

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 JANUARY 2000
THE MCCRONE COMMITTEE
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report outlines the remit of the McCrone Committee of Inquiry into professional conditions of service for teachers and seeks approval of a draft response to McCrone's request for comments.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- a notes the terms of reference of the McCrone Committee as detailed in this report
- b authorises the attached response (Appendix) to be sent to the McCrone Committee

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 1999, the Scottish Executive set up a committee to look into the current pay structure and conditions of service of Scotland's teachers. The committee is being chaired by Professor Gavin McCrone - a visiting professor in the Edinburgh University Management School since 1994.
- 2.2 The remit given to the committee is to inquire widely into:
 - How teachers' pay, promotion structures and conditions of service should be changed in order to ensure a committed, professional and flexible teaching force which will secure high and improving standards of education for all children in Scotland into the new Millennium.
 - The future arrangements for determining teachers' pay and conditions in Scotland following the removal of the statutory basis of the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee (School Education) now proposed by the Scottish Executive.
- 2.3 The McCrone Committee has produced a leaflet summarising the issues it hopes to address and seeking responses to a number of questions. This leaflet was widely circulated in early December 1999 and responses are sought by 11 February 2000.

3 RESPONSE TO MCCRONE COMMITTEE

- 3.1 Time has not allowed any widespread consultation on the terms of the Council's response.

3.2 The attached draft (Appendix) is intended to provide an outline of the general approach which this Council would support.

4 CONSULTATION

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

Jim Anderson
Director of Education

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.

APPENDIX

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“A TEACHING PROFESSION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY”
SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO PROFESSIONAL CONDITIONS OF
SERVICE FOR TEACHERS

1 PROMOTION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

1.1 Primary Schools

- 1.1.1 Primary schools vary enormously in size - some primary schools catering for only a handful of pupils, and some for several hundred pupils.
- 1.1.2 The duties and responsibilities currently expected of primary head teachers also vary enormously; for very small schools head teachers have to undertake significant managerial roles as well as full-time teaching roles, and greater flexibility to enable education authorities to develop creative, effective and supportive management arrangements for very small schools (with less than, say, 30 pupils) is desirable.
- 1.1.3 For primary schools with pupil rolls of approximately 30 to 150 pupils a single promoted post of Head Teacher is adequate - provided the head is given sufficient resources (particularly staff resources) to be able to devote sufficient time to the responsibilities of the job.
- 1.1.4 For primary schools with rolls of approximately 150 pupils or more there is a need for a post of Assistant Head Teacher (and for larger schools several such posts) in addition to that of head teacher. The functions of such posts should be to assist the head teacher in managing and developing the curriculum, in providing pastoral care for pupils, in providing effective support and challenge for staff, and in liaising with a range of individuals and agencies outwith the school.
- 1.1.5 The number of Assistant Head Teacher posts in schools of different sizes should be a matter for local deliberation by education authorities as should the precise staffing complement of each school. However, there would be merit in the McCrone Committee offering possible models, and in order to plan the funding of the education service at a national level it might be helpful to indicate that ideally the head teacher of any primary school with approximately 80 pupils or more should be engaged in some direct teaching without having full time responsibility for a single class - as should any Assistant Head Teacher. Only by providing resources to allow this deployment of promoted staff is there any real prospect of all schools being consistently and effectively managed in the context of current expectations.
- 1.1.6 Generally, there ought to be as few tiers of management within schools as possible. What is proposed above would result in only two levels of promoted post in Primary Schools - Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher; this would not preclude an education authority from designating one Assistant Head Teacher who would normally deputise for the Head, if the education authority believed that was appropriate.

1.2 Secondary Schools

- 1.2.1 Inevitably as children grow older the nature of the curriculum they follow becomes more complex and this in turn means that secondary schools must continue to be more complex organisations than primary schools.

