

**The Highland Council**  
**ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**21 August 2013**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Curriculum for Excellence Update**

**Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport**

**Summary**

This report summarises recent developments in Curriculum for Excellence implementation and outlines priorities for 2013 – 2014.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The 2002 National Debate led to a Curriculum Review the following year and the launch of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in 2004. CfE roll out has now reached S4 in secondary schools and will be fully implemented, from pre-school to S6, by the start of session 2015 – 2016.

**2. Qualifications Update**

- 2.1 Standard Grade exams were available for the last time in May / June of this year. The current Access, Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher exams will continue to be available until May / June 2015. During session 2014 – 2015 there will be dual running of qualifications in S5 / S6 while the two exam systems overlap. By 2016, the three main exam groups will be Nationals, Highers and Advanced Highers.
- 2.2 National 1 – National 5 courses, leading to qualifications in 2014, began officially for the current S4 at the start of session. National 1 to National 4 courses will be internally assessed. National 5 will have a mix of internal and external assessment. The vast majority of Highland pupils will be presented for National 4 or National 5 exams with relatively small numbers being presented for National 1 to National 3 qualifications. A summary of the way in which current qualifications correspond to the new qualifications is attached in **Appendix 1**.

**3. Support for CfE Implementation**

- 3.1 Education Scotland's Annual CfE Implementation Plan has just been published. It has three main sections:
- Early Years and Broad General Education

- Senior Phase
- Support for engaging parents and carers

In each section, Education Scotland outline the support that they will provide during session 2013 – 2014 and also the progress they expect to see at education authority, school and college level. In a parallel document Education Scotland have published updated expectations in terms of school inspections and the implementation of CfE. A summary is attached in **Appendix 2.**

- 3.2 Schools in Highland have additional support from the ‘Steers’ developed for primary and secondary schools and from a three year CfE implementation Plan, currently heading in to year three, details of which will be reported to the September ACS Committee.
- 3.3 Seconded Curriculum Area Development Officers (CADOs) and teacher working groups have also played a key role in ensuring that schools share resources and have access to the most up to date information.
- 3.4 Over the past year, reports have been presented to Committee referring to strategic developments in 16+ policies, supporting learners, literacy, numeracy, learning for sustainability, health and wellbeing, PE and modern languages. The practical application of strategic direction in all areas continues to evolve via CADOs and working groups.
- 3.5 Further developments in the use of ICT to support learning and the tracking, monitoring, profiling and reporting of pupil progress have also been discussed in the past year.

#### **4. Current Priorities**

- 4.1 While there is an understandable emphasis at this stage of CfE implementation on the Senior Phase, it is important that there is a continued focus on Early Years and the Broad General Education (BGE).
- 4.2 A key priority will be to complete an audit of language provision as the first step to full implementation of the *1 + 2 Language Report* by 2020. A working group is now underway. The Scottish Government has made an allocation of £182,180 for The Highland Council to take this initiative forward in 2013 – 2014.
- 4.3 Priorities for session 2013 – 2014 will include support for staff to:
- ✓ collaborate in planning learning and sharing assessment at key transition points within, and between, early years centres, primary schools, secondary schools and post-school destinations
  - ✓ evaluate and review Broad General Education arrangements, and further embed skills for learning, life and work
  - ✓ avoid overly bureaucratic approaches to the planning and delivery of courses and reporting of progress
  - ✓ take account of anticipated reports on RME and Creativity

- ✓ further develop embed effective strategies for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing programmes
- ✓ take forward developments in science, computing science, languages (including Gaelic Medium and Gaelic Learners) and learning about Scotland
- ✓ evaluate the quality of profiling, particularly in P7 and S3
- ✓ develop effective programmes for assessment and sharing standards.

4.4 Staff in secondary schools will need support to:

- ✓ further develop flexible pathways from the BGE to the Senior Phase
- ✓ take advantage of local opportunities to provide a range of flexible achievement pathways within and beyond the Senior Phase to meet the needs of all learners
- ✓ promote the highest level of attainment in literacy and numeracy for all
- ✓ provide meaningful work experience placements
- ✓ meet the needs of young people who leave school at the end of S4
- ✓ build on college partnerships and promote employability skills
- ✓ take account of the transition and interim arrangements for the period of dual running of existing and new qualifications
- ✓ with partners provide meaningful pathways to positive and sustained destinations post-16 for all young people
- ✓ develop internal quality assurance procedures in line with SQA expectations of local authorities
- ✓ become familiar with the new Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool to be introduced in 2014.

