

**ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 JANUARY 2000**

**MODERN LANGUAGES: CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO (i) SCOTTISH CCC REVISED 5-14
GUIDELINES (ii) SQA REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR STANDARD GRADE**

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee notes and endorses the terms of the attached officer responses (Appendices) which had to be sent to Scottish CCC and the Scottish Qualifications Authority in order to comply with the submission deadlines of 17 December 1999 and 18 January 2000.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to Report No 956/99 (Article 4 refers) which described the Council's response to the report by Her Majesty's Inspectors, "Standards and Quality in Primary and Secondary Schools 1994-98: Modern Languages"

2.2 Following the publication of the HMI Report in October 1998 the Education Minister set out a detailed strategy to address perceived weaknesses in the learning and teaching of Modern Languages in Scottish Schools. Major elements of this strategy were:

- the establishment of a Ministerial Action Group for Languages
- a review of 5-14 Modern Languages Guidelines to be undertaken by a Scottish CCC Review and Development Group
- a revision by SQA of arrangements for Standard Grade Modern Languages in and after 2002

2.3 The draft Revised 5-14 Guidelines were issued for consultation in October 1999. (A copy of the draft guidelines is available in the Members' Lounge)

The objectives of the revised guidelines are:

- to review the place of Modern Languages in the 5-14 Development Programme
- to secure the place of Modern Languages within that programme
- to provide detailed advice on 5-14 attainment targets for Modern Languages in Primary and Secondary schools

2.4 Scottish CCC facilitated the Consultation exercise by holding consultation seminars in each Authority. The Angus seminar took place on 11 November 1999 and was attended by all Angus Principal Teachers of Modern Languages, primary school representatives from each cluster and all the members of the Authority's Modern Languages Working Group. The consultation response (Appendix 1) was drafted by the working group in the light of discussions at the 11 November seminar and of comments received subsequently from colleagues in attendance.

2.5 The revised arrangements for Standard Grade were also issued for consultation in October 1999. (A copy of the revised arrangements is available in the Members' Lounge). The objectives of the SQA revision are:

- to make explicit the links between the guidelines for 5-14 and arrangements for Standard Grade and for Higher Still
- to balance the intellectual content of Standard Grade with that of other subjects in the secondary curriculum, and with the perceived needs of students
- to provide detailed and clear information about the Standard Grade assessment system at each level

- to create a more appropriate balance in the weighting of skills at Standard Grade by incorporating Writing as an assessable skill for all students
- 2.6 The consultation response attached (Appendix 2) was provided in the light of comments received from Angus Modern Languages departments and the Modern Languages Working Group.

3 CONSULTATION RESPONSES: KEY OBSERVATIONS

The following key observations have been made in the attached responses:

(i) 5-14 Revised Guidelines

- the 5-14 Review and Development Group are to be congratulated for producing within a very tight timescale a coherent and comprehensive set of guidelines - it is believed that shortcomings within these can be addressed effectively in the light of the commendable commitment by Scottish CCC to a major consultation exercise
- while the 5-14 Guidelines are generally clear, Section 2 is not clearly presented. A reduction in the number of strands and separate exemplifications for **each** language would make attainment guidance more accessible
- the desire to align Modern Languages with other 5-14 curriculum areas is wholly understood; however, it has to be recognised that the Modern Languages curriculum is effectively a 10-14 curriculum. As they stand, the strands and attainment targets - particularly in relation to levels C and D - are too ambitious (given time allocations and the levels of teacher confidence and competence which can be attained through current MLPS training provision) and require to be simplified
- the proposals for a detailed Guide for Teachers are welcome but it would have been helpful for a draft guide to have been issued with the draft guidelines
- the Rationale is clear and helpful but should include "the development of an understanding of language" as a **specific** aim

(ii) Revised Standard Grade Arrangements

- notwithstanding the stated aim of making explicit links with 5-14 guidelines, there is a signal lack of effective articulation between the two documents - collaboration between Scottish CCC and SQA is urgently required prior to finalised guidelines being issued
- assessment advice is practical and well considered; proposals in relation to speaking, listening and writing are particularly welcome and the revised weighting of skills is a significant improvement on current arrangements
- the Grammar Grid is appreciated for its simplicity and clarity and the Candidates' guide is very welcome
- the overall structure of the Guidelines document requires to be clearer and more accessible
- in seeking to align 5-14 guidelines and Standard Grade arrangements, an effort should be made to include a consistent rationale in both documents - the aims section of the draft arrangements document is disappointingly bland and unhelpful and requires considerable elaboration

4 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 Finance and the Director of Law and Administration.

