

**European Commission Public Consultation:
Schools for the 21st century**

Response from Scottish Government

PART 1: Actions necessary within national contexts to ensure that schools deliver the quality of education needed in the 21st century

1. How can schools be organised in such a way as to provide all students with the full range of key competences?

The school curriculum aims to equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to realise their potential, fulfil their ambitions and succeed in later life.

The curriculum in Scotland is non-statutory and responsibility for what is taught rests with local authorities and schools, taking into account national guidelines and advice. As part of the overall *Curriculum for Excellence* programme, the curriculum in Scotland is undergoing a major review which should support all young people in all educational settings to maximise their potential. At its heart lies the aspiration that all young people should develop the following four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Curriculum for Excellence should provide the framework for the delivery of key competences, providing opportunities to develop depth of understanding, and key experiences which support connected meaningful learning. The curriculum should encompass the ethos and life of the school, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary projects and studies and opportunities for personal achievement.

The clear principles for curriculum design provide a framework within which improvements can and should be made. The principles identified - challenges and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance - will have different emphases at different stages and as each young person learns and develops, ensuring they will enjoy greater choice and opportunity to help realise their individual talents. The intention is to alter the balance between a process that is heavily dependent on content, and learning and teaching approaches that improve pupils' understanding of what is being taught.

Principles of *Curriculum for Excellence* are now influencing educational developments right across the board, including informal education, such as youth work. Major programme of engagement activity by authorities and other partners will give teachers across Scotland the opportunity to have their say on the developing curriculum, and to think about how they would want to develop learning and teaching to deliver the values, purposes and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

The *Schools of Ambition* project, a path-finder initiative which encourages and supports elected schools to initiate and develop transformative policies and practices, has resulted in a number of wide-ranging and innovative approaches to the school curriculum. The developments have included increased curriculum flexibility, development of creative arts and health agendas, as well as increased vocational and enterprise opportunities. Early impacts show positive effects on student engagement and attainment.

2. How can schools equip young people with the competences and motivation to make learning a lifelong activity?

It is necessary to encourage independent thinking and creativity by allowing learners to make choices to meet their needs and aspirations and to suit local circumstances and develop positive disposition towards lifelong learning. Most importantly we should encourage young people to retain an enthusiasm for learning and support them in 'learning how to learn', identify gaps in their knowledge through reflection and self awareness and to learn new skills effectively throughout their life.

A wide range of opportunities is provided for children and young people to take responsibility for the next steps in their learning. The *Assessment is for Learning* programme has encouraged thinking in relation to personal learning planning, which provides the opportunity to set targets and consider the next steps in their learning. By promoting classroom assessment which is based on high quality interactions, thoughtful questions, careful listening, and reflective responses, the programme seeks to develop independent, reflective, lifelong learners.

We are looking at how to give greater recognition to young people's broader life skills and achievements beyond national qualifications, as gaining recognition for these can improve pupils' self esteem, motivate them and keep them engaged in learning throughout school and beyond. In addition the process involved in recording and recognising these achievements can help young people to reflect on their learning and development, and can be valuable starting points when it comes to articulating themselves in interviews with employers, colleges or universities.

3. How can school systems contribute to supporting long-term sustainable economic growth in Europe?

A skilled and educated workforce is essential to productivity and sustainable economic growth. *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (published in September 2007) outlines our vision for a smarter Scotland with a globally competitive economy based on high value jobs, with progressive and innovative business leadership.

Young people's education, from the early years of a child's life through their compulsory education, lays the foundations of skills for life and work. What they learn and how they learn have a major bearing on wider outcomes including employability and participation in society in later life. Pupils should have the opportunity to build up a strong foundation of a wide variety of skills and be able to present and demonstrate their skills in a way that will be of high value to themselves, their parents and carers, employers, colleges and universities.

Against this background, we are committed to developing Scotland's worldwide reputation for excellence in enterprise education. Through *Determined to Succeed* – our strategy for enterprise in education – we will continue to create an enterprising culture in our schools and make the link between the classroom and the workplace so young people see the relevance of their learning. Entrepreneurial education is an

important aspect of *Determined to Succeed*. The range of enterprise experiences - more opportunities for vocational learning and achieving a parity of esteem with academic learning, enhanced employability skills, understanding the world of work and commerce - are building blocks to help achieve sustainable economic growth.

The design of *Curriculum for Excellence* will encourage schools to provide – for pupils across the range of aspirations and abilities - increased opportunities to build work related knowledge, experience and skills through a range of routes, including an expansion in school-college partnerships and provision of meaningful and relevant work experience. To deliver increased opportunities and achieve parity of esteem with academic learning and certification we must ensure that vocational and employability skills, learning about the world of work and learning about the skills needed in the world of work, are an integral part of the curriculum and not a separate experience.

4. How can school systems best respond to the need to promote equity, to respond to cultural diversity and to reduce early school leaving?

We are committed to enabling every child to achieve their full potential, paying particular attention to those young people whose attainment is not improving and who need more choices and more chances to make the most of their lives. Our *Skills Strategy* makes clear our desire to keep young people engaged in learning before and after the age of 16. To that end, we are working to ensure the overhaul of the education system through *Curriculum for Excellence* delivers for all Scotland's children, by providing: more engaging, personalised approaches; more and better vocational learning; recognition for broader forms of achievement; teachers and other professionals with the skills and capacities to meet successfully the needs of these young people; and appropriate drivers in the system.

The *Skills Strategy* underlines the vital part that schools play in a continuum of learning provision, in which all learning providers must engage, retain and progress all learners. Schools must see the post-16 years not as a period for which young people 'leave' but to which they progress. This means prioritizing transitions post-school and working with a range of providers to plan that transition.

