

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
19 OCTOBER 2011
CURRICULUM REVIEW AND DESIGN
POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Education Committee with an overview of the Angus *Curriculum Review and Design Policy Statement and Guidelines* issued to schools in August 2011.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) note the terms of this report
- (ii) note the implications of Curriculum for Excellence for the design of the primary and secondary school curriculum
- (iii) note, in particular, the fundamental changes to the organisation of the curriculum in secondary schools
- (iv) note that the [Curriculum Review and Design Policy Statement and Guidelines](#) are available for perusal in the Members' Lounge and are attached.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Curriculum for Excellence offers schools considerable autonomy in the organisation and planning of experiences which encourage deep, sustained learning appropriate to the needs of children and young people. However, this does not mean that there are or can be wholly individualised approaches to curriculum planning across Angus schools.
- 2.2 The *Curriculum Review and Design Policy Statement and Guidelines* were produced to provide consistent advice and support to schools in managing the demanding process of reviewing and designing their curriculum, taking due account of national guidance in relation to Curriculum for Excellence. In particular, the policy aims to:
 - assist schools in developing the skills and knowledge of staff to ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Excellence
 - support the development of a learning environment which enable all children and young people to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- 2.3 The recently issued operational policy statement and guidelines – developed by task groups in which school staff played a major role – were initially shared with schools in October 2010. Thereafter, they were the subject of extensive consultation and discussion throughout 2010/11 including discussions with Parent Council representatives in December 2010 and January 2011. The nature and implications of the changing curriculum and examination system have been the subject of parental workshops and presentations in individual secondary schools over the past term. Arrangements have also been made to offer parents further information and advice about the new secondary curriculum at the next Angus-wide meeting of Secondary Parent Council representatives, to be held on 2 November 2011.
- 2.4 Given that Curriculum for Excellence will have particularly significant impacts on the curriculum in secondary schools, there has been a major emphasis on engaging actively with secondary school senior

managers through a range of forums. The guidelines were unanimously endorsed by secondary Head Teachers in June 2011 in light of professional deliberations in those forums.

- 2.5 The extensive involvement of school staff in preparing the guidance and related consultation exercises have served to ensure that schools are well aware of the practical implications of Curriculum for Excellence. School staff have welcomed the opportunity to be included in the preparation of the guidelines. Their contributions have been crucial in developing advice and guidance which responds to practical considerations which require to be addressed in taking forward the new curriculum.
- 2.6 Since its launch in 2004, as a national programme, Curriculum for Excellence has been promoted by Scottish Government as a *transformational* reform of the school curriculum in Scotland. That ambition has inevitably resulted in fundamental changes to how the curriculum is organised and how children's progress, attainment and achievement are to be measured.
- 2.7 The most fundamental changes to the secondary curriculum relate to the establishment of two curricular phases, each lasting 3 years, namely, (a) **The 'Broad General Education' phase**, spanning S1-S3 and (b) **The Senior Phase**, spanning S4-S6.
- 2.8 In secondary schools, the **broad general education** phase of Curriculum for Excellence commenced with S1 pupils in August 2010. This phase is designed to strengthen young people's ability to learn in the round and to acquire learning skills that allow them to transfer their learning across different contexts. Pupils will now choose subjects (that lead to external accreditation) one year later than at present. They will have longer exposure than previously to a broad curriculum, with better opportunities to deepen their learning and consolidate key skills within and across discrete subject areas. They will now select, mid-way through S3, those subjects which they wish to study in the S4-S6 senior phase.
- 2.9 Almost all learners will follow *six* courses in S4 leading to SQA accredited awards. This means that almost all will study Maths and English alongside four other options. There will be no requirement for very able pupils who, for example, have the ability to take 5 Higher courses, to take the new national examinations in S4. These examinations could be bypassed. The use of such an approach would, of course, have to be managed very carefully and be the subject of detailed and sensitive exploration and consultation with young people themselves and their parents.
- 2.10 In S5 and S6, as at present, most young people will be able to choose five course options each year. This will allow them either to build on work in S4 and deepen their learning by progressing within a subject to the next level of study or to broaden their learning by starting a new subject at a level appropriate to their prior progress and achievement.
- 2.11 The following sections of this report provide a summary of the key elements of the policy and guidelines.

