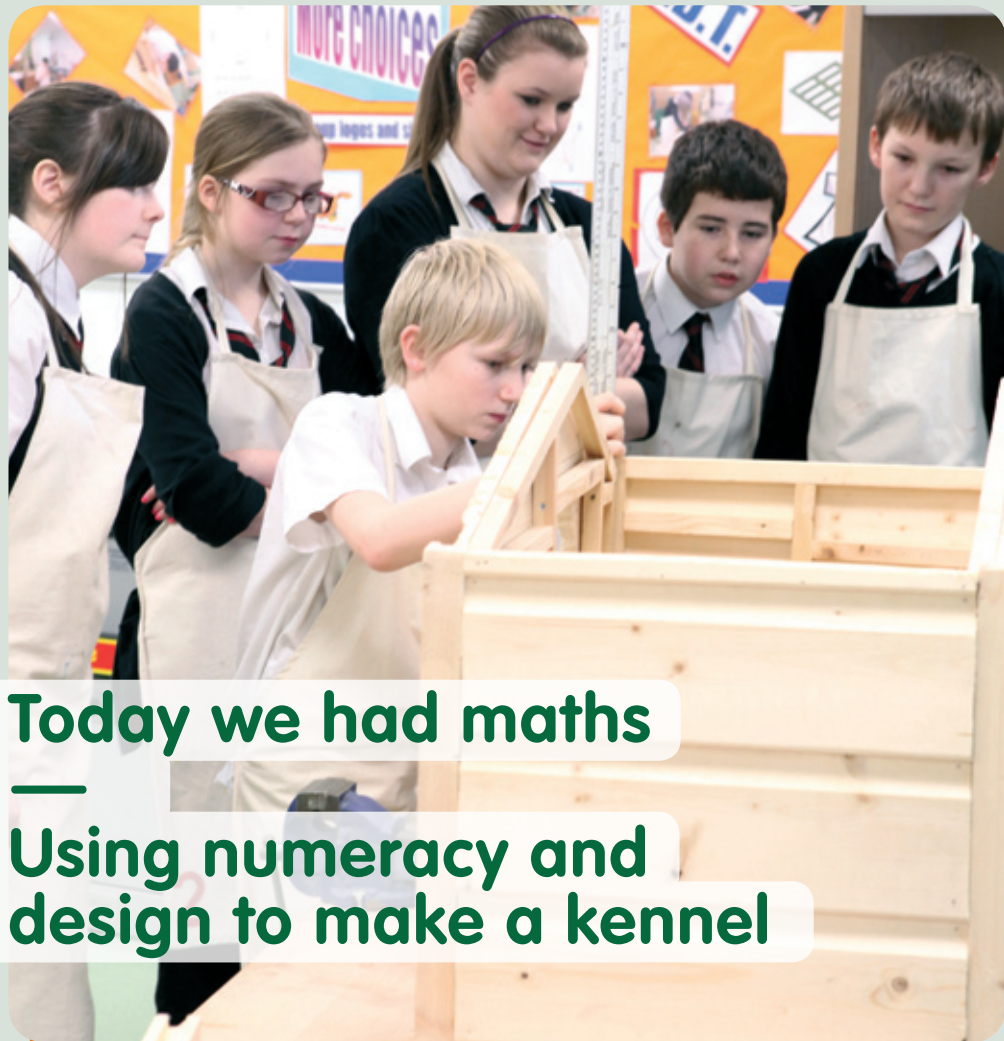


For parents and carers: Secondary and beyond



**Today we had maths**

**Using numeracy and design to make a kennel**

Curriculum for Excellence in action

**Bringing life to learning and learning to life**

**'Kennel Club' project at  
Deans Community High School,  
Livingston**

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# Bringing life to learning and learning to life

When the headteacher announced that a small group of us were going to do a joint maths and design project and build a few kennels and learn how to market them some of the class laughed but I thought 'cool'.

My Uncle Bob and Auntie May run boarding kennels near Falkirk and they do really well. People in this country love their pets and love their holidays – that's a  $2 + 2$  that really equals 4 in my book. So I got right into it. And so did the other S2 lot once we got started.



A home for my  
pet Westie

A lesson in collaborative  
health and safety

An exercise in profit  
and labour costs

Joining wood, metal,  
physics and maths

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# Raising standards

As it turned out the kennels we were designing and building were classic Snoopy kennels to put out in the yard. But there's big business in that – just look at all those pet stores in retail parks across Scotland. Who would have thought maths could make me money? I might even take it as a Higher now. We also used maths skills to price up the job and work out what we'd charge to cover costs and labour and make a profit. We've always been told that the area of a circle is  $\pi r^2$ , who would have believed we would actually be using it to build a kennel?

