

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

1 JUNE 2015

NASUWT Headquarters, Edinburgh

NOTE OF MEETING

LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS AND ATTENDEES

Management Board Members

Alan Johnston	Scottish Government
Andy Smith	School Leaders Scotland
Ann MacDonald	Scottish Teacher Education Committee
Ann McIntosh	Association of Headteachers & Deputes in Scotland
Bill Maxwell	Education Scotland
Bill Miller	Community Learning and Development Manager Group
Fiona Robertson	Scottish Government (Chair)
Gill Stewart (on behalf of Janet Brown)	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Graeme Logan	Education Scotland
Grant Jarvie	Universities Scotland
Iain Ellis	National Parent Forum of Scotland
John Edward	Scottish Council of Independent Schools
Ken Muir	General Teaching Council of Scotland
Larry Flanagan (on behalf of Susan Quinn)	Educational Institute of Scotland
Mike Corbett	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
Neville Prentice (on behalf of Damien Yeates)	Skills Development Scotland
Terry Lanagan	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
Mhairi Harrington	College Development Network

Other Attendees

Denise Brock	Education Scotland
Craig Flunkert	Scottish Government
Natasha Black	Scottish Government

Apologies

Janet Brown	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Andrew Sutherland	
Damien Yeates	Skills Development Scotland
Jane Peckham	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
Robert Nicol	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

OECD Engagement Session

Fiona Robertson (FR) thanked Ken Muir and Terry Lanagan for facilitating the OECD Engagement Session. The Management Board reflected on some of the main points from the session. In particular the Board noted:

- the importance of measuring the impact of CfE, with a key role for the forthcoming improvement framework;
- the effective role played by the Management Board in providing evidence of a collaborative, participative way of working;
- the sound basis for CfE in terms of its core principles, and;
- a range of implementation issues to address in the coming months and years.

FR confirmed that the OECD Team will remain in Scotland for the remainder of the week, with a further session with civil servants and Ministers planned for Friday 5th June. The OECD report will be published later in 2015.

Larry Flanagan (LF) asked if this will be the OECD's only visit as part of the review. FR confirmed that this is the second and final visit of the OECD Team, though the team will draw on a broader range of briefings, materials and research in completing their final report.

Management Board members noted the review activity and asked to be kept up-to-date on further progress with the review during the remainder of the year.

1. Apologies & Note and actions from the last meeting

1.1 Apologies were noted from Janet Brown (SQA) and Damien Yeates (SDS).

1.2 It was confirmed that Gill Stewart would attend on behalf of SQA and Neville Prentice would attend on behalf of SDS.

It was noted that Robert Nicol (COSLA) would require to leave the meeting in order to take part in a further OECD/COSLA discussion.

December minutes:

1.3 The minutes were approved.

March minutes:

1.4 Mike Corbett (MC) asked about the progress of note 4.2 bullet point 7 within the minute – i.e. progress with the New Qualifications Steering Group. It was confirmed that Ken Muir will chair a further meeting of the 'Reflections' group later in June 2015 to reflect on this year's qualifications round. In relation to the longer term, the intention was to consider the best way to address any issues following the

conclusion of the 2015 diet. The Board noted that it may wish to consider this question at its next meeting in September.

1.5 Alan Johnston (AJ) provided a summary of progress against all other actions from the March minute.

Matters Arising

1.6 The Board discussed the following as key matters arising from both the March and December minutes:

Assessment and Qualifications

1.7 The Board considered the activity that should be taken forward following the 2014 “Reflections” report, with a specific focus on assessment.

1.8 The Board noted that SQA have already made some alterations in relation to the qualifications, and they plan further focus group activity in the next academic session in preparation for a larger evaluation in 2016.

Young person discussions

1.9 Andy Smith (AS) noted that the March minute contained a helpful summary of the discussion sessions with young people. He asked if there was a similar note from the earlier pupil discussions at Bearsden in December. FR asked the Secretariat to provide a copy of the write-up.

Action: KM to chair a “Reflections” sub-group which will reflect on the 2015 diet and report back to Management Board in September.

Action: Management Board Secretariat to circulate a summary of pupils conversation in Bearsden to Management Board members.

2. Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Update

Implementation

2.1 Bill Maxwell (BM) introduced Paper 1 (CfE Implementation Update). The Board noted that there will be some areas in the Implementation Plan where there will be minor adjustments to milestones. The Board noted the key challenge identified in the 2014/15 Plan in relation to the availability of SQA markers. BM confirmed that SQA had a range of mitigating actions in place to reduce the likelihood that this risk will occur.

2.2 BM confirmed that the 2015/16 plan had been restructured in order to simplify the plan and to make it more relevant to school and local authority planning. The Board noted that the main focus of the plan is raising attainment and closing the

attainment gap. BM confirmed that the next meeting of the CfE Implementation Group will review the range of literacy and numeracy activities within the 2015/16, ensuring that they are comprehensive and effective.

2.3 In discussion the following additional points were made:

- that funding levels will always impact on supply teachers and administration staff;
- that many of the SSLN results were positive, in particular the statistic that 80% of pupils were performing well [covered in greater detail later under item 3], and;
- the need to make even better use of the data available throughout the system – and the role that the proposed National Improvement Framework will play in this regard [covered in greater detail under item 3].