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.

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

RESPONSE FROM ANGUS COUNCIL ON THE REVIEW OF MODERN LANGUAGES 5-14

General Comments

1 a)	Overall the Guidelines: are clear and easy to read partly agreed – see comment
b)	are a helpful guide to the 5-14 Modern Languages curriculum partly agreed – see comment
	<p>Comment</p> <p>a) In the main the Guidelines are fairly easy to read, but section 2 is not. There is too much information on the pages covering strands, attainment targets and exemplification. A reduction in the number of strands and separate exemplification sheets for each of the four languages would make the information more accessible.</p> <p>The paragraph on connections on Page 10 should be reworked to convey its meaning more clearly.</p> <p>b) The vision contained in the Introduction and Rationale is welcomed but the scope of some of Section 2 may be beyond the reach of P6 and P7 and may consequently affect targets for S1 and S2. Given the current levels of competence of MLPS trained primary practitioners, it is difficult not to conclude that many of the level C and D attainment targets and exemplifications are unrealistic.</p> <p>There is a dilemma for modern languages at 5-14. It is not conceivable in the near future that there will be any widespread delivery in P1-P5. The reality is that consistent provision for P6 and P7 is an achievable target, especially if guidance is appropriate and clear. Should modern languages fit into the 5-14 framework or should the 5-14 framework be flexible enough to recognise that the modern languages curriculum is effectively 10-14?</p> <p>Confusion is likely to surround levels A and B as they should be attainable “in the course of P1-3 by almost all pupils” and “by some pupils in P3 or even earlier, but certainly by most in P4” in other areas of the primary curriculum. Clearly these definitions do not apply to the vast majority of pupils learning a modern language at present. It might be better to make it absolutely clear that P6 is the usual starting point for a modern language and rename levels C and D “Beginners 1” and “Beginners 2” (or similar). Where pupils learn a language earlier, reporting could be undertaken in terms of a comment rather than a level.</p>

Introduction: How to Use These Guidelines

2	The Introduction offers a helpful summary of the structure and key issues addressed in the Revised Guidelines agree
	<p>Comment</p> <p>The Introduction refers to good practice. Full and clear exemplification would be appreciated in the <i>Guide for Teachers and Managers</i>, especially in relation to delivery in P6 and P7.</p> <p>It would be extremely helpful to have case studies showing how all of the following are already being achieved to the levels suggested in the draft document within the notional one hour’s time allocation for a modern language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of modes and strands undertaken as an integral part of teaching • progression in modes and strands • and differentiation.
3	The key strand of <i>Knowing about Language</i> is clearly explained agree

