

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

19 OCTOBER 2011

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE: PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Education Committee of arrangements which have been made to prepare a progress report requested by Scottish Government in relation to the first year of implementing Curriculum for Excellence.

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee:
- (i) note the very positive terms of this report which summarises the progress report to be submitted to Scottish Government
 - (ii) note the good progress made by Angus schools in delivering Curriculum for Excellence entitlements in the first year of the new curriculum
 - (iii) note that copies of the [Angus-wide progress report](#) are available for perusal in the Members' lounge and is attached
 - (iv) authorise me to submit that report to Scottish Government by the due date of 29 October 2011.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Reference is made to recent progress reports considered by the Education Committee at its meetings on 3 June 2010 (Article 6 refers) and 2 June 2011 (Article 8) refers. Both reports highlighted the overall very good progress made in preparing for the formal implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. In particular, it was noted that Angus schools had received comprehensive support through the provision of high quality learning and teaching resources, the issue of detailed advice and guidance to staff and the delivery of a wide range of continuing professional development activities to meet the training needs of staff.
- 2.2 On 16 May 2011, Scottish Government issued a letter to education authorities seeking, by the end of October 2011, an overview of the progress made by individual establishments in taking forward Curriculum for Excellence. The letter was accompanied by a national template for recording progress with respect to the characteristics of effective practice which had been identified by HMIE and issued to authorities in January 2011.
- 2.3 All schools in Angus completed progress reports in June 2011, using the national template. These reports provide a wealth of detail in terms of the very good progress made as well as the challenges experienced by individual schools in their first year of formal implementation of the new curriculum.
- 2.4 The extensive information produced by individual school progress reports has been collated within an authority-wide progress report (which is attached above).
- Reports from all 32 authorities will be used by the national CfE Management Board to produce in December 2011 a national progress report.
- 2.5 The following sections of this Committee Report offer an overview or précis of the comprehensive Angus report to be submitted to Scottish Government by 29 October 2011. The overview is organised with close regard to CfE pupil entitlements and to HMIE's characteristics of effective practice.

3 COHERENT APPROACHES TO LEARNING, TEACHING, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSITIONS

- 3.1 Very good work has been undertaken across all schools in the planning and delivery of interdisciplinary learning. Staff are more aware of the need to plan learning within and across subject areas. They also have a fuller understanding of the need to plan and provide a range of opportunities for personal achievement.
- 3.2 Pupils in almost all schools are now able to talk more confidently about how they are learning. Staff across schools have become increasingly familiar with and confident in using the national 'experiences and outcomes' to plan learning. All schools have dedicated CPD time and resources to improve the planning and delivery of interdisciplinary learning.
- 3.3 Support has been provided to all schools to promote a shared understanding among staff of how learning needs to be planned with reference to 'experiences and outcomes'. Comprehensive and well received support programmes have been developed by groups of practitioners. These are known locally as the '*Angus Repacked Outcomes*'.
- 3.4 The 'repacked outcomes' have been very well used by staff across most schools to identify key knowledge, skills, concepts and understanding that need to be learned for a pupil to be secure in their learning.
- 3.5 In some secondary schools, baseline assessment attitudinal surveys undertaken with S1 pupils have provided valuable information about pupil perceptions of 'joined up' learning. Pupils report that they enjoy interdisciplinary approaches to learning. Staff have used the data from these pupil surveys to review and improve the quality and range of courses on offer.
- 3.6 Curriculum 'maps' have been established for S1 and S2 pupils and work is ongoing to develop these for S3. More coherent approaches to the management and quality of vocational courses have also been established in most secondary schools.
- 3.7 The electronic planning and tracking tool, 'On Track with Learning', jointly developed by Angus and North Lanarkshire Councils, was piloted successfully last session. It is currently being rolled out to all schools to improve procedures to plan and track pupil learning. Currently, the tool has been rolled out to 12 primary schools and four secondary schools. All Angus staff will be trained in its use by March 2012. Staff enthusiasm for the new planning tool is high across all sectors.
- 3.8 Network support group meetings for pre-school managers and primary Head Teachers have been established to consider improvements to transition arrangements. This facility has been well received by staff including staff from the private and voluntary sectors. A strategy group has been established to develop clear guidance on continuity and progression through Early Level from pre-school into Primary 1.
- 3.9 Support for pupils moving from Primary 7 into S1 has always been a notable strength in Angus schools. All clusters have very effective and well established transition arrangements in place. These are ably supported by dedicated and experienced primary teachers based in each secondary school, who undertake the role of cluster transition teachers.
- 3.10 All schools have worked hard to improve the ways in which pupil achievements within school and out of school are recognised and celebrated. This broader view of pupil achievement has been evidenced in every Angus HMle report since 2009.

