

**CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE  
MANAGEMENT BOARD  
MEETING No. 45: WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2016 (2:30pm – 4:30pm)  
EDUCATION SCOTLAND, OPTIMA BUILDING , GLASGOW  
NOTE OF MEETING**

**ATTENDEES**

**Management Board Members**

Alan Armstrong	Education Scotland (ES)
Alan Johnston	Scottish Government (SG)
Andy Smith	School Leaders Scotland (SLS)
Ann McIntosh	Association of Headteachers and Deputes in Scotland (AHDS)
Bill Maxwell	Education Scotland
Fiona Robertson	Scottish Government
Graeme Logan	Education Scotland
Grant Jarvie	Universities Scotland
Iain Ellis	National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)
Jane O'Donnell	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
Janet Brown	Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
John Edward	Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)
Ken Muir	General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
Mhairi Harrington	College Development Network (CDN)
Michael Wood	Association of Directors of Education (ADES)
Mike Corbett	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
Neville Prentice	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Seamus Searson	Scottish Secondary Teachers Association (SSTA)
Susan Quinn	The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)

**Additional Attendees**

Craig Flunkert	Scottish Government
Donna Bell	Scottish Government
Natasha Black	Scottish Government

**Apologies**

Ann MacDonald	Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC)
Bill Miller	Community Learning and Development Manager Group
Denise Brock	Education Scotland
Damien Yeates	Skills Development Scotland

## **1. Welcome**

Fiona Robertson (FR) welcomed Management Board members to the meeting.

## **2. Apologies / Note & actions from the previous meeting / Matters Arising**

Apologies were noted from Ann MacDonald, Bill Miller, Denise Brock and Damien Yeates (represented by Neville Prentice).

FR noted that Joanna Murphy had been elected as the new NPFS Chair. Iain Ellis confirmed that the NPFS rep for future Management Board meetings will be confirmed before the next scheduled meeting.

Mike Corbett (MC) noted that papers for the meeting were issued very close to the meeting date, making it difficult for some Board members to consider the various issues in the necessary depth prior to the meeting. AJ noted that in this instance a number of issues remained “live issues” in the days running up to the Board meeting, and the Secretariat want to delay issuing papers until key issues were resolved in time to inform the various paper. The Secretariat stated that they would endeavour to issue papers earlier for the September meeting.

FR invited Alan Johnston (AJ) to provide a summary of progress on actions in the March minute. All actions arising were covered on the Agenda.

AJ invited comments on the minutes, comments by the end of the week.

## **3. CfE Implementation Update**

### 2016 Diet: Education Scotland Update

Bill Maxwell (BM) introduced Paper 1, confirming that:

- Senior Phase and Broad General Education matters were discussed by the recent meeting of the CfE Implementation Group
- The remaining CfE implementation programme was progressing well
- Education Scotland are continuing to develop benchmarking data and insight data.

### 2016 Diet: Scottish Qualifications Authority update

Janet Brown (JB) provided an update as follows:

- Subject reviews reports were published in May, drawing 55,000 hits on the SQA website and positive reports on the maths and science papers in particular.
- Work on determining grade boundaries for 2016 Diet will commence this week and is due to complete by 6<sup>th</sup> July
- The SQA are noticing a growing trend towards petitions, with 30 petitions on social media. JB noted that the use of petitions and social media were having an interesting effect on perceptions of the qualifications.
- Overall, the Diet has gone broadly well. The main issue related to the Computing Science paper which will be reviewed and addressed for future years.

Mike Corbett (MC) noted that large numbers of people signed the petition on the National 5 paper but that the paper itself was fair. In contrast, there was a clear issue with the Computing Science paper. He noted JB's comments that the SQA was addressing the issues for future years.

#### **4. Strategic Issues**

##### Response to the OECD Review (Paper 2)

Alan Johnston (AJ) introduced the first of a series of papers on strategic issues, beginning with the OECD review. AJ noted that the paper draws a number of important threads together, moving towards a draft delivery plan for education. AJ informed the Board that a draft Delivery Plan for education would be published in the next few weeks. He sought the Board's advice on what the Delivery Plan should say about the curriculum.

AJ started discussion by explaining that the key priority in the plan would be to provide simplicity and clarity for the education system. Whilst the plan would be broad in terms of the range of issues covered by the document, the core of the plan would focus on Scotland's curriculum and framework for learning and teaching.

Graeme Logan (GL) stated that the new simplified framework should focus on firm national standards for literacy and numeracy, and would lead to a streamlining of a wide range of material. The simpler framework should:

- trail clear progression steps;
- de-clutter the primary curriculum and explain what that means, and;
- provide a greater focus on what learners need.

