

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010

### MODERATION PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT OF CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

#### Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Seek Cabinet approval to utilise £73,000 allocated by Scottish Government to develop moderation programmes which effectively support teachers to assess the Curriculum for Excellence across all educational establishments.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In September 2009 the Scottish Government set out the strategic vision for assessment in 'Assessment for Curriculum for Excellence: Strategic Vision and Key Principles'. The changes from the existing arrangements for teachers are that:
- Assessment practices will now follow and support the new Curriculum for Excellence outcomes and experiences and give more autonomy and professional responsibility to teachers to assess and report on progress.
  - The revised assessment regime will support greater breadth and depth of learning and place a greater focus on skills development (including higher order skills) such as creativity and enterprise.
  - Each local authority has to participate in the development of a national system of quality assurance and moderation for 3 – 18 to support teachers develop consistency and confidence in their professional judgements.
  - Learning and Teaching Scotland has taken responsibility for the production of a National Assessment Resource to help teachers achieve consistency and understanding in their professional judgement.
- 2.2 The new framework for assessment aims to build on the strengths of current approaches to assessment in Scotland, developed through Assessment is for Learning and National Qualifications. It also takes account of best practice elsewhere and the findings of international research such as the Analysis and Review of Innovations in Assessment (ARIA) and the United Kingdom's Teaching and Learning Research programme (TLRP) commentary: 'Assessment in Schools: Fit for Purpose?' The new proposals recognise the good practice and expertise in assessment that exists across all sectors of education and the aim of the framework for assessment is to ensure this good practice is shared, reflected upon and implemented to raise standards of achievement for all children and young people.

- 2.3 The revised framework fundamentally recognises that the purposes of assessment are to:
- Support learning that develops the knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities, which contribute to the four capacities of successful learner; effective contributor; responsible citizen, and confident individual.
  - Give assurance to all stakeholders, including parents/carers that children and young people are progressing in their learning and developing in line with expectations.
  - Provide a summary of what learners have achieved, including through qualifications and awards.
  - Contribute to planning the next stage of learning to help learners progress to further education, higher education and employment.
  - Inform future improvements in learning and teaching.
- 2.4 The Curriculum for Excellence emphasises that literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, as well as health and wellbeing, information and communications technology (ICT) and higher order skills, including creativity, are essential. Consequently, assessment is to support learning and promote participation in the process, resulting in greater breadth and depth of learning, including a greater focus on the secure development of knowledge, understanding and skills, linked to these areas.
- 2.5 Scottish Government has recognised that such a revised system of internal assessment to assess pupil progress and attainment will require teachers to be highly skilled and confident in all areas of assessment. This means they will have to develop consistently high skills in cross marking and moderation and be able to benchmark their work against national standards, comfortably working across transitions between early years, primary and primary/secondary. They will also need to match individual pupil progress to agreed national standards from the National Assessment Resource. In order to support teachers develop these skills, Scottish Government has allocated £3m across local authorities to allow them to plan their own continuing professional development (CPD) programmes. East Ayrshire Council's share of this £3m is £73,000. Further detail of what will be required in such a moderation programme is described below.

### **3. KEY THEMES OF THE REVISED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Standards and Expectations**

The standards and expectations that form aspirations for learners from 3 – 18 are set out in the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence and their equivalent in the specification for qualifications and awards. Progress in

Curriculum for Excellence will promote greater breadth and depth of learning, including a greater focus on the secure development of skills and knowledge. Assessing progress across a breadth of learning and will help teachers to plan, track progress, summarise achievements in a rounded way, and better prepare children and young people for the next stage of learning.

- 3.2 The experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence cover each of the levels that have been identified in the programme. The table below illustrates the levels that are in operation from 3 – 18:

<b>CURRICULUM LEVEL</b>	<b>STAGE</b>
Early	Pre-schools years and P1
First	To end of P4
Second	To end of P7
Third, Fourth	S1 – S3 (fourth level broadly aligns to SCQF Level 4)
Senior Phase	S4 – S6 and College or other means of study

- 3.3 The new assessment process will therefore aim to support young people respond to the level of challenge set out in the ‘experiences and outcomes’ and enable them to demonstrate movement forward to more challenging learning. The assessment process will also demonstrate that young people can apply what they have learned in new and unfamiliar situations.

