

Meeting:	Advisory Board
Date:	30/01/2025
Time:	10:00:11:30
Details:	MS Teams/Optima

Minute

Members	In attendance
Gillian Hamilton (Chair)	[Redacted]/ [Redacted] (item 6)
Janie McManus	[Redacted] (item 8)
Ollie Bray	
David Gregory	Governance
Gill Ritchie	[Redacted]
Rob Strachan	[Redacted] (secretariat)
Patricia Watson	
David Gemmell	
Kevin Kelman	
Aileen Ponton	
Apologies	
John Fyffe	
Lyndsay McRoberts	

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chief Inspector of Education, Janie McManus chaired the first part of the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Advisory Board. Apologies were noted from John Fyffe and Lyndsay McRoberts.
- 1.2 It was noted that the meeting time had been reduced today, to allow the Non-executive Board members to meet with Clare Hicks and Lisa Bird to discuss Education reform.

2. Previous meeting

- 2.1 The Board agreed the minutes from the meeting of 24 October 2024.
- 2.2 The following action log updates were also noted:

AB 26	ES Key Priorities – update on activity. Curriculum Improvement Cycle.	Tabled at today’s meeting. Action closed.
AB 31	How best to utilise Strategic Discussion sessions going forward.	Rob Strachan drafting a paper. Action open.
AB 32	Horizon Scan – provide a summary of what has been actioned.	Summary shared with Board. Action closed.
AB 33	Horizon Scan – Published SureStart research to be shared.	Shared with Lyndsay McRoberts. Action closed.
AB 34	AAP 24-25 – Corporate Radar decision making process to be shared	Shared with Board. Action closed.
AB 35	MI, Q1 24-25 report – Explore the nature of enquiries.	Ongoing. Action open.

AB 36	MI, Q1 24-25 report – Update to be provided on social media engagements.	Data would be included in the Q3 report. Action closed.
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3. Declarations of interest

3.1 No declarations to report.

4. Update from the Chief Inspector of Education

4.1 The Chief Inspector of Education, Janie McManus advised it had been a busy time for the Inspectorate with new developments underway. She highlighted that the shared Inspection framework with the Care Inspectorate had been published on 14 January 2025. This had been challenging and included complex stakeholder engagement. It was noted that the Framework would be used for inspection from September 2025, with ongoing piloting and testing of the quality indicators within the framework.

4.2 It was also noted that the review of the school inspection framework had been announced and the work was now underway. Stakeholder engagement forums had been set up for the various reviews and that included curriculum inspections to inform the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.

4.3 The CI informed the Board that the evaluation of the CLD provision had been published and advised that both her and Gillian Hamilton had joined the new CLD strategic leadership group.

4.4 An update on the local authority (LA) national report was provided, on the approaches to support school improvement. It was noted that the fieldwork had been completed and each LA had been provided with a draft written summary of findings. This would inform the development of the LA national report.

4.5 Several other key engagements were highlighted, including work with the Children and Young People’s Commissioner. There was then some discussion around stakeholder engagement and it was noted that there was a clear sense that people would prefer to be involved at the start of any development.

5. Update from the Chief Executive

5.1 The Chief Executive joined the meeting and confirmed that the appointment process for the posts of Chief Executive of Education Scotland and HM Chief Inspector of Education had re-commenced with a closing date of 9 February 2025. She highlighted the indicative timeline as follows:

- Longlisting 14 February 2025.
- Shortlisting 5 March 2025.
- Assessments 10 - 28 March 2025.
- Interviews 3 or 4 April 2025.
- Final Outcomes w/c 7 April 2025.

5.2 The Chair provided the following updates on reform and the internal work taking place.

- It was noted that the monthly leadership updates would now take place separately, with one for the Inspectorate and one for the refocused ES. They would run at the same time, with corporate messages shared across both sessions to ensure alignment across the organisation.
- The January update had reconfirmed the core functions of both a refocused ES and the inspectorate and the three key pieces of work underway were noted as follows:
 - the AAP/Strategic Plan – ELT and LT would lead on this work with contributions from teams across ES. The work would be led by Rob Strachan and would soon start to develop a refreshed plan for 2025/26.
 - the Transition Plan – a joint piece of work between ES and SG. The plan represents strategic and operational aspects of what we need to do to create a separate inspectorate and a refocused ES.
 - both aspects of the strategic work are reflected in the organisational design work.
- The Chair advised the Transition Plan was designed to identify key activities and outputs to set up a refocused ES and HMIE and she highlighted the various actions set out in the plan.
- It was noted that time had been blocked out in staff diaries to focus on transition days. The Chair advised board members that there may be an opportunity to join in the discussions and contribute.
- In terms of the wider SG work to support reform the Programme Board met on 22 January 2025 and there was confirmation of the stages of the Bill and an outline of the timeframes was given.
- The Chair confirmed the Chief Executive Forum and the fortnightly Senior Liaison Groups continue to meet, as well as the staff engagement group and ES, SG and TU had held a joint meeting. Trade Unions and professional associations met with Cabinet Secretary in January and feedback suggested it was a very positive meeting.

