

TEACHER PANEL

SUMMARY OF THE KEY POINTS FROM EIGHTH MEETING – 13 MARCH 2018

Introductions

1. Panel members were welcomed to the meeting. The Panel congratulated Gayle Gorman in her appointment as Chief Inspector of Education. It was noted that separate dialogue is taking place between specific members of the Panel and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Workforce Planning

2. The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (DFM) outlined the Scottish Government's priorities in relation to workforce planning, teacher retention, workload and the impact of curriculum change. DFM noted the significant increase in routes into teaching. DFM invited comments on opportunities to address some of the key workforce challenges.

3. A number of points were raised by Panel members:

- That for many professionals the Chartered Teacher route was a positive way to give back to the school or region and to develop skills whilst based in a University.
- Some important issues with the previous Chartered Teacher initiative in relation to "self-selection" and perceptions about its inflexibility. It was suggested that any alternative approach would need to introduce greater flexibility.
- The potential benefits of providing opportunities for teachers to see an increase in pay and responsibilities on a temporary basis, for instance a 23-month period.
- The need for greater flexibility in the roles that teachers take on, in particular the potential to teach a wider range of subjects beyond their core subject.
- The potential benefits of the pedagogical aspect of the Initial Teacher Education course being provided within the main degree, allowing for 6 months of postgraduate experience in schools (rather than the current 1-year placements).
- The benefits of a Norwegian-style model where teachers can teach the Broad General Education (across primary and early secondary) without being required to teach the senior phase.
- The need for further collaboration between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Universities and Further Education colleges in order to look at providing "hands on" industry work for prospective teaching graduates and vice versa i.e. so-called "2+2 routes".
- The concept of "teaching schools" where there is a strong partnership between a school or group of schools and a leading university.
- The importance of well-designed school/college relationships with the possibility of colleges delivering teaching within school buildings i.e. vocational centres within schools.
- The benefits of further expansion of the Western Isles e-Sgoil initiative.

4. Scottish Government officials were invited to expand on the forecasting of the impact of the various new routes into teaching on overall teacher numbers and quality. It was confirmed that the 11 new routes are forecast to provide an additional 10% increase over and above the increase in applications via “core” routes. In addition, it was confirmed that the new routes will be evaluated in order to measure quality.

5. There was a further discussion about the consequences of shortages in teachers for schools. Key consequences were for timetabling, narrowing of the curriculum, longer assemblies and removal of certain course options.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

6. Graeme Logan, Deputy Director, Learning Directorate introduced the paper on Pupil Equity Funding, pointing to the commitment to provide teachers and headteachers with access to good quality evidence via the Education Endowment Foundation, a suite of evaluation for the PEF, the 11 key measures for “closing the gap” in educational attainment, the amended PEF guidance and the emphasis on flexibility and innovation.

7. Comments from the Panel were as follows

- The importance of clarity about when it is appropriate for local authorities to influence how funding is spent and when it is not appropriate for them to do so. Panel members commented that dialogue, discussion and constructive challenge from local authorities is helpful but bureaucratic approaches are not.
- The importance of collaborative working on how PEF is being used and the need to spread the message about targeted interventions that work. Gayle Gorman confirmed that the various PEF conferences and thematic reviews by Education Scotland are intended to assist with this work.
- That there is variation in experience and approach between schools and between local authorities.
- The importance of setting how PEF will be spent with evaluation of impact considered from the very beginning.
- The difficulties in evidencing impact within a year, but the very clear potential to evidence impact after 2-3 years.
- The need to maintain a focus on the “middle 60%” of pupils
- The very positive added benefit of the PEF in re-focusing schools on taking a forensic look at the levels of engagement as well as attainment.
- The need to minimise additional or bureaucratic reporting mechanisms, and to focus on the core Standards and Quality reports and statistics data.

8. The Panel discussed the need to develop clear and consistent central measures on health and wellbeing. It was noted that a number of schools are attempting to create their own tools and greater consistency would help to reduce duplication of effort. The Panel agreed that a national framework of measurement around health and wellbeing would be helpful.

9. The Panel confirmed that the introduction of PEF and Scottish Attainment Challenge funding is having a major impact on the options available to schools, with increases in attendance and engagement being two of the very obvious positive benefits. The Panel also confirmed that it is very clear to schools what they should be trying to achieve with the PEF

Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs)

10. The Deputy First Minister confirmed that regional improvement plans have now been received from all RIC areas with signs of progress across Scotland.

11. Gayle Gorman provided a short summary of the initial analysis of the RIC plans. All plans cover the key areas for improvement that would be expected, and with a focus on research, collaboration and improvement methodology.

12. One panel member noted that in his local authority area there had been a tentative start to the RIC's work, limited communication with headteachers and low awareness amongst senior managers and classroom teachers. It was commented that there needs to be further progress to stimulate collaboration amongst local authority Quality Improvement Officers and headteachers across RIC areas. It was also suggested that there should be a further effort to raise awareness and engage with professionals.

13. The Panel agreed that a key focus for the RICs should be to grow a culture of collaboration, moving beyond the initial focus on the creation of the strategic plan. In particular, it was suggested that the collaborative needs to be a "space" for professionals to go to rather than being driven by the Collaborative's plan. It was noted that plans were developed at a significant pace in order to ensure that areas make an early start, and that the forthcoming year would provide further opportunity to develop and grow collaborative practice.

Behaviour in Scottish Schools

14. A Teacher Panel member introduced an item on behaviour in Scottish Schools, focusing on a recent statistical publication by Scottish Government and a variety of comments by teaching unions.

15. Graeme Logan provided additional information about the research publication which showed a positive picture overall, though a small increase in "low level disruptive behaviour" in primary schools.

16. Comments were as follows:

- The most significant factor is often staff/pupil relationships and learning and teaching practice.
- That confident practitioners are, for the most part, not experiencing increasing difficulties with behaviour.
- The very positive policy on inclusion raises challenges for the education sector. The focus should be on continuing to improve professional practice.

- The need for high quality training for professionals and support staff

Close

17. The Chair thanked attendees.

Curriculum Unit
Scottish Government
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