3 BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION (Pre-school – S3)

- 3.1 All children and young people in Angus are entitled to experience a **broad, general education** from pre-school to the end of S3 which provides breadth and depth of learning across **all** the national experiences and outcomes from early to third level and, for most, fourth level.
- 3.2 Within the '**broad, general education**' phase, children should experience breadth and depth in learning across all eight curriculum areas. A series of national experiences and outcomes has been developed for each of the eight areas to enable teachers to plan appropriate learning experiences for all pupils.
- 3.3 Planning the learning should include both subject-specific plans and learning linked across curricular areas, now often described as 'interdisciplinary learning'. Not all experiences and outcomes lend themselves to being taught through interdisciplinary studies and subjects, of course, remain an 'essential feature of the curriculum', especially in secondary schools. As young people move through the curriculum levels, they will experience increasing specialisation.
- 3.4 The curriculum in S1-S3 should build naturally on work undertaken in the primary years and ensure that all pupils are provided with a strong platform for learning in the Senior Phase (S4-6), when they will have opportunities to study for external qualifications.
- 3.5 An innovative web-based planning tool, *On Track with Learning*, is currently being rolled out to Angus schools to support effective planning. This planning tool will also provide teachers with the facility to profile pupil achievements and has the potential to be developed into a reporting tool.

- 3.6 Rigorous procedures need to be in place to ensure that curriculum change is regularly monitored and its impacts evaluated, with due reference to national guidance and, as appropriate, practice elsewhere. This work should be undertaken with reference to appropriate qualitative and quantitative measures. Where necessary, refinements or adjustments to a school's curriculum should be made as part of established school improvement planning processes.
- 3.7 There should be timely and sufficient provision of relevant information to all stakeholders and appropriate consultation undertaken. The extent of consultation will depend on the nature of planned changes.
- 3.8 Learning across literacy, numeracy and selected health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes are now the responsibility of **all** teachers. Schools should have reliable means to ensure that all staff are supported to respond consistently to this expectation. Further guidance is contained within the *Angus Literacy Strategy* (June 2010) and *Angus Numeracy Strategy* (April 2010). A Health and Wellbeing (Curriculum) Strategy has recently been finalised and is the subject of a separate report at this Committee cycle.
- 3.9 There is no strict national guidance (for primary schools or for the broad general education phase in S1-S3) about time allocations across the curriculum other than an entitlement to **one hour** of RME and **two hours** of quality PE per week. The balance of time beyond PE and RME is spread across: the remaining curriculum areas; interdisciplinary learning; opportunities for broader achievement and personal support and challenge including through Form Tutor support and Personal and Social Education classes.
- 3.10 The timetable in S1-3 should seek to minimise fragmentation and the number of discrete teacher contacts, where practicable, by:
- offering an integrated approach that links learning within a curriculum area and, through interdisciplinary working, between curriculum areas
 - seeking to achieve a reasonable balance between the use of specialist teachers for each subject in a curriculum area and one teacher supporting learning across some or all subjects in that curriculum area.
- 3.11 As indicated in paragraph 2.7 above, pupils will make course choices in S3, one year later than at present.

