



Inside this Issue

- 2007 –The Year of Highland Culture
- Energy Management
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act
- Highland Libraries Supporting New Highlanders
- New Recruits-Teachers
- SQA
- Developing The Youth Service
- Glow/Pathfinder
- HMIe Inspection of Community Learning and Development in the Highlands
- Class Size and Class Contact Reduction
- Blas – Fèis ùr airson na Gàidhealtachd
- Support for Leadership in Highland
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Successes

Education, Culture and Sport Service – Autumn 2006

Seirbheis Foghlaim, Cultair Agus Spors - Foghar 2006

Dear Colleague

Is it a function of age when you ask yourself where the time has gone? Almost the October break already! I hope you find this edition of our newsletter interesting and informative.

Bruce Robertson
 Director of Education, Culture and Sport
 Remember to use our Website www.highland.gov.uk where you can see more news and information.

2007 – The Year of Highland Culture

Plans for Highland 2007 are developing apace- and they're looking very exciting. Thousands of events and activities will take place in villages, towns and cities across the Highlands and beyond.

Just a few of the major events happening are the spectacular launch in Inverness City Centre on 12th January (the old Scots New Year), the Moray Firth Flotilla making its way down the coast from Wick to Portsoy in June and a unique performance by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Smoo Cave, on the north coast at Durness, in June.

A particularly important element of the programme for ECS is delivering The Highland Promise/ An Gealladh Mòr. CSGs throughout Highland are busy drawing up a suite of

opportunities for all school pupils to participate in new cultural activities. Young people are actively involved in making the choices for their ASG. The menu they choose from is vast and includes unique and exciting offers from leading national organisations and arts companies.

Communities throughout the Highlands have also been awarded funding to develop and deliver their own, local celebrations and to improve local facilities.

2007 promises to be a special year for our staff, our school pupils and everyone living in and visiting the Highlands- just a few more months to wait!

In the meantime, visit the 2007 website at www.highland2007.com for full info on the Year of Highland Culture.

Energy Management

Here Comes Winter – Can we afford it?

In a few weeks time the clocks will be going back and we will be going to and from work in the dark, scraping the frost from our car windscreens and turning on the heating as it gets cooler. (Hopefully many of you will not have turned it on yet, or have you?) This means that we are about to move into the most expensive part of the year with respect to energy expenditure and given that there seems to be no real let up in the ever rising spiral

of the cost of energy then one has to ask 'can we afford it'. The real answer is yes we have to, we have to heat the buildings and light the rooms. However, what we don't have to do is to use it unnecessarily and that is the real message that needs to get out. If you don't need it then don't use it.

I like to think that ECS is at the front of the behavioural change process to reduce energy costs and good examples are beginning to emerge. Those of you who have seen the recent Times Educational Supplement will note that Nairn Academy has reduced their energy consumption by as much as a third through a mixture of practical building measures and behavioural change. Other examples at Dornoch Academy and Dingwall Leisure Centre also demonstrate that simple measures can make a difference. Add to that the fact that Dingwall Primary will soon be using a Bio Mass boiler then it is clear that the Council is introducing a really broad range of measures and is really serious about controlling energy consumption effectively.

Even here in HQ we are switching off lights turning down heating and turning off computers, printers and the photocopier at the end of the working day. No doubt a few of you think we are permanently in the dark anyway! If you are not sure of what to do, then look at the web sites and get advice from ourselves.

www.thecarbontrust.co.uk/energy/pages/publication_search.asp?PuBid=3509# for schools and http://www.thecarbontrust.co.uk/energy/pages/page_203.asp for leisure facilities.

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act

Well, it's finally happened - following widespread national consultation, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill finally received Royal Assent in June 2006, is now an Act, and was launched at a national conference on 12 September 2006. The Act is now partially in force, but will not take effect fully until August 2007.