Alan Armstrong (AA) reinforced this point, making it clear that efforts in the coming months will focus on providing greater clarity to teachers about achieving a level at the various stages within the framework.

Ken Muir (KM) stated that it would be important to make clear links between the National Improvement Framework's 6 drivers, Curriculum for Excellence and "How

Good is Our School” 4. He asked Board members if it would be helpful to the “de-cluttering” aim to provide renewed focus on aspects of significant learning rather than an excessive focus on the Experiences and Outcomes.

Susan Quinn (SQ) said that the challenge was not related to teachers’ understanding or ability to apply, the Experiences and Outcomes, it is instead the challenge of delivering the aspirations on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing within a 35 hour working week.

There were further comments from Board members:

- Ann McIntosh (AM) endorsed the comments made by SQ and noted that the very important inclusion agenda reduces the contact time for a lot of teachers. AM noted that emotional and mental health are vital. AM said that many teachers are now beginning to feel confident with the broad general education and that there would be risks in making further radical changes too quickly,
- GL stated that there is no intention of making radical change at short notice. Instead, he said that it would be important to exemplify effective curriculum models which address the challenge of de-cluttering the curriculum. GL noted the need for clear, practical guidance, with the potential to create a product along the lines of the previous 5-14 practical guide.
- Seamus Searson (SS) stressed the importance of reinforcing the confidence of teachers – building their confidence and trust.
- Neville Prentice stressed the importance of designing the system around the needs of young people, and noted the budget challenges that are driving some of the wider issues for the system.
- Mike Corbett (MC) welcomed the aim of providing a clearer framework, one which supports teacher innovation.
- Iain Ellis (IE) said that it is important to iron out problems, and to resist the temptation to add further elements to the curriculum framework.
- Michael Wood (MW) stressed that it is important not to lose sight of the starting point, with the key pillars in place for excellence and equity.
- Andy Smith (AS) mentioned the recent conference involving his organisation, with its focus on narrowing the gap, the resource implications of this, and the importance allowing teachers to innovate.
- SQ endorsed the point raised by KM that any further advice to the system should focus on the Significant Aspects of Learning. SQ stated that timing is crucial for any further steer to the system, noting that School Improvement Plans will have been drafted by June.
- Mhairi Harrington (MH) asked the Board to reflect on what “de-cluttering” actually means, and to ensure that this question is posed to Ministers before we leap to assumptions. That way, the system will ensure that it tackles the right issues.

FR noted the wide range of comments from the Board; that the comments made it clear that the Scottish Government should take great care with any further changes; and reinforced that Scottish Ministers are keen to continue the conversation about clarity, simplicity and prioritisation.

### Report of Assessment and Qualifications Group (Paper 3)

AJ introduced paper 3 and provided an update on the points reached in recent weeks. This included:

- a clearer set of actions and timing to be taken forward, and;
- comments on progress made by the group and next steps.

AJ noted some of the key findings of the initial report from the Group, in particular the broad consensus that the system was creating a burden of workload that was not intended.

Janet Brown (JB) stated that there were multiple reasons lying behind the workload challenges in the system. She said that the SQA were considering the issue of workload on a subject by subject basis, with an evaluation plan put in place and a published report had been issued to teachers this session.

FR stated that she was particularly interested in the next steps for the group, and sought specific contributions from Board members:

- MC said that the Group created the opportunity for a lot of useful discussion but that there were still significant issues with duplication. MC said that some issues were not resolved with the clarity that he would have preferred, and that communication of key findings with front-line teachers remains a hurdle.
- SQ said that the EIS welcomed several aspects of the Group's report but that it did not go far enough and that a key priority area is perceptions around National 4.
- SS noted that there was excessive pressure on schools. He noted that the Group had not met since March and needed to meet soon.
- Bill Maxwell (BM) noted the letter issued by Education Scotland to schools, reaffirming the general principles of Curriculum for Excellence.
- IE welcomed the Education Scotland letter but noted that many schools continue to implement CfE in a way that was not intended

In response to points raised, JB asked Board members how to achieve a successful pathway of learning in S3, and said that it is important to recognise that assessment is important. JB said that the system partners need to be clear about what they need to achieve via assessment and to design solutions around that aim. Nonetheless, she noted that Board members, via the sub group, need to engage in a detailed discussion on National 4 and internal assessment. JB noted too that communication to teachers about what they can/cannot do or should/should not do remains a major issue.

