

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE**  
**17 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Agenda Item	13.
Report No	ECS/44/09

**Curriculum for Excellence**  
**Raising Standards and Increasing Capacity for Leadership**

**Report by Director of ECS**

**Summary**

This report outlines the work undertaken by the Quality Improvement Team in supporting Leadership for Learning at all levels within the Highland Council's schools. It covers the established processes of School Improvement through Self – Evaluation. It also reflects on the completed project of Support for Leadership in Highland together with the present work on the 'next generation' leadership programme for 2009 – 10. It helps the service to achieve its vision of ***working together to inspire learning and achievement in Highland communities*** through its key value of *recognising our staff as our most valuable asset and ensure they are enabled to develop their skills, expertise and potential*. It is directly related to the commitment of ***Strengthening the Highlands*** to Improve the quality of learning, teaching and leadership capacity in our schools and communities.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 *The key to developing the capacities, raising standards and meeting the needs of all learners lies of course in consistent, high quality learning and teaching* (Improving Scottish Education: HMle 2009). Such development is clearly linked to a culture of self-evaluation and improvement and is a route to meeting the considerable challenges of improving the learning, skills and achievements of young people from disadvantaged groups and in particular Looked After Children.
- 1.2 The Quality Improvement Team over time developed and simplified its expectations for self – evaluation and improvement planning in schools. The materials for these can be found at: <http://www.hvllc.org.uk/dps/>. As a result, schools have improved their leadership capacities for self evaluation and improvement planning.
- 1.3 Central to the improvement of learning and teaching are the core quality indicators of
  - Improvements in performance
  - Learners experiences
  - Meeting learning needsUsing these QIs, schools are regularly evaluating the quality of their learning and teaching through classroom observation, professional discussion, performance information on achievement and engagement with pupils and parents.
- 1.4 The ECS Learning and Teaching Policy and Toolkit is a vehicle for its schools to engage in professional dialogue around its practice and its impact on learners. The active promotion of learning and teaching policies within schools has led to increasing quality as evidenced in notable case studies and quality assurance reports. The central themes of learner participation, engagement, and dialogue leading to thinking have been made explicit and are being adopted widely.

**2. Leadership and School Improvement**

- 2.1 More rigorous approaches to self – evaluation and improvement planning have embedded collegiality and distributed leadership as cornerstones of work thus giving teachers a bigger stake in improving schools. Regular visits by Quality Improvement Officers have supported school leaders in taking forward many of the demanding tasks in improving learning and teaching and improving outcomes for pupils.
- 2.2 Where school leadership has been strong, leaders have been encouraged to share their practice through secondments, participation in Highland working groups and through engagement with colleagues.
- 2.3 Where leadership has required support, Quality Improvement Officers have regularly engaged with individuals and groups in order to secure improvement. HMIE have recognised the strong support that the Service gives to its schools in improving areas of identified weakness.

### **3. Support for Leadership in Highland**

- 3.1 In 2006, the Service initiated a project of Support for Leadership in Highland. This involved general in-service events for all groups of staff in ECS and specific projects (learning and teaching, literacy, co-operative learning) that have had a beneficial effect on the quality of learning and teaching. There were successful programmes of management training and enterprising leadership together with 144 individual leadership projects undertaken by members of staff.

The project succeeded in making a strong contribution to:

- *Promoting Integrated Learning Communities* as a collegial environment for personal and collective leadership growth and as a context for transformation through the development of common purpose, ethos and action in support of community.
- *Developing the competencies, confidence and capacities of staff* to be highly successful in the work that they do.
- *Inspiring and supporting staff* at all levels in the Service in enhanced leadership roles in preparation for career progression.

- 3.2 Continuing work from this initiative has comprised further development of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy, Literacy for Learning and the introduction and expansion of Co-operative Learning Academies. The first two projects have achieved significant national recognition.