2006-07 is a 'transitional year', during which time local authorities, schools and parent bodies will be working towards developing a strategy for parental involvement, and also moving from the current School Board / Parent Teacher Association arrangements to new Parent Forum / Parent Councils. In preparation for these changes, a Lead Officer for the project has been identified (Moira McCarrell, QDO Strategic Initiatives), and an Implementation Team has been set up to oversee the necessary changes. Nationally, a Parental Involvement Toolkit and Guidance pack has been prepared - all of which was launched at the national conference. All schools should receive 3 copies of this pack within the next 10-14 days, for the Head Teacher, School Board, and PTA. Please ensure that these are passed on to the relevant people, and do order more copies if that would be helpful.

We'll keep you fully informed as progress is made, but in the meantime, if you have any queries relating to Parental Involvement, please ring Moira or drop her an email.

Highland Libraries supporting New Highlanders

Alison Magee, Convener of The Highland Council, extended a warm welcome recently to all new Highlanders at Inverness Library. The Convener helped launch the Library Service's first world language newspaper, 'Polska Express' - many other newspapers are available online in all Highland Libraries via the free internet access. Libraries in Highland are often the first port of call for new residents as they seek to make contact with their families back home. The arrival of the newspaper is in direct response to requests by Polish library users who want to keep abreast of events in their homeland.

Migrant workers using libraries in the Highlands already have access to the free internet and email facilities, and are now able to enjoy a wide range of material, not only to learn English, but also to access material in their own language. A leaflet is being developed with information available in five community languages (Polish, Russian, Bengali, Arabic and Chinese) - the Polish version was the first off the press. The bilingual leaflets will give details of all the library resources and facilities available to new Highlanders.

New Recruits - Teachers

The new session started with another significant intake of new recruits to schools, across both primary and secondary sectors. The largest number of probationer teachers since the Teacher Induction Scheme

began are now well into their first term with us. This year 63 primary and 57 secondary probationers have been placed in schools across Highland. Peter Peacock, the Minister for Education, Young People and Families, along with Bruce Robertson, Director of Education, Culture and Sport, and Andy Anderson, Chairman of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, welcomed these newly qualified teachers to Highland Council at their Induction Day on 11th August. We are delighted that so many new teachers have opted to come to Highland for their probationary year.

In addition to the recruitment of these new probationer teachers, we have also recruited many of last year's probationers to posts within Highland. In fact, so far this session, we have recruited 83 new staff, the bulk of whom are recently qualified.

SQA

The SQA results for the 2006 examinations show that Highland pupils continue to achieve high standards. The performance of boys in S4 continues to improve at Foundation and General level while girls continue to do better than boys at Credit level. Overall the gender gap between the performance of boys and girls continues to narrow.

At Higher grade there has been a very slight drop this year in the number of pupils gaining one and five Highers with virtually no change in the number gaining three Highers. In sixth year, the performance in Higher and Advanced Higher courses continues to improve resulting in the best results in recent years.

Some pupils have achieved outstanding results with 47 pupils across Highland gaining 5 or more Highers at band A and one pupil achieving 6 Highers at band A.

Developing the Youth Service

The ECS Committee has recently agreed the first phase of a major investment and development in youth work services. A great deal of youth work in Highland up until now has been provided on a voluntary basis or in specific areas via Social Inclusion Partnership funding. However, the service has been successful in gaining £545k through the Council's Service Improvement Fund-to be followed by a bid for another £277k in the next financial year.

In agreeing proposals to implement this development Committee agreed that the need to provide a universal service whilst taking account of rurality and deprivation was important.

The Committee agreed proposals that will see youth workers being based around Associated School Groupings. The development will see ASGs having a minimum of a 0.5 FTE youth work post with additional resources for ASGs in deprived areas. These workers will link with other ECS staff operating around ASGs-such as Active Schools Coordinators. In some areas Head Teachers and Integration Managers having benefited from youth workers in their areas, have chosen to add to this level of provision.