4 SENIOR PHASE (S4-6)

- 4.1 In the senior phase, young people have an entitlement to prepare for recognised qualifications as a progression route from their broad general education. Nationally, the new senior phase will commence in 2013/14, that is, the current S2 will be the first cohort of pupils to undertake the Curriculum for Excellence senior phase. An organisational overview of the design of the broad general education phase (S1-3) and the senior phase (S4-6) in Angus schools is shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 In S4, in keeping with SQA guidance about course duration, and as indicated in the lower half of the diagram in Appendix 1, almost all learners in Angus secondary schools will follow six courses leading to qualifications (usually at Scottish Credit Qualification Framework (SCQF) levels 3, 4 or 5). For almost all, this will include English and Mathematics at the appropriate level plus four other selected options. In some circumstances, to best meet the needs of individual learners, direct entry to Higher courses (SCQF level 6) in S4 may be considered. The level of course studied on entering the Senior Phase in S4 will reflect the progress and achievement of pupils within the Third and Fourth Levels of the broad general education phase.
- 4.3 In S5 and S6, almost all learners will follow five accredited courses (spanning SCQF Levels 4 to 7 [Advanced Higher]) depending on prior progress and achievement. For many young people, progression through the senior phase will offer an opportunity to deepen their learning by progressing to the next level of study within a subject (eg National 5 in S4 to Higher in S5 and possibly Advanced Higher in S6) or broaden learning by studying new and different courses at the same SCQF level. In practice, most learners will combine aspects of both these progression routes. To exemplify these pathways, three typical 'learner journeys' are shown in Appendix 2.
- 4.4 Curriculum models in individual schools should promote and support the efficient use of staff time. The viability of all senior phase courses - particularly at Advanced Higher and for some lower uptake Higher courses – needs to be carefully and regularly considered. Well planned collaborative arrangements between schools and with other partners should, therefore, be used to maintain breadth of opportunity for

learners across secondary schools. Such arrangements may involve the use of remote or open learning technology, for example, to deliver courses to pupils across schools from a single establishment.

Collaborative working

- 4.5 Collaborative working across Angus secondary schools will bring greater potential for increased staffing efficiency while retaining access for all learners to as broad a range of courses as possible.
- 4.6 Such collaborative arrangements clearly require a degree of harmonisation or alignment of timetables across Angus secondary schools. This approach will necessitate consistent start and finish times to the school day, a common duration of classes, common interval and lunch breaks and the same number of teaching periods each day. Arrangements for a common timetabling framework for all eight secondary schools has been agreed with Head Teachers following detailed discussion, planning and consultation over the past two sessions.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that shared arrangements will apply predominantly to pupils in S6 (and to a lesser extent S5) who would be better able to manage arrangements for travel between schools and/or independent learning.
- 4.8 Schools will promote independent learning, where appropriate, via distance learning technologies provided by Heriot Watt University through its SCHOLAR programme and through GLOW, managed by Education Scotland. This type of approach can provide valuable personal study skills that will be an asset for lifelong learners as well as providing, notably in low uptake subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher levels, opportunities for the efficient delivery of courses that otherwise might not run.

Time allocations and flexibility

- 4.9 New national qualifications will be planned around a notional 160 hours per course in accordance with SQA advice. The statutory entitlement to approximately one hour of RME and a national expectation of two hours of quality PE per week remain throughout S4-6 for all young people.
- 4.10 Beyond this, the balance of time for most learners should be spread across six national qualification courses in S4 and five courses in S5 and 6. Any timetable flexibility can be used to enhance interdisciplinary learning, support broader achievement, develop literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing and provide opportunities to deliver personal support to pupils.

Personal support

- 4.11 Access to personal support is a key Curriculum for Excellence entitlement for all pupils. Principal Teachers (Pupil Care and Support) and Form Tutors each fulfil particular roles in monitoring pupil progress and ensuring that they receive appropriate personal support and challenge in managing their learning.
- 4.12 Young people should have regular daily contact with their Form Tutors. Extending this contact time has the potential to bring a range of benefits for learners including:
- enhanced monitoring and tracking of progress
 - delivering aspects of Personal and Social Education
 - supported study, including through peer support
 - structured opportunities for collating and organising evidence to profile their achievements
 - planning and carrying out citizenship activities across the school and its wider community
 - creating further 'space' in the curriculum to strengthen their key learning skills.
- 4.13 Schools should consider these and other potential benefits or drawbacks in extending Form Tutor contact time when reviewing current and planning future timetabling arrangements. Any changes to Form Tutor contact time should be accompanied by appropriate, well planned CPD to develop the necessary staff skills and confidence.

