

## Teacher Panel

### Meeting 2 – Thursday 27 October 2016

Conference Rooms D and E, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh

#### Agenda

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|--|---------------|
| <b>1. Welcome and Introductions</b>  | 9:30 – 9:35   |
| <b>2. Delivery Plan Update (Paper 1)</b>   | 9:35 – 9:40   |
| <b>3. Assessment</b>   |               |
| <b>3.1 Changes to assessments in the Senior Phase (Paper 2)</b>  | 9:40 – 10:05  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removal of mandatory unit assessments at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, and</li><li>• Possible implications for National 4.</li></ul>                       |               |
| <b>3.2 Assessment model for Broad General Education (Paper 3)</b>  | 10:05 – 10:30 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feedback on literacy and numeracy benchmarks, and</li><li>• Consultation arrangements, publication and messaging for remaining curriculum area benchmarks.</li></ul> |               |
| <b>4. Governance Review (Paper 4)</b>  | 10:30 – 10:50 |
| <b>5. National Improvement Hub (Paper 5)</b>   | 10:50 – 11:00 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress update on streamlining guidance.</li></ul>  |               |
| <b>6. Close</b>  | 11:00         |

# CHAIR'S BRIEF

## Teacher Panel

Meeting 2, 9:30 am, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

### 1. Welcome and Introductions [9:30]

*Welcome attendees. To note, there are three new members to the Panel:-*

- *Jenny Kerr, Class Teacher, Craigdhu Primary School, Milngavie, East Dunbartonshire*
- *Lynne Doyle, Class Teacher, St Flannan's Primary School, Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire*
- *Catriona Chaimbeul, Depute Headteacher, Glasgow Gaelic School*

*To note, apologies have been received from Andrew Travis.*

Introductory remarks:

- Grateful for all for travelling to Edinburgh to continue with this important piece of work.
- A number of actions to reduce workload have been undertaken since our first meeting, many of which we will discuss today.
- Will also touch on some wider but related issues, including the Governance Review, which I would like to hear initial thoughts and reflections on.
- As noted in the first meeting, want individuals in this group to give honest, practical views on what will and will not reduce teacher workload.

Note of Meeting 1:

*Invite attendees to agree revised minute for Meeting 1 which reflects some comments from Panel members in tracked changes at paragraphs 8 and 10.*

### 2. Delivery Plan Update (Paper 1) [9:35]

- Paper 1 provides an update on a number of actions taken forward since the Panel's first meeting including the publication of the CfE Statement and Benchmarks and the review of local authority actions to reduce workload and bureaucracy.
- Paper 1 also includes a note of some upcoming actions intended to reduce teacher workload, including publication of guidance on school improvement planning and reporting. The Panel's views on these will be sought by correspondence.

## CHAIR'S BRIEF

*Invite any brief comments on Paper 1, noting that substantive issues will be discussed as separate agenda items.*

### 3. Assessment [9:40]

#### 3.1 Changes to assessments in the Senior Phase (Paper 2) [9:40]

*Changes to national qualifications were discussed with some of the Panel in a teleconference on 13 September. This is an opportunity for the whole Panel to discuss the changes and possible wider implications e.g. for National 4.*

- At the first meeting of the Panel, there was a frank and open discussion on the workload issues for learners and teachers in the Senior Phase. Problems with mandatory unit assessments were highlighted.
- The ANQ Working Group met in September to discuss the removal of unit assessments as a mandatory part of national qualifications. The group's proposals were discussed with a number of Panel members in September, and agreed by the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board last month.
- During the discussions on unit assessments, I have heard concerns about National 4 and that it is perceived, by some parents, teachers and employers, as a less meaningful qualification. The Assessment and National Qualifications Working Group will consider the issues around National 4 and I will bring any proposals for change to this Panel for your views.

*Ask [redacted] to briefly summarise changes to unit assessments for Panel before inviting comments from attendees.*

#### 3.2 Assessment model for Broad General Education (Paper 3) [10:05]

##### BGE Assessment Model

- Our assessment model within BGE is based firmly on teacher judgement. We trust our teachers who judge when children achieve Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy, based on a range of assessment evidence.
- The National Improvement Framework sets out a range of evidence we will consider when assessing children's progress. In order to support teachers and improve the consistency of teacher judgement of CfE levels we recently published benchmarks for each level in literacy and numeracy, replacing a wide range of existing materials.
- Important to have a frank and open discussion on how we can improve confidence in, and consistency of, teacher judgement.

*Invite [redacted] to discuss the work going on in this area under the National Improvement Framework.*

## CHAIR'S BRIEF

*To prompt discussion it may be useful to ask:*

*How confident are teachers in assessing curriculum levels? How can we improve this?*

*Is there consistency of teacher judgement in your schools? How do you try to promote consistency e.g. through professional dialogue and collaboration?*

*Is there a role for further guidance or national support to help teachers in assessment?*

*What are your experiences of local authority moderation?*

### Benchmarks

- The draft Benchmarks which were published in September for literacy and numeracy are one tool by which we hope to reduce confusion about what is and is not required by teachers when assessing in BGE.
- Would be interested to hear thoughts on how useful these have been, especially given the work underway at Education Scotland to produce Benchmarks for the remaining curriculum areas by the end of the year.
- The Benchmarks to be published in December cover a further 12 areas and there is obvious concern about the scale of information which will be going out to teachers. Firmly believe that these are useful documents and will reduce workload in the long term, but interested to hear views on how we can most helpfully present these.

Ask [redacted] to say more about the development of benchmarks for further curriculum areas.

*To prompt discussion it may be useful to ask:*

*How can we most helpfully present the Benchmarks for the remaining curriculum areas to teachers? Do we need to present these differently for primary and secondary?*

*Will the new Benchmarks help schools to make better informed, and earlier, decisions about presenting learners appropriately for qualification, in the Senior Phase?*

#### **4. Governance Review (Paper 4) [10:30]**

- Launched the Governance Review on 13 September. Starts from the fundamental presumption that decisions about a child's education should be made at school level where possible.
- Review is about empowering teachers to make the best decisions for children and young people as that is where the expertise lies. It is not about imposing further bureaucracy or workload on teachers. Need to ensure we get that balance right.

