

SCOTTISH EDUCATION COUNCIL
6 March 2019, Portobello High School, Edinburgh

Present

Fiona Robertson	Director of Learning, Scottish Government
Janie McManus	Education Scotland
Jim Thewliss	General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland
Larry Flanagan	General Secretary, EIS
Ken Muir	Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland
Andrew Griffiths	RIC Lead, The Northern Alliance
Douglas Hutchison	RIC Lead, South West Collaborative
Elaine Cook	RIC Lead, Forth Valley and West Lothian Collaborative
Joanna Murphy	Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland
Janet Brown	Chief Executive, SQA
Karen Reid	Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross Council

In attendance

Andy Bruce	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
Clare Hicks	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
Ruth McKay	Portobello High School, Edinburgh
Glen Deakin	Scottish Government Learning Directorate (Secretariat)
Maria Harris	Scottish Government Learning Directorate (Secretariat)
Nicola Dickie	COSLA

Apologies

John Swinney, MSP	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Chair)
Gayle Gorman	Chief Executive of Education Scotland and Chief Inspector of Education
Maureen McKenna	President, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)
Councillor Stephen McCabe	Children and Young People Spokesperson, COSLA
Ian Rivers	Chair, Scottish Council of Deans of Education
Carrie Lindsay	Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) Lead, South East Collaborative
Sheena Devlin	RIC Lead, Tayside Collaborative
Mhairi Shaw	RIC Lead, The West Partnership

Welcome & introductions

1. Fiona Robertson welcomed everyone to the ninth meeting of the Scottish Education Council (SEC). She apologised on behalf of the Deputy First Minister for his absence as he had been called away unexpectedly on other business. She thanked the headteacher, Ruth McKay, and young people of Portobello High School for the warm welcome to their school and for the excellent buffet provided by the S3 hospitality pupils under the direction of their teacher. She welcomed Ruth to participate in the meeting and invited her to say a few words.

2. Ruth welcomed Council members to Portobello High School and spoke of the diverse make-up of the school. There are pupils from SIMD areas 1-10. A curriculum review around ethos and equity was carried out and the school has moved away from a punitive approach to focussing on positive relationships. Portobello is the first high school in Scotland to introduced an app called class charts which is used to send positive messages in real time to parents. Over 30,000 positive messages since its introduction have been sent to parents. Praise calls are also made every Friday. This has had a very positive impact on pupils, staff and parents.

An update on key issues

3. Fiona provided a brief update on key issues. She advised that there continued to be ongoing dialogue with professional associations on the subject of teachers' pay to seek a negotiated settlement.

4. The Education Committee has now concluded its review on the Scottish National Standardised Assessments and the Independent review by David Reedy is continuing. Professor Sue Ellis chairs the P1 Practitioner Forum and this will conclude shortly. The SNSAs are being undertaken in schools across Scotland, with more having been taken at this point in the academic year than at the same time in the last academic year. The Gaelic Medium Education Standardised Assessments are now live and being taken across the sector.

Equity [paper 09(01)]

5. Janie opened discussion on this agenda item. She advised she would provide a brief overview of the key themes emerging and what inspection evidence on the Scottish Attainment Challenge is telling us to date. Two of the nine reports have not yet been published and once all reports are available a full analysis will be carried out and a discussion paper brought to a future Council meeting.

6. A summary of early findings include:

- Overall there has been a positive shift in culture over the years.
- There is a strong focus on equity, across the country.
- There is a stronger focus on leaders to look at cultural issues around the local community and how they can take them into account.
- Staff are benefitting from a wide range of opportunities and there is a strong focus on leadership development and emphasis on collaboration.

- Professional learning – there is a lot more confident discussion taking place around professional learning and opportunities available. There is greater emphasis on this in SAC authorities, on balance with other authorities.
- There has been an improvement in the quality of learning in classrooms.
- There is a lot of good work going on around the psychological, and collaboration between schools and partners, including psychological services.
- Schools are collaborating with other schools about the use of pupil equity funding.
- There needs to be more focus on the planning for using funding for schools out-with challenge authorities.
- Self-evaluation using data – there is a focus on looking at research and evidence to target certain groups and cohorts. There is a need to use the data more consistently to measure impact.
- Collaboration needs to be extended across clusters, authorities and other boundaries.
- There is an emphasis on practitioner enquiry and how this can best be achieved.
- There is a need to set priorities in relation to parental engagement and to target interventions accordingly.
- Sustainability – need to consider the sustainability of staffing requirements. Professional learning will help to build the capacity of staff.