	<p>Comment</p> <p>The concept of KAL is understood and, as it stands, is coherent and logical but it is not absolutely helpful to the teacher. It is strongly felt that the exploration of "knowing about language" in the document should contain clearer, more open references to grammar and grammatical concepts than is the case; teachers of modern languages and English should be encouraged not to be shy of grammar despite the negative connotations of past experiences and the mistaken belief that the learning and teaching of grammar runs contrary to communicative competence.</p>
4	<p>The key concept of <i>Language to Languages</i> is clearly explained</p> <p>disagree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>This was not felt to be particularly clear as it stands, and greater clarification is required in the <i>Guide for Teachers and Managers</i>. The concept of Language Languages is central to the approach being taken to the dual concepts behind levels A and B. If this is not clarified, then there will be significant problems in implementing the guidelines.</p> <p>The idea of language to languages pre-supposes that most pupils have a sound knowledge of how their first language works. A more focused awareness of English would help the acquisition of a modern language and the opportunity for closer links with English departments would help achieve this. There are staff development implications for English specialists who may not be comfortable with teaching certain areas of grammar. Teachers need to feel secure about agreed terminology if cross-curricular links/joint programmes of study are to be successful.</p> <p>If the concept of language to languages pre-supposes the transfer of skills, structures and patterns between English and a foreign language, there must, of course, be a similar transfer possible between different foreign languages. That being the case, continuity of pupil experience between primary and secondary may in certain circumstances require to be continuity of foreign language experience rather than "same language" continuity.</p>
5	<p>The importance of <i>Intercultural Awareness</i> is sufficiently emphasised</p> <p>agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p>
6	<p>The importance of Information and Communications Technology in enhancing learning and teaching activities is sufficiently emphasised</p> <p>agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>There are clear financial implications for authorities and schools relating to the provision of planned, phased resourcing for hardware, software and training.</p>
7	<p>The <i>Guide for Teachers and Managers</i> will be a welcome addition to the Guidelines</p> <p>strongly agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p>
8	<p>The specific issues suggested for the Guide are appropriate</p> <p>agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>The Guide should avoid the understandable temptation of being too vague in an effort to avoid being too prescriptive. It is appreciated that creativity should be encouraged and different answers sought, but teachers of modern languages will welcome unambiguous support at a time when morale is low nationally. The implementation of Higher Still and the forthcoming amendments to Standard Grade have added and will continue to add to workload.</p> <p>It is important that support material is produced by a working group which combines vision and an awareness of the practical realities facing teachers. Support in respect of managing grammar progression would be most welcome.</p>

Section 1: Rationale

9	<p>The Rationale provides a clear explanation of the nature and purpose of modern languages learning and teaching</p> <p>strongly agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>The list of essential experiences, however, does not sit well in the Rationale and would be better placed in the <i>Guide for Teachers and Managers</i>.</p> <p>It is strongly believed that the development of an understanding of language should be one of the aims. The importance of this is acknowledged in paragraphs one and three of the rationale but does not figure within the stated aims.</p> <p>The term <i>Knowing about Language</i> is bland and imprecise, despite the acknowledgement that it encompasses nuance, audience, register etc. as well as grammar.</p>
10	<p>The aims of learning a modern language as outlined in the Guidelines are appropriate</p> <p>Agreed – subject to the comment made in 7 above</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>The following references are helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of personal and social skills • The concept of a wider society • Learner autonomy • Generic learning and teaching issues which address more than mere communicative competence
11	<p>The essential experiences as described are central to all modern languages classrooms</p> <p>agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>But they are out of place in the Rationale and would be more appropriate in the Teachers' Guide. Although they could be explained more lucidly, they are, in the main, a helpful summary of effective learning and teaching strategies and how these relate to the teaching of modern languages.</p>

Section 2: Attainment Outcomes, Attainment Targets and Exemplification

12	<p>The framework for attainment outcomes is appropriate for modern Languages 5-14</p> <p>agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Learning outcomes/ modes are clearly interrelated and mutually supportive.</p>
13	<p>The strands within each attainment outcome are appropriate to modern languages learning and teaching at the 5-14 stage</p> <p>disagree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>There are simply too many strands to make assessment manageable. Inclusion in section 2 of Reading for Enjoyment and Listening for Enjoyment is inappropriate since "enjoyment", though a highly desirable feature of the learning experience, does not lend itself to assessment at different levels.</p>
14	<p>It is appropriate to see <i>Knowing about Language</i> as integral to all strands</p> <p>agree and disagree</p>

