

**CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE
MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING**

**21 January 2013
St Peter the Apostle High School, Clydebank**

NOTE OF MEETING

LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS AND ATTENDEES

Board Members

Name

Kay Barnett
Janet Brown
John Edward
Iain Ellis
Tony Finn
Alan Johnston
Terry Lanagan

Mhairi Laughlin
Irene Matier

Bill Maxwell
David McMurtry
Ken Muir
Christine Pollock

Duncan Simpson
Sarah Smith

Organisation

Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS)
National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFSS)
General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)
Scottish Government
Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
(ADES)
College Development Network
Association of Headteachers and Deputies in
Scotland (AHDS)
Education Scotland
Initial Teacher Education
Education Scotland
Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
(ADES)
Community Learning and Development Network
Scottish Government (Chair)

Others

Mike Corbett

NASUWT

Officials

Julie Anderson
Denise Brock
Graham Norris
Jeane Freeman

Scottish Government (Secretariat)
Education Scotland
Education Scotland
Scottish Government

Apologies

Grant Jarvie
Ken Muir
Jane Peckham
Andy Smith

Universities Scotland
Education Scotland
NASUWT
SLS

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Sarah Smith (SS) thanked Terry Lanagan (TL) and Mick Vassie, Headteacher of St Peter the Apostle High School for hosting the meeting in the school. She welcomed Members, in particular Mhairi Laughlin, Principal at West Lothian college who has replaced Graeme Hyslop as the College Development Network's representative on the Board and Iain Ellis, who has replaced Joanna Murphy as the NPFS representative. Introductions were made around the table.

1.2 SS updated the Board with recent general developments since their last meeting, in particular noting that: implementation milestones continued to be met with products being well received; CfE was now far from being a 'new thing' – it is the norm, the standard, the expectation in Scotland's schools; more positive examples were emerging such as Calderglen High School in East Kilbride which was the first to be evaluated as "excellent"; extensive discussions were continuing across schools and local authorities on senior phase curriculum models for 2013/14; and that ongoing support for authorities and schools, and a focus on communication and engagement with parents, was crucial throughout this period.

1.3 It was noted that the discussion on the annual CfE progress report later in the meeting would give the Board a chance to reflect on progress, and consider further action required.

2. Note and actions from meeting of 13 September 2012

2.1 The note of the last meeting was agreed.

2.2 Alan Johnston (AJ) provided an update on the actions from the last meeting, many of which were to be covered under agenda items 3 and 6.

2.3 On the Senior Phase Benchmarking Project, AJ updated the Board on the further engagement work that had been carried out to determine the most appropriate name of the tool, since the Board last met in September. It was noted that the name Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool had been most popular with practitioners. This was approved by MB.

2.4 In terms of future Management Board priorities, it had been agreed at the previous meeting that the Board would have an 'observatory role' and future meetings would be designed to enable them to take a broad view of issues.

2.5 As regards venues and visits built around future Board meetings, Christine Pollock (CP) suggested that these should be linked to each of the CfE entitlements, to enable the Board to see these developing in practice.

3. CfE Implementation Progress

3.1 SS invited Bill Maxwell (BM) to introduce the report from the Implementation Group (paper 3.1). BM explained that the Implementation Group were meeting every six to eight weeks and tracking the high level programme plan across six main strands, highlighting areas at risk of slippage in amber. He explained that Education Scotland were broadly on track to deliver on original commitments and new priorities. He also noted that the Professional Focus Papers had been well received and exemplars of S3 profiles on track. One area currently flagged in amber was the development of NQ materials for N4 and N5, due to issues around resources and commissioning support materials from authorities. However he was confident this would be delivered on time.

3.2 The main risk was the nature of the new Senior Phase and Broad General Education Curricular models. Here the Implementation Board was keen to closely monitor models emerging and take direct action where needed, for example in Aberdeenshire. They also want to keep an eye on the variety of models emerging and want to share emerging examples and ideas.

3.3 Board Members discussed the difference between “inconsistent” and “inappropriate” approaches in the Senior Phase and BM noted that the recent series of CfE Briefing papers had provided clarification on national expectations, for example making it clear that whole cohort subject choice in S2 was incompatible with CfE. In terms of the extent of inappropriate practices, BM said that, although there were still some, there were not many examples of this and that schools were heading in the right direction.

