

Introduction

Authority:	South Lanarkshire
Case Study Focus:	Curriculum Design
Establishments:	Calderglen High School, East Kilbride/associated primaries
Learners' stage/s:	P6-S6

About the educational establishment and the learners

Calderglen High School was established after the merger of Hunter High school and Claremont High School in East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire. It serves approximately 1,600 young people from 11 – 18 years. Calderglen High School shares its campus with Sanderson High School, a school catering for learners with additional support needs. The staff and young people of both establishments work closely together.

HMI has described the quality of learning and achievement at Calderglen High School as “particularly high”. Many of its young people enjoy successes in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities and the school recognises achievement through a range of accredited awards. The majority of learners from Calderglen High School move on to further study, employment or training on leaving school.

[Calderglen High School – Inspection Report](#)

Background

In December 2012, Calderglen High School was the first secondary school whose curriculum was evaluated as “excellent” by HMI, following the introduction of the increased expectations.

Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages made the following comment:

“Calderglen is a fantastic example of how the new curriculum will benefit learners across Scotland as they learn in new and exciting ways, across subjects to develop the knowledge and skills they need for the jobs of the future.”

Underpinning language learning in Calderglen High School, is the clear rationale behind the school's sector leading curriculum design. In [this video clip](#) from Education Scotland, former head teacher, Tony McDaid, talks about developing the rationale for the curriculum.

Progressing towards the “1+ 2 Approach”

Most children in Calderglen High School's associated primary schools study French from primary 6, but in some cases language learning starts as early as primary 5. In addition, a number of learners from the Gaelic Medium Unit at Mount Cameron Primary School enrol at Calderglen High School.

All learners continue to study the language they have studied at primary school until the end of S3. In addition to this, they have the opportunity to study more languages by choosing options at the end of S2. Languages on offer as options are French (for Gaelic medium learners), German, Gaelic beginners or Spanish. Alternatively, young people can engage with new languages in S3 through the “Languages for Life” option on the school's innovative menu of master classes. Currently, young people in the Languages for Life master class can study Spanish and Italian with plans to introduce Mandarin in the future.

[Languages for Life Masterclass](#)

Young people in Calderglen High School learn in an environment where language learning is widely regarded as a valuable skill for life and work. The Principal Teacher is keen to explore more flexible ways of achieving accreditation through further use of the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award. In the senior phase, there are strong progression routes at various NQ levels in a selection of languages.

Aims of the language learning approach

Modern language learning in Calderglen High School is shaped by a clear and unifying whole school vision:

“Working together to inspire learning and shape the future”

The school is well placed to deliver the recommendations of the 1+2 Working Group, particularly those relating to;

- Effective transition between P7 and S1
- Entitlement for all to the end of the BGE
- Developing L3 through interdisciplinary working
- Providing young people with flexible opportunities and encouragement to study more than one language in the senior phase.

Implementation

Planning

“Curriculum areas are not just for timetabling and we have the freedom to think imaginatively about how the experiences and outcomes might be organised and planned for in creative ways which encourage deep, sustained learning and which meet the needs of our children.”

Calderglen School handbook

The modern languages and Gaelic faculty has the full support of senior management and the education authority in planning provision for language learning. Within the local cluster, professional network group meetings are held four times a year giving colleagues the opportunity to share resources and approaches to language learning and teaching. Primary and secondary colleagues arrange visits between schools to learn from each other’s practice thus making transition from P7 into S1 more effective and sustainable. Continuity and progression are felt to be important principals that reinforce language study for all throughout the broad general education. This provides a solid foundation for learners to pursue language learning in the senior phase to achieve SQA accreditation.

In this video clip, Rhoda Kirkwood from Mount Cameron primary school talks about liaison between the sectors and progression from primary language learning into the secondary school.

[Mount Cameron Primary School](#)

Implementation

Modern languages are given momentum through a collaborative approach to learning. Staff members demonstrate enthusiasm for languages and actively participate in whole school language events like *European Day of Languages*.

