

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS

EDUCATION REFORM: EMPOWERING OUR TEACHERS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES TO DELIVER EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY FOR CHILDREN

PAPER BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Introduction

1. It is the aspiration of the Scottish Government for Scotland to be the best place in the world in which to grow up. Its defining mission is to improve the education and life chances of children and young people by closing the unacceptable gap in attainment between the least and most disadvantaged children, and to raise attainment for all.

2. The case for reform was made in the June 2017 report *Education Governance: Next Steps*¹ and the International Council of Education Advisers recommendations from July 2017 set out at Annex A have been instrumental in informing how we take forward this work.

3. Evidence also shows that the current system is not achieving excellence and equity for all, given the continued and widespread variation in outcomes in the performance of local authorities and schools. Whilst improvements are being seen, these are not happening fast enough or being driven sufficiently effectively in all localities. The Education Scotland 2017 report on [*Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education*](#)² confirmed that the quality of education children and young people experience within and across sectors between 2012 and 2016 was too variable. It asserts that Scottish education does not yet provide all children and young people with consistently high-quality learning experiences and that unless this variability is addressed, the national ambition of excellence and equity for all learners will not be achieved.

Education Reform Programme

4. In pursuit of our aspirations and in order to consistently achieve excellence and equity in education in Scottish schools, a programme of cultural, capacity and structural change is underway. The scale and scope of our Education Reform Programme requires a range of approaches and these are outlined in Annex B.

5. We are seeking through the Education Reform Programme to increase the pace of change in respect of achieving our ambitions by building on the strengths in the Scottish education system to: empower headteachers to be leaders of learning

¹ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/education-governance-next-steps-empowering-teachers-parents-communities-deliver-excellence/>

² https://education.gov.scot/Documents/QuISE_full_2012_16_web.pdf

and teaching in their schools and work collaboratively with their staff, pupils, parents and other partners so that the decisions that most affect a pupil's experience are taken by those closest to them; enhance the educational improvement support and advice that is available to educational practitioners; encourage an increase in parental and community involvement in education and parental engagement in children's learning; ensure that effective pupil participation is supported in all schools and develop an approach to funding that builds on the strengths of the existing Devolved School Management as well as tackling its weaknesses.

Education Reform Workstreams

School Leadership

Headteachers' Charter

6. The Headteachers' Charter seeks to empower headteachers so that decisions that most affect children and young people's outcomes are made in a collaborative way at school level, within a transparent local education system where partners are working together to improve outcomes for children and young people. We believe that headteachers are empowered when they are able to make decisions on curriculum design and improvement priorities but that this will have limited effect if they do not also have more control of staffing and spending decisions.

7. The Education Bill will place requirements on local authorities to empower headteachers to make decisions at school level in relation to curriculum, improvement, staffing, and funding, working in collaboration with staff, parents, pupils and wider partners. It also places requirements on local authorities to ensure the involvement of headteachers in decisions made at local authority level, to increase the consistency of funding delegation from local authorities to schools, and to support headteachers in making decisions at school level.

8. In addition to legislating to put this in place the Scottish Government and local government are working in partnership to develop with greater pace those elements of the Headteachers' Charter which can be put in place sooner.

9. Officials' engagement with stakeholders and responses to formal consultations have indicated that this degree of empowerment already exists in parts of Scotland. What is currently lacking, and what the reform work aims to address, is consistency of approach across all of Scotland's education authorities and the establishment of a clear legal basis for that empowerment.

Leadership support package

10. An enhanced leadership support package is being developed by Education Scotland which recognises that headteachers, and other leaders within the school system, may require additional support and professional development in order to ensure they are able to maximise the impact on children and young people of their enhanced empowerment.

Workforce Development

Expansion of General Teaching Council for Scotland

11. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) is primarily responsible for the setting of Professional Standards for teachers and for maintaining a register of teachers in Scotland. The education workforce has changed significantly, with many different education practitioners now involved in the delivery of education. We fully support a professional education workforce and recognise that there are many professionals, who play a key role in educating our children and supporting our teachers.

12. To develop a national system that will ensure that professional standards are being met across the whole education team; we plan to establish an Education Workforce Council which will expand registration to include educational professionals other than teachers.

Leadership Pathways and professional standards

13. The Scottish Government are working with the teaching profession and other partners (including Education Scotland, GTCS, further and higher education institutions and specialist groups) to develop new career pathways for teachers allowing greater opportunities for development and progression into leadership, specialist or improvement roles. This work has been agreed jointly with the teacher unions as part of our country commitments for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (2017 and 2018) and will be taken forward by an independent panel linked to the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers.