Specific support will be needed to design a Senior Phase curriculum which enables young people to:

- ✓ learn over variable time-frames (eg 1 or 2 year programmes)
- ✓ maximise the benefits of qualifications design
- ✓ have increased personalisation and choice and learning through relevant real life contexts
- ✓ have more time spent on applying learning in new contexts
- ✓ develop approaches to learning that motivates young people across the totality of their experiences
- ✓ have a continued focus on health and wellbeing, the provision of RME and PE, opportunities for personal achievement and interdisciplinary learning
- ✓ have an increased emphasis on depth and application of learning and skills development, including higher order thinking skills
- ✓ progress across levels eg N4/5 to N5/H programmes
- ✓ progress and attain as highly as possible
- ✓ experience opportunities for personal achievement with a continued focus on developing the skills and attributes of the four capacities.

4.5 Parent Council representatives have been invited to a seminar, which will include inputs on CfE implementation nationally and locally, on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September. A CfE Briefing for members of the ACS Committee is to be arranged. This will include visits to a primary school and a secondary school to see CfE in action.

## **5. Implications**

5.1 Resource implications have been factored in to the 2013 – 2014 budget. There are no specific Legal, Equalities, Climate Change and Risk implications.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the updated inspection advice and changes to exams from 2014 and to comment on the 2013 – 2014 CfE priorities.

Designation:

Date: 7 August 2013

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Background Papers:

**Appendix 1** SQA and SCQF

**Appendix 2** Inspection Advice 2013 – Highland Summary

## Appendix 1

### SQA Qualifications

Current Qualifications	New Qualifications	Available From	*SCQF Levels
Access 1	National 1	2014	1
Access 2	National 2	2014	2
Access 3 Standard Grade (Foundation)	National 3	2014	3
Intermediate 1 Standard Grade (General)	National 4	2014	4
Intermediate 2 Standard Grade (Credit)	National 5	2014	5
Higher	Higher (new)	2015	6
Advanced Higher	Advanced Higher (new)	2016	7

\*SCQF = Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

#### What is SCQF?

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership promotes lifelong learning in Scotland and supports everyone in Scotland, including learners, learning providers and employers, by:

- helping people of all ages and circumstances access appropriate education and training so they can meet their full potential;
- helping employers, learners and the general public to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of learning, and how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce.

The Framework also provides an extremely important way of recognising different types of learning in a wide range of settings - for example, learning in the workplace or in the community.

#### How does it work?

By using two measures, the level of a qualification or learning programme and the number of Credit Points awarded, the Framework helps you understand and compare the various Scottish qualifications. The level of a qualification indicates the level of difficulty and the number of credit points indicates the length of time it takes to complete. One SCQF credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning time.

More information at: [www.scqf.org.uk/](http://www.scqf.org.uk/)

## Appendix 2

### Inspection Advice Note 2013-14 – Highland Summary Version August 2013

#### Introduction

The five core Quality Indicators (QIs) continue to be the basis for inspections and provide the headings for this summary. But, in addition to the QIs, HMI will continue to take account of Curriculum for Excellence national expectations in their school visits. Education Scotland Implementation Priorities for 2013 – 2014 are published separately and are worth consulting in relation to this document.

It should be noted that, although HM Inspectors do not apply a QI evaluation to leadership, it is well recognised that leadership influences all aspects of the work of a school or learning community. Strong and effective leadership is required **at all levels** to promote the continuous improvement and excellence for all learners expected through Curriculum for Excellence.

The updated expectations in relation to QI 5.1 (*The curriculum*) and QI 5.9 (*Improvement through self-evaluation*) replace the illustrations of 'very good' for these QIs in *HGIOS3 and CATC* to reflect developing best practice and national expectations of progress in implementing aspects CfE. **This represents a further adjustment of expectations from August 2013 in line with the Education Scotland Implementation Plan Priorities 2013-14.**

To assist schools with the CfE implementation, this note also emphasises aspects of practice where further improvement is needed. This includes ensuring that approaches to planning, tracking, recording and reporting do not become overly bureaucratic.

In order to ensure that the National Performance Framework (NPF) QIs remain valid for national reporting purposes, **there will be no changes to HMI expectations in relation to the three NPF QIs: QI 1.1, QI 2.1 and QI 5.3** as detailed in *HGIOS3 and CATC*. However, Curriculum for Excellence should have an impact on the quality of learning, teaching and meeting learning needs, particularly the first theme of meeting learning needs, which relates to tasks, activities and resources.

References are also included to key themes for improving teacher professional learning, as recommended in *Teaching Scotland's Future* and the work of the National Implementation Board.