## CHAIR'S BRIEF

- Also see this as an opportunity to strengthen the support for improving leadership and teacher professional learning, issues which were touched on at the first meeting of the Panel.

*Invite reflections and initial reaction to the Review from the Panel. To prompt discussion it may be useful to ask:*

*What are your initial thoughts on the issues raised in the Review (accountability, funding, strengthening the middle, capacity building and empowerment)?*

*How do we ensure the result of the Review is not just more workload for teachers?*

*How can we promote a culture of professional learning and collaboration?*

### **5. National Improvement Hub (Paper 5) [10:50]**

*A short update paper on progress with streamlining the National Improvement Hub has been provided to the Panel, together with slides which show how the hub and other Education Scotland websites will look. [REDACTED] will briefly introduce the work Education Scotland have been doing to streamline guidance.*

*To prompt discussion it may be useful to ask:*

*What do Panel members think of the new look to the Hub?*

*Has anyone tried to use the new Hub yet, and if so, how do you find it? Is it easy to find what you are looking for?*

### **6. AOB and Close [11:00]**

*None received in advance. If none offered then close meeting.*

*The next Panel meeting will be arranged for February, given the Christmas break.*

*Officials will contact the Panel with a date for the next meeting and to seek future agenda items.*

## **DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE - FOR INFORMATION**

### **Purpose**

1. To provide the Teacher Panel with an update on the number of actions which have been taken forward since their first meeting, and a forward look to some upcoming actions, as detailed in the [Delivery Plan](#).
2. A number of these items will be discussed separately during the second meeting of the Panel.

### **Update**

#### *Publication of CfE Statement and Benchmarks*

3. The CfE Statement together with a covering letter from the Deputy First Minister (available [here](#)) and Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy (available [here](#)) were published on Monday 29 August.
4. The CfE Statement provides key messages about what teachers and practitioners are expected to do to effectively plan learning, teaching and assessment. The Benchmarks set out what learners need to know and be able to do to achieve a level and are intended to support teacher professional judgement in assessing learners' progress.
5. The Benchmarks were published in draft and Education Scotland are engaging with teachers and practitioners to learn from their experience of using these. The Benchmarks for the remaining curriculum areas will be published by the end of the year.

#### *Changes to Unit Assessments*

6. The proposed changes to unit assessments at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher were discussed with member of the Panel by teleconference on Tuesday 13 September. The changes will remove the mandatory requirement for unit assessment at National 5 (from 2017-18), Higher (from 2018-19) and Advanced Higher (from 2019-20), and replace this with enhanced course assessment (including final examination and course assignment, depending on the subject) to ensure appropriate course coverage. The unit structure of the National Qualifications will remain, but without the mandatory assessment of each unit.
7. SQA will retain the availability of units as individual, free standing units for those learners who wish to take these rather than an entire course. This will support flexibility and alternative pathways to meet the needs of a range of young people.
8. The removal of mandatory unit assessments is intended to significantly reduce assessment workload, allowing more time for teachers to focus on learning and teaching, while maintaining the core principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

9. The proposals have now been endorsed by the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board (News Release available [here](#)). SQA is now taking forward the new approach and will publish more detail for teachers as soon as this is available. Furthermore, SQA will suspend the random sample element of unit verification for a further year (2017-18).

*Report on local authorities' actions to tackle workload in schools*

10. Education Scotland published its report on its "*Review of local authorities' actions to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy and undue workload in schools*" (available [here](#)) on Monday 19 September.

11. Whilst the review found that all local authorities were committed strongly, in principle, to tackling bureaucracy and reducing unnecessary workload for their staff, the extent and the effectiveness of their actions to achieve this varied significantly. The report highlighted that many authorities need to do more to speed up progress in ensuring consistent good practice across schools in their areas.

12. In particular, inspectors found that:

12.1 15 local authorities have been proactive in providing support and guidance that minimise workload demands for staff in their schools,

12.2 14 local authorities have provided support and guidance that places reasonable workload demands on staff, and

12.3 3 local authorities have not yet given sufficient support and guidance to prevent or reduce undue workload demands on staff, and further improvement is required.

13. The Deputy First Minister has written to all local authorities requesting action plans are put in place to address the issues raised in the review. Education Scotland will be following up with all local authorities and reporting any situations where local authorities are not taking robust action to the Deputy First Minister.

*Governance Review*

14. On 13 September, the Deputy First Minister launched "*Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review*". The Review starts from a fundamental presumption that decisions about a child's education should be made at school level where possible and asks questions about responsibilities and functions at every level of the education system and how these can be improved. It also asks about how funding for education can be made fairer through the development of a needs based funding formula for schools.

15. The Review is open until 6 January and Panel members can access the Review and submit a formal response [here](#). A number of regional engagement events are also being held, details of which can be found [here](#).

### *Review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006*

16. The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) is midway through its review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The review looks at the impact and success of the 2006 legislation and wider policy framework on parental involvement.

17. Research fieldwork is now underway; telephone interviews were held with parents during the summer and further focus groups will take place in the autumn term. NPFS have issued a call for evidence which includes questionnaires for parents, parent council representatives, educationalists and organisations (available [here](#)).

18. The research aspects of the review are due to be complete by December with a report to Ministers published in February 2017.

### *Progress with the National Improvement Hub*

19. An update on progress with progress with streamlining guidance and the work on the National Improvement Hub is provide in Paper 5 and will be discussed under Agenda Item 5.

### **Forward Look**

20. There are some upcoming publications which are due to be released prior to the next quarterly meeting of the Teacher Panel which are intended to reduce bureaucracy and workload in schools. As a result, it would be helpful to get feedback from the Panel on the following items by correspondence, once available.

### *Publication of further benchmark guidance*

21. As discussed above, Benchmarks are being developed for the remaining curriculum areas, namely:-

- Expressive Arts
- Gaelic (learners)
- Gaelic (native speakers)
- Health and Wellbeing (Food & Health)
- Health and Wellbeing (Personal & Social Education)
- Health and Wellbeing (Physical Education)
- Modern Languages
- Religious & Moral Education
- Religious Education (Roman Catholic)
- Sciences
- Social Studies
- Technologies

22. The new Benchmarks will be published before the end of the year. The timeline for implementation of these is available [here](#).