14. We are working with the GTCS on its review of the Standards for Leadership and Management (which include the Standard for Headship) ahead of the commencement of the new requirement for all headteachers to hold the Standard by 2020. GTCS expects to launch a consultation on the proposed revised standards and their application in 2018 and for that review to conclude in 2019.

Support for improvement

Regional Improvement Collaboratives

15. The report *Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective*, published in December 2015, highlighted the need to strengthen and support educational leadership and to ensure that mutual support and learning across local authorities and networks of schools is provided. The Joint Scottish Government/Local Government Steering Group on Regional Improvement Collaboratives was established to take forward this work. A report was produced through consensus in September 2017 setting out how greater collaboration across education authorities in Scotland should be developed. This process has continued with the establishment of 6 Regional Improvement Collaboratives, the appointment of a senior leader of each one and the development of initial Regional Improvement Plans at the beginning of 2018.

16. Through the Education Bill we will place a duty on local authorities to collaborate with their partners in the development and delivery of a regional improvement plan, which builds on the support provided by individual authorities and is informed by the priorities of schools across the region. This will provide a basis on which to ensure a consistent level of collaboration.

School collaboration framework

17. The Scottish Government is also committed to working with partners to develop a supporting framework for school level collaboration to be most effective.

Parents, Pupils and Communities

Parents

18. Evidence indicates that parental involvement in a child's education has a positive effect on outcomes. We will seek to build on the recommendations from the review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Scotland Act 2006, carried out by the National Parent Forum of Scotland through both the Education Bill and by underpinning and encouraging parental involvement and engagement in relation to Parent Councils and the wider parent forum and to support greater consistency of effective practice across schools.

19. We are also committed to ensuring that every school has access to a home school link officer who will help support parents to be more involved in their children's learning.

Pupils

20. One of the aims of Curriculum for Excellence is to put the learner at the centre of their own education and pupil participation is at the core of this. There are many good examples of pupil participation throughout Scottish schools and plans are in place to promote and support pupil participation by reinforcing this as a core requirement within the broader context of the Headteachers' Charter. No specific model will be imposed to ensure headteachers are able to engage with pupils in their school in the manner that is most appropriate for their context.

Funding

21. A consultation 'Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education' was launched on 15 June 2017 and closed on 13 October 2017. The consultation invited views on the way education is currently funded in Scotland, the purpose of developing a new, more consistent approach to school funding, and the principles that should underpin any changes. It also set out and sought views on possible future approaches. The next phase of the fair funding work will be to develop a detailed view of how funding schemes should be reflected in and interact with the Government's policy on the Headteachers' Charter.

22. To support this next phase, a joint Fair Funding Reference Group has been formed with local government representatives. The current membership of the

Reference Group has significant knowledge of Devolved School Management and, consequently, can aid the Scottish Government by providing strategic advice and guidance. Moreover, development of the policy around the increased empowerment of schools and requirement for greater transparency of school funding decisions associated with the Headteachers' Charter will require frequent and in-depth discussions between local and national government to take place. It is currently envisioned that the Reference Group will therefore play a central role in enabling this partnership work to take place in a systematic and transparent manner.

Outcome of consultation and engagement

23. The analysis of the 870 consultation responses to the Education Bill consultation showed that there is general support for the principles underpinning the empowerment proposals, with less consensus on the way in which that should be achieved with some reflecting that elements of the proposed reforms are already in place.

24. There was general agreement that school leaders should be able to decide how best to lead learning and teaching in their school, provided that they did so in a collaborative way, taking into account the views of their wider school community. A range of views were expressed as to how a school and teacher-led system could be best achieved in the Scottish education system.

25. Consultation respondents raised specific concerns about the potential impacts of the proposals to empower schools. This included school leader workloads and the risk of blurred accountability. Many consultation responses discussed the current challenges some areas are facing in recruiting sufficient teachers, arguing that school empowerment could only be meaningful if workforce supply issues were addressed successfully.

26. While consultation respondents tended to support the principle of collaborative working and welcomed greater opportunity for schools and local authorities to work together across traditional boundaries, there were calls for greater clarity on the respective roles and responsibilities of local authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives.

27. In relation to parental engagement and pupil participation, consultation responses demonstrated majority support for the underpinning principles. Some respondents argued that schools are already putting these principles into action, proactively seeking the views of their Parent Forum and engaging pupils in decisions about the life and work of the school.

28. Responses to the proposal to establish an Education Workforce Council for Scotland were more mixed. Analysis highlights that views were slightly more in favour of the proposed purpose and aims of the Workforce Council; however a considerable proportion were not in favour. Although respondents agreed that other education professions should be able to benefit from registration and regulation in a similar way to the teaching profession, concerns were raised about the potential impact on the operation of GTCS, if it was to be moved into a new, larger organisation.