- 3.4 A challenge in the programme will be to ensure a level of consistency across individual levels within each educational establishment and across establishments, particularly at transition points. The £73,000 allocated by Scottish Government will primarily work to secure these objectives.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 The Curriculum for Excellence programme formally began in session 2010/11 in primary schools and in the first year of secondary school. The 5-14 programme has now concluded and in June 2011 the only 5-14 reports available will be for the new cohort of S2 pupils in secondary school. Consequently, educational establishments will work to prepare alternative forms of evidence to demonstrate the progress of young people, both individually and in relation to meeting a national standard. The assessment proposals in ‘Building the Curriculum 5’ are based on teacher’s professional judgement. Consequently, education staff must have a thorough and consistent understanding of the national standards. This is a major continuing professional development (CPD) exercise, which requires central co-ordination and leadership and management at authority level. The £73,000 will be used to facilitate this purpose. The Leadership and Management Board (Curriculum for Excellence) will coordinate the work, although it will be led by Quality Improvement Officers working with key school staff.
- 4.2 The Curriculum for Excellence Development Officer working closely with the Quality Improvement Team will play a pivotal role in monitoring, co-ordinating and leading the programme and will liaise closely with colleagues across other local authorities to ensure the moderation programme developed in East

Ayrshire reflects best practice and is developed in co-ordination with our neighbouring authorities.

- 4.3 Literacy and Numeracy qualifications will be incorporated within English and Mathematics at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5. Detail on how this will be communicated within the nature of these qualifications is still to be formalised by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.
- 4.4 A Curriculum for Excellence recognises the critical importance of recording achievement beyond formal qualifications and awards. Through recording achievement young people will continue to develop the four capacities and the range of skills for learning, life and work. Recognition of young people's learning may include, as well as traditional qualifications, achievements through, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes and local authority certification and awards ceremonies. There is a range of youth awards such as ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), John Muir Awards and Millennium Volunteer Awards, which East Ayrshire Council already make use of. These will be further developed and reported on from session 2010/11.
- 4.5 Summative assessment of attainment and achievement will take place at periodic levels and at transition points. Transition points within the Curriculum for Excellence include:
- Pre-school to primary
  - Between stages
  - Primary to secondary
  - From additional support for learning units and establishments to mainstream provision
  - From the broad general education at the end of S3 into the senior phase
  - Beyond school to positive and sustained destinations such as employment and further and higher education.
- 4.6 To ensure effective transition across East Ayrshire, educational establishments will require all practitioners, staff, parents and support agencies to work together and to involve learners in the process. The secondary to post-school transition is a good example of where partnership working needs to be well planned to allow appropriate information to be communicated to allow a seamless move into the next phase of learning.
- 4.7 The CfE Leadership and Management Board will investigate and agree with Head Teachers whether it would be appropriate to introduce external standardised testing into the CfE phase of Primary 1-Secondary 1 to supplement assessment information during the early years of moderation training. External assessment packages offer an analysis of literacy and numeracy development for each young person which can be annually tracked. It may be possible, for example, to administer tests at key transition points at P4 and P7 with an emphasis on the diagnostic element. Discussion will take place with neighbouring authorities and Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) to identify what is being proposed across local authorities during this

interim period. The annual cost of any externally administered series of tests is in the region of £30,000. This cost could be taken from the allocation of £73,000 made by Scottish Government. The CfE Leadership and Management Board once it has carried out a review will recommend to the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services whether such an investment during the 'transition years' should be considered.

## **5. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 5.1 A rigorous quality assurance programme at establishment, authority and national level, will be developed to review moderation procedures and give a benchmark for measuring confidence in teacher judgements. It will be based on self evaluation involving teachers in collaboration, professional dialogue and collegiate working. The final programme will articulate across stages and sectors, with the objective of fostering mutual trust and respect for the different skills, experience and understanding that all those leading moderation bring.
- 5.2 The quality assurance programme will also ensure that assessment is valid and reliable and provide opportunity for feedback in planning for improvement. The final system must be manageable and the methods used accessible and easily arranged, with ongoing professional dialogue as a key component. The programme will also promote the building of capacity in terms of assessment expertise.