23. The Panel will have the opportunity to provide some initial thoughts on the consultation arrangements, publication and messaging for the new Benchmarks as part of a wider discussion on assessment in BGE generally, at Agenda Item 3.2. However, Education Scotland would also welcome detailed comments and feedback on the content of the Benchmarks. If you would like to provide feedback for your specific interests please email [EDSCFE@EducationScotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EDSCFE@EducationScotland.gsi.gov.uk), indicating which Benchmarks you are interested in.

*Guidance on school improvement planning and reporting*

24. Work is underway to provide support and guidance to ensure that schools, parents and communities are effectively involved in school improvement planning. This will be mindful of the need to tackle bureaucracy and will focus on how, through focusing upon the National Improvement Plan (NIP) priorities, all schools can work towards achieving excellence and equity.

25. The National Parental Strategic group is being consulted and following this, a short-life working group will be set-up to co-develop advice and guidance to support schools, parents and local communities.

26. This guidance will focus upon three key elements of school improvement: self-evaluation, annual reporting and improvement planning. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of schools, their stakeholders and communities focusing upon school improvement in relation to their local context based on high quality self-evaluation for self-improvement. This will ensure they are best placed to address and meet the need for improvement in relation to their own particular context. The guidance will be developed from "[How good is our school?](#)" and existing good practice.

27. The guidance will provide clarity to schools about a more streamlined approach to school improvement planning and how it can be achieved. A draft of the guidance will be available at the end of November, and views of the panel sought at that time by correspondence.

**Learning Directorate  
Scottish Government  
21 October 2016**

## **ASSESSMENT AND NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS WORKING GROUP ASSESSMENT OVERLOAD**

### **Purpose**

1. *Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland* (June 2016) commits the Scottish Government to “work with the Assessment and National Qualifications Group to consult on the design of assessment within the qualifications system - involving teachers, parents, young people, employers, national partners and other stakeholders.”
2. This paper is intended to assist the Group’s contribution to that process and to inform discussion at the Group’s meeting on 12 September.

### **Introduction**

3. The new National Qualifications, designed as part of Curriculum for Excellence, were phased in over a three year period from 2013-14. All former qualifications have now been replaced in accordance with the agreed timetable.
4. In 2014, the CfE Management Board established a ‘Reflections’ sub-group to consider any issues arising from the introduction of the new qualifications. This reported in 2014 and 2015. Subsequently, as the first phase of implementation drew to a close, Ministers established the Assessment and National Qualifications (ANQ) Group to consider and make recommendations (based on emerging evidence and experience) to Ministers and Management Board on (i) the policy framework (including design principles) within which qualifications are developed and operate, and (ii) on assessment policy and practice from age 3 to 18, and the best means of supporting improvements.
5. It has been clear from the work undertaken by these Groups, as well as from SQA’s evaluation of the new qualifications in schools, that there has been an unintended and unsustainable level of assessment-related work for learners and teachers. This appears to build up throughout S4, with a particularly acute focus between January and April, when there are cumulative demands for unit assessments, coursework and final exam preparation.
6. The first report on the work of the ANQ Group (May 2016) made clear that this workload has been a result of a variety of factors, including the design and operation of some unit assessments; preparation for qualifications in Broad General Education; curriculum pathways in the Senior Phase; schools’ policies on presentation for qualifications; the number of courses being taken by pupils in S4 and insufficient time available for learning and teaching and assessment of the Courses; and the operation of verification processes in the first years of the new qualifications.
7. Ministers have been clear that reducing workload and bureaucracy for teachers and young people is a priority (the establishment of the Reflections Group and the ANQ Group were in part a response to concerns expressed by professional associations on workload and over-assessment), and have already put in place a range of actions, many based on the work of the ANQ Group to date. Key to these are the actions already announced by SQA to streamline the qualifications in 2016-17 and beyond, SQA’s review of its approach to quality assurance, and the publication of clear guidance by the Chief Inspector of Schools in May 2016, on national expectations on qualifications and assessment to reduce

unnecessary workload on teachers. In particular, the guidance highlighted the following areas and has been specifically designed to help reduce the assessment burden:

- adequate preparation of candidates through the broad general education (BGE) for seamless transition into the senior phase
- presentation of candidates for courses at the appropriate level, based on reliable and robust judgements of curriculum level achieved
- the allocation of sufficient time for learning, teaching and assessment for the national courses (a notional 160 hours)
- the importance of following appropriate progression pathways
- effective assessment 3-18, aligned with the approaches being developed to support the National Improvement Framework.

8. The guidance recognises that, while schools and local authorities should make use of the flexibility they have under CfE in designing learning, teaching and assessment arrangements, great care needs to be taken to ensure that these local arrangements do not create unnecessary workload demands for teachers or learners. Schools and local authorities should be clear that applying this guidance will assist directly in reducing workload concerns.

### **The Design Principles of the new National Qualifications**

9. In addition to the actions to be undertaken in response to the above guidance, the Education Delivery Plan makes clear the Scottish Government commitment to consult on the design of assessment within the qualifications system. The proposal scoped below provides a suggested approach to future qualifications design, for discussion by ANQ Group members.

10. The new national courses for SQA National Qualifications are based on Design Principles agreed by the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board in 2010, following a national consultation with a broad range of stakeholders across Scotland.

11. National Courses, and the Units within them, are designed to reflect the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence, and to develop skills for learning, life and work. They have an increased emphasis on skills but still have appropriate knowledge and skills for that course area. They are less prescriptive than previous qualifications as they offer flexibility, provide time for learning and have scope for personalisation and choice, especially within the Coursework.

12. The content/skills of each Course has been organised into units. Most of the national courses above level 4 comprise three units, plus an added value element - an additional unit at National 4, and course assessment (usually an exam plus other form of assessment, such as assignment, portfolio or performance) at National 5 or Higher. At present, National 4 to Higher qualifications are weighted at 24 SCQF points, six for each unit plus a further six for the course assessment or Added Value Unit. The SCQF Credit points are used to quantify learning outcomes and give them a value or currency. They are a way of showing how much time it takes, on average, to complete a qualification or learning programme.