If you require further information about how this will operate in your area please contact-
pablo.mascarenhas@highland.gov.uk
Principal Youth Development Officer
Tel 01463 702026

Glow/Pathfinder

Glow is the new name for the Scottish Schools Digital Network (SSDN). It is a national schools intranet, digitally linking Scotland's 800,000 educators and pupils. Glow is funded by the Scottish Executive and managed by Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) in partnership with RM. Teachers and learners will be at the heart of Glow. Glow is designed with one aim - to support educational development.

Glow is for everyone - giving us powerful online tools to work together safely and securely, at any location or time. The Council is in continuing discussions with colleagues from Learning and Teaching Scotland and from RM about how best we can exploit the potential of Glow for our pupils and teachers.

Some of the services Glow will eventually provide are:

- Secure and personalised access to the intranet.
- Virtual learning, including virtual whiteboards to share information across many schools taking part in one lesson; the system includes tools access and the ability to manipulate and present content.
- Tools to enable you to collaborate, cooperate and communicate across the network.
- Technical helpdesk, training and support.

For more information on Glow visit their web site at <http://www.glowscotland.org>

Pathfinder Project

This is a £70 million project which will provide high capacity broadband links to schools,

libraries and other council buildings throughout the Highlands and Islands. Thus plc, is the preferred supplier. The Highlands and Islands Pathfinder Broadband Procurement Project aims to deliver a very high bandwidth infrastructure to more than 800 sites across the area, with a focus on schools. It is hoped to sign a contract with Thus plc in October and that 60% of all sites will be connected next year with the roll out completed within two years. This will ensure fast Internet access for schools and libraries across Highland. To read more visit the [Pathfinder North web site](#)

HMle Inspection of Community Learning and Development in the Highlands

The Lochaber Community Learning and Leisure team are in the midst of an inspection of their work covering the three National Priorities of Community Learning and Development:

- Achievement through learning for Adults
- Achievement through learning for Young People – and
- Achievement through building community capacity

A team of HMle inspectors, led by Managing Inspector Stewart Maxwell, arrived on Monday September 11th to spend their 'core' week reviewing information, meeting the staff team, partners, young people, adult learners and community groups who are involved in delivering and participating in learning and community programmes across the whole 'patch'.

In common with school and other inspections which the Service is involved in, the week is the culmination of three months of

intensive preparation work, where staff have been collating evidence and information on their work ready to put in front of the inspection team. Since the inspection was first announced there has been a 'Scoping' phase in late August, when the inspection team spent a couple of days visiting the Area to get an initial over-view of what is being delivered. Local staff have been involved in weekly video conference meetings to plan the process, local newsletters and numerous staff meetings.

The whole process has been a significant and very positive team building exercise for Lochaber, with staff and Area Managers 'pulling out all the stops' to ensure that the inspectors get as full a picture as possible of the Service and the good work it delivers.

Class size and class contact reduction

As part of the 21st Century Agreement for Teachers, the maximum class contact time for teachers in all sectors has now been reduced to 22.5 hours per week. This change was introduced from August 2006, and forms the second stage reduction of class contact time in the primary sector, where it had previously reduced from 25 hours to 23.5 hours in August 2004. As part of the planning for class contact reduction, the visiting teacher service across Highland schools has been reviewed and re-organised, with a number of specialisms, such as music, art and PE now forming part of the CCR element in schools.

Planning is already underway for class size reduction in August 2007, when Primary 1 classes will have a maximum size of 25, and

class sizes in S1 and S2 English and Mathematics will also reduce.

Blas – Fèis ùr airson na Gàidhealtachd

Blas, the festival celebrating Highland music took place this September

Watch out for Blas 2007 next September- even bigger and better as part of the Year of Highland Culture- feuch gum bi sibh ann! (Be there!)

Support for Leadership in Highland

The ECS service has secured a £600K SEED grant over the next two years to develop support for leadership across the ECS service.