3.4 Denise Brock (DB) introduced the Communications and Engagement Update (paper 3.2), outlining recent and planned activity by partners. She highlighted the range of partnership work that had been undertaken recently, in particular the EIS article, the GTCS Magazine Q&A, as well as the development of a cross institutional communications network. Work was underway to review the impact of communications activities in reaching certain groups and to use this evidence to identify priority areas going forward. There had been a specific focus on communications with parents and CLD providers recently and these will remain key areas going forward, along with Higher Education.

3.5 SS invited Iain Ellis (IE) to present paper 3.3 on outcomes from the December NPFS Focus Group. IE talked through the paper noting that the main message from the Focus Group had been that parents were not clear about how curriculum models were being developed and that the numbers of subjects in S4 were causing major concern, with comparisons being made between local schools. Parents were also concerned about how universities and employers were going to accept qualifications and were not aware of engagement with universities and employers on CfE. In addition, parents still did not understand Nationals. In light of this feedback, the NPFS (with advice and support from Education Scotland and SQA) have been developing materials for parents explaining the content of the new Qualifications courses. They have also commissioned the development of a map for parents explaining the CfE journey. And, as these same issues were coming up across the country, the NPFS are also organising three events for parents on Qualifications and Senior Phase in March. Mr Russell will provide the opening address at the first event

in Edinburgh on 5 March, Dr Allan will open the events in Glasgow on 13 March and in Aberdeen on 20 March. SQA, SG and ES will support the events.

3.6 AJ thanked IE for his helpful summary and noted the range of work undertaken recently to address the issues raised and to improve communication and engagement with parents. He also highlighted the important role of Ministers in helping to reinforce messages for parents, which included a number of engagements by Dr Allan which demonstrate our commitment to engaging with parents and young people eg with SPTC, Local Forums in Inverclyde and West Lothian and Chief Executives of children organisations.

3.7 Kay Barnett (KB) noted that the EIS were supportive of all the recent work to provide materials and resources, but felt that the key issue was what happened next, emphasising that the focus needed to be on implementation. She noted that they would get a better sense of what was happening on the ground following the EIS Senior Phase survey that was going to EIS teachers in the week beginning 28/01/13.

3.8 Terry Lanagan (TL) noted that communications around CfE had improved recently, however he felt that, because it had been simplified down to something parents understand, they were no longer able to see the big picture, an example of which has been the recent focus on number of subjects in S4. He felt it was important to be clear about the benefits of CfE and its overarching aims, not just to focus on number of subjects.

3.9 CP suggested that had the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool been available earlier, then perhaps that might have helped the argument around CfE being about more than academic results. BM noted that the completion date for this work was June 2013 and AJ confirmed that the original milestones were still in place. It was felt that further communications were needed around this, as having the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool together with the position of Scottish universities would help clarify that young people were going to be judged on wider achievements as well as academic results. TL suggested that where there was a perception that things were not working, then the void should be filled with success stories of where schools are doing this successfully, which would help develop understanding without being a template.

3.10 Graham Norris (GN) noted that, with regard to the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool and HE engagement, that Education Scotland were currently developing CfE Briefing 8 and that this would look at how the benchmarking tool will support curriculum planning and will reflect the fact that universities are currently considering their position on CfE.

3.11 AJ pointed out the need to reinforce the value of the BGE, as it could be at risk of not being recognised and the focus put on National Qualifications.

3.12 Janet Brown (JB) noted that pupils' destinations depend on business, so it was important that the CBI, Institute of Directors, FSB etc were all up to speed on CfE. AJ noted that this was a priority area for engagement and that the Cabinet Secretary was closely involved. He also pointed out that his Division were feeding into the work of the Commission for the Development of Scotland's Workforce.

3.13 IE asked about schools that had been identified in the Deep Audit as needing support and what had subsequently happened to them. BM explained that any issues raised had been addressed at the time and were not ongoing, so no further support was needed. In terms of full cohort presentations, clearly the cohorts that started several years ago must reach their end point but Education Scotland were closely monitoring schools now and making sure none are doing full cohort early presentation. The Area Liaison Officers were in close contact with local authorities and have a strong feedback loop to raise awareness about models being developed and any issues emerging.