13. Depending on the nature of the subject, sometimes units are skills-based, with appropriate knowledge and understanding, and sometimes they are topic-based, incorporating appropriate skills. Each unit has an SCQF credit value attached to it that reflects the amount of time required for the delivery and assessment of that unit for an average learner, assuming they are at the correct entry point for that Course. The unit

content of the National Courses has 18 SCQF credit points associated with it. In addition there are six SCQF points attached to the Course assessment for the time required to complete Coursework and prepare for the exam through integration and application of the skills and knowledge acquired in the units.

14. The current assessment strategy of the Courses combines unit assessment, to ensure the learner is secure in the learning covered in each of the units, and a Course assessment. The Course assessment normally combines an exam and a piece of Coursework (this could be a performance, a practical task, an assignment). The exam is shorter in this design of Course as the content of the units has been assessed at a minimum level through the unit assessments. The grading of the Course is based on the Course assessment. The achievement of the Course is based on achieving a pass in the assessments of the units and achieving a Grade A to D in the Course Assessment. Both the unit assessments and course assessments are subject to national quality assurance to maintain the credibility of the Courses and to ensure that national standards are being applied across Scotland. One of the new features of the National Courses was that the Course assessment would reflect a broader range of learning by combining exams with coursework. Coursework enables the candidates Grade to be based on the range of skills and knowledge covered in the learning of the Course. Coursework can allow learners to demonstrate evidence of depth of learning, application of learning, creativity and/or performance abilities. It also allows some degree of personalisation and choice within the subject.

15. The purpose of National Units is to set standards of learning for individual learners. Units provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their acquisition of skills in an organised way and to develop the required skills for learning, life and work. National Units can form part of National Courses or can be undertaken separately. National Units can currently be certificated as qualifications in their own right.

16. To gain the award of the Course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the learner must pass all of the unit assessments as well as the Course assessment. To gain the award at National 3 and 4, the learner must pass all the units (plus the Added Value Unit at National 4). In addition, course assessment provides the basis for determining Grades at levels 5-7.

17. The National Course at SCQF levels 5 to 7 are currently graded A to D. In terms of pass rates, Grades A to C are considered passes and Grade D is a near miss but still recognises and certificates attainment. The score "norms" required to achieve each Grade are outlined below:

- Grade A - 70-100%
- Grade B - 60-69%
- Grade C - 50-59%
- Grade D - 45-49%

### **Assessment in the National Qualifications – a proposal for consideration by ANQ Group**

18. In scoping this proposal, a range of options have been considered, from maintaining the current system as defined by the agreed design principles (with refinements to the model to address qualifications and broader issues), to moving to exam-only external course assessment as under previous assessment regimes. The proposed option has been tested

with key stakeholders in order to ensure that the Group can be confident that the proposal has general support, is based on evidence and is designed in the best interests of learners.

19. The Group will also wish to be assured that the proposal is in line with the ambitions and approaches to learning and teaching inherent within CfE. The original principles (of CfE in general, as well as for the qualifications) were system-driven and based on an original, broad consensus from teachers, academics and others.

20. Following on from the fieldwork and research findings, SQA worked with its National Qualifications Support Teams to identify issues and actions for 2016-17 and subsequent years to reduce workload for teachers and learners. These subject reports were published in May of this year. From the research it was clear that the bar for assessing a unit was too high, leading to candidates failing and requiring reassessment. This was also leading to complex recording within schools that was felt by many to be bureaucratic and time consuming. SQA has put in place approaches to address this issue for 2016/17, e.g. lowering the threshold required for passing units. Assuming that candidates are presented at the correct level, this should reduce the requirements for re-assessment. In a small number of cases SQA was able to remove duplication of assessment between units and Course assessment in the immediate term.

21. Additionally SQA identified other issues and has initiated work to address these in the medium term. These issues for review include some instances of duplication of assessment which are more complex to address, . A key element within this programme of work is to identify and remove any genuine duplication between unit assessments in external exams.

22. The first report on the ANQ Group's work was clear that any changes in the short term should not compromise the secure delivery and credibility of qualifications. This has meant that the work has not progressed as fast as some stakeholders would wish. Within the current design of National Courses SQA has introduced a number of modifications to assist with workload. However there is feedback that these modifications will be insufficient to address workload concerns. Hence a modified design for National Courses is proposed in this paper, which addresses the concerns raised but is still very much in keeping with the aims and principles of CfE.

#### **Option for consideration:**

***Retain course structure and extend course assessment (including units for teaching & learning purposes only), but remove mandatory unit assessment at National 5 and Higher.***

23. The central elements of this proposal:

- **SQA would remove the requirement to have units summatively assessed, quality assured and certificated as a requirement of the Course.** Instead SQA would base achievement of the Course on a modified Course assessment only. Given that SQA is removing unit assessment then the exam would be extended to increase the sampling of the Course content. There may be a requirement to modify Coursework but this is less likely.
- Candidates would be entered for the Course and would need to be successful in their Course assessment to attain it. Units would not be part of the Course award. However, freestanding units will be available for candidates who wish to be presented for units only.

- Units would remain as organisers of learning within the course architecture, but **formal assessment of candidates would take place at Course level (through exam and coursework), not at unit level, and candidates would be certificated for the Course at the grade achieved.** Under this approach, units would be retained for planning and organising learning, but there would be no requirement for any formal assessment of units in order to certificate the Course. National 5 units would not be certificated on a candidate's SQA certificate for those completing the Course assessment.
- SQA would also retain the units of the Courses **as free standing units for learners who wished to take these** . This would support flexibility and alternative pathways to meet the needs of a range of learners (SQA offers many other stand-alone units which could also be taken and certificated). In order to be certificated for free-standing units schools would have to enter candidates for the units, conduct summative assessment and be quality assured.

24. Teachers could undertake assessment of the Course content in a way in which they thought was appropriate throughout the year but this would be driven by their own professional judgments on supporting pupils and monitoring progress, rather than the summative unit assessment requirements of the SQA in delivering the qualification. The formal summative assessment of the Course would instead be undertaken by an expanded final exam and the existing coursework. Teacher judgement would be paramount and would be in line with the drive to empower classroom teachers which has been a key principle of CfE.

