

Curriculum and Assessment Board

Meeting 9 – Wednesday 4 December 2019, 10.00 – 13.00
Lasswade High School, Bonnyrigg

Minute of Meeting

Members and Substitutes

Peter McNaughton	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)
Steven Quinn	ADES
Tim Wallace	Association of Heads and Deputes in Scotland (AHDS)
Jim Metcalfe	College Development Network
Ken Thomson	Colleges Scotland
Nicola Dickie	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA)
Jean Carwood-Edwards	Early Years Scotland
Andrea Bradley	Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)
Alan Armstrong	Education Scotland
Mike Corbett	NASUWT
Margaret Wilson	National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)
Mhairi Shaw	Regional Improvement Collaboratives
David Barnett	School Leaders Scotland (SLS)
Alison Newlands	Scottish Council for Independent Schools (SCIS)
Dee Bird	Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
Aileen Ponton	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Partnership (SCQF)
Graeme Logan	Scottish Government (Chair)
Malcolm Pentland	Scottish Government
John Guidi	Scottish Secondary Teachers Association (SSTA)
Gill Stewart	Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
Neville Prentice	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Catherine Whitley	Universities Scotland
Mark Priestley	University of Stirling

Young Representatives

Lawrie Tice Young	Lasswade High School
Chloe Lauder	Lasswade High School

Secretariat

Liam Cahill	Scottish Government
Emma Mair	Scottish Government

Additional Attendees

Alison Clark	Lasswade High School
Liz Levy	Scottish Government
Julie Anderson	Scottish Government
Keith Dryburgh	Scottish Government

Apologies

Andrew Griffiths	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)
Robert Hynd	Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland
Gayle Gorman	Education Scotland
Louise Hayward	University of Glasgow
Linda Pooley	Scottish Government
Seamus Searson	Scottish Secondary Teachers Association (SSTA)
Brian Green	Universities Scotland

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed board members to the meeting, provided thanks to Lasswade High School for hosting the meeting and a special welcome to the young representatives present from the school. Apologies were listed as above.

1.2 The Chair then handed over to Campbell Hornell, Headteacher at Lasswade High School. Mr Hornell provided a background to life and work at the school including partnership work with Edinburgh University, achievement of a Sport Scotland Gold Award and a continuous focus on utilising data to influence curriculum design and development.

2. Minute and actions arising from the last meeting

2.1 The minute and actions from the Board's last meeting on 18 September 2019 were introduced.

2.2 The following comments were made in relation to the Board's September meeting:

- There was a request for clarification as to the timescales and the work plan of the curriculum narrative strategic engagement group. Attendees were informed that the group in question would set the timescale and work plan at its next meeting in January 2020.
- The Board's chair was also asked when and how the Board would continue to consider assessment related matters which were first raised when the Board met in June 2019. It was confirmed that the Board's co-chairs were continuing to consider the most appropriate and effective ways for the CAB to consider assessment.

2.3 The minute of the Board's September 2019 meeting was agreed.

3. The Expansion of Funded Early Learning and Childcare

3.1 The Chair introduced paper CAB-09(01) and handed over to Jean Carwood-Edwards (JCE) who had contributed to the development of the paper in partnership with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.

3.2 JCE provided attendees with an overview of the paper stating that the Scottish Government is currently undertaking work to increase the entitlement to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) from 600 to 1,140 hours per year for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. JCE stated that quality is at the heart of the expansion and highlighted the expected benefits of this work, including but not limited to, the reduction in the poverty related attainment gap. Furthermore, JCE outlined the expected impact on transitions into school years education and the need to ensure that primary schools are supported in adapting to changes in ELC.

3.3 The Chair opened the paper up for discussion and asked attendees to specifically consider the impact of the ELC expansion on curriculum and assessment related practice. The following comments were made:

