

Bonnyrigg  
Primary School



Social Studies  
Policy

## Rationale

1. To ensure that there is a clear understanding of the development of Social Studies within our school as required by A Curriculum for Excellence.
2. To ensure that there is coherence, consistency and continuity in our Social Studies programme.
3. To take account of the provision of resources and the management of these resources including staff development.
4. To ensure that activities are appropriate to the educational needs of all pupils.

In Scotland a Curriculum for Excellence provides a seamless curriculum for children from ages of 3 to 18 years. This enables our children to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

Our curriculum takes account of all the experiences that learners can have through learning both in school and outwith school recognising and making connections between the four different contexts for learning through:

- the ethos and life of the school as a community
- curriculum areas and subjects
- interdisciplinary learning
- opportunities for personal achievement.

Our curriculum has been designed on the basis of the following principles:

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

Social studies experiences and outcomes are designed to encourage links with other areas of the curriculum to provide learners with a deeper, more enjoyable and active experience. Active citizenship is a central feature of learning in social studies for children and young people, developing skills and knowledge to enable and encourage participation. Social studies offer opportunities for children and young people to become involved in their local community and the wider world and are therefore an important vehicle for opportunities to consider and develop their role as active and informed citizens.

It is important that all staff teaching social studies look for opportunities to develop and reinforce social studies knowledge and skills within their teaching activities and plan interdisciplinary studies including a coherent approach to the development of literacy, numeracy, citizenship, creativity, enterprise and sustainability.

Active experiential learning is the best way for children to understand concepts and retain knowledge. The environment provides a context for learning. Pupils should be given opportunities to both learn about the world around them and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to interpret it. Experiences in Social Studies should be continuous, coherent and progressive. Our Social Studies Framework aims to ensure progressive development of the children's knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live and also to develop a wide range of skills in order to investigate and comprehend the environment acquiring practical abilities for day to day living. The development of informed attitudes should permeate all that we do.

Children and young people as they participate in experiences and outcomes in social studies will:

- develop their understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of their local and national heritage within the world
- broaden their understanding of the world by learning about human activities and achievements in the past and present
- develop their understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures and those of others
- develop an understanding of the principles of democracy and citizenship through
- experience of critical and independent thinking
- explore and evaluate different types of sources and evidence
- learn how to locate, explore and link periods, people and events in time and place
- learn how to locate, explore and link features and places locally and further afield
- engage in activities which encourage enterprising attitudes
- develop an understanding of concepts that encourage enterprise and influence business establish firm foundations for lifelong learning and for further specialised study and careers.

(Curriculum for Excellence)

## Social Studies Experiences and Outcomes

The study of Social Subjects is central to our pupils' understanding of their place in the world. The experiences and outcomes have been structured under the three main organisers:

- People, past events and societies
- People, place and environment
- People in society, economy and business.

Detailed information on these features can be found in the Social Subjects section of Curriculum for Excellence

## Methodology

### *Skills development*

The development of skills is an essential aspect of active learning in social studies and the experiences and outcomes should provide frequent opportunities for the development of these skills. Terms such as 'investigating', 'exploring', 'discussing' and 'presenting' are used throughout the experiences and outcomes from Early to Fourth Level. Pupils will develop these skills progressively by applying them in new and more complex contexts.

Social studies skills development includes:

- observing, describing and recording
- comparing and contrasting to draw valid conclusions
- exploring and evaluating different types of sources and evidence
- development of curiosity and problem solving skills and capacity to take initiatives interacting with others and developing an awareness of self and others
- planning and reviewing investigation strategies
- developing the capacity for critical thinking through accessing, analysing and using information from a wide variety of sources
- discussion and informed debate
- developing reasoned and justified points of view
- developing and using maps in a variety of contexts
- developing and applying skills in interpreting and displaying graphical representation of information
- developing an awareness of sequence and chronology
- presentation skills – oral, written, multimedia.