25. A key test for any refinement of the national qualifications must be adherence to the vision for Curriculum for Excellence, and to the ambitions for the learning and teaching that have been a key part of that. Under this approach, the Course syllabus – skills and knowledge and understanding would not change and would provide continuity for teachers that builds upon their three years of delivery experience with the existing National 5.

26. In order to secure recognition for candidates who might not achieve A-D (and for whom certificated units provide an opportunity to demonstrate attainment), the grade range could be expanded. This would enable a range of candidates to demonstrate attainment on graded certificate carrying the full 24 SCQF points.

27. There are two alternate ways of approaching the extension of grading –

- Alternative 1 – Redefine Grade D as 40-49% and then E as 30-39% - this is the most logical approach and from assessment perspective bands of 10% are more practicable and reliable.
- Alternative 2 – keep Grade D as near miss 45-49%, Grade E as 40-44%, Grade F as 35-39%, Grade G as 30- 34% - this keeps grade D consistent with existing practice but logic then says go down in bands of 5%

28. A crucial factor would be the importance of the non-exam element of the course assessment, e.g. assignment, portfolio or performance, as this would be key to ensuring that application of skills and knowledge and understanding can be demonstrated by the learner, and that there is no return to an “all-or-nothing” final exam.

29. SQA's fieldwork has identified learners' generally positive experiences of Coursework, as valuable and helpful in ensuring that not all emphasis is placed on a final exam. Conversely, a significant number of learners' experience of unit assessment is less positive, and seen as time-consuming and unhelpful in preparing for course assessment.

30. This approach would provide continuity with the design principles as agreed, and provide further stability as the qualifications continue to be in.

31. In order to ensure success, the system will also need to address the other issues associated with workload as identified in the first report on the ANQ Group's work and subsequent guidance issued by Education Scotland and SQA.

### **Potential challenges**

32. The first ANQ Report made clear that any changes to assessment or qualifications should be based on several key principles (below), and the ANQ will wish to be confident that the proposed refinements are in line with these principles:

- adherence to the guiding principles of Curriculum for Excellence
- adherence to the aims of the Senior Phase, including the maintenance of breadth of learning, deeper learning, and appropriate uses of assessment to support learning and teaching
- based on evidence of the experience of the introduction of the new qualifications to date
- assurance of the on-going integrity and high standing of qualifications in Scotland
- assurance that any changes in the short term do not compromise the secure delivery and credibility of qualifications
- recognition that assessment-related issues are multi-dimensional, and must be addressed across the whole 3-18 curriculum
- all parts of the education community has a part to play in ensuring a high quality, effective and efficient assessment and qualifications system
- most importantly, assurance that learners will not be disadvantaged in any way.

33. In particular, the ANQ Group will wish to explore any risks or potential unintended consequences arising from the proposed refinements. These include the potential ways in which this proposal may be interpreted by different schools and teachers, and any implications for Assessment 3-18.

34. The approach outlined above could be portrayed as a departure from the original design principles agreed after national consultation. National Courses have been designed on the assumption that Course assessment has been lessened as assurance is gained about the skills and knowledge and understanding of the candidate through unit assessment.

35. In addition, centres must be clear that candidates presented for the Course Award should not also be presented for individual units, as this would fail to address the workload issues for learners or teachers. Schools would be able to use the freestanding units for assessment and certification purposes if that is seen as helpful for specific learner(s) – but it is not anticipated that this would be a widespread practice. These units would be assessed according to the current arrangements.

36. Were this option to be adopted, consideration would also need to be given as to whether this model would over time be rolled out to Advanced Higher. There would be a logic in changing the design at National 5 and above in terms of coherence of approach. Consideration may also need to be given to the implications for the current assessment arrangements for National 4.

## **Timetable**

37. Initial scoping work by SQA suggests that this approach could be delivered for National 5 for session 2017/18, although detailed planning still needs to be undertaken (there has been no time for consultation outwith SQA). The intent would be to put in place the new approach at National 5 for 2017/18 and then introduce the changes to Higher in 2018/19. This would ensure that learners who undertake the revised National 5 then progress into the revised Higher and spreads the change out over two years for teachers. This would require significant additional work for the SQA and some of the work and support planned for 2016/17 published in the delivery plan could not be undertaken.

## **Communication**

38. A clear communication plan would require to be developed to ensure that teachers, learners, parents, employers, HE and FE, and other partners understood the changes (and the continuities) stemming from the proposal. Subject to the views of the ANQ Group, we would share the proposal with representatives of the Teacher Panel, prior to presenting it to the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board at its next meeting on 29 September.

## **Conclusion**

**39. The Assessment and National Qualifications Group is invited to discuss this proposal, in particular testing it against the key principles as set out in paragraph 32.**

**Assessment and National Qualifications Group Secretariat  
September 2016**

## CURRENT DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR NATIONAL COURSES

### Design Principles for National Courses

#### Course design

- 1 Every National Course must have a clear rationale that:
  - ◆ justifies the need for the Course and its uniqueness
  - ◆ provides evidence of demand for it
  - ◆ explains how the National Course fits with other qualifications
  - ◆ identifies the progression opportunities into and from the Course
  - ◆ outlines the aims, purposes and intended learning outcomes of the Course and explains how the award structure meets these purposes
  
- 2 National Courses will have the following SCQF credit points:
  - ◆ Courses at National 2 and 3 will have Units totalling 18 SCQF credit points.
  - ◆ Courses at National 4 will have Units totalling 24 SCQF credit points. One of the Units (six SCQF credit points) will assess added value, ie it will require the learner to demonstrate depth of understanding and/or application of skills.
  - ◆ Courses at National 5 and Higher will have Units totalling 18 SCQF credit points, with an additional six SCQF credit points to allow the use of an extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning, integration, and preparation for external assessment. This will give a total of 24 SCQF credit points for Courses at National 5 and Courses at Higher.
  - ◆ Courses at Advanced Higher will have Units totalling 24 SCQF credit points, with an additional eight SCQF credit points to allow the use of an extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning, integration and preparation for external assessment. This will give a total of 32 SCQF credit points for the Course.
  