4 PROGRESSION AND LEARNING WITHIN 'A BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION'

- 4.1 Clear advice has been issued to staff about key expectations for both primary and secondary schools in relation to the provision of a **broad general education through** the Angus '*Building a Curriculum for Excellence: Curriculum Review and Design Policy Statement and Guidelines*' 2011. These guidelines which have been developed with school staff, have been very well received by schools.
- 4.2 All eight secondary schools have taken on board the principles of a broad general education for pupils in S1-S3. They have reviewed course options and structures to ensure that a wider range of curricular opportunities are offered. Option choices will now be made in S3, not S2, thus offering pupils the opportunity to broaden and deepen their learning before choosing subjects leading to an external qualification in S4 or S5.

- 4.3 Pupils have become more involved in co-operative approaches to learning and in planning and evaluating the quality of their work. Teachers are increasingly confident in finding out what pupils already know, what they want to learn and how they would like to demonstrate their learning at the planning stage.
- 4.4 Assessment and moderation developments have been well planned at authority, cluster and school level in order to foster a shared understanding of the national assessment framework. Focused continuing professional development has been provided at authority and school level and has served to ensure the adoption of increasingly consistent approaches across schools in relation to arrangements to assess learning in the new curriculum.
- 4.5 Schools are using baseline performance data more rigorously to track progress by individual pupils and by groups of pupils including year groups.

5 SENIOR PHASE DEVELOPMENTS

- 5.1 A clear implementation plan for senior phase developments has been agreed with Secondary Head Teachers and shared with all secondary schools. This plan sets out explicit expectations for the full implementation of the new qualifications. It clearly maps out the stages needed to move from existing to new arrangements, session by session.
- 5.2 All eight secondary schools have given due care and attention to the review of the senior school curriculum. Curriculum plans have been developed which are organised in terms of levels of study as opposed to year stages.
- 5.3 It has been agreed that nearly all learners will follow six National 4 or National 5 qualifications in S4, with a minority working partially or wholly at Access level. For almost all pupils, this will involve the study of English and Mathematics at the appropriate level, Physical Education and Religious and Moral Education, plus four other options. At points of choice in S5 or S6, learners will have the opportunity to progress vertically to the next Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level in five national qualifications or laterally to broaden their range of qualifications within an SCQF level.
- 5.4 Option choices have been reviewed and broadened to provide opportunities for a better balance of academic and more practical work-related learning. Schools are, for example, now offering course awards in leadership, employability, enterprise and volunteering skills among others.
- 5.5 A very successful Secondary Attainment Review Conference was held in September 2011 for school senior managers. Working in collaboration with the Education Senior Management Team and Link Quality Improvement Officers, Head Teachers and nominated Depute Head Teachers had the opportunity to reflect critically on performance in the 2011 SQA diet and to share and disseminate existing good practice, with a view to improving overall performance.

6 DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS FOR LEARNING, LIFE AND WORK THROUGH LITERACY, NUMERACY, HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- 6.1 Schools have received clear guidance in relation to the implementation of national advice contained in 'Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for Learning, Life and Work'. An Angus skills guidance document, *'Building a Curriculum for Excellence; Skills for Learning, Life and Work in Angus'* has recently been issued. This well received guide was the main focus for the annual Angus Effective Learning and Teaching Conference held in June 2011.
- 6.2 Almost all staff have been trained in Co-operative Learning. This methodology remains one of the key vehicles for promoting within the curriculum enterprising learning and nurturing skills for learning, life and work. Feedback from recent Angus school inspections demonstrates that this methodology is having a positive impact on pupil learning and their acquisition of the key skills which Curriculum for Excellence is seeking to foster.
- 6.3 Angus Literacy (June 2010) and Numeracy (April 2010) Strategy papers have been provided and shared with schools. A draft Angus Health and Wellbeing Strategy (September 2011) has recently been developed and is the subject of a separate report at this committee cycle. These three strategy documents provide clear guidance on expectations, recommendations and action points which are central to the authority's commitment to strengthen, through Curriculum for Excellence, fundamental aspects of the school curriculum.

- 6.4 Pleasing progress has been made in relation to achievements in literacy and numeracy within secondary schools. Analysis of the 2011 diet of SQA performance in Maths and English has shown welcome improvements in performance in almost all schools at Level 3 or better. Overall, S4 attainment in English and Mathematics (combined) at Level 3 was 94%, the highest performance since 2001.
- 6.5 Very good progress has been made in taking forward the Health and Wellbeing curriculum at authority and school level. Almost all schools have undertaken a review of courses and programmes and are becoming increasingly confident in using the Health and Wellbeing 'experiences and outcomes'. On a related note, an extremely coherent partnership approach to taking forward the GIRFEC agenda has received very favourable feedback nationally and from neighbouring local authorities.
- 6.6 Multi-agency planned training for staff has resulted in a sound approach to improving the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum across schools. This training has also impacted very positively on joint work with other children's services in addressing the GIRFEC agenda.