- 1.2.2 The principle of establishing as few tiers of management as possible should hold in secondary schools also - on the understanding that currently there are several such tiers and a well established infrastructure which relies heavily on them.
- 1.2.3 The McCrone Committee is encouraged therefore to recognise that current management structures need to be taken as the starting point for any reorganisation which it may seek to propose; any such reorganisation should reduce the number of different grades of promoted post to perhaps as few as three, namely:

Head Teacher
 Assistant Head Teacher (one of whom may be designated to deputise for the head teacher)
 Faculty Head/Year Head

(note - the post titles above are no more than a preliminary suggestion)

- 1.2.4 As for primary schools the number of posts created in individual schools should be a matter for local deliberation. However there would be merit in the McCrone Committee offering possible models, appropriately costed.
- 1.2.5 The functions of an Assistant Head Teacher in a secondary school should be broadly similar to those outlined above for an AHT in a primary school; functions of a Faculty Head should relate principally to the effective management and development of the curriculum including support and challenge for teachers in all curriculum related aspects of their job; the functions of a Year Head should relate principally to pastoral care and guidance for pupils.

1.3 Transfer of Promoted Staff Between Schools

- 1.3.1 At present it is difficult for an education authority to transfer promoted post holders from one school to another. This leads to an unsatisfactory degree of rigidity and in particular makes it much harder to spread good practice than ought to be the case.
- 1.3.2 It is therefore suggested that greater flexibility should be encouraged to enable local agreements on this matter to be developed.

2 **CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

- 2.1 Current conditions of service as set out in the national Scheme include a helpful framework for addressing very specific issues (eg sickness absence, leave entitlement, maximum class sizes, etc). However they also include what appear to be unduly prescriptive regulations (eg on supply cover, parents' meetings, planned activity time). The overall impression of the national Scheme is of a document which has had section after section bolted on to it as and when specific issues have arisen, which is far too detailed and over prescriptive on many of these issues, and which generally fails (albeit unintentionally) to reflect either the needs of children or the needs of teachers. Notwithstanding this impression the need to strike a balance between offering protection to teachers and creating flexibility in the system is fully acknowledged.
- 2.2 There would be merit in a national Scheme which set out a number of key principles but with the clear intention of enabling these principles to be translated into operational reality by education authorities and schools, by development of local agreements.
- 2.3 There is an obvious tension between, on the one hand, expecting teachers to be sufficiently professional to discharge a wide range of duties in ways which they believe are appropriate and, on the other hand, creating an overloaded remit for teachers. It must be acknowledged that the current codification of teachers' duties and time allocations to these duties was an attempt to resolve that tension but it is not an attempt which has been particularly successful, notwithstanding the good intentions behind it.

- 2.4 There is widespread acceptance that the job of a teacher is a complex one which must encompass curriculum planning with colleagues on a co-operative basis, preparing and assessing pupils' work, liaising with parents and outside agencies, etc, as well as the fundamental tasks of engaging directly with children and young people on a daily basis. Such a range of duties cannot be easily compartmentalised. Equally, the sheer volume of the task means that concerns about excessive workloads being imposed (or self generated) will always be present, and there is a need to tackle concerns about workload more effectively.
- 2.5 Those conditions of service which are agreed nationally should include broad parameters within which teachers should work, including some reference to:
- leave year
 - weekly working hours (including class contact time)
 - class sizes
- 2.6 The requirements of the job mean that continuing professional development is an absolute necessity for all teachers; this requirement should be somehow built into the broad national framework of conditions of service. The current arrangements whereby five days are set aside annually for in-service training require to be given some consideration in this context : there is an argument for a more flexible approach which is less disruptive to the rhythm of the learning process for pupils (eg by reducing the number of school in-service closure days from 5 to 2 or 3), and an argument also for greater opportunity for teachers to benefit from some staff development outwith their own school setting. A slightly longer working year for teachers may therefore be appropriate - particularly given the enormous disruption to children's learning which can be caused by ambitious staff development programmes which take place during the normal pupil year.
- 2.7 Staff development opportunities could also be extended within the normal workplace although to accomplish this effectively there may have to be a slight decrease in the weekly class contact time which the average teacher currently enjoys : this may be accomplished in secondary schools partly by a reduction in the number of promoted post holders (and a consequent levelling out of class contact time across the staff as a whole), and in primary schools by providing more generous levels of promoted staffing which in turn can be deployed partially in ways which release other staff from direct teaching duties for short periods on a regular basis.