## **6. ACCESS TO EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT ADVICE**

### **6.1 The National Assessment Resource**

All staff will have access to a national online resource (The National Assessment Resource) which is being developed by Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS). It will be available from autumn 2010 and its purpose is to provide support for a single coherent assessment system through which understanding and professional practice in assessment and standards and expectations for Curriculum for Excellence will be shared. The National Assessment Resource will provide a single place in which assessment materials for Curriculum for Excellence can be stored. It will include examples of practice, illustrating standards and expectations across curriculum areas, stages, experiences and outcomes and qualifications. This will support teachers to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations and how to apply these consistently. The assessments and supporting advice will include video, audio and interactive resources, as well as text, which will also be enhanced with graphics and pictures. Links to the SQA website will provide access to further advice and support on national qualifications.

In summary, the online assessment resource will:

- Provide assessment tasks for children and young people
- Support the development of national assessment materials in exemplification

- Provide a tool to allow teachers and others, for example, SQA's examining teams to create fit for purpose, up to date and engaging assessment materials
- Provide unit assessment materials and core support materials for National Qualifications
- Provide exemplars in guidance for continuing professional development and assessment for curriculum for excellence
- Support the delivery of the Scottish Survey of Achievement

## **7. SCOTTISH SURVEY OF ACHIEVEMENT**

- 7.1 In order to monitor national standards of performance over time Scottish Government uses the Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA), which is presently being adapted and fully aligned with Curriculum for Excellence, with a focus on attainment and literacy and numeracy in schools.
- 7.2 The SSA is a 'sample based' survey undertaken through a partnership between Scottish Government, SQA, LTS and HMIE, with SQA leading on the development and delivery of the SSA assessments and quality assurance. This survey monitors attainment, literacy and numeracy across learning at P4, P7 and S2 and includes written and practical assessments. The survey focuses on literacy and numeracy in alternate years with numeracy in 2011. The SSA provides an assessment of learning and progress over time to monitor standards from year to year and over longer time periods.
- 7.3 The Department of Educational and Social Services will use the outcome of the SSA to benchmark its own findings from its moderation processes to ensure that standards are being matched with what is being produced nationally.

## **8. INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS**

- 8.1 Scottish Government is committed to participation in the following international achievement study:
- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) covering skills in reading, mathematics and science literacy at aged 15 (S4)
- 8.2 Each study selects around three to four thousand pupils per stage across the country and as with the SSA provides a national estimate of the performance of Scotland's children and young people. These surveys facilitate analysis of the performance of Scotland's children and young people over time and in comparison to other countries. The Department of Educational and Social Services will continue to support Scottish Government with these international achievement studies and once again use the information that emerges to benchmark its own progress.

## **9. STANDARDS, TABLES AND CHARTS (STACS)**

- 9.1 National standards of performance in National Qualifications are traditionally monitored over time through standards, tables and charts (STACS) analysis. An analysis of STACS allows the authority to measure SQA attainment data across our schools. It includes flexible tools to support investigation into individual subject performance as well as overall grades and levels across schools and the authority. Scottish Government will update and adapt STACS so it is fully aligned to Curriculum for Excellence and it will continue to be extensively used by the Department of Educational and Social Services to benchmark performance.

## **10. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 A revised policy on Assessment and Reporting will be completed to guide all educational establishments once the moderation and continuing professional development exercise has been completed.

## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 £73,000, allocated from Scottish Government will be used to support the moderation programme during 2010/11 to better prepare education practitioners assess and report effectively on Curriculum for Excellence. The allocation of the budget may be utilised as follows: up to £30,000 for staff and potential short term secondment purposes in order to lead and facilitate moderation training; up to £30,000 for standardised testing at P4, P7 and potentially S1, if approved; up to £13,000 for materials, software and miscellaneous costs such as travel for CPD. If standardised testing is not utilised the finance would be added to the training and staffing budget for CPD.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 12.1 The moderation and training programme does not impact specifically on minority groups and therefore does not require an equalities impact assessment.

## **13. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The issues contained in this strategy impact on the theme of the Community Plans: 'Promoting Lifelong Learning' and 'Improving Health and Well Being'.

## **14. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 Cabinet is asked to:
- (i) approve the use of £73,000 to support an assessment and moderation programme across educational establishments in session 2010/11;

- (ii) approve the continued involvement of the Department of Educational and Social Services in Scottish and International surveys of attainment and achievement;
- (iii) approve the potential introduction of a standardised externally administered assessment programme at key transition stages for a period of up to three years;
- (iv) note the changes in assessment and reporting resulting from the end of 5-14 and the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence; and
- (v) otherwise, note the contents of this report.

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AS/EO'N  
26 July 2010

### **List of Background Papers**

1. Curriculum for Excellence, Building the Curriculum 5

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