	<p>Comment</p> <p>Whilst agreeing that KAL is integral to all strands, this approach may make KAL too vague and too unwieldy to be assessed properly and may lead to the opposite outcome to that intended – namely, confusion.</p> <p>Although it is appreciated that structures can be used at different levels and that they develop in complexity, a progress grid in each of the four languages would be helpful in setting targets that are specific and measurable at each level for productive language, ie Speaking and Writing: eg progression in the use of adjectives use of conjunctions / connectors use of adverbs / discourse markers.</p> <p>Any grid should articulate with what is produced at Standard Grade. There is already a (too simple?) grid in the consultation document for Standard Grade.</p> <p>Advice on KAL in Listening and Reading should be elaborated in the <i>Guide for Teachers and Managers</i>, encouraging the use of “detective” skills to help unravel meaning.</p>
15	<p>It is appropriate to describe the strand <i>Knowing about Language</i> across levels</p> <p>disagree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Whilst recognising the difficulties of isolating and breaking down structures, there is some feeling that KAL needs to be specific to levels - otherwise why have levels? Appropriate staff development would enable staff to become familiar with progression from level to level.</p>
16	<p>It is appropriate to describe the strand <i>Listening for Enjoyment</i> across levels</p> <p>disagree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Whilst it is highly desirable that pupils, for example, “may select for themselves texts that reflect their own interests and will listen to/watch these independently with teacher support, glossaries, word lists and /or dictionaries”, (see page 15, levels C-F) this would be difficult to implement.</p> <p>The concept of enjoyment is crucial to pupils’ perceptions and the future uptake of modern languages. Although there is a case for underlining the importance of enjoyment by including it in this section in the interests of streamlining the attainment outcomes and targets, it is felt, on balance, that strong, positive statements should be made both in the Rationale and in the <i>Guide for Teachers and Managers</i>.</p>
17	<p>It is appropriate to describe the strand <i>Reading for Enjoyment</i> across levels</p> <p>disagree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>See comment in Q16</p>
18	<p>Taken together, the attainment targets represent a coherent model of progress in learning a modern language</p> <p>Partly agree</p>
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Although the attainment targets as they stand do represent a coherent model of progress, and provide symmetry across the modes, they are likely to be unworkable in P6 and P7 if one hour a week is the notional time allocation. There is too much contained in too many strands and since strands overlap considerably, a maximum of 2 per outcome would be more than enough. There is merit in reducing Reading and Writing to a single strand each, up to level E, where they could be subdivided.</p>
19	<p>The exemplification provided is appropriate to the levels</p> <p>disagree</p>

	Comment
	Exemplification of the definitive version should be provided, wherever appropriate, in each of the four languages. Exemplification as it stands is too vague and should state more specifically the differences between levels.

Section 3: Assessment, Learning and Teaching

20	The description of assessment, learning and teaching is clear and helpful agree
	Comment But - A bullet point format for this section would make its content more immediately accessible to the teacher. See Page 39 "reflection". It is hoped that the definitive version of attainment outcomes and targets will allow time for reflection!
21	The general principles characterising effective assessment are helpful agree
	Comment

Section 4: Methodology

22	The features listed under each heading are a helpful aid to reflection on effective learning and teaching agree
	Comment In the section "In effective modern languages classrooms the teacher ..." the appropriate use of the target language in the classroom should be added to the list of features. It would be more felicitous (to the ear!) if these sections were introduced in the following ways: (a) "The effective teacher of Modern Languages:" (b) "Effective learning in Modern Languages will occur when learners are encouraged to:"

Further comments

1. There are many positive features in the Revised 5-14 Guidelines for which the RDG group should be commended. The document is coherently written, following a clear logic, and should make a positive contribution to a revitalised perception of the place and value of modern languages. It is clear that members of the RDG have worked extremely hard within a very short timescale to convey a vision for and the importance of learning modern languages in the wider world.
2. In addition to making assessment more manageable (by reducing the number and content of the strands), advice on a "lighter touch" approach to assessment would be welcomed. The salutary "early warning" signals from Higher Still of potential stress in pupils and teachers alike should be heeded.
3. There are severe doubts that the consultation documents for 5-14 and Standard Grade articulate sufficiently.
4. The *Guide for Teachers and Managers* which will accompany the final 5-14 document would be an ideal starting point for **new national Modern Languages courses** aimed at
 - minimising duplication of effort
 - promoting consistency
 - and helping to raise standards

Coherent and easily managed assessment, in line with 5-14 recommendations, should be an integral part of such courses. It is felt that, at a time when modern languages are high profile, there can be no better opportunity for policy makers and practitioners to collaborate in supporting the production of material which is designed specifically for Scottish schools.