- We should not overlook the importance of parents supporting their children's development. As well as programmes like 'Stay, Play and Learn', parental engagement programmes are underway in many ELC settings and the Scottish Government's ELC Directorate is currently commissioning a Family Learning Scotland Programme to be delivered via the ELC offer in settings supporting our most disadvantaged communities.
- If the number of practitioners are to increase then it is crucial that they are skilled and confident to deliver quality ELC. Similarly, it is imperative that the existing ELC workforce are supported in adapting to the expansion. It was confirmed that this is part of the expansion work and that a suite of online training modules is in development alongside a professional learning repository. Recruitment of the additional staff is progressing on target. Over half of the additional required local authority workforce had already been recruited at September 2019.
- Parents need a better understanding of the extent of continuity across the early level, in the transition between ELC and school, so that they can make informed decisions about deferral. Evidence should be collected in relation to the number of parents who are choosing to defer their child's school start date as this may be an indication that the ELC and school sectors are seen as difficult to transition between.
- It was noted that it may be practically very difficult for primary schools to effectively support transitions if they are having to liaise with an increased number of ELC providers in order to collect relevant information on each child. It was suggested that it may be helpful to have a nationally agreed and consistent way of measuring learner progress in ELC. This would make the transfer of information to primary schools much easier and ultimately support the child's transition.
- A number of attendees felt that it was vitally important that there continued to be access to teachers in the ELC sector while others felt that the requirement for ELC leads to be educated to a degree level meant that teachers were not always necessary. In addition, some board members felt that the movement of educators between the ELC and school sectors was crucial in supporting transitions for learners.
- An unexpected outcome of training more ELC practitioners may be that both trainee teachers and trainee ELC practitioners will struggle to find work placements. One attendee fed back anecdotal evidence that suggests schools with an adjoining nursery often only have capacity to oversee a student teacher or a student ELC practitioner. This is problematic if more ELC

practitioners need placement opportunities. Similarly, it was noted that establishments providing initial teacher education are discouraged from covering early years education as they find it difficult to secure nursery placements for their students.

- It is important that the expansion doesn't become too focused on childcare rather than quality learning.
- The focus on play based learning and outdoor learning as part of the expansion is very welcome however, the different ratios of staff to learners in primary settings means it is much more difficult to deliver this kind of learning in schools.
- It was also noted that some schools are under pressure from their local authorities to deliver improved attainment by the end of P1 and teachers may be less confident in utilising play pedagogies to do this. However, other board members pointed out that there was evidence available to show that play based pedagogy does raise attainment.
- It is important to acknowledge that primary schools do a lot of good work to support transitions and the Board shouldn't lose sight of that.
- It would have been useful to include some previously published Education Scotland research on ELC/school transitions in the paper.
- An unintended consequence of the expansion is that colleges will focus more on ELC courses at the expense of other courses. To avoid the narrowing of college options it is therefore important that new and additional funding is provided to colleges to allow the expanded ELC workforce to be trained.
- It was confirmed that Skills Development Scotland have already provided a significant number of apprenticeship places for those wishing to pursue a career in ELC.
- It was noted that some independent schools are withdrawing from ELC partnerships citing a lack of quality provision. However, other attendees felt that the new National Standard for ELC providers should mean that there should not be a question around quality of provision.

3.4 The Chair thanked attendees for their comments and summed up discussions. It was agreed that there was a need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of learning throughout the early level of the curriculum before decisions to support transitions into school could be made.

Action: The Scottish Government and Education Scotland to lead on gathering evidence on learning in the early level with a view to identifying additional support that may be required.

4. The Senior Phase Review

4.1 The Chair introduced paper CAB-09(02) which focused on the forthcoming senior phase review. It was noted that the review would not be about revisiting the principles and aspirations of CfE but about understanding how this policy is being implemented in practice and the impact this is having on outcomes for learners. The OECD had been invited to lead the review and it is proposed that they would be supported by a Scottish Practitioner Forum, comprising current practitioners involved in designing and delivering the Senior Phase curriculum in a variety of contexts. The

role of the Forum would be to work as an advisory board to the OECD team, guiding the work of the review and considering progress and deliverables.