5.3 The Chair referred to the Organisational Design work. She advised that LT are also keen to hear staff views on what had worked well and lessons learned from the most recent restructure. It was noted the DPR team had created a short survey to give staff the opportunity to share their views.

5.4 Given the short meeting today the Chair agreed to share the further updates via email.

ACTION: Further updates to be shared via email – [Redacted].

6. Mathematics National Thematic report

6.1 [Redacted] and [Redacted] joined the meeting to present the National Thematic report on Mathematics.

6.2 Members were advised that at the end of 2023 the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills had announced a new Curriculum Improvement Cycle, starting with a review and update of the mathematics curriculum. As part of this work, HM Inspectors had carried out a national thematic inspection of learning and teaching across early learning & childcare, primary, secondary, special and Gaelic Medium. It was noted

that the ensuing report had published on the 28 November 2024 and the key findings and recommendations were outlined.

- 6.4 Having presented the work done to date, the discussion then turned to some of the challenges and options for next steps were outlined. It was noted that the team had begun to engage with ES and SG colleagues to discuss how the findings of this report would take account of the wider work within the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.
- 6.6 Board members commented that they found the presentation really helpful and provided some constructive feedback. The Chair thanked [Redacted] and [Redacted] for their presentation and they both left the meeting.

7. Curriculum Improvement Cycle

- 7.1 Ollie Bray provided a brief presentation on the Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC) and outlined four areas in moving forward for ES, highlighting areas of complexity. He also provided a high level timeline and referenced the OECD action plan and how this had formed into the CIC work.
- 7.2 It was noted that there is a need to replace the technical framework for the curriculum to ensure it is fit for purpose and Ollie outlined current areas of focus and advised on next steps and communication. This was the first month into the awareness raising phase and a project plan was being developed. Webinars and podcasts were being planned to disseminate information and to provide opportunities for people to engage.
- 7.6 It was noted that work had also been done on professional learning and leadership and how to lead change programmes.
- 7.7 It was also highlighted that a website had been set up with a link to pathways and Ollie asked members to sign up to be kept up to date with progress of CIC.
- 7.8 Ollie advised the presentation slides would be shared with the board after the meeting.

ACTION: To share CIC presentation slides with board members – [Redacted].

8. Finance

- 8.1 [Redacted] joined the meeting to provide an update on the financial monitoring report as at 31 December 2024. She advised the predicted overspend as at end December 2024 was £88.7k.
- 8.2 Due to the Oracle upgrade, [Redacted] highlighted the significant issues with payroll reporting and difficulties in verifying the accuracy of some balances. Although the Finance Team had logged a number of i-fix calls, there were still outstanding issues to be resolved. Audit Scotland had therefore agreed to push back the start date for the annual accounts audit by two weeks, allowing extra time to try and resolve the identified issues. It was also noted the transaction processing times had gradually improved.

- 8.3 The Chair thanked [Redacted] for her update and confirmed that given the severity of the risk flagged around reporting, this would be escalated to and a note had been prepared to be sent to the Director General.
- 8.5 The addition of £1.9m of the existing budget pressure to the face of the budget bill was noted.
- 8.6 [Redacted] left the meeting.

9. Audit and Risk Committee

- 9.1 Aileen Ponton referred to the minute from the last meeting on 21 November 2024. She highlighted some of the actions, including the discussion around the DR testing and the implications. It was noted that the Procurement report should go to the Advisory Board as well as ARC.

10. For Information

- 10.1 The AAP2425 Q2 report and Management Information Q2, 24-25 report was noted. There was a brief discussion around the MI, Q2 report and integrating the reporting under priorities.
- 10.2 The Inspectorate Quarterly report (June-September 2024) on Activity and Staffing levels was also noted.
- 10.3 The latest minutes from both the Inspectorate Board and the Support and Improvement Board were noted.

11. AOB

- 11.1 There was no other business to note.

12. Date of next meeting

- 12.1 The next Advisory Board was scheduled for 13 March 2025.

Name [Redacted]

Date 18/02/2025