5 RISK

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

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

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

8 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

9 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

9.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community 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
- we have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 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/KE/NL/AM

APPENDIX 1 OVERVIEW OF BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION AND SENIOR PHASE
Broad General Education S1-3

Stage	Form Time (150 mins)	Maths 3 ppw (150 mins)	English 3 ppw (150 mins)	Mod Lang 3 ppw (150 mins)	Social subjects 3 ppw (150 mins)	Techs 3 ppw (150 mins)	Science 3 ppw (150 mins)	HWB (inc PE) 3 ppw (150 mins)	Exp Arts 3 ppw (150 mins)	PSE / RME	Flexibility
S1	30 mins daily	← Broad General Education →							2 ppw	4 ppw	
S2	30 mins daily	← Broad General Education →							2 ppw	4 ppw	
S3	30 mins daily	Start NQ Maths	Start NQ English	← Broad General Education →					2 ppw	4 ppw	

Senior Phase S4-6

Stage	Form Time	Continue from S3 2 x 3 ppw (150 mins)		Options 4 x 5 ppw (250 mins)				PE	PSE / RME	Flexibility
		(A)		B	C	D	E			
S4	30 mins daily	Maths	English	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	2ppw	2 ppw	0 ppw
S5	30 mins daily	Options 5 x 5 ppw (250 mins)						2 ppw	2 ppw	1 ppw
		A Choice	B Choice	C Choice	D Choice	E Choice				
S6	30 mins daily	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	2 ppw	2 ppw	1 ppw

APPENDIX 2 TYPICAL LEARNER JOURNEYS

Jane

Jane has enjoyed considerable success in her S1-3 broad general education. She is keen to go on to study at university on leaving school at the end of S6. She thinks she may want to study English or a modern language. She is also interested in music and art. At the end of S3 Jane had covered all the third level CfE outcomes and many of the fourth level outcomes.

S4	S5	S6
English (National 5) Maths (National 5) Chemistry (National 5) Music (National 5) History (National 5) French (National 5)	English (Higher) Music (Higher) German (National 5) History (Higher) French (Higher)	English (Adv Higher) Biology (National 5) German (Higher) Art and design (Higher) French (Adv Higher)
Overall qualifications achieved by the end of S6: Seven National 5; Six Higher; Two Adv Higher		

John

John is a motivated pupil who enjoys school. He has progressed well through his S1-3 broad general education. He likes maths and science but finds English and languages more challenging. He knows English is particularly important. He is not sure whether he wants move on to further study at college or perhaps university on leaving school – probably at the end of S6. At the end of S3 John had covered all the third level CfE outcomes and some fourth level outcomes in a number of curriculum areas.

S4	S5	S6
English (National 4) Maths (National 5) Physics (National 5) Computing (National 5) Chemistry (National 4) Geography (National 4)	English (National 5) Maths(Higher) Physics (Higher) Chemistry (National 5) Geography (National 5)	PE (National 4) Maths (Adv Higher) Biology (National 5) Geography (Higher) Chemistry (Higher)
Overall qualifications achieved by the end of S6 Three National 4; Seven National 5; Four Higher; One Adv Higher		

Jack

Jack is a very sociable pupil and gets on well with his friends. He has made steady progress through his S1-3 broad general education. He particularly likes PE and technical – his favourite subject. He wants to be a joiner and knows that he will need to go to college. He would rather leave at the end of S4 but has agreed with his parents that he should stay on to the end of S5. At the end of S3 John had covered almost all the third level CfE outcomes but only fourth level outcomes in one or two curriculum areas.

S4	S5
English (Access 3) Maths (National 4) Practical Woodworking (National 4) PE (National 4) Skills for Work Construction (National 4) Geography (National 4)	English (National 4) Modern Studies (National 4) Design and Manufacture (National 4) PE (National 5) Skills for Work Construction (National 5)
Overall qualifications achieved at the end of S5 One Access 3; Eight National 4; Two National 5	