The key to the success of such courses would be flexibility, perhaps using core and extension models, which would lend themselves to differentiation and cater for a variety of learning and teaching styles. There is clearly enough talent in the land, which could be harnessed in the form of inter authority co-operation or a centrally based team, to produce groundbreaking material to a tight timescale. The use of up-to-date ICT in relation to courses would:

- speed production
- and form an essential part of their contents

National courses would clearly seek to provide models for continuity and progression from primary to secondary and would draw upon a wealth of materials developed across Scottish Authorities.

5. The argument for diversification of language provision is strengthened by the following statements in the Introduction and the Rationale:

- (i) "the rationale seeks to reflect the new Europe in which Scotland will play a strong role and in which a modern languages capability is increasingly important."
- (ii) "In the world of international trade and business, young people in Scotland must be equipped with the skills that will allow them to take advantage of the opportunities that exist for those with sound language abilities. For some, as they progress beyond 5-14, the purposes of foreign language learning may take on an increasingly vocational perspective"

To meet the future economic and cultural needs of the country, appropriate action should be taken to ensure that careful planning will avoid the **dominance of French** and provide an appropriate balance of languages from **primary** onwards. In developing national and local strategies for modern languages, it may be necessary in the short term to achieve diversification by sensitive intervention in respect of primary-secondary transfer.

Angus Council

Response to Consultation Document on Revised Standard Grade Arrangements in Modern Languages

1. Is the weighting of skills in the proposed assessment system appropriate?

The proposed weighting is an improvement on the current arrangements. The reduction for Speaking, which is internally assessed, is welcomed and should help encourage more focused and purposeful Speaking activities. The slight reduction (from 25% to 20%) for Listening is an improvement, as examination type listening tasks are difficult when the pupil may be nervous and has no support from gesture, facial expression or dictionary.

In the case of Reading and Writing the combined weighting is appropriate at 50% but there is a case for reducing Reading to 30% and increasing Writing to 20% to:

- provide a more balanced weighting of skills
- give Reading and Writing the same relative values as Speaking (30%) and Listening (20%)
- make a total of 50% for the receptive skills of Reading and Listening
- make a total of 50% for the productive skills of Speaking and Writing
- simplify the calculation of the overall grade
- give a higher status to Writing
- encourage pupils to learn structures and chunks of language
- allow pupils who prepare well for the production of their folio pieces to be rewarded for their efforts
- motivate pupils to improve their performance throughout the two years of the Standard Grade course as the Writing folio will contain the three best pieces of work

The tenor of the draft 5-14 document, with its overt references to structure and knowing about language and its descriptions of three strands for Writing, will encourage more Writing in due course and, in this respect, the two documents will dovetail better than before.

2. Are the proposed arrangements for Speaking appropriate and workable?

They are workable and welcomed in so far as:

- candidates can prepare in advance for a presentation on a topic of their choice
- they are allowed three headings of a maximum of three words each. This is a useful aid to memory and confidence and, for this reason, it would be worth considering an **increase** in headings and words allowed
- the balance of presentation, discussion and role play seems fair. Candidates can progress from a prepared talk to a discussion on a familiar topic or familiar topics to dealing with unexpected questions or problems

- the role play will involve the use of relevant politeness conventions. This is an important aspect of using the foreign language in the real world

Care should be taken, however, to ensure that discussion and role play are made accessible to pupils at all levels, as discussion has been perceived as difficult by Higher candidates in the past and the role play element of the formal O Grade was challenging.

Some form of support for Foundation and possibly General candidates should be offered, for example prompt cards/questions/key words in English and/or the foreign language.

Clarification is required with regard to the following:

- Is it expected that there should be a full, formal ("final") test of Speaking for each candidate? If so, it would need to be made clear to school management that support for the administration of Speaking tests would probably be necessary, especially where there are large classes involved
- If there is to be a "final" Speaking test, what arrangements would there be for reassessment or adjustment (from previous evidence) if the grade awarded did not reflect "normal performance"?
- Would it be acceptable or desirable to do the three components of the Speaking assessment on **separate** occasions, either formally or as part of the work of the class, given that grades awarded are to reflect "normal performance"?
- If there is to be no "final" Speaking test, how much on-going evidence will be required?