- 3 The level of a National Course should be consistent with the appropriate SCQF level descriptor. The extent of coverage of a National Course should be comparable to appropriate existing or previous qualifications at the same level, and should be consistent with the rationale and the aims, purposes and intended learning outcomes of the Course. Units in a National Course must all be at the SCQF level of the Course.
  
- 4 Every National Course should provide appropriate opportunities for skills for learning, life and work to be developed.
  
- 5 National Courses should take into consideration practical aspects of delivery and should be able to be delivered in a range of centres. The requirements for practitioner expertise and resources should not be restrictive and should be appropriate for general qualifications.
  
- 6 National Courses should take into consideration the needs of all learners, and should be designed to be as accessible as possible to learners who will achieve in different ways and at a different pace.

#### Course structure

- 7 A National Course can be made up of mandatory and/or optional Units. However, at least six SCQF credit points (eight at Advanced Higher) must be from mandatory Units, and these must reflect the title of the Course. There will be no alternatives within this mandatory section. In some Courses, all component Units will be mandatory.
  
- 8 Optional Units can account for up to 12 SCQF credit points (16 at Advanced Higher). Where optional Units are used, these should reflect identified needs of the specialist area and the rationale, aims, purposes and intended learning outcomes for the Course.

- 9 Where appropriate, a suite of Courses with the same title at different levels should have a Course structure which is consistent across levels.

### **Units**

- 10 Each Unit in a National Course should be coherent and worthy of recognition in its own right.
- 11 Units in National Courses will be internally assessed on a pass/fail basis, and will be ungraded. Unit assessment should be fit for purpose and proportionate. Units can be assessed individually. In some subjects, it will be possible to gather evidence of achievement of Units in an integrated way, combining assessments across Units.
- 12 Units in a National Course can be of different SCQF credit values but they must all be at the same SCQF level of the Course.

### **Assessment**

- 13 Assessment methodologies for National Courses should support the *Strategic Vision and Key Principles for Assessment 3–18*. They should promote best practice and enable learners to achieve the highest standards they are capable of. They should support greater breadth and depth of learning and a greater focus on skills development.
- 14 Assessment approaches for National Courses should support learning by engaging learners. Assessment has to be fair and inclusive, and must allow learners to show what they have achieved.
- 15 Assessment approaches should be proportionate and fit for purpose: different forms of assessment are appropriate in different areas of learning, and this should be reflected in the assessment approaches for National Courses.
- 16 Assessment for National Courses will be as follows:
- ◆ To achieve the award of a Course at any level, the candidate must provide evidence of achievement of the Units of that Course. Units can be assessed individually. In some subjects, it will be possible to gather evidence of achievement of Units in an integrated way, combining assessments across Units.
  - ◆ The award of a Course at National 2 and 3 and National 4 will require achievement of Units.
  - ◆ The award of a Course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher will require achievement of Units and an external assessment, which will be graded. The external assessment will confirm attainment in the Course — sampling the skills, knowledge and understanding in the Course Units as well as integration and application of these as appropriate. The external assessment will take a form that is fit for purpose and proportionate. It might involve an examination, performance, project, practical activity or other form of assessment (or combination of two of these) as appropriate to the subject area. 17 Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher will be graded A–D. The grade awarded will be based on the grade achieved in the external assessment.
- 17 Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher will be graded A–D. The grade awarded will be based on the grade achieved in the external assessment.

### **Award of Course**

- 18 For the award of a National Course at National 2, National 3 and National 4, candidates must pass all the Units in the Course. For the award of a Course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, candidates must pass all the Units and achieve an overall pass grade in the external assessment.

## **NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT HUB UPDATE**

### **Purpose**

1. To provide the Teacher Panel with an update on progress with streamlining guidance on the National Improvement Hub.

### **Update**

2. In September 2015, Education Scotland announced the development of the National Improvement Hub. The aim is to provide an easily accessible portal designed around the needs of education practitioners offering interactive, digital content and tools to improve practice and increase the quality of learners' experiences and outcomes. Education Scotland is working with a wide range of other national bodies in this development to improve access and avoid duplication. An 'alpha' site was released in March and there has been extensive consultation with practitioners and stakeholders. Feedback from this consultation has been used to develop the brief for the 'beta' site which will be released by March 2017.

3. During the past year the whole organisation has worked on a change programme in relation to our online content. Until recently, all of the content was accessed through one large site (with 55 microsites) which was added to over time building on the content from our predecessor organisations. All content has been reviewed (approx. 50,000 pages) and the content that has been added to our new sites has been peer reviewed and has placed into a structure with clear information about its purpose and with reflective questions to help practitioners consider how best to use materials to improve their practice. From December 2016 Education Scotland will divide our web content between:

- the National Improvement Hub for improvement resources and materials,
- the new Education Scotland corporate website for corporate information and links to key policy and legislation
- Parentzone Scotland for resources, information and data specifically for parents
- NQ's for specific materials and resources
- Glow

4. The new corporate site includes key information about Scotland's education system, the role of Education Scotland and news about education. It also provides links to relevant external organisations and content and the outlines the key policy and legislation that is the basis of why we do what we do. This is where the guidance for CfE sits and this area has been streamlined and dramatically reduced to enable practitioners and interested parties to navigate with ease.

5. Key points to note:

- Resources and information on the new sites will be reviewed at least annually to ensure relevance. They are also peer reviewed.

- The 'beta' version of the National Improvement Hub is being developed in discussion with other national partners and agencies with the view to developing federated searches and encouraging collaboration through a range of channels including social media.
- The search function lies at the heart of the National Improvement Hub. Users search for content by inputting text or phrases that are relevant to their needs. To improve search results every single piece of hub content is also tagged with terms that are central to the experience of teaching and learning in Scotland. Users can also employ a range of filters to narrow their search results. The new sites will also show materials and resources that are trending and popular.
- The alpha version of the hub already offers useful information around 'what works' in relation to closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- All of Education Scotland's self-evaluation frameworks including "How Good is our School 4" will be digitised to link to relevant improvement materials and resources.