7 PERSONAL SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE

- 7.1 In many schools across Angus, pupils are now confidently setting targets for their own learning and development. Increasingly strong personal support is being provided to young people in secondary schools through arrangements to support and strengthen the role of Form Tutors.
- 7.2 Clear guidance and well received training materials have been made available to schools to ensure that Form Tutors are equipped to support pupils in their Tutor Group on a daily basis. Feedback about progress in each of the eight secondary schools indicates that a high proportion of teachers are carrying out this role with increasing confidence.
- 7.3 Additional Support Needs staff provide good levels of support to staff and pupils. Very good relationships and close working partnerships exist between school staff and support agencies such as the School and Family Support Service, Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy and Behaviour Support.
- 7.4 ASN provision is currently the subject of a service review, the purpose of which is to support the efficient management of a key service area in an increasingly challenging financial climate.
- 7.5 Partnership with parents has been a key feature of the authority and school plans to implement the new curriculum. A series of leaflets for parents to inform them of changes to the curriculum has been produced. There has been regular direct engagement between Education Service Senior Managers, Quality Improvement Officers and Parent Council representatives at bi-annual meetings and, recently, through the new Parent Council blog. That resource will be used, in response to requests from parent representatives, to post regular parent-friendly updates, advice and information about the new curriculum.

8 POSITIVE DESTINATIONS BEYOND SCHOOL

- 8.1 Very good progress has been made in ensuring that all young people are supported effectively to move to positive destinations after school, through the Angus 16+ Learning Choices programme. A very thorough and focused mapping exercise has been carried out and more in depth consideration is being given to enhance provision targeted at young people undertaking Activity Agreements.
- 8.2 An innovative approach to this provision has been developed through the 'Stepping Stones' programmes, delivered jointly by the Angus Community Learning and Development Service and Skills Development Scotland. A range of awards such as Youth Achievement and the John Muir Award have been incorporated within the 'Stepping Stones' programmes and CLD have recently become an SQA accredited Centre.
- 8.3 An increasingly wider range of accreditation opportunities in areas such as work experience, personal development and employability can now be offered to Angus young people. A significant number have been able to undertake agency-specific training such as first aid, and the safe use of equipment in Rural Skills.
- 8.4 The 16+ Learning Choices Partnership in Angus have recently implemented a single referral system for all 16-19 year olds. This approach will ensure that financial support is available to young people in need. Education Maintenance Allowances have been made available to all eligible young people participating in Activity Agreements. The 16+ Discretionary Fund is also available to young people who face barriers to progression.

9 EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 9.1 The Angus education service has a two year plan in place to ensure that all schools are well placed to manage the full implementation of the new curriculum, in line with local and national expectations. The plan has closely informed the annual improvement plans of schools and school clusters.
- 9.2 Evidence about the effectiveness and the impact of the new curriculum is gathered in a range of ways, including through the preparation of bi-annual PIN (Progress, Impact, Next steps), reports for all schools. These are completed, in the course of quality assurance visits to schools, jointly by Head Teachers and Link Quality Improvement Officers. Opportunities are scheduled to gather additional evidence through: direct observation of classes, meetings with focus groups, evaluations of CPD activities, scrutiny of school and service self-evaluation reports and of annual Standards and Quality reports.
- 9.3 There is a wide range of networking opportunities and standing groups within the service that allow senior managers and staff in schools to meet regularly with centrally-based staff to exchange ideas and develop shared approaches to securing agreed improvements. This collaborative approach is highly valued by school staff and senior managers alike.
- 9.4 One of the main challenges for schools at the current time is to continue to improve outcomes for learners through increasingly effective self-evaluation processes. Senior managers have taken steps to streamline self-evaluation procedures so that they are more focused and more manageable. These arrangements take due account of new school inspection procedures introduced in August 2011.
- 9.5 Schools are well supported and are encouraged to be honest and rigorous in evaluating their own performance. Arrangements to develop more focused and more manageable procedures have had a positive impact on improving outcomes for Angus children and young people.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Overall, Angus schools have made significant progress in implementing the new curriculum. School staff have worked hard to ensure that the transition from the old to the new curriculum will be a smooth and positive experience for pupils. This work is continuing apace as new ways of working and achievements to date become embedded in day to day practice. Further developments, in particular, developments within the senior phase are being planned diligently and enthusiastically by key networks in which promoted school staff play a welcome and major role.
- 10.2 Angus schools are continuing to respond well to the training, resources, networking opportunities and practical advice provided by education authority in delivering the ambitions of Curriculum for Excellence. Opportunities are actively sought to seek the views and opinions of school staff, pupils and parents about changes to the curriculum. This partnership approach to taking forward the reform of the curriculum will continue to be an integral feature of our commitments to improve outcomes for Angus children and young people.

11 RISKS

- 11.1 This report does not require any specific risk issues to be addressed.

12 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

13 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from this report.

14 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) has been undertaken.

15 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

15.1 This report contributes to the following outcomes contained within the Angus Local Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2011-2014:

- our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them.

16 CONSULTATION

16.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NEIL LOGUE
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 a material extent in preparing the above report.

ED/TT/NL/AM