Pupils learning through Gaelic medium are given a wealth of opportunities to celebrate wider achievement. Every year, pupils from Calderglen High School participate in the Irish-Scottish Gaelic speaking competition, *Ri Chèile*, held alternatively in Scotland and Ireland. S2 learners become journalists for a day as part of the *BBC School Report* project. They work collaboratively with a *BBC* correspondent to report on a theme of their choice. S3 pupils working towards a bronze Duke of Edinburgh award also do so in a Gaelic context.

Interest is further sustained through planned interdisciplinary projects which provide new and appealing contexts for learning. In S1, pupils learn about the Francophonie through an interdisciplinary project between modern studies and RMPS on life in the Congo. Planning is underway to introduce a similar project in the associated primaries.

At S2, all learners are released from normal timetabling for the month of May so that they can participate in a range of linked interdisciplinary activities that have “The Future” as a context. The most recent activity was planned in collaboration with home economics and concerned futuristic food choices.

[Interdisciplinary learning](#)

Partnership Working

To enhance the S1 interdisciplinary project on the Congo, the school has established links with members of the local Congolese community who visit the school to give presentations on themselves and life in the Congo. There are plans to explore links with the Congo in the senior phase through Congolese media.

Pupils also benefit from strong partnerships with the wider Gaelic-speaking community, locally and nationally, and with Gaelic-speaking media. With guidance from staff and the continued support of former pupils, senior learners lead a variety of clubs targeted at younger learners and the wider community. One such initiative is the monthly “Tea Club” which invites Gaelic speakers in the local area in to the school for refreshments and the chance to converse entirely in Gaelic with the young people. Such projects help forge good working relationships, help smooth transitions and firmly establish Gaelic as the language used between all Gaelic learners in the wider school community.

Engagement with Gaelic speakers in a range of professions continues to impact positively on learners. Young people in S1 studying the Myles Campbell novel “*Clann a’ Phroifeasair*” had the unique opportunity to take part in a Skype conference with the author, who answered their questions directly from the arts centre on the Isle of Skye. Additionally, representatives from the Gaelic college in Skye visit the school to discuss career paths with senior pupils. In preparation for the public speaking event, *Ri Chèile*, Gaelic speaking students from the islands who study at nearby establishments visit the school to work with pupils on developing their talking skills.

Impact

At Calderglen High School, staff are working hard to maintain pupil numbers post S3 following the removal of languages as a compulsory subject at S4. Pupils at all ages and stages comment positively on their learning experiences and readily testify to the benefits of studying languages.

[Pupil voice](#)

Lifelong language learners

Former pupils who have learned modern languages and Gaelic have gone on to study International Law with Languages, Dentistry with Languages, Business with Languages, Film and Television studies, Theatre Studies and Gaelic Medium Education.

Parental Feedback

Every year the school holds a P7 open evening for parents of prospective pupils. This is an opportunity for modern languages staff to engage with parents about the importance of language learning. Early and sustained engagement from primary into secondary ensures that parents and carers know the importance and benefits of language learning on a young person's future prospects.

Next Steps

Challenges

The principal teacher recognises that earlier engagement with languages in primary school will have implications for learning and teaching in the secondary school. Children and young people will become more confident and increasingly successful learners of languages. Thus, sustaining progressive programmes of study throughout the BGE and into the senior phase will be a challenge for the modern languages and Gaelic faculty.

The faculty is keen to attract more young people into studying languages at NQ level and has identified the need to continue to build on the good practice established in the BGE. Possible challenges include creating increasingly flexible pathways for progression, sustaining challenge and enjoyment, and offering a wider range of languages.

Next Steps

The faculty identified the following steps as key to the continuing success of the 1+2 policy at Calderglen High School:

- Continue to work closely with primary colleagues
- Establish links with businesses in the senior phase
- Introduce more opportunities for the Languages for Life and Work Award
- Introduce residential language learning experiences
- Consolidate new NQ courses