FR noted that the next steps will be to develop a forward agenda and timetable of forward discussion. FR reiterated the Cabinet Secretary's desire to make significant progress on workload issues as a priority, and one that would be at the forefront of the forthcoming Delivery Plan for education.

### CfE Implementation Plan 2016-17 (Paper 4)

BM introduced the brief overview paper providing key headlines of the CfE Implementation Plan, which is now broader in its scope compared to previous CfE plans. FR invited comments from Board members.

SQ stated that the role of SCEL shouldn't duplicate actions by Education Scotland within the Implementation Plan. FR clarified that the plan will link effectively with SCEL's role and priorities. GL stated that there was clear alignment between the CfE Plan and the various NIF programmes, with SCEL working very closely with ES on delivery of the NIF, in particular the themes on teacher professionalism and school leadership.

IE raised a query about the absence of parent involvement actions within the Implementation Plan, however MB clarified that the plan did in fact include a range of actions to support parent involvement.

MW noted that the Implementation Plan contained 101 actions and that prioritisation should be at the forefront of minds. FR noted that the CfE Implementation Plan provides a detailed summary of activity with the forthcoming Education Delivery Plan designed to pull this all together into a more strategic plan.

FR concluded by noting that the CfE Implementation Plan will be published in the coming weeks. AJ will share certain aspects of the higher level Delivery Plan with Management Board members for comment, focusing on the curriculum aspects of the plan.

#### National Improvement Framework Update (Paper 5)

Graeme Logan (GL) and Donna Bell (DB) provided a short update on the NIF as follows:

- Plans for the December 2016 NIF Annual Report were well underway
- There has been progress across all 6 drivers within the NIF
- A funded post within GTCS will commence shortly, to examine the ITE provision on literacy and numeracy.
- The NIF report will be using the 3 core Quality Indicators for inspection

FR invited Board members' comments on progress

SQ said that she had a concern about the gathering of data to support teacher professional judgement and the significant time needed for this. In response, GL clarified that a number of individuals had taken part in additional professional learning. GL commented that the standardised assessments under the NIF would provide a robust streamlined assessment.

MC said that a commitment had been provided on "achievement of a level" since January but that it was provided too late in the academic cycle to influence teacher practice in academic year 2016/17. GL said that Education Scotland met with Directors of Education in October 2015 and published a document on "achievement of a level" in March 2016. He said that further support will be provided in the coming year to ensure that schools are in an even better position next year.

Andy Smith (AS) asked for clarity on what will be published, how and when. Donna Bell confirmed that there will be a clear timetable on publication of NIF-related material.

IE asked about plans for publication of the teacher professional judgement data. FR confirmed that the publication will be in a similar format to the senior phase data provided on ParentZone Scotland.

AM noted that the Parent Council in her own school were concerned about the publication of data on schools who take on pupils with significant challenges. She stated that it was easy to make assumptions about the public's ability to interpret what is highly complex information.

### Papers 6 and 7

FR noted that the Agenda included a further two substantive items:

- Technologies Experiences & Outcomes Review (Paper 6)
- Invitation to contribute to Research Strategy (Paper 7)

However, due to time constraints, FR suggested that the Board consider papers 6 and 7 by correspondence.

In relation to governance, FR stated that the Scottish Government was considering a range of education issues beyond CfE, with one option being the creation of a strategic forum on education with a slightly broader membership. The Board noted that this would need to be considered further with Board members and with Ministers before arriving at a final decision on the future of the Board.

Next meeting: September 2016

Venue To be confirmed

## Actions from Meeting No. 45 (8 June 2016)

	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Action</b>
1.	Iain Ellis/ National Parent Forum of Scotland	Confirm NPFS Rep for future meetings before September meeting.
2.	Secretariat/ Scottish Government	Issue papers earlier for September meeting.
3.	All	Provide comments on minutes from the March meeting of the Board by end Friday 10 June.
4.	Andy Bruce/Scottish Government	Develop a forward agenda and timetable of forward discussion in relation to work of the Assessment and Qualifications Group.
5.	Education Scotland/Scottish Government	Publish CfE Implementation Plan.
6.	Scottish Government	Share certain aspects of higher level Delivery Plan with Management Board members for comment, focussing on the curriculum aspects of the plan.
7.	Donna Bell/Scottish Government/ Education Scotland	Provide clear timetable on publication of NIF-related material.
8.	All	Board to consider Paper 6 (Technologies Experiences & Outcomes Review) and Paper 7 (Invitation to contribute to Research Strategy) by correspondence.