3.14 SS emphasised the need for clarity around the big messages behind CfE and asked for a progress report on this at the next MB meeting.

4. CfE Annual Report: presentation and discussion of implications

4.1 BM explained to the Board that the report had been produced by the Scottish Government's Analytical Services Team based on evidence on the current state of play and that there was a fairly large evidence base which sits behind the short summary that the Board has received. Its purpose was: to feedback on progress over the last year; to support reflection on what needs more attention; and to help focus on what further support is needed. He pointed out that Section 8 of the report was a first attempt at setting out priorities for next year and that this will go to the Implementation Group and come back to Management Board to be agreed.

4.2 BM suggested that an overarching Benefits Realisation Strategy should be developed, based on a strong independent evidence base that allowed the Board to look at whether the original aims/ outcomes of CfE are being delivered.

4.3 SS suggested that the best use of the Board's time in this meeting would be: to reflect on the suggested areas for support; to indicate if they agreed; to consider the EIS proposal for additional in-service days; and to look at other ways of providing support, for example the AHDS assessment events.

4.4 AJ noted that a minor typo had been picked up in section 7, where it referred to "unit assessment support packs" and that this would be amended in the report.

4.5 Irene Matier (IM) gave an update on the AHDS conference on assessment, tabling a short paper which highlighted some of the issues raised, but noting that they had a great deal of positive feedback, particularly around the joint working. However, it was felt that more time was needed for practical/operational matters and on BTC4 and the NAR. The feedback suggested that this support should be: time to assimilate and engage in professional dialogue; reassurance (from Education Scotland) that they were doing the right thing; and help with workload. She suggested that Headteachers would prefer the resources and supply cover to release small groups of teachers to do work together, rather than have whole school days out.

4.6 KB noted that there was an outdated belief that CfE issues in the primary school had been addressed and the focus had moved to the Senior Phase. However, feedback from EIS Primary Teachers suggested that there were key issues still to be addressed, in particular assessment and moderation and issues around transition, which required time, space, ability to liaise across sectors and time to facilitate meetings. She was of the view that a good starting point, which could lead to opportunities for other developments, would be two additional in-service days.

4.7 Mike Corbett (MC) reiterated concerns that a lot of time had been spent on supporting the National Qualifications and that there was a need for Primary teachers to take time to look at assessment and moderation and would welcome anything that could be done to support this.

4.8 TL felt that extra inservice days in Primary would not be helpful or well received, but suggested that it would be better to prioritise development activities and to use existing inservice days, for example to bring together staff from different authorities or to have local authority facilitated events.

4.9 IE expressed concerns about the proposal for an additional two days in-service for Primary teachers, mainly due to childcare issues for parents. He suggested that the existing five inservice days should be used more effectively and that parents should be able to see the programmes and planned outcomes from these days.

4.10 David McMurtry (DM) raised some questions about the value of the CfE Progress Report in its current format, asking: if it provided enough evidence for MB; if exact numbers of exemplification was needed; if some of the general statements were specific enough; and how issues raised would be kept on the Board's agenda?

4.11 CP noted that the NPFS feedback had shown that parents were reassured about the delivery of CfE in Primary Schools and suggested that giving two extra inservice days might destabilise this reassurance. She pointed out that moderation and quality assurance were about sharing work and could not solely be done as inservice days, but also through observing practice. She suggested that approaches such as learning and teaching communities would be more helpful in developing sharing of standards.

4.12 Duncan Simpson (DS) noted that the report raised a number of questions, but needed more answers and more specific detail.

4.13 Tony Finn (TF) suggested that it would have been helpful for Management Board to see a more detailed analysis of the data provided.

4.14 KB suggested that, by way of a compromise, the EIS would be willing to look at a focused programme of support across the whole country for one additional in-service day.

4.15 BM acknowledged that the current format of the progress report gave a broad brush summary of the evidence and that this format should be reconsidered. He

suggested that the Board could commission mini reports on specific areas and that that would be for the Scottish Government's Analytical Services Unit to consider. BM noted that the progress report would feed into the Implementation Group's Action Plan for support, would enable them to identify explicit actions to take this forward. Education Scotland would take lead on this and report back to Management Board.