There are three main aims of the project:

1. Promote Integrated Learning Communities as an environment where we can learn from each other, share good practice and support collective growth. The Achievement and Transitions themes of A Curriculum for Excellence will help us develop this. The proposals to celebrate Highland 2007 may also present opportunities for more collective work on leadership.
2. Develop the competencies, confidence and capacities of staff to be highly successful in the work that they do. We will ask volunteers wishing to develop their leadership skills to self assess their abilities in relation to the Highland Council competency framework.
3. Inspire, excite and support staff at all levels in the Service in enhanced leadership roles in preparation for career progression. We will seek to place professionals in dialogue with

contexts which demand a higher and wider level of leadership skills. We would plan experiences at higher levels of management for those who wish to do so.

Leadership support will extend the concepts of coaching and mentoring to engage with those professionals with the potential for more senior posts in order to transform this into well-founded aspiration to take up such posts.

The ECS Service will seek partnerships with the Scottish Interactive Technology Centre (SITC) and other providers to deliver the generic aspects of leadership training. It will also seek a partnership with a Scottish Higher Education institution to develop e-learning support packages as part of the Highland Leadership Toolkit.

**For further information contact
Tony McCulloch, Quality
Development Manager**

Getting it Right For Every Child

Highland has been chosen as a Scottish pathfinder site for to implement a new approach - 'Getting It Right for Every Child'.

The overall objectives of the pathfinder are:

to create a structured approach with all agencies, voluntary and statutory, having a corporate responsibility for managing a child's welfare;

to develop a seamless response, assessment, planning and review process for all children at key stages in their lives.

Key aims of the pathfinder are:

To produce a less bureaucratic, more user-friendly, unified approach to delivering frontline services with workers accessing

specialist services when appropriate.

Children and their families will be able to access information about the support being offered,

Structures will be developed with clear routes of staged, targeted and tiered intervention.

To develop new electronic systems which allow agencies to share information with a single shared assessment record (SARP) for each child.

Early intervention will allow the highly pressurised Children's Panel / Reporter and Social Work Services to concentrate effort on more complex cases involving high levels of risk and/or harm to a child.

Implementation will be in phases, with children going through the transition process in Inverness being targeted from early in 2007. Roll-out across Highland (and Scotland) will follow throughout 2007.

Training will start in late autumn 2006 with the emphasis on a multi-agency approach.

More information is available at:
www.forhighlandchildren.org/html/girfec/girfec.php

For further information contact
Roseann.Christie@highland.gov.uk.

Successes

- An 11 year old primary pupil in Skye sat the Higher grade examination in Music this summer and achieved an A grade pass. It is believed this is the youngest pupil in Scotland to have achieved this distinction
- A grant of £4.3m has been allocated by the Heritage

Lottery Fund award for the new Highland Archive Centre which it is hoped will open in 2009, the Year of Highland Homecoming.

- Raigmore Primary School will be representing Scotland at the UK Healthy Living Awards Finals in London in October.
- As part of efforts to improve services and as a direct response to requests by migrant workers in the Highlands Inverness Library is stocking the daily Polish newspaper Polska Express. As well as free online access to world newspapers, the council is producing bilingual leaflets about the benefits of joining the library plus details of other available facilities, the first of these being in Polish, with others in Russian, Bengali, Arabic and Chinese being developed
- Rogart Primary, Farr Primary (Inverness) and Broadford Primary have all been awarded their first Eco Schools Green Flag Award joining Elgol, Dochgarroch and Mulbuie Primaries who have previously received this fantastic award. Over 75 schools in Highland are now registered to this programme and working towards getting their awards.
- North Kessock Primary School Quiz Team won through to the finals of the Scottish Rotary Quiz. They were runners up for the North of Scotland after the morning session at Stirling University and were the only team to get over 100 points in the afternoon session and were awarded the title of Scottish Rotary Quiz Team Champions 2006.