

The Curricula for Dummies

This handout gives a flavour of the current **curricula** in the UK.

National Curriculum in Scotland – The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

1. What's statutory and what's not

The CfE aims to ensure that young people (aged 3-18) develop the knowledge, skills and attributes related to the **four capacities**: being a **successful learner**, **confident individual**, **responsible citizen** and an **effective contributor**. The CfE develops the skills needed for life, work and learning. Schools must include **experiences and outcomes** from all 8 curriculum areas, and at different levels for each age group, meaning learning has to be cross-curricular and interdisciplinary.

- and what this means for museums

Museum learning can't just be about delivering a Romans workshop anymore, it's has to include learning points that are cross-curricular and look to develop the 'whole child'.

2. What teachers are really doing

Primary schools have really taken CfE on board. Learning is pupil-led, lessons are cross-curricular, and pupils are familiar with the four capacities. Whilst there is lots of good practice in secondary schools, it has been more difficult for teachers to fully engage with the CfE, given that learning still takes place in a subject specific and exam-led environment.

- and what this means for museums

Working with schools, museums have been able to develop their learning programmes using the CfE's language, outcomes and experiences. Museums are also able to provide projects that are interdisciplinary and reach beyond school boundaries of timetables, departments etc, meaning they can be catalysts for CfE projects.

3. Key skills

There are 8 curriculum areas: Expressive arts, Health and Wellbeing, Languages, Mathematics, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Studies, Technologies. Across each of these areas there are experiences and outcomes, which list the skills, knowledge and attributes for each stage and in each area.

- and what this means for museums

Traditionally, learning in museums sat within the social studies curriculum area. Now, one museum workshop can reach across a number of different curriculum areas.

4. Most relevant programmes of study

In CfE, schools still study topics such as the Romans which will include the usual historical research, knowledge building, etc. However, it will also include literacy and numeracy outcomes, as well as perhaps technologies, expressive arts, and so on. Museums can therefore fit into a whole range of programmes of study.

- and what this means for museums

Resources museums provide for schools have to be much more flexible and geared to developing more than just knowledge of a topic.

5. What is likely to happen over the next 5 years

New qualifications for Secondary schools will change the way the CfE works across different departments. The push for schools to focus on all things Scottish will continue towards the referendum in 2014.

- and what this means for museums

Museums will need to keep up to date with the way the curriculum is being used and delivered in schools, and organisations like GEM can help them do that!

6. Further information

- www.educationscotland.gov.uk/
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Scotland

National Curriculum in England

1. What's statutory and what's not

Statutory: at Key Stages 1-3 – art and design, design and technology, English, geography, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, music, physical education, science and religious education. At KS3 modern foreign languages and citizenship also become statutory (also modern foreign languages at KS2 from 2014). At KS4 compulsory subjects are English, maths, science, ICT, PE, citizenship, religious education, sex education and careers education. ICT has recently been 'disapplied': it's still statutory but is integrated rather than a discrete subject.

Not statutory: at KS1-2 – PSHE and citizenship; at KS3-4 personal wellbeing, economic wellbeing and financial capability, and the optional subjects at KS4 (although schools do have to offer a range of 'entitlement' subjects at GCSE). From 2012 secondary schools no longer have to provide 'work-related learning'.

Exemptions: Academies, free schools and independent schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum but need to provide a 'broad and balanced' curriculum, and are still inspected by Ofsted.

- and what this means for museums

Museums need to be aware of curriculum links, so that they do not expend time and resources on subjects which might only appeal to minority audiences, such as option subjects at KS4. Of course museum visits themselves are not statutory so need to be seen as enhancement activities. Nevertheless the Historical Association found that 86% of respondents to its primary teaching survey used museum and heritage visits to develop their pupils' understanding of the past.

2. What teachers are really doing

Although the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) no longer exists many teachers are still using its schemes of work, such as 'How did life change in our locality in Victorian times?' (KS2). However in reality schools have the flexibility to teach the curriculum through a variety of approaches, such as the International Primary Curriculum. Perhaps the more innovative schools will be more likely to depart from the older schemes of work.

- and what this means for museums

At primary level, the potential for cross-curricular work (a major selling point of museum visits) is greater than at secondary level, as one teacher is responsible for the whole curriculum. As a rule of thumb, the degree of relevance of the collections to specific areas of the curriculum will be what leads a new teacher to book a visit, but the quality of the experience will lead to repeat bookings.

3. Key skills

At the root of the National Curriculum are core knowledge and skills linked to attainment levels. For instance, the central elements of the history curriculum cover chronology, knowledge and understanding, historical enquiry, historical interpretation and organisation. The DfE has said it will retain these in the 2014 curriculum although the mode of delivery may be freed up.