#### 5.1 The Curriculum

Evaluating the quality of the curriculum **as experienced by learners** across stages and transition points remains the key focus. The main change is a **greater emphasis on planning for progression, coherence and improving curriculum transitions.**

It includes learning in and out of school and that delivered through partnerships. **Evaluations will take account of the need for the curriculum to be flexible to meet the needs and interests of children and young people.** HM Inspectors do not promote or endorse any particular curriculum model. Nor do they evaluate curriculum plans yet to be delivered but will engage in professional dialogue about these.

## Theme 1: The rationale and design of the curriculum

It is essential that the curriculum has a clear rationale based on:

1. shared values
2. learners' entitlements
3. developing the four capacities in children and young people (successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; effective contributors).

In secondary schools, the rationale for the senior phase should have a focus on:

- a) improving attainment and achievement of **all** young people
- b) progression to positive and sustained post-school destinations.

The rationale for the number of subjects/qualifications individual and groups of learners study throughout the senior phase should take account of partnerships within the education authority and other providers eg colleges and also the views of parents and carers.

In both primary and secondary schools, staff should have a clear and shared strategy for the development and assessment of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to ensure smooth progression and achievement across the curriculum.

HMI expect to see staff and partners developing the curriculum to ensure coherence and progression in learning using the experiences and outcomes (Es and Os) to provide well-planned and joined up learning across curriculum areas and subjects and also in interdisciplinary learning, personal achievement and the life and ethos of the school.

In all schools, the curriculum should be designed to raise standards of attainment and achievement, advance equality of opportunity, reduce disadvantage and meet the needs of all learners including those with additional support needs.

HMI, therefore, expect to see:

- Schools continue to evaluate and further develop the Broad General Education (BGE) from P1 to S3. In secondary schools, this includes providing appropriate specialisation and continued breadth of experience during S1-S3 to provide a firm foundation for progression into the senior phase.
- Secondary schools and partners are expected to:
  - ✓ further develop flexible achievement pathways from the BGE to the senior phase;
  - ✓ take advantage of local opportunities to provide a range of flexible achievement pathways within and beyond the senior phase to meet the needs of all learners;
  - ✓ promote the highest level of attainment in literacy and numeracy for all;
  - ✓ meet the needs of young people who leave school at the end of S4;
  - ✓ build on college partnerships and promote employability skills;
  - ✓ take account of the transition and interim arrangements for the period of dual running of existing and new qualifications.
- The design of the senior phase curriculum should enable young people:
  - ✓ to learn over variable time-frames (eg 1 or 2 year programmes) to meet learners' needs;
  - ✓ to have more time spent on challenging learning;
  - ✓ to develop approaches to learning that motivates young people across the totality of their experiences;

- ✓ to have a continued focus on health and wellbeing, the provision of RME and PE, opportunities for personal achievement and interdisciplinary learning.

### **Theme 2: The development of the curriculum**

There should be an emphasis on innovation and flexibility of provision. In addition,

- ✓ Planning should be as streamlined and effective as possible and not overly bureaucratic or time-consuming.
- ✓ Secondary schools and partners should be aware of, and take account of, the implications and changes to qualifications including recognising achievement and evidence for SQA's exceptional circumstances service.
- ✓ Staff should have planned opportunities to collaborate across schools and with partners and to share resources and evolving practice, including in the senior phase.
- ✓ Partners should work together to ensure opportunities for shared experiences and placements are of high quality.
- ✓ Achievement pathways should increasingly be informed by realistic and manageable tracking and profiling of learners' progress through the BGE and senior phase so that the BGE and senior phase curriculum is under review and evolving to better meet learners' needs.

### **Theme 3: Programmes and courses**

It is expected that school staff are designing and refreshing programmes and courses that build on prior learning and, in doing so, use:

1. The Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os).
2. Qualifications and awards specifications.
3. A coherent approach to learning, teaching and assessment.
4. The development of the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities.
5. Well-planned interdisciplinary projects and studies focussing on a selection of Es and Os that support learners in making links across different aspects of their learning while building in opportunities for progression in knowledge, understanding and skills.
6. Realistic and manageable approaches to assessing progress and achievement across all curriculum areas at early to fourth curriculum levels.
7. Personal achievements that promote learners' growth as citizens as detailed in the four capacities and in the Es and Os.
8. Courses offering greater choice (including interdisciplinary projects and studies, short courses and electives) that are designed, in S1 – S3 especially, to meet a range of learners' needs.
9. Opportunities for learners to revisit and consolidate their learning and to apply and extend their learning in more challenging contexts.
10. Programmes and courses in the senior phase that:
  - ✓ maximise the benefits of qualifications design;
  - ✓ have an increased emphasis on depth and application of learning and skills development, including higher order thinking skills;
  - ✓ have increased personalisation and choice and learning through relevant real life contexts;
  - ✓ allow young people to progress across levels, especially when progressing from eg N4/5 to N5/H programmes;
  - ✓ encourage young people to progress and attain as highly as possible;
  - ✓ provide progression through opportunities for personal achievement with a continued focus on developing the skills and attributes of the four capacities.



