

## ANGUS COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2000

## CURRICULUM DESIGN AND REVIEW IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

**ABSTRACT**

This report describes current activity in relation to the review of curriculum structures in Angus. The report also seeks the Education Committee's approval of proposals to support and co-ordinate curriculum reviews through the Educational Development Service.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) notes the terms of this report
- (ii) approves the establishment of an additional post of Education Development Officer

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 24 November 1998 (article 15(a) refers) the Education Committee approved a consultative response to draft revised guidelines for curriculum design in Scottish schools.
- 2.2 The revised guidelines, amended in the light of consultation, were issued in April 1999 and were the subject of SOEID Circular No 6/99.
- 2.3 The revised document "Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stages: Guidelines for Schools" published in May 1999 by Scottish CCC offers secondary schools a framework for planning continuity and progression in pupils learning.
- 2.4 The updated guidelines aim to take careful account of:
  - the national quality and standards initiative
  - strategies to support schools in achieving their targets for improved attainment
  - key 5-14 developments, not least the introduction of Level F
  - the implications of the Higher Still Development Programme, in particular the implications of managing provision in relation to core skills and Scottish Group Awards
  - major recommendations in respect of P7-S1 continuity
  - major S1/S2 curriculum reports, in particular, "Achievement for All" and "Achieving Success in S1 and S2"
  - SEED and SQA guidelines in respect of a relaxation of Age and Stage restrictions at Standard Grade and Higher

**3 NATURE AND SCOPE OF SECONDARY CURRICULUM REVIEWS IN ANGUS SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

- 3.1 Curricular reviews are an integral feature of secondary school development planning. A school's decisions about curricular priorities are substantially influenced by the type of national and local initiatives outlined in 2.4 above.
- 3.2 Monitoring and evaluating curriculum structures in a regular and systematic fashion is a clear expectation from the national guidelines for school self-evaluation provided in "How Good is Our School?" Angus secondary schools are required to produce an annual set of standards and quality statements using identified performance indicators from "How Good is Our School?" and there is a clear expectation that over a 3 year development planning cycle major aspects of curriculum design will be the subject of specific review.
- 3.3 Secondary schools in Angus are currently engaged in specific reviews of their curriculum structures and timetabling frameworks. These reviews are being carried out in response to:
- Council recommendations about the need to increase coherence and to reduce fragmentation in the S1/S2 curriculum
  - the implications of Higher Still and National Qualifications
  - revisions to the S3/S4 Standard Grade curriculum which are designed to:
    - (a) incorporate Higher Still National Qualifications in line with advice about Age and Stage restrictions
    - (b) introduce, as necessary, an 8 Standard Grade structure in order to provide greater opportunities to meet national targets for improved pupil attainment
- 3.4 In addition to in-school curriculum reviews, arrangements are currently in place within the context of the Best Value Secondary Review to conduct a Value for Money study of timetabling efficiency in Secondary Schools and to carry out evaluation exercises in relation to the effectiveness of existing curriculum structures and school timetables.
- 3.5 Support for individual school and Authority-based activities is available through the Authority's Secondary Curriculum Review and Timetabling Steering Group. This group was established in order to:
- identify and disseminate good practice
  - plan and prepare timetabling audits
  - plan and deliver timetabling workshops for existing timetablers
  - plan and deliver timetabling training for aspiring senior managers
- The group is chaired by a Secondary Head Teacher and comprises timetablers from each secondary school who are normally Depute Head Teachers. The Steering Group is supported by a Staff Tutor and by a teaching colleague employed on a minor contract basis.
- 3.6 The need for secondary schools to receive significant support in relation to curriculum reviews was recognised by the publication in September 1999 of "Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stages: Supplementary Guidance for Schools" (Scottish CCC). The provision of practical advice and exemplification to support Head Teachers, Senior Management Teams and Heads of Departments to design and implement effective changes to curriculum structures will undoubtedly be an important priority area for support by Education Authorities in the foreseeable future.
- 3.7 While current arrangements in respect of seconded Staff Tutor support is valuable, it is unlikely that this arrangement can provide effectively for the ongoing co-ordination and delivery of support and guidance required by schools and by the Steering Group referred to above.
- 3.8 It is, therefore, proposed that an additional Education Development Officer post be established. This post would require to be filled by an experienced teacher with a proven track record in curriculum development and design. The main duties of the postholder would be to:

- identify, promote and disseminate good practice in relation to curriculum design and timetabling
- offer direct support to schools in relation to curriculum audit and review activities
- support the Authority and Secondary Schools in analysing examination performance and in identifying possible implications for curriculum structures and timetables
- provide dedicated support to the work of the Curriculum Review and Timetabling Steering Group; and
- co-ordinate the main training and development activities undertaken by the group

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The postholder would be employed under the same Teachers' Conditions of Service and salary as existing Education Development Officers within the current staffing establishment of the Education Development Service. It is proposed that the post will be funded in part from the Authority's Excellence Fund allocations and in part from budget provision embedded within the Education Department's Revenue Budget as a result of the April 1998 SOEID "Money for Schools" initiative. There are, therefore, no additional financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5 CONSULTATION**

In accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council, this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance.

JIM ANDERSON  
Director of Education

**NOTE:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

NL/AR  
21/02/00