# Improving knowledge

There were lots of different elements to the project starting with basic calculations for the construction of the kennels – perimeters, areas and volumes of rectilinear shapes. We learned which tools to use in carpentry and how to look after them, oil them and wipe them down – that kind of thing.

Then we learned all the joinery skills and techniques like cutting and fitting, framing and jointing as well as testing.

And we learned about health and safety. I know for a lot of people that brings on a groan but it's pretty important when you could lose your fingers if you're not careful.



## Curriculum for Excellence in a nutshell

Curriculum for Excellence is about bringing life to learning and learning to life. It has been introduced to raise standards of learning and teaching and help improve our children's life chances.

It focuses on the importance of knowledge and skills. It offers a broad and deep general education to S3 with options in the senior phase. It promotes the ability to learn – a skill for life that will help young people go on to further study, to secure work and to navigate through life.

It brings real life into the classroom and takes lessons beyond the classroom.

It promises to support young people in every way possible so that they can fulfil their potential and make the most of their opportunities.

All those working with children and young people will be responsible for delivering skills in literacy and numeracy – skills that unlock other subjects and are vital in everyday life.

All staff will be responsible for young people's health and wellbeing and for identifying the personal support a young person needs on a day-to-day basis. Parents can ask for help too.

Staff will work together to plan a child's 'learning journey' from 3 to 18. They will ensure young people can learn in a way that works for them, at a pace they can cope with and with enough challenge to stretch them. Staff will support them as they move up from nursery to primary, on to secondary and beyond.

There are new ways of assessing progress and ensuring young people achieve their best. There will be new National 4 and 5 qualifications from 2013/2014, replacing the Standard Grade and Intermediate 1 and 2. Our well-regarded Access, Highers and Advanced Highers will be updated.

Professionals can teach subjects more creatively, work together and with others, and share best practice, ideas and innovation.

Ultimately, the aim is to improve our children's achievements and life chances, to nurture successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens.



## Fact file

'Kennel Club' was a numeracy across learning project that involved a small group of S2 pupils from Deans Community High School in Livingston.

The project was planned around numeracy, design, engineering and construction.

It included active learning experiences, learning together, construction and joinery skills, design, maths, marketing and the use of ICT.

It combined numeracy concepts and skills needed for SQA modules at levels 3 and 4.

## What it means for parents

I was amazed when Ali told me about the kennel project. It sounded great, bringing together joinery and maths in such a real way. Really different and really practical. Ali loves dogs so that helped, but that's not really the point.

It can be scary being a parent... watching and helping your children make choices. Ali will be picking qualifications this year. And it's getting harder in this fast-changing world to know what's best. Who would have thought when I was at school that we'd all be using the internet on our phones, and now every school in the land is connected and shares ideas through an online system called Glow!

There's no such thing as a job for life now and there's no way of knowing what the jobs of tomorrow will look like. It seems to me that Curriculum for Excellence gives us a reassurance that our children are learning how to learn, that they have good general education, that they're learning skills for life, not just sitting tests.

As there is a good mix of knowledge and skills, I know that whatever Ali chooses, he'll be able to adapt and change direction later on – that he's 'future proofed' if you like. And people will always have pets! So he might be on to a good thing.

*Ali's mum, Livingston*



## What parents can do – sharing, planning and learning!

- Listen, talk and encourage – this has a big influence on young people’s learning
- Do things together – learn together and have fun together
- Praise effort
- Encourage a ‘can do’ approach – ‘give it a try, you might just like it’
- Help them to respect others
- Talk to them about their strengths and interests, and help them make choices based on these
- Find out what learning is happening at school and do what you can at home to build on that
- Help them work on tasks on their own and then talk about it with you afterwards
- Encourage any reading – books, online – it all helps!
- Look for opportunities at home to develop literacy and numeracy skills: Money, number problems, time, measuring, matching, size, reading, writing, understanding instructions, questioning information
- Encourage them to make their own choices
- Help prepare for change – talk about it together
- Ask for extra help if you think your child needs it for any reason. Visit [www.infoscotland.com/justask](http://www.infoscotland.com/justask)
- Be there – help, listen, support and encourage
- Talk to them about how they are feeling

The ‘Kennel Club’ project has enhanced students’ ability to apply knowledge and transfer skills from different areas of the curriculum. Young people engage so much more productively when they can make connections between subjects, see the relevance of what they are learning, and apply their learning effectively. Their confidence is boosted when they can put mathematical concepts to use. They are developing enterprising attitudes. This is energising – they get a thirst for knowledge, want to learn more, do better.

*Elaine Cooke, Headteacher of Deans Community High School*

With thanks to Deans Community High School, Livingston.

For further information parents can find out more at:

[www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)

[www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk)

Quotes are not word for word. They were inspired by listening to children taking part in real projects and by listening to parents during a major piece of research that told us parents wanted to hear about Curriculum for Excellence from professionals who know their children. (We’ve changed names to protect individuals’ privacy).