**Education Scotland**  
**20 October 2016**



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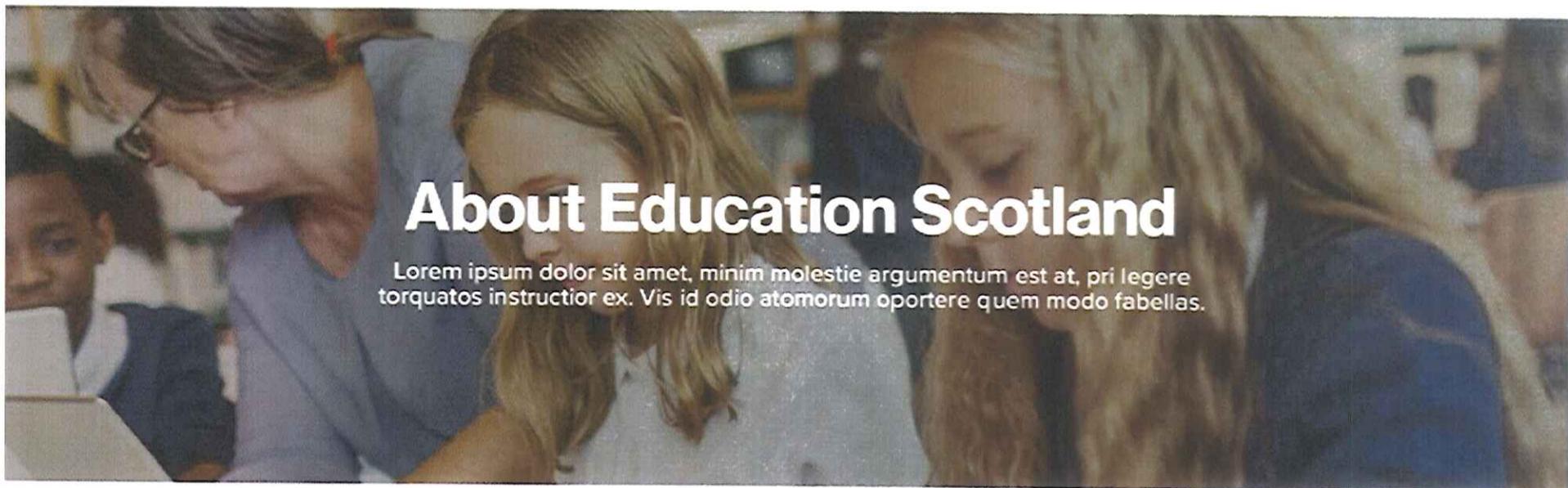
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# About Education Scotland

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## Learning and teaching

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## Early learning and childcare

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## The curriculum

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MY CHILD

LEARNING IN SCOTLAND

LEARNING AT HOME

MY SCHOOL

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

GETTING INVOLVED

# Be at the heart of your children's learning...



LEARNING IN SCOTLAND



EARLY YEARS



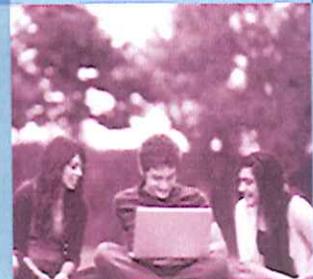
PRIMARY YEARS



GAELIC EDUCATION



SECONDARY YEARS



BEYOND SCHOOL YEARS



# National Improvement Hub

## What is the NIH?

The National Improvement Hub will become a key gateway to educational improvement resources and support. It provides easy access to dynamic digital resources to help you improve your practice quickly and easily, increasing the quality of learners' experiences and their outcomes.

**DELIVERING EXCELLENCE  
AND EQUITY IN  
SCOTTISH EDUCATION**

A DELIVERY PLAN FOR SCOTLAND

**NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT  
FRAMEWORK  
FOR SCOTTISH EDUCATION**

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY



THE SCOTTISH  
ATTAINMENT  
CHALLENGE  
SCOTLAND: THE BEST PLACE  
IN THE WORLD TO LEARN



# National Improvement Hub

Self-evaluation and improvement

Knowledge and research

Learning and assessment

Practice exemplars

Programmes

Education Improvement resources and support provides easy access to dynamic digital resources to help you improve your practice quickly and easily, increasing the quality of learners' experiences and their outcomes.

## Education Improvement Hub

Our Education Improvement Hub provides easy access to dynamic digital resources to help you improve your practice quickly and easily, increasing the quality of learners' experiences and their outcomes.

Search...

SEARCH

### Most Read

Ateliers chez les Pictes

Dedicated to Nurturing - Inverclyde

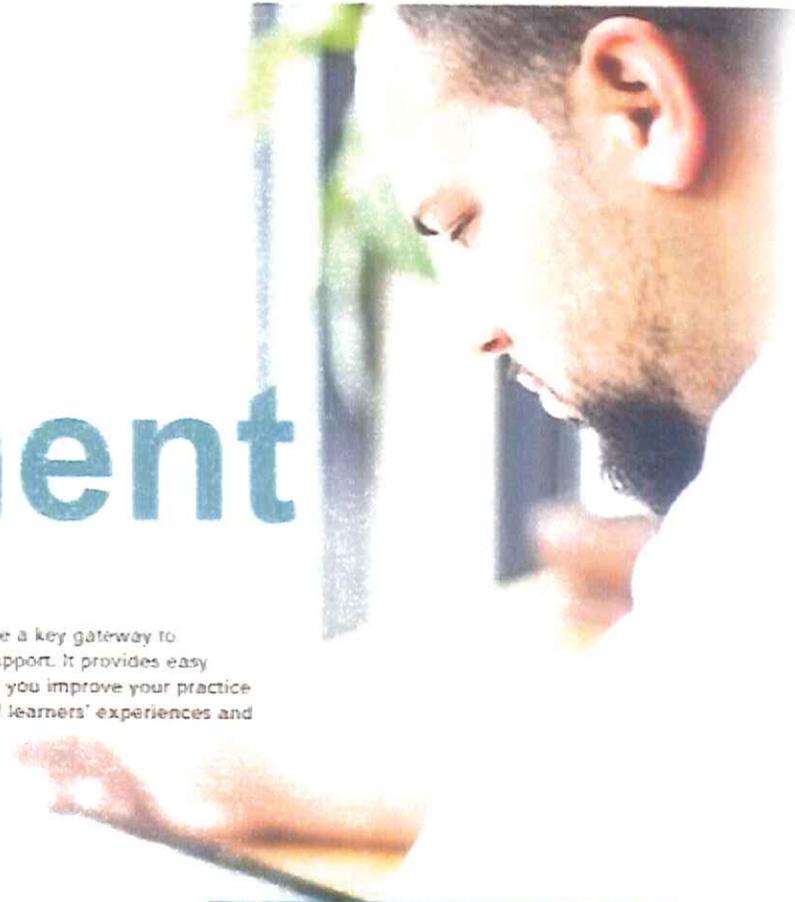
Gracie Kopernika - The Star of Copernicus