4.2 Board members were invited to provide comment on the proposed scope of the review. The following comments were made:

- There was a generally held view that it was important to ensure an effective practitioners' forum. Many of the CAB members expressed a desire to be involved in the forum, including the Professional Associations, Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland. It was however noted that it is important that the practitioners group doesn't become a stakeholder group.
- Whilst acknowledging the importance of the review having a clear focus on the key issues impacting on the Senior Phase curriculum, Board members also suggested that the following be included or considered:
 - the National 4 qualification;
 - the S3 profile;
 - learning and teaching pedagogy;
 - leaver destinations;
 - the identification of common senior phase issues and common effective approaches to delivery;
 - widening access to higher education;
 - the breadth of awards and achievements in the senior phase and not just national qualifications;
 - teacher recruitment and the impact on delivery of the senior phase;
 - teacher workload and the impact on the senior phase;
 - level of resources and the impact on the senior phase; and
 - the need to base the review on clearly defined research questions.
- Some felt that while the approach to the review is sensible it may transpire that the evidence base to support any conclusions is limited.
- There was a call for the views of young people to be collected as part of the review. However, some Board members felt this was problematic as young people have vastly different senior phase experiences depending on their circumstances. It was also noted that the review should focus on outcomes and not just experiences.
- It was suggested that the views of parents and carers should also be captured by the review.
- The involvement of the OECD was generally welcomed as they are seen as highly credible however, some felt that their organisational focus on economic development meant their perspective could be too narrow.
- It was noted that work to take forward any conclusions of the review should be done in a way that further supports the empowerment of practitioners.
- It was noted that Lasswade High School follow a 'free choice' model for the senior phase and they develop consortia arrangements with other establishments to support this. However, it was also noted that such an approach was not universally supported and therefore the review may conclude that there is not one single correct approach to senior phase design and delivery.
- It is important to remember that some issues relating to the senior phase are not new and not necessarily a consequence of Curriculum for Excellence. For example, the level of resource in the education system has always been a challenge no matter the curriculum in place.

The young representatives at the meeting made the following points:

- It feels like there have been a lot of changes to SQA National Qualifications in recent years and this is disruptive to a young person's education.
- If the review is to collect the views of young people then it should be from a representative group and it would be more effective to collect data face-to-face rather than through a survey.

4.3 The Chair summed up discussions and thanked attendees for their comments. Board members were asked to feed back any further comments by email before close on 13 December. All comments would be considered as the scope of the review is finalised.

Action: The Board's secretariat to email all CAB members requesting any further comments on the draft scope of the senior phase review by 13 December 2019.

Action: The Scottish Government to consider the feedback of CAB members when advising the Deputy First Minister as to the final proposed scope of the review.

5. PISA Results

5.1 The Chair introduced the agenda item focusing on Scotland's results in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Attendees then heard a detailed presentation on Scotland's performance.

5.2 The Chair then asked for board member's views. The following comments were offered:

- It would be helpful if the CAB could see the questions that were asked as part of the assessment. It was confirmed that the OECD do release some of the questions on their website however the majority are not released as they may be used again in future assessments.
- In addition, it would be helpful to conduct some analysis to understand why Scotland's PISA reading scores have improved. Any lessons from this could be shared to support improvements in other curricular areas.
- It may be helpful to look at PISA data against PEF and SAC funding to see if any trends are apparent.
- When thinking about the PISA results we should also consider what has happened between this set of results and the previous ones.
- The PISA data should be considered alongside other data before any conclusions are drawn in relation to Scotland's education system. This is the advice of the Deputy First Minister's International Council of Education Advisors.
- It was generally agreed that the media and political response tends not to be measured and this can be unhelpful. We should not lose sight of the positives and successes within Scottish education.

- It would be interesting to consider if countries that perform well in PISA share similar curriculum approaches and where Curriculum for Excellence fits into that. The forthcoming results in relation to the PISA global competence domain should give us some idea if the broad focus of CfE is impactful.
- It was noted that Estonia has a strong culture of curriculum studies and this may be linked to their improvements in PISA assessments.

5.3 The Chair thanked attendees for their comments and informed the Board that the Scottish Government will continue to conduct analysis on the PISA data in the months ahead. The outcomes of this analysis will be shared with the Board where appropriate.

6. Any Other Business (AOB)

6.1 The co-chairs invited attendees to raise any other business.

6.2 In response the following two requests were made:

- that papers are issued at least a week before the meeting; and
- that learner representation at board meeting is reviewed to ensure we are getting the most representative input.

6.3 The Chair committed to the timeous issuing of papers for future meetings and apologised for the delay in relation papers being issued for this meeting. The Chair also stated that the Scottish Government would review learner participation in future CAB meetings.

Action: The Board's secretariat to review mechanisms for securing learner representation at CAB meetings.

Meeting concludes

List of actions

- 1. The Scottish Government and Education Scotland to lead on gathering evidence on learning in the early level with a view to identifying additional support that may be required.**
- 2. The Board's secretariat to email all CAB members requesting any further comments on the draft scope of the senior phase review by 13 December 2019.**
- 3. The Scottish Government to consider the feedback of CAB members when advising the Deputy First Minister as to the final proposed scope of the review.**
- 4. The Board's secretariat to review mechanisms for securing learner representation at CAB meetings.**

Curriculum and Assessment Board Secretariat
Scottish Government