- and what this means for museums

Although teachers are required to cover these core skills, school visits still tend to be decided by subject links. In practice, therefore, a museum needs to attract school visits by subject relevance (e.g. 'The Victorians') but ensure that the core skills are being covered. Therefore, within a 'Victorians' visit there must be opportunities for historical enquiry, and assessment of a range of different interpretations of history, as well as central literacy skills such as 'speaking and listening' and as wide a range as possible of other core skills across the curriculum.

4. What is likely to happen over the next 5 years

The DfE is currently reviewing the English national curriculum, with changes due for implementation in September 2014. The government has said that the key skills of the curriculum will remain in place, but that the curriculum will be more flexible, and that free schools and academies will not need to adhere to it. An increasing number of primary schools already follow separate schemes such as the International Primary Curriculum. Nevertheless Michael Gove has been indicating that he prefers a return to factual content, which seems slightly at odds with the move towards greater flexibility. At KS4 the English Baccalaureate is to replace GCSEs and there may be implications for optional subjects such as history, with fewer specialist teachers needed and the subsequent reduction in exam capability.

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- and what this means for museums

At this stage it is very difficult to plan as the changes have not been agreed. However, the teaching profession is a juggernaut and it will probably take years for them to leave the well-tried National Curriculum which they have been using for the past 20 years.

5. Further information

- www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_England#Curriculum
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Curriculum_\(England,_Wales_and_Northern_Ireland\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Curriculum_(England,_Wales_and_Northern_Ireland))

National Curriculum in Wales

1. What's statutory and what's not

The National Curriculum for 3 – 19 year olds in Wales was revised in 2008.

The Foundation Phase is the curriculum for 3 to 7-year-olds. It encourages children to be creative, imaginative and to have fun, making learning more enjoyable and more effective. There are 7 areas of learning – Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity; Language, Literacy and Communication Skills; Mathematical Development; Welsh Language Development; Knowledge and Understanding of the World; Physical Development; Creative Development

Key Stage 2: Welsh, English, Mathematics, Science, Music, Information and Communication Technology, Design and technology, History, Geography, Art and design, Physical education, Religious Education

Key Stage 3: All of the above plus Modern foreign languages.

Key Stage 4: Welsh, English, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, Religious Education and 'option' subjects

The following are also statutory elements of the national curriculum in Wales across all key stages –

Skills across the curriculum – developing thinking, communication, ICT and number

Learning across the curriculum – Curriculum Cymreig (7-14); Wales, Europe and the World (14-19); Personal and social education (7-19); Careers and the world of work (11-19)

Welsh Baccalaureate – a qualification for 14 – 19 year old students in Wales. Not compulsory at the moment, however most secondary schools offer this.

Exemptions: Independent schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum but need to provide a curriculum made up of the following areas - Linguistics, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Humanities and social science, Physical exercise, Aesthetic and creative – and are still inspected by Estyn.

- and what this means for museums

Museums need to be aware of curriculum links and need to adapt their sessions to take into account the skills framework and identify where their collections / sessions fit into areas like 'Curriculum Cymreig' and 'Wales, Europe and the World'. When describing your work show teachers how a visit meets the curriculum requirements e.g. use the same language that's used in the curriculum documents. Some subject documents suggest that students visit galleries / museums – be aware of these references in documents. Talk to teachers about areas of the curriculum that they find difficult – quite often museums can help with this.

2. What teachers are really doing

Schools have the flexibility to teach the curriculum through a variety of approaches and use a range of schemes of work. Talk to teachers and ask them which scheme of work they follow. Most visits continue to be subject specific e.g. tudors, science / adaptation, celts however teachers appreciate that museum learning which is enquiry based meets many of the requirements of the skills framework. They appreciate sessions where pupils can handle objects and when developing skills underpin the visit e.g. developing scientific enquiry through a museum visit. Some schools are very specific when they describe what they want to achieve from a museum visit e.g. how do we know the celts existed? Most secondary visits are subject specific and they respond very well to special days which have been designed for them e.g. A level study day. Some schools suspend the timetable for a day or a week and might bring a whole year group to the museum, usually focusing on one theme.

- and what this means for museums

Subject relevance is important but so is what they can do on site.

In History at Key stage 2 for example schools have to either study

- *The Celts or the Romans*

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- Age of the Princes, Tudors or Stuarts
- Nineteenth Century
- Two contrasting periods of the twentieth century

The quality and the curriculum relevance of the on site experience is crucial. Teachers appreciate any resources that museums can produce for them and value information, web links and ideas for follow on work back at school. Some teachers like resources that they can adapt themselves to meet their own needs, however others prefer something that they can use immediately.