Work Placement Standard - Benchmarking exercise

# National Improvement Hub

## What is the NIH?

The National Improvement Hub will become a key gateway to educational improvement resources and support. It provides easy access to dynamic digital resources to help you improve your practice quickly and easily, increasing the quality of learners' experiences and their outcomes.



### Search the National Improvement Hub

Find a resource, article or exemplar on improving outcomes for learners. Add a keyword(s), title or description of your chosen area below.

Search...

Scottish Attainment Challenge

SEARCH

### Most Read

Asterix chez les Pictes

Dedicated to Nurturing - Inverclyde

Gwiazda Kopernika - The Star of Copernicus

Work Placements Standard - Benchmarking exercise

# Children's Parliament and the Attainment Challenge

*Last updated: 21 July 2016*

## What is this?

This presentation describes the engagement of the Children's Parliament with St Margaret's RC primary school in the Scottish Borders.

## Who is this for?

The exemplar would be of use for primary sector leaders and teachers.

## How to use this exemplar to improve practice?

Developing the young person's confidence and sense of identity are key features of the work carried out by the Children's Parliament. With this in mind, the following reflective questions could help to improve pedagogy for learners in schools:

- What arrangements exist to ensure learners have regular communication and discussions with a key adult to review their learning and plan next steps?
- To what extent do we involve parents and partner agencies to ensure learners benefit from the right support at the right time to encourage confidence and a sense of identity?
- How effective are the processes utilised in removing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all?

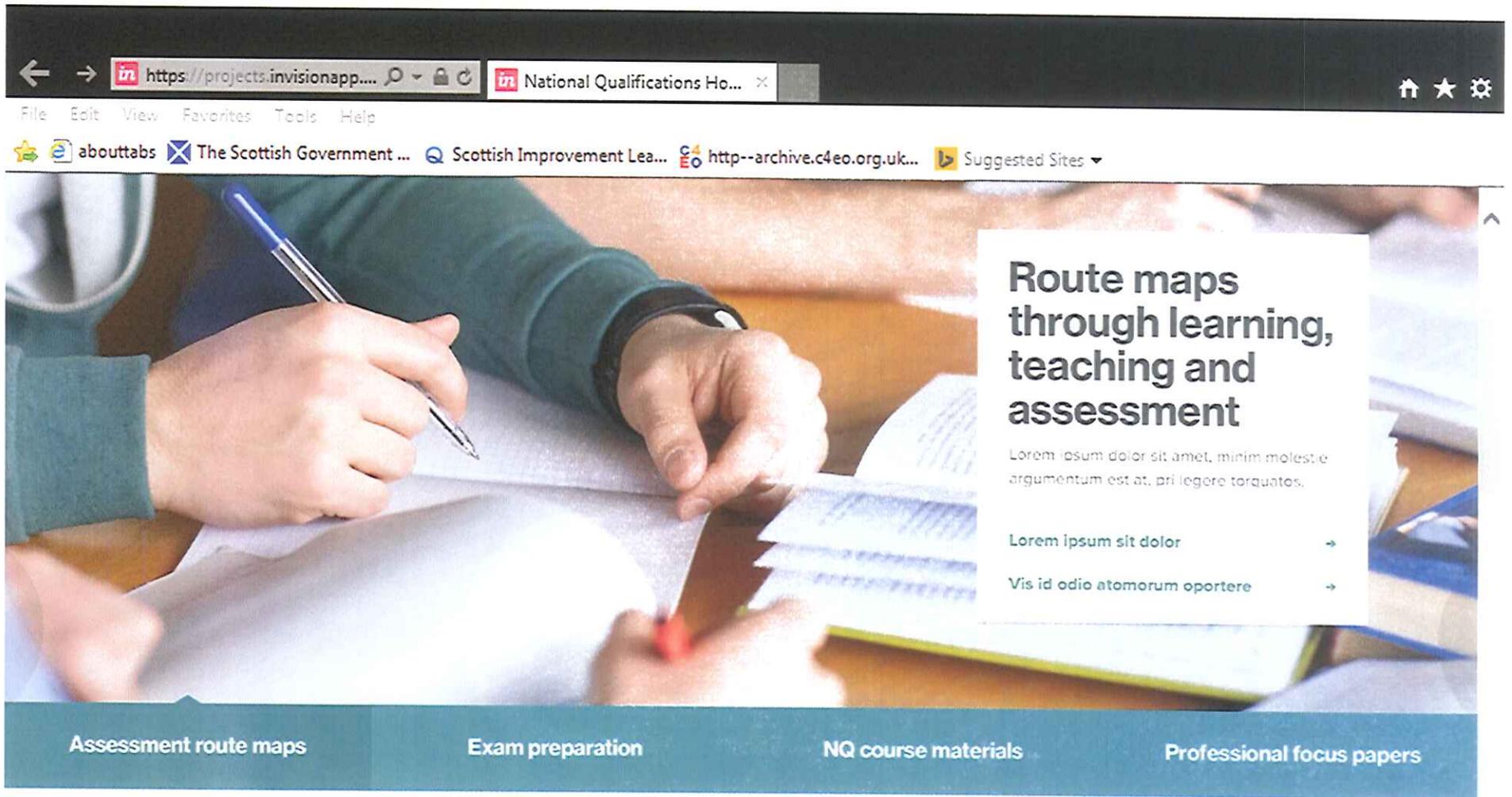
## Download

 PDF file: [The value of learner participation and children's insight \(1.6 MB\)](#)

## Related links

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## Supporting National Qualifications

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