4.16 CP pointed out that each local authority was doing its own report and that there were major differences between each authority. She therefore felt that this report did not fully reflect the range of issues and was not sure of its value on an annual basis. She suggested that individual authority progress reports would be more helpful, with an Implementation Group report setting out national actions.

4.17 Mhairi Laughlin (ML) noted that this could be part of a wider Benefits Realisation Strategy and link into the monitoring of different models emerging.

4.18 SS brought this item to a close noting that: the Board must be mindful of implementation issues in Primary Schools despite focus on the Senior Phase in coming months; there was a mixed response about what should be done around further support; and there was a range of suggestions including an extra in-service day, work to build on good practice and building on the AHDS conference.

4.19 SS asked AJ to work with partners to develop this further and report back to the Board.

5. Management Board Learner Journey Sub Group

5.1 SS invited TL to give an update on progress with the work of the Learner Journey Sub Group.

5.2 TL noted that the CBI was represented on the Sub Group to help identify and disseminate good practice in working with employers. He pointed out that they had so far been unsuccessful in securing SDS representation.

5.3 TL told the Board that a major focus of the meeting in December had been on the importance of universities making their position on CfE flexibility public in the next few months. He explained that universities would be clarifying their positions on CfE between December and February and that St Andrews and Aberdeen had already done so. He explained that there was a great deal of nervousness amongst parents and a focus on the high tariff courses, but emphasised that this should not be allowed to drive this area of work. He told the Board that Universities Scotland would be gathering information from universities on the following key areas:

- Requirement for National 4 and 5 qualifications;
- Policy on Highers taken in more than one sitting;
- Policy on Highers studied for over two years (e.g. S4 and S5);
- Statements on the value of progression, where appropriate and possible, from Highers to Advanced Highers and Scottish Baccalaureates, as good preparation for the demands of university study; and

- Policy on recognition of wider achievement.

An update would be provided to the Sub Group at the next meeting.

5.4 IE agreed that these issues were the issues parents were raising and that there needed to be a way of sharing this information more effectively.

5.5 TL explained that the Higher Education representatives on the sub group had also raised the question of an exit profile for school leavers, similar to those in P7 and S3. He felt this was already the purpose of the UCAS personal statement and asked the Board for their views. BM pointed out that schools were doing profiling and that this wouldn't always stop at S3. He also noted that the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool would have a role in looking at wider achievement which would be helpful. JB suggested that there could be a recognising achievement toolkit covering qualifications, other awards and personal achievements. She explained that UCAS were reviewing the current HE entry system and the personal statement and suggested that this would be a good time to engagement with them on this area.

5.6 SS noted that the Board were open to further exploration of idea of the exit profile and asked TL to take this forward with the Sub Group and report back to the Board.

6. CLD Strategy

6.1 SS invited DS to give an update on work to develop a CLD strategy.

6.2 DS told the Board that there had been a lot of activity in recent months to develop a CLD Communications Strategy, briefing paper and also changes to CLD guidance, the overarching aim of which is to help schools better understand the role that CLD can play in delivering CfE.

6.3 DS explained that work was in hand to develop a more strategic, co-ordinated approach to CLD and that he would bring a more substantial report on this to the next meeting of the Board in April.

7. AOB

7.1 SS asked Julie Anderson (JA) to send a post meeting summary of the agreed actions.

7.2 SS invited members to cover any other business. It was noted that the ADES network were organising a CfE conference on 13/05/13 to showcase success and good practice.

7.3 Board Members agreed to the online publication of the note and the following papers from the September 2012 meeting:
Paper 3.1 – Implementation Group Report
Paper 3.2 – Communications Update
Paper 4.1 – Senior Phase Benchmarking Project

7.4 TL wished SS the best for her new post and asked that it be noted for the record that the Board were grateful to SS for her work in chairing the Management Board and for securing a smooth transition following on from Colin MacLean.

8. Date of Next Meetings

The date of the next meeting had been agreed as Tuesday 23 April.

Post meeting note: this will be held in West Lothian College, Livingston.