

The school has an established procedure to monitor and evaluate learners' progress throughout the BGE as well as across the Senior Phase. These procedures see staff record and facilitate data analysis that allows them to identify development needs and next steps.

Next Steps:

An appendix will follow, from collaboration with Pupils, Staff and Parents/Carers to define our 6 Aspects of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment further in terms of roles, responsibilities and expectations as a visual appendix.

- **UPDATES**

Update: November 2023

Whole Staff Inset – gathering of high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment practices. Triangulation of those statements, data from 2.3 statement Faculty RAGs, and observations.

Update: December 2023

Authority Quality Improvement visit and the creation of ‘6 aspects of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment’.

Update: January 2024

6 Aspects of LTA shared and agreed by pupils (PPAG; 18th January 2024) and parents (Parent Council; 30th January 2024)

Update: February 2024

WOW (Ways Of Working) boxes – members of the Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Leadership Group spoke with the wider staff to find out what resources would be helpful to have in the classroom for pupils to access whenever they needed in order to help make them leaders of their own learning.

Curriculum Map – reviewed by all Faculties to give full overview to BGE curriculum, allowing opportunities for IDL or shared responsibility of outcomes.