Qualifications

2.4 The Board discussed the current exam diet, in particular the Maths Higher exam. The Board noted the initial response to the Higher Maths exam and covered a range of items in detail, including

- the merits of “multiple choice” and “short response” answers;
- use of contextualised questions;
- the importance of considering those who may have left an exam early, and
- the importance of providing reassurance and information to pupils, parents and teachers.

2.5 GS confirmed that all exams in relation to the new qualifications were developed in line with Curriculum for Excellence – with greater use of applied learning and assessments – and that the papers reflected course arrangements and specimen papers. The Board agreed on the importance of taking evidence-based decisions and ensuring rigorous processes to ensure that no child is unfairly disadvantaged by any exam.

2.6 The Board noted the standard processes that SQA would now follow in relation to grade boundaries. The Board agreed that it will be important to prepare effective information and communications messages in advance of results day, with a particular focus on the Maths Higher exam.

2.7 Iain Ellis (IE) confirmed that the National Parent Forum held a focus group on the new qualifications and agreed to circulate copies of the focus group report to all MB members.

Action: Board Secretariat to circulate the reports from the recent NPFS focus groups on Qualifications and Curriculum for Excellence.

Communications

2.8 Denise Brock (DB) provided a summary of the Communications plan. The Board noted:

- media coverage following the 2015 SSLN literacy results;
- a successful publicity campaign to parents on the new qualifications, and;
- early preparations for the 2015 results round.

2.9 In relation to exam results day 2015 the Board noted the Education Scotland plans to ensure clear, consistent messages across the various agencies, briefing to media in advance, and provision of “Q&As” via Parent-zone Scotland. It was suggested that the communications messages should also recognise that the new appeals system will be in place.

2.10 The Board noted the importance of involving all partners (including unions) in the Attainment Challenge work, and that there are a variety of contingency arrangements in place to ensure consistent and effective arrangements on marking.

Action: DB to ensure co-ordinated information and communications messages in run-up to results day, with a particular focus on the Maths Higher exam.

Action: Scottish Government officials leading on the Attainment Challenge to contact LF in order to ensure that EIS are involved in the work.

3. Improvement Framework Update

3.1 AJ provided an update on initial work to develop a National Improvement Framework following the Cabinet Secretary for Education’s announcement on 29 April. The Board noted that the framework will be developed in partnership with key organisations across the education system, with the emphasis on ensuring more consistent use of the wide range of data present across the system.

3.2 The Board noted that the framework should focus on making better use of existing data and more comprehensive sampling, with the potential to increase the frequency of the SSLN. The Board noted that the framework should ensure a wider focus beyond assessment data, seeking to capture progress across all four of the CfE “capacities”. Graeme Logan (GL) commented that the NIF provides the potential to provide a much more comprehensive, rounded picture beyond SSLN alone. Ann McIntosh (AM) said it would be important to strike the right balance between preparing children for tests and retaining all that is good about the emphasis on teachers’ professional standards.

3.3 The Board noted the update and asked for all key partners to be fully involved in the work from the beginning and throughout.

Action: Scottish Government Performance/Strategy Unit to ensure that all relevant partners are involved in the development of the National Improvement Framework.

4. Developing the Young Workforce Update

4.1 AJ and GL provided an update on progress with the Developing the Young Workforce programme.

4.2 The Board was asked to note three points in particular:

- That DYW in schools is very much part of Curriculum for Excellence implementation – with a specific role for the CfE Implementation Group in this regard;
- That Scottish Government and Education Scotland teams will continue to listen to local authority counterparts to gauge how DYW is developing locally. In particular, GL mentioned one specific example of this work, via Education Scotland's work with schools to look at the nature of the vocational qualifications on offer and their plans for what will be on offer in future.
- Two current consultations are the draft Standard for Careers Education and the draft Standard for Work Placements. GL circulated an example of the "I can" statements for schools to use in relation to Careers Education. GL confirmed that organisations should submit their views by the July 2015 deadline.

4.3 Board members noted the successful joint working between Education, Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and other agencies.

4.4 In discussion the following additional points were made:

- It would be important to look to exemplar countries such as Switzerland and Austria where as many as 50% of the young people achieve vocational qualifications.
- There was broad agreement amongst Board members that there should be a strong emphasis on what young people should expect from the system (e.g. "by year X you should receive Y to a specific standard".)
- Schools, councils and national agencies should continue to focus on the wider culture change, reforms to school practice and a shift in the experience for young people, and
- It was encouraging to note that Primary schools are at the centre of the DYW changes and in particular, the early years focus within the "I can" statements.

4.5 The Board noted that language should continue to evolve over time. For instance we should begin to talk about what "18 year olds should expect" rather than what "school leavers" should expect.

Action: MB Member organisations to ensure that they submit comments on the draft Standards for Careers Education and Work Placement by the early July deadline.

5. Close and next meeting

5.1 The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 9 September 2015, and that the meeting that had been scheduled for 16 June is now cancelled.

5.2 Board members were invited to propose venues for the September meeting.

[Post-script note: The Board meeting was subsequently changed to 30 September 2015, venue Polmont YO].

Action: MB Members to send proposals on a venue for the September meeting to the Scottish Government Secretariat.

Learning Directorate
Scottish Government
September 2015