#### **Theme 4: Transitions**

It is important that curriculum transition procedures and programmes - including any shared placements - effectively meet the needs of **all** learners, pre – school to P1, P7 to S1 and from the BGE to the Senior Phase. The senior phase curriculum should provide opportunities for all and should support transition planning beyond school so that young people, including those with additional support needs, have an appropriate place in learning, training or employment.

Schools are expected to further develop, and embed, their approaches to profiling, including, where appropriate, using e-portfolios. This should lead to improved quality and impact of the profiling process including the P7 and S3 profiles. There should be a clear focus on skills development and using profiling to inform and improve future learning.

### **5.9 Improvement through self-evaluation**

The focus continues to be on improvement through self-evaluation emphasising **leadership of self-evaluation**, including effective support for career-long professional learning, and evaluating its impact on the work of staff and the progress and achievement of learners. Ensuring shared self-evaluation with partners is especially important. **Self-evaluation must give high priority to rigorously monitoring high quality learning and teaching while ensuring that approaches to planning, tracking, recording and reporting do not become overly bureaucratic or take unreasonable time away from learning and teaching.** It should provide sufficient information to inform planning for, and improvement in, progression of learning.

#### **Theme 1: Commitment to self-evaluation**

Effective systems need to be in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. Staff, partners, learners and stakeholders need to be:

- involved in self-evaluation;
- systematic in gathering and responding to views of stakeholders;
- aware of resulting strengths and development needs;
- committed to taking action on results of self-evaluation to effect improvement.

The school has to have **good leadership at all levels** with a vision for the outcomes of change. This vision gives direction to self-evaluation.

It is important that good quality support for career-long professional learning is in place to support improvement and results in staff:

- Taking ownership of professional learning, including reflection on practice as an individual or with others, including partners, in order to engage more deeply and meaningfully with CfE.
- Taking part in a range of professional learning, including the right blend and balance agreed by each member of staff through effective professional review and development (PRD). Whilst most professional learning will be practice based, it is important it includes an element of 'externality' i.e. moving 'outwith' the centre, school or learning community where feasible in order to get a broader perspective.
- Being aware of the impact of their professional learning on their work and the experiences of learners.

- Engaging in a range of professional learning to support CfE implementation including using, sharing and developing good practice in assessment and profiling; and continuing to work with the new qualifications, developing courses and programmes and improving learning transitions including from the BGE into the senior phase.
- Ensuring a continued focus on support for leadership development, including leadership for learning and in particular for lead practitioners, principal teachers and faculty heads.

### **Theme 2: Management of self-evaluation**

Self-evaluation focuses on key aspects of learners' successes and achievements. It draws on a wide range of advice and evidence and is rigorous, systematic and transparent.

To be effective, school self-evaluation must:

- Maintain a strong focus on evaluation of practice to ensure a high quality of teaching, consistent with the Es and Os and qualifications and awards.
- Focus on the impact of changed methodologies on outcomes for learners.
- Use a range of approaches to monitor and evaluate the impact of curriculum change in the BGE / senior phase and, so, inform on-going improvements in provision.
- Identify important strengths and areas for improvement through self-evaluation from a range of evidence.
- Further develop approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress and achievement in the BGE to provide robust evidence of standards of achievement across all curriculum areas and trends over time.
- Help share good practice.

Staff are expected to use self-evaluation and work collaboratively to develop a shared understanding, consistently apply and improve standards and expectations including through moderation, sharing best practice and benchmarking with other establishments.

Staff should be increasingly engaged in a range of quality assurance and moderation activities within schools/centres, between schools and other centres, between authorities and colleges and at a national level to develop their skills and confidence in assessment approaches.

### **Theme 3: School/centre/learning community improvement**

Staff reflect on current practice and evaluate any initiatives, ideas and changes which have been introduced. Staff are committed to acting on the results of robust and rigorous self-evaluation and can show clear evidence of improvement based on actions as part of our self-evaluation. Improvements focus particularly on continuing improvements to learning and teaching and the achievement of all learners.

Calum MacSween  
August 2013