Practice of presentation would lend itself to peer and self-assessment, but practice of discussion and role play could prove difficult to manage in large classes. Pairings and groupings with other pupils, especially at Foundation and General levels, would be unlikely to lead to meaningful and extended conversations. The input of **foreign language assistants** would be of enormous assistance in this respect.

3. Is the proposed system of moderation of Speaking appropriate?

As the present system of moderation for well established arrangements in Speaking in Standard Grade is perceived by many to work very well, the following question arises:

Why is such a reduction in sample size (and corresponding reduction in time spent in discussion with a moderator) being proposed to standardise **new** arrangements?

Six candidates may not provide enough of a range for the moderating teacher. Assuming that samples are sought for the range 1-6, it would be helpful to include at least three additional candidates who are considered borderline Foundation, General and Credit.

Where presentation numbers are high, and where there are more than two or three teachers involved, there is a strong case for a larger sample of at least twelve to be provided.

Clarification is required for the following:

- Will the moderation exercise involve a new task or will it be a repetition of tasks already done?
- If a new task is required, will ML departments be asked to produce the necessary material?
- Will the SQA produce sets of tasks for moderation purposes?

4. In the external assessment arrangements for listening, do you agree that the candidates should hear the stimulus material three times?

On balance, yes.

- in real life situations it is rare to have language repeated twice
- such repetitions under exam conditions may make the process tedious

but

- the stimulus is a disembodied voice
- there is no support from gesture, mime, facial expression or dictionary
- listening examinations are often particularly nerve wracking and stressful
- candidates will have a better opportunity to demonstrate their understanding
- the arrangements articulate with Higher Still

5 Are the proposed assessment arrangements for Writing appropriate?

In order to compile a folio of their three best pieces, pupils will be encouraged to view writing positively and the process of drafting and redrafting should be a valuable learning experience. The new arrangements for Writing give candidates:

- an increased variety of topics to write about
- a real chance to prepare and make improvements in advance of the final, controlled assessments
- the opportunity to take pride in the preparation of their folio
- opportunities to discuss improvements with their teachers at the drafting/ redrafting stage. This articulates with the arrangements for redrafting in the internal assessment of Writing at Higher Still and builds on well established practice in Standard Grade English
- opportunities to take increased responsibility for the presentation, improvement and control of their work
- a fair balance between preparation, controlled conditions to write the "final" versions and external assessment
- the opportunity to benefit from a common approach to grammar and structure in English and the foreign language
- the opportunity to continue the improved variety of Writing approaches in 5-14

6. Is the information provided in the Assessment Syllabus section of the document appropriate and helpful?

The recognition of the importance of the interdependence of skills and curricular areas is welcomed, as is the concept of using content and context to change the focus of work.

The layout of lists and tables from pages 11 to 13, however, is not particularly clear and lacks unity. It would be useful if this section was:

- written in a common format
- expanded into a Teachers' Guide (perhaps in conjunction with the last section of the document) with exemplification

It would be particularly useful to clarify how Table 1 relates to Writing, especially at Foundation and General levels, for example:

- Would all topics need to be covered?
- If not, what would be the minimum requirement per level?
- Some of the topics pre suppose the use of different tenses. Could (some of) these topics be omitted at Foundation level?

7 Is the Grammar Grid for Productive Language appropriate and helpful? (grammatical terms used are intended to be generic and indicative and may not be equally applicable to each of the six languages)

The simplicity and clarity of the grid is appreciated. Language specific versions, however would be more meaningful, as some grammar points which are high profile in one language are not necessarily so in another, for example "case" in German.

Care would need to be taken with the application of the grid. As candidates are unlikely to be able to demonstrate awareness of and accuracy in **all** the listed elements, it should made clear what the **minimum** requirements are for each of the six grades.