3 WORKLOAD

- 3.1 There is little doubt that excessive workload is a genuine problem for many teachers. However, it is important also to recognise that this is intrinsic to the job of a teacher - it is a job which can make infinite demands and there is a requirement for a sympathetic programme of staff development and review to draw attention to this phenomenon, and to ensure that effective support is available to individual teachers in order to make workloads more manageable - both in practical terms and in psychological terms.
- 3.2 The psychology of excessive workload cannot be ignored. Teachers feel they are being bombarded with change in an ill planned and fragmented way; equally important they feel under-valued due to the culture of blame which has become increasingly widespread - fanned often by poorly informed media comment. Many of the mechanisms to address excessive workload are already well established - particularly school development planning and staff development and review; these should be nurtured and extended to include a requirement on the Scottish Executive to produce a national education service plan which takes account of the capacity of the service to manage whatever new change is being proposed. However, even more importantly, the Scottish Executive must take steps to move away from the culture of blame which has been created; the many public pronouncements in recent years praising the teaching profession need to be translated into a more systematic way of celebrating the good practice which exists and concentrating public attention more and more on that good practice.

4 PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

4.1 Pre-Service Training and GTC Registration

The very restrictive pigeon-holing of teachers which takes place as a result of the current arrangements for pre-service training is heavily reinforced by the GTC's procedures. The erection of demarcation lines between primary and secondary teachers and between secondary teachers of different subjects is not helpful in the quest for a more committed and flexible teaching force. Some steps should be taken to reduce the quite unnecessary rigidity within the profession.

4.2 Premature Retirement

Premature retirement is not a panacea which will resolve all ills. For many teachers it is quite appropriate to go on teaching until 60 or 65. However, for some teachers it is true that they can find it increasingly difficult to relate to children and young people as they themselves grow older. Current financial constraints make it difficult to allow all teachers who wish to retire early to do so when they wish; one obvious way to address this is to re-draft existing pensions regulations and existing pension entitlements - possibly with a view to enabling any teacher who reaches a certain age (55?) and/or completes a fixed number of years of service (30?) to retire on the basis of a pre-determined pension, provided the teacher wishes to retire and that her/his post can be readily filled.

4.3 Part-Time Teachers

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of part-time teachers. Current expectations suggest that this trend will grow. It is important therefore that the McCrone Committee recognise this and do not assume that all teachers will be full-time professionals - many wish to balance their commitment to teaching with other commitments.

5 PAY

5.1 It seems self evident that current levels of remuneration for Scottish teachers have been allowed to drift to an unacceptably low level.

5.2 A significant percentage increase in salary for all teachers would be appropriate. However current financial constraints mean that local Councils are not in a position to meet the additional cost of such an increase; furthermore there is sufficient unease with current conditions of service to suggest that a pay award of the magnitude indicated should also be linked to changes in conditions of service.

5.3 The profession must be sufficiently attractive to high calibre school leavers and graduates - both in terms of starting salary and in terms of a reasonable expectation of salary within five years or so of joining the profession.

5.4 Although performance related pay is not seen as an appropriate or practicable approach, there would be merit in some form of salary bar operating at the end of the two year probationary period : satisfactory completion of this period should be more systematically appraised in order to trigger placement on the salary scale for a fully registered teacher (this scale containing no more than 3 or perhaps 4 salary points which fully registered teachers would normally progress through on an annual basis).

5.5 It is difficult to find any support for the concept of a "superteacher." However, there is support for any genuine attempts to spread excellent practice and there may therefore be merit in exploring the possibility of creating a small number of posts for (nursery, primary, secondary or special) teachers who would be expected to take on specific coaching in context duties in different schools over a period of time. The salary for these posts should be identical to those of Faculty Heads/Year Heads proposed above (paragraph 1.2.3) for secondary schools.

6 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 A national forum for setting teachers' pay is appropriate.
- 6.2 A degree of consistency across Scotland in core conditions of service remains desirable including length of the working year and the working day, weekly class contact time, and maximum class sizes. Within a framework of broad national parameters there should also exist the facility for local agreements to be developed on a range of issues to ensure that local circumstances can be adequately addressed.



JAA/CJ
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