

TEMPLATE FOR SCQF SCHOOL AMBASSADOR BLOG

Name of school	Forrester High School
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Background to the school

- Context:**
Forrester High School is a comprehensive 6-year non-denominational secondary school located in the NW locality of Edinburgh served by a Learning Community including the following primary schools: Broomhouse, Carrick Knowe, Gylemuir and Murrayburn. The school role is around 850. The school has an active Parent Council who have been supportive of interventions to support improving the equity of school experiences in recent years.
- Vision:**
At Forrester we aim for all learners to achieve the best they can through the delivery of very good learning and teaching and a curriculum responsive to the needs of the learners. High aspirations support a growing belief within the learners of their potential. Wider supports and opportunities augment the learning and teaching to create a supportive and inclusive school community. Improvements in learning and teaching and tracking and monitoring have been identified from the recent follow up HMle visit in [February 2025](#) and an authority SSE in December 2024, highlighting the transformation of practice already undertaken.
- Values and Aims:**
The core values at Forrester are 'Respect, Believe, Achieve'. These three values underpin our aspirational and collaborative approach to delivering a coherent and

engaging curriculum to support learners as they progress. Increasing the aspiration and challenge of learners from an earlier stage is central to our approaches to raising attainment and achievement in the senior phase. We are committed to working ever more closely with our learning community to continue enhancing the educational provision for all learners.

- **Curriculum Rationale:**

Within Forrester there has been a strong focus in the last four academic sessions in reviewing the senior phase curriculum, taking on board labour market intelligence from SDS and working in close partnership with local further education providers. Currently we have introduced a wide range of SCQF qualifications from level 4-7 within the senior phase to widen the curricular offer and pathways for all learners. Pupils in S4 undertake seven subjects to support increased attainment in S4 and to allow for greater and smoother progression onto Level 6 qualifications within S5 to improve both the breadth and depth of learning within the senior phase. The school was recognised as the most improved secondary school in school over the time period 2016-2025 based on the percentage of leavers attaining 5 or more Level 6 qualifications.

- How have you helped to raise awareness of the SCQF amongst staff, pupils & parents at your school?

Staff are exploring multiple different opportunities within the SCQF framework and presenting candidates for a variety of NPAs, FAs and Skills for Work qualifications. Staff have a good understanding of the framework.

Pupils have engaged with the Ambassadors at events, where the Ambassadors advocated for SCQF, explaining that at times the NPAs were more appropriate and achievable than traditional NQ qualifications.

Parents have engaged with Ambassadors at Pupil Progress Evenings for all year groups. The Ambassadors made a display stand, with QR codes to links for new courses, posters showing the links between NQ and SCQF, and were available to talk to parents and pupils at these events. They also handed out leaflets to further explain.



- Can you tell us about the innovative ways you promote the principles & benefits of the SCQF -
 - * to pupils at different stages in the school? We have talked to some younger pupils about the benefits of taking SCQF courses and how you can do different subjects that may be more interesting or relevant to their future plans
 - * to parents & carers? We made a presentation to share with parents at events – we found that lots of parents and carers didn't really understand how the SCQF worked and needed it made relevant to the qualifications they studied at school
 - * through your website & social media? We made a TikTok and Instagram account and posted some videos about our work

- Has the school made any changes to its curriculum? (e.g. introduction of new qualifications, learning pathways or any non-SQA provision) – Yes, almost every department has at least 1 NPA at at least one level. Some departments are introducing FAs as well. New courses being introduced this year include Creative Industries, Furniture Making and Technical Theatre

- Do you have any plans to move forward with the tiered recognition element of the School Ambassador programme? Yes, we would like to achieve our Gold Award. We are planning to recruit SCQF ambassadors from different year groups, including the BGE, and build our presence within the school community through more targeted assemblies, PSE lessons etc.

- Quotes from SCQF Pupil Ambassadors &/or young people undertaking a new or more unusual pathway:

Why did you choose an NPA? “Because I found the course interesting”, “Less stressful because no final exam”, “I dropped pe and needed another subject and liked the idea of no exam.

Was it a good choice for you? “Yes, because it gave me some flexibility in completing course work”, “Yes it was a very good choice as the subject was very fun and a lot less stressful than the other classes but I still managed to get 2 level 6 qualification”

Would you recommend these courses to others? “Yes I would recommend because they are a very good way to achieve a level 5&6 without needing to stress over an exam”, “It is a good alternative to still get a higher or nat 5 equivalent qualification without the added pressure of a final exam”, “Yes if you want to go in to a career in it – you don't always get Nat 5s and Highers for careers you want to do like Music Business or Events”.

- Quote from a former pupil who has used the SCQF to progress with their learning journey/journey into the workplace

“I decided to take some SCQF courses in S5 rather than explore some different NQ courses because there was more variety. I also found that I could achieve a higher level following the NPA route rather than crashing Highers or having to do a Nat 5. Being an SCQF ambassador helped me realise that these courses were just as valid as traditional qualifications, and actually when I applied to college I found they really liked these qualifications because they showed skill development, a constant work

ethic and an ability to meet deadlines. Traditional qualifications often rely on a final exam and don't always show the work you've done all year, but SCQF qualifications like NPAs give you credit for the work you've done throughout the year. You can also get credit for units you've completed and passed which you don't always get with Highers."

- Any other comments?

Our school has worked hard to offer a variety of qualifications, both National Qualifications and SCQF, in all curriculum areas. We had a great course choice selection when we achieved our Bronze Award and have continued to add to this, with new relevant skills based courses such as Furniture Making.