7. Discussion was opened up to Council members for comments and feedback. The following points were raised:

- Members were asked to remember that inspection evidence is only one part of the evidence the Government is collecting. There are eleven quantifiable measures within the National Improvement Framework (NIF) to help define progress. The evidence is broadly moving in the right direction although movement is small. The data in the NIF published in December '18 shows a marginal shift in all areas.
- The ability to quantify the data and link to resource and strategy is a challenge as a lot of funding has been provided to enhance activity and to kick-start new approaches.
- Leaver attainment statistics – there are more opportunities for young people leaving school into positive destinations. Success is still being measured by number of qualifications and not looking at the quality of learning. We need parity of academic and vocational pathways. There is more innovation in the system but the pattern of presentation has not yet changed.
- There is a need for a suite of data and information to be available. We cannot separate attainment and health and social care and we need to look at the wider landscape of the local authority and how joined up it is. The wider community needs to be involved. They need to understand the pathways and the learner journey. We need more engagement with parents to ensure they understand the differences between Highers and apprenticeships.
- We need to look at what success at the end of the senior phase looks like.
- There is a need for greater coherence and linkage. We need to take every opportunity to remind everyone what CfE is about and what success looks like. There is a need to refresh the narrative around CfE and pick up on key messages. The Curriculum and Assessment Board will be reviewing the CfE

narrative, and the outcome of their review will be fed back to the SEC at a later date.

- The learner journey - we must become more sophisticated about the message of what success is going to be and how we will support and evaluate it.
- We need to consider how the data from attainment and learner journey can be used to inform the strategic agenda.
- The ways in which qualifications are viewed by pupils is also a concern, as is how parents view different qualifications. Culturally there are still a lot of views that university is the best next step.
- There is a big focus on equity and poverty but, whilst schools do what they can, this cannot seriously challenge what leads to poorer children not achieving as well. The child poverty strategy needs to be widened and the social justice agenda should be included.
- There needs to be a real focus on pedagogy. Pedagogy will support equity and improve outcomes.
- Curriculum for Excellence is putting creativity in the system. We have more confident young people now than ever in the past. There has been a lot of change over the last five years with qualification changes. We do not need new measures we need a stronger articulation of the key messages.

8. In concluding this discussion Fiona advised that further discussion should be had around these issues and concerns and will be brought back to a future meeting along with further analysis of the SAC inspection reports.

Action: SEC 09 – (01) – Secretariat – To ensure further discussion on SAC emerging issues and inspection reports are considered for future agendas.

GTCS 3 year Professional Update Evaluation Report [paper 09(02)]

9. Ken gave a presentation on the General Teaching Council for Scotland's 3 year Professional Update Evaluation Report. He spoke of the background to professional update (PU) and how the evidence gathered highlights five major ideas which are axiomatic and which underpin its recommendations. Career-long teacher education is at the heart of this process. He spoke of how we need to support and strengthen both the quality of teaching and the quality of leadership.

10. The results of the review were reassuring and broadly positive. The feedback received highlights key areas of concern and provides insight into practitioners' experiences of their professional review and development (PRD) discussions and how they manage, plan and self-evaluate their professional learning (PL).

11. The feedback on the benefits of PRDs, PL and PU have been mostly positive. Lack of time and support and other competing priorities are what have mostly limited engagement in PL. There are clear indications of a move from continuing professional development to the concept of career-long professional learning. Working in collaboration and in groups is viewed as one of the best qualities of PL and encourages more engagement from practitioners.

Future agenda items

12. Fiona spoke of the purpose of the Forum and the need to provide advice to Ministers in developing improvements across the education system. It is not an accountability Forum. Council members were asked to consider future agenda items, what would be most useful to focus on and is there a better way in which we can have discussions in the future.

13. Members would welcome a greater sense of the outcomes from discussions and also the opportunity to shape future agendas. Young people involvement is welcome so long as there is a clear purpose and remit.

Action: SEC 09 – (02) – Secretariat – To issue a call for agenda items prior to future meetings.

Strategic Board for Teacher Education update [paper 09(03)]

14. This paper was provided for information. No comments or discussion points were raised.

Any other business

No other business.

Date of next meeting

13. The next meeting of the Scottish Education Council will be held on 8 May 2019, venue to be confirmed.

**National Improvement Framework Unit
March 2019**