### **4. The 'Next Generation' Leadership Programmes in Highland**

- 4.1 'Next Generation' leadership programmes are commencing this session, building upon the earlier work. There are four parts to the programme targeted at particular cohorts:
  - Leaders of Learning – for Classroom and Chartered Teachers
  - Lead On - for Principal Teachers and Depute Head Teachers
  - Flexible Routes to Headship – for aspiring Head Teachers
  - Early Headship – a programme for new Head Teachers

These will be supported through an extensive coaching model as the development of staff as coaches constitutes another strand to the programme.

- 4.2 The *Leaders of Learning* programme aims to support the development of school

leaders through:

- actively engaging in supporting self directed leadership learning
- strengthening and updating their existing leadership skills
- enhancing their understanding of current and future national agendas
- bringing a deeper understanding of professional satisfaction to their current role by developing leadership skills
- helping develop the essential skills for learning in and managing teams
- increasing their ability to contribute to the development of the leadership capacities of colleagues
- enhancing their ability to build and sustain effective relationships in school and the wider community
- increasing motivation and confidence to take on more substantive leadership roles in the future

4.3 The *Lead On...* programme aims to supplement the Leaders of Learning programme through the additional area:

- helping to develop the essential skills for strategic leadership

4.4 *Flexible Routes to Headship* is a leadership development programme for aspiring head teachers. It is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government and the General Teaching Council for Scotland. FRH provides an alternative route to achieving the Standard for Headship. Participants have access to their own Highland Leadership Coach who has been fully trained in the programme by the Scottish Government. The programme:

- offers choice and flexibility for individual participants
- capitalises on experiential learning opportunities
- is predominantly practice-based with a strong focus on impact on learners
- takes account of individual lifestyles and professional commitments
- takes account of different learning styles and of relevant prior learning
- takes account of local school or service improvement plans
- focuses on promoting personal and potentially transformational professional development in a leadership context
- allows each participant to develop, implement and reflect upon a Professional Learning Plan
- recognises and explores the prime importance of personal qualities and interpersonal capabilities and skills in successful leadership
- acknowledges and utilises, as a key methodology, the power of coaching relationships in the development of self and of professional confidence, competence and expertise
- promotes substantial reflection on and analysis of aspects of leadership through situational analyses and critical reading of relevant literature
- is subject to rigorous assessment through a framework of on-going formative and summative assessment which gives parity to each aspect of the Standard for Headship

4.5 The *Early Headship* Programme aims to:

- support head teachers on taking up their first headship within Highland
- increase leadership and management capacity
- enable head teachers new to the role to be fully effective as quickly as

possible

- enable head teachers to become familiar with the structure, personnel and procedures of the authority
- provide a support mechanism through documentation and networking
- support the transition period from one headteacher to another.

4.6 *The Highland Leadership Coach Programme* demonstrates a commitment to developing a coaching and mentoring culture across Highland. Highland Leadership Coaches will be encouraged to support programme participants either in their own school or, in the case of the *Lead On...* and *Early Headship*, participants outwith their own school. The Programme aims to:

- Extend a coaching and mentoring culture across Highland
- Support school leaders at all levels to develop their coaching skills
- Support participants to become more influential and motivational leaders
- Improve performance management dialogues
- Build a common language to support culture change
- Support the development of high performing leadership teams

4.7 At present the numbers on the programmes are:

*Leaders of Learning* - 31

*Lead on-* 16

*Flexible Routes to Headship* - 7

*Early Headship* - 6

*Highland Leadership Coach* – 53

This represents an encouraging start to this next phase of leadership development.

## 5. Recommendation

5.1 The Committee is invited to note and comment on:-

- The strategies of the service in increasing the quality of learning and teaching;
- The work of the School Improvement through Self Evaluation project; and
- The 'Next Generation' Leadership Programme.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 4 September 2009

Author: Tony McCulloch, Quality Assurance & Development Manager

Ref: HF/TMcC