Teachers will support children and young people as they progressively develop these skills by applying them in new and more complex contexts. Skills are to be regarded as a continuum and should not be 'capped' at any particular level. The professional judgment of teachers is essential in ensuring that individual learners are faced with the appropriate level of challenge in developing skills.

In social studies, effective learning and teaching will draw upon a variety of approaches including:

- planned active learning with opportunities to observe, explore, experiment and play
- use of relevant contexts, familiar to children and young people's experiences
- appropriate and effective use of technology
- building on the principles of Assessment is for Learning
- collaborative and independent learning
- discussion and debate
- interdisciplinary learning experiences
- learning outdoors, field trips, visits and external contributors.

### Social Studies Framework

To enable us to cover the full range of experiences and outcomes in a balanced way which shows progression a Social Studies Framework has been created for use from Early to Third Levels across the Lasswade ASG which has bundled the Experiences and Outcomes.

This can be accessed on the Main Server in the Planning Folder, marked Social Studies.

The minimum expectation is that all classes will experience two bundles in the year from their expected level. This will mean that all bundles of experiences and outcomes will have been experienced across the level over a three year period. Teachers will tick the column for their year stage when the Benchmarks have been *experienced*. The Framework is not to be used as a 'ticksheet' but as a Planning, Tracking and Transition document which will follow a class as they progress through the levels.

It is important to note that the Social Studies Framework is intended to be used flexibly to allow us to be responsive to current events, pupil's interests, abilities and aptitudes, experiences and prior learning. It is essential to take cognizance of previous experiences and contexts for learning. There are *suggested* contexts for learning – if you choose another context, this should be recorded in the document for subsequent teachers in order to avoid repetition. In the Second Level Planner, the contexts used at Lasswade High School are included in order to avoid replication across Second and Third Levels.

A Skills Focus for each level is also included in the Framework.

## Assessment and Moderation

Assessment involves the collecting of information on which judgements are made about pupils' progress and the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The broader features of assessment in social studies are clearly outlined in Curriculum for Excellence. To summarise, the purpose of assessment is:

- to identify pupils' strengths, attainments and development needs
- to decide on the next steps
- to provide effective feedback to pupils
- to allow effective reporting

Teachers must engage in effective gathering of evidence of learning. Examples from across the four contexts of learning including day to day learning, standardised assessments and planned holistic assessment.

Assessment sheets should use Traffic Lights to show progress against selected Benchmarks. These are included in the Social Studies Planning Folder on the Main Server. These allow effective reporting to parents, other staff and other schools when required. Pupil Profiles and collections of work in LAC Jotters are also records in themselves and should be titled. Underlined and dated, with the Learning Intention displayed and with Feedback comments according to the Bonnyrigg Presentation Policy.

Using this evidence and teacher professional judgement, teachers will make informed decisions using the Social Studies Benchmarks about whether a learner has:

- achieved a breadth of learning across the knowledge, understanding and skills as set out in the experiences and outcomes for the level
- responded consistently well to the level of challenge set out in the experiences and outcomes for the level and has moved forward to learning at the next level in some aspects
- demonstrated application of what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations

in order to achieve a level in Social Studies.

## Other Information

In the Social Studies Planning Folder located on the Main Server are documents to support the planning and assessment of Social Studies.

These include:

- Suggested **Say, Make, Write, Do Assessment Activities**: a series of suggested assessments for Modern Studies, History and Geography.
- **A Guide to...Modern Studies/Geography/History**: handy hints and tips from the staff at Lasswade High School on the teaching of these key curricular areas.
- **A Community Partners List**: a list of partners and groups in the local community who can support learning in Social Studies and support the development of citizenship.

The Social Subjects Experiences and Outcomes as well as information on principles and practice are available on the Learning and Teaching Scotland Website.

Further examples of good practice in the teaching of Social Studies can be accessed on the Education Scotland Website.