29. The consultation responses and subsequent independent analysis, as well as views expressed in discussions with stakeholders and in separate representations, continue to inform both the wider reform programme and the development of the provisions for the forthcoming Education Bill.

Conclusion

30. The development of the Education Reform Programme recognises the importance of culture, capacity and structure in accelerating improvement across Scottish education. The Scottish Government has reflected on the advice of the Council in developing the scope of the Reform Programme recognising the need to enhance impactful collaboration throughout the system. The importance of strengthened school level leadership is addressed through the key legislative provision of the Headteachers' Charter, and this will be underpinned by enhanced leadership support. In general the Empowering Schools consultation responses reflect a growing commitment to local empowerment and improved collaboration but also a more equivocal position in relation to whether these principles should be enshrined in legislation.

31. The Council is asked to consider whether the Education Reform Programme as outlined addresses the cultural, capacity and structural aspects of improvement which had been identified by the Council. Are there further areas where collaboration can be more firmly embedded within the system? Does the approach to school level leadership address the Council's identification of untapped leadership potential across Scottish schools?

Scottish Government
April 2018

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISORS RECOMMENDATIONS
JULY 2017**

1. In order to improve pedagogy for specific subjects, using clear evidence to identify what works in the classroom, the Scottish Government should:

- Establish and fund a network of proven and well-trained teaching professionals who are highly accredited for their pedagogy but also have a strong knowledge of the community/health and wellbeing aspects of CfE.
- Identify a systematic, sequenced and selective plan for literacy and numeracy, including a research based approach to improving learning and development, that ensures they can both achieve targeted academic goals while being responsive to the unique needs of each learner.
- Consider expanding the role of universities to work more closely with schools in the spirit of collaborative inquiry.

2. In order to develop effective leadership at all levels in Scottish education – unleashing untapped potential within the system, the Scottish Government should:

- Consider providing a greater financial incentive to encourage teaching professionals to take on greater leadership roles and, in particular, to apply for headships.
- Establish clear, broad and multiple career pathways for teaching professionals, and look at ways for teachers to progress while remaining in the classroom (e.g. as a teacher mentor employing leadership skills within a classroom environment, or by leading change in pedagogy in a certain subject area) other than the more administrative route to headteacher.
- Establish a clear structure for bringing together leaders from across the teaching profession, local authorities, business etc, at a regional level in order to share learning and engage in joint practice development.

3. In order to ensure a culture of collaboration exists throughout Scottish education, at classroom, school, regional and national level, the Scottish Government should:

- consider incentivising collaboration by making it one of the required criteria for any financial programme e.g. future iterations of the pupil equity fund.
- Establish a national training programme on how to collaborate fully i.e. “working together not just talking together”.
- Look at creating federations of schools – this can be done on a simple collaborative basis or on a more formal standing with shared headteachers or “chief executives” leading across a number of schools.

4. In addition to the priority areas, at the Deputy First Minister’s request, the Council also made some recommendations around the issue of governance. The Council felt that it was important to consider how to de-clutter the system without damaging it. The Council advised against becoming too focussed on changing the structure of the education system when, arguably, the more important aspects are

the culture and capacity within the system. In particular the Scottish Government should:

- Learn from existing attempts to formally share education services between local authorities e.g. the Northern Alliance, and other forms of non-structural regionalisation that have been successful internationally.
- Create learning hubs around the country where education professionals can go to learn about different elements of educational practice.

EDUCATION REFORM PROGRAMME - AIM STATEMENT

The Education Reform Programme will contribute to the achievement of excellence and equity in the Scottish Education system by delivering a school and teacher led education system which will empower our workforce, parents, pupils and communities.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

To give HT the power and autonomy to make decisions for the children in their care.

To develop the right professional learning and support for the enhancement of capacity and capability to take on their role.

To develop new pathways into and through school and systems leadership.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

To develop a teaching profession which is empowered, skilled, confident and collaborative.

To transform the support available to the learning workforce at every level of the system.

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT

To put in place accessible, excellent support for schools and early learning and childcare settings in every part of Scotland.

PARENTS, PUPILS AND COMMUNITIES

To develop an education system where parents are valued as equal partners in their children's education.

To develop an education system where pupil voices are heard and welcomed and taken into account in decisions which affect them.

To enhance the engagement of schools with their local communities to secure greater collective impact.

FUNDING

To develop an approach to funding that truly empowers schools, and provides the framework of support which schools need.