3. Key skills

'Skills Framework for 3 – 19 year olds in Wales' is the key document that outlines the requirement for skills development (developing thinking, communication, number and ICT) across all subjects. In History at KS 2 pupils have to be given opportunities to develop chronological awareness, their historical knowledge and understanding and interpretations of history. In Art and design at KS2 pupils have to be given opportunities to develop their Understanding, Investigating and Making skills.

- and what this means for museums

Although teachers are required to integrate the development of these skills across all subjects, school visits to museums tend to be led by subjects rather than skills. In practice, therefore, a museum needs to attract school visits by subject relevance (e.g. Celts) but ensure that the skills are integral to any session / resources. Therefore within a Celts session there must be opportunities for developing chronological awareness, for questioning interpretations of history as well as developing thinking and communication skills.

4. What is likely to happen over the next 5 years

- The Welsh Government (WG) and for Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews, has made it clear that the over-riding priorities for Education are Literacy and Numeracy, together with breaking the link between poverty and underachievement. It seems extremely likely that these will continue to be the key priorities for the WG – at least until the elections in 4 years' time.
- It remains to be seen how the difference in priorities between the DfE in England and the DfES/WG will play out in Wales – but WG rhetoric suggests a stronger emphasis on skills in the next few years. The role/posts of subject advisers appear to be changing in favour of posts with a more general emphasis i.e. on School Improvement, and also through literacy and numeracy advisers.
- In the light of the (mandatory) new National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF), the WG is reviewing programmes of study and subject contents for National Curriculum subjects at all key stages – both for content and skills. First phase report expected in 2013: Implementation expected from September 2014. The Minister has recently established a task and finish group to look at the teaching of history in school (which includes a museum representative). Another group is looking at Arts in Schools which appears to signal a determination to further differentiate England and Wales.
- The emphasis on Welsh medium education and bilingualism continues.
- Whilst the WG remains committed to the Welsh Baccalaureate, changes in university admissions to focus on subject grades, rather than points may in time have knock on effect on WB popularity in Wales.
- NIACE (England and Wales) is conducting review of Family Learning in 2013.

- and what this means for museums

- *Museums with the capacity to offer sessions through the medium of Welsh and/or bilingually may want to stress this in marketing materials. Museums may want to explore with teachers, the literacy and numeracy potential of their collections / exhibitions / programmes in light of the new Literacy, Numeracy Frameworks.*
- *Both the Minister for Education and Skills and Huw Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage, have a strong interest in addressing child poverty (e.g. the Welsh Minister is addressing an MA conference workshop on the role of cultural participation). Publicly funded museums may be encouraged to respond to the agenda e.g. by developing strategy to address child poverty; removing barriers to visiting (e.g. waiving charges, delivering outreach to schools which have difficulty with transport costs), targeting particular groups such as schools in Communities First areas and/or high Free Schools Meal eligibility/uptake, or other disadvantaged groups, such as Looked After Children (i.e. fostered or in care); working in partnership with key organisations in this field and/or aiming to improve attainment.*
- *The development of the WG-funded 'Hwb' from 2013 – the digital portal for schools learning materials – and changes/development in the People's Collection Wales, it is likely that there will be an increased emphasis on e-learning in schools - and hopefully offering opportunities to museums.*

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5. Further information

- <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/?lang=en>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Wales

National Curriculum in Northern Ireland

1. What's statutory and what's not

- Statutory at primary level: Religious education; language and literacy; mathematics and numeracy; the arts; the world around us; personal development and mutual understanding; physical education.
- Statutory at post primary level: Learning for life and work (employability, personal development, local and global citizenship, home economics - KS3); religious education, language and literacy; mathematics and numeracy; modern languages; the arts; environment and society; physical education; science and technology.
- At Key Stage 4, the statutory requirements have been reduced to Learning for Life and Work, PE, RE and developing skills and capabilities.

- and what this means for museums

- *Museums develop their learning resources around these areas of study.*
- *The most relevant programmes for museums are mathematics and numeracy, the arts, the world around us, personal development and mutual understanding, local and global citizenship, environment and society, science and technology.*

2. Key skills

- Key skills are managing information, self management, being creative, problem solving, working with others, communication, using mathematics, using ICT.

- and what this means for museums

- *These skills can be nurtured by museums through the use of interactive learning resources, learning packs, tours and workshops.*

3. Further information

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Northern_Ireland
- www.nicurriculum.org.uk/

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What makes museums such special places to learn?

Since 2003, *Inspiring Learning for All (ILfA)* has identified and promoted **Generic Learning Outcomes** not just for school visits but for any museum experience. These fall into 5 categories:

- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Attitudes and Values
- Enjoyment, inspiration & creativity
- Activity, behaviour & progression

.. and many museum services and science centres find this an altogether more holistic and grounded approach to planning galleries, programmes and publicity where learning is an explicit aspiration. See: <http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplates/genericlearning/index.html>

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November 2012