The following changes in wording would be helpful:

- "**may** show awareness of case and adjective agreement" as an amendment for Foundation level
- a similar qualification in the use of object pronouns at General level, as object pronouns can tax Higher candidates

8. Are the GRC appropriate for each skill at each level?

Yes, but it would be helpful to have the following exemplar material:

- samples of Writing at 6 levels
- cassettes and/or videos of Speaking tests at 6 levels
- cassettes and scripts at 6 levels for Listening
- Reading texts and marked answers at 6 levels

9. Does the Candidates' Guide provide a useful framework for explaining Standard Grade to both candidates and parents?

The content of this section is generally useful, but its structure and presentation should be improved. With additional exemplification (appropriate appendices with all tables in the same format) it could form the basis of a **good teachers' guide** and a **reference document for pupils and parents** who request **additional** information.

As pupils and parents are becoming increasingly accustomed to professionally produced reports, newsletters etc., the opportunity of using ICT to produce an eye catching, attractive and well designed **mini guide on paper and on line** should be grasped. A succinct (two page?) leaflet is more likely to be properly understood by and encouraging for candidates and parents alike. It could make reference to the document described in the previous paragraph.

Copies of details of Grade related criteria could be issued to pupils as and when required for the preparation and practice of learning outcomes. Too much information issued at one time might have the opposite of the intended effect and lead to confusion and demotivation.

10. Do the proposals meet the stated aim of ensuring continuity and progression from the revised 5-14 guidelines through Standard Grade to appropriate levels of Higher Still?

It is recognised that improvements, acknowledged in sections 1-9 of this response, have been made. (See comments on weighting, arrangements for Speaking, Listening and Writing.)

In addition, it is acknowledged that notice has been taken of the message from the *FLUSS* report that pupils of this age group had negative feelings about having to talk about personal matters. (A minor caveat would be that the first five topics in the list on page 13 are all "personal".)

However, as the consultation stage for the 5-14 document has just been completed, care will need to be taken to ensure that representatives from the groups responsible for the two consultation documents can work together to ensure continuity and progression.

There are severe doubts that the two documents, as they stand, articulate sufficiently as:

- the draft versions of the two documents have very different formats and rationales
- some of the proposed attainment targets in Speaking and Writing at levels E and F in the 5-14 document are more demanding than Credit
- the 5-14 concepts of Reading and Listening for enjoyment, Knowing about Language, Language to Languages, Intercultural Awareness, Essential Experiences, Writing imaginatively / to entertain are not carried through adequately to Standard Grade.

11. Will the proposed arrangements meet the perceived needs of students?

Progress has been made in the following areas:

- The vocational context of the proposed arrangements will go some way to meeting demands for real language for the real world and will be carried through into Higher Still
- Preparation for the presentation element of the Speaking test is not dissimilar to what would be required for any interview
- Students will benefit from improved awareness of the skills required for Standard Grade
- Listening has been made more accessible
- Writing in the hands of skilled teachers will be a valuable learning and motivating tool

In addition to the response to Q10 which expressed grave doubts about the sufficient articulation of the proposed arrangements with 5-14 and Higher Still, further reservations are that:

- care will have to be taken to provide lower ability students with appropriate progression in writing tasks and grammar
- fun/enjoyment and imagination should not be excluded

Please include any other comments which you would like to make.

The rationale in so far as it is a "rationale for review" is clear and straightforward. Some reiteration and integration of the precepts of 5-14 and more overt references to Higher Still would be a useful step towards the harmonisation of the three systems. This should perhaps best be achieved by including in 5-14 and Standard Grade guidelines a consistent rationale for the learning and teaching of Modern Languages.

While there is no reference in the document to the relaxation of ages and stages, it is assumed that it could also be used to prepare for the presentation of candidates at the end of S3.

The welcome inclusion of a strong vocational element in the proposed arrangements will necessitate changes in teaching materials. There will be cost implications arising from:

- up-dated textbooks
- the need for a range of appropriate reading material
- additional ICT resources to provide:
 - up-to-date and vocational Reading texts
 - extended opportunities for Writing (e mail)
 - support for better presentation and redrafting
 - enhanced encouragement/motivation for all candidates
 - practice in the core skill of ICT which is recognised at Higher Still

Finally, it is hoped that foreign language assistants in Angus Council secondary schools will continue to provide an increasingly important source of support, inspiration and stability at a moment of great change in the teaching and learning of modern languages throughout P6-S6.