Inclusive schools provide comprehensive, integrated approaches, harnessing multi-agency support to meet that care support to meet the care and welfare needs of children young people and families. The youth work strategy “*Moving Forward: A strategy for improving young people's chances through youth work*” recognises the opportunities that exist for teachers and youth workers to work more closely together in young people's learning. A key outcome in the youth work strategy is for young people to be able to access information on youth work opportunities at schools and for schools to fully understand and appreciate the unique role and methods of youth work and the benefits and achievements young people gain through youth work.

The Scottish Government is also committed to supporting schools, local authorities and communities to prevent and tackle bullying whenever and wherever it arises. We have established *Respectme*, Scotland's anti-bullying service with the remit to

support those working with children and young people to tackle bullying effectively. The service will deliver advice, information and training on bullying relating to all equalities issues.

In addition, the Scottish Government has commissioned LGBT Youth Scotland to prepare training materials and guidance on tackling homophobic incidents in schools. This project complements work already undertaken to produce guidance to raise awareness of equalities issues in schools.

5. If schools are to respond to each pupil's individual learning needs, what can be done as regards curricula, school organisation and the roles of teachers?

The current implementation of Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 Act, commenced on 14 November 2005, is promoting more effective approaches to meeting the needs of all children and young people.

The Act encompasses any need that requires additional support in order for the child or young person to learn. It places duties on education authorities to identify and then make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support needs of children and young people, replacing the system for assessment and recording of children and young people with special educational needs.

As stated above in response to the first question, the principles of curriculum design under the *Curriculum for Excellence* are already being applied in schools across Scotland. One of the principles is personalisation and choice, which states that the curriculum should respond to individual needs and support particular aptitudes and talents, and that there should be safeguards to ensure that choices are soundly based and lead to successful outcomes.

Teachers play a crucial role in this. The Standard for Full Registration (SFR), which is the baseline professional standard that applies to all teachers throughout their careers, includes a requirement that registered teachers “set and maintain expectations and pace of work for all pupils”. It includes as an illustration of professional practice that registered teachers ensure “learning tasks are varied in form, differentiated and devised to build confidence and promote progress of all pupils, including those with additional support needs and high attaining pupils”.

6. How can school communities help to prepare young people to be responsible citizens, in line with fundamental values such as peace and tolerance of diversity?

Education for Citizenship permeates through a number of curricular areas including Environmental Studies and Social Subjects. The aim of education for citizenship is to develop a capacity for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, social, economic and cultural life.

International education in schools ensures that all young people have opportunities to develop a knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it in a planned and progressive way throughout their school careers. The learning outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence* will include preparing young people to actively participate in a global society by developing a range of knowledge and skills. Teachers have the opportunity to learn from practice of other countries and develop links with them to support the delivery of International Education in schools.

7. How can school staff be trained and supported to meet the challenges they face?

A national induction programme for newly-qualified teachers was introduced in Scotland in August 2002. It guarantees a one- year teaching post with a local authority to newly qualified Scottish-trained teachers. Teachers on the programme teach just over two-thirds of the time (so they have more time to concentrate on their development) and have access to the services of an experienced teacher as a mentor/supporter.

Additionally, a national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) is in place to enable teachers at every stage in their career to realise their full potential, develop and maintain and develop their skills and contribute to achieving a more successful outcome for every child and young person. All teachers are entitled to 35 hours of CPD each year, the content and focus of which should be agreed with their line managers. The framework provides scope for teachers to achieve Chartered Teacher status or to progress through the management structure of Principal Teacher, Depute Headteacher and Headteacher. The Standard for Chartered Teacher and the Standard for Headship are relevant in this context.

The CPD framework does not dictate definitive training programmes but allows for individuals, together with their line managers, to take account of particular individual needs, while also considering school, local and national priorities when drawing up the annual plan. CPD can take many forms such as work based projects, learning networks, formal courses and coaching and mentoring. However, effective CPD must be modern, relevant, coherent and challenging if it is to meet the needs of teachers, stimulate them and impact on school and pupil learning.

8. How can school communities best receive the leadership and motivation they need to succeed? How can they be empowered to develop in response to changing needs and demands?

To provide the best possible education for pupils, schools must be led by motivated leaders who are committed to excellence. Teachers must have the opportunity to develop new skills as they progress through their careers.

The Scottish Government is determined to improve leadership, particularly in relation to learning and teaching, in all schools and thereby increase pupil attainment and

achievement. We promote a number of initiatives aimed at improving leadership and building leadership capacity in Scottish education. In particular, the diploma level Scottish Qualification for Headship currently prepares around 140 teachers per annum for headship. In addition, the Government is currently funding a 'flexible route' pilot whereby 30 aspiring headteachers are being prepared for headship by way of individualised personal development plans with an in-built, heavy reliance on coaching. Limited numbers of aspiring headteachers have also taken part in leadership development summer programmes at Harvard University in 2006 and 2007, and in 2007 the Scottish Government hosted an inaugural International Summer School on School Leadership in Edinburgh.

PART 2: identify those aspects of school education on which cooperation at EU level could help support Member States in the modernisation of their systems

It is in the interest of all Member States and their devolved regions to ensure that their education systems are fit to meet the challenges of the 21st century and thus contribute to the collective target for the EU to “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world” by 2010.

Given the enormous diversity in culture, structure and priorities within and between Member States, it is important that the content of teaching and organisation of education systems remain a responsibility of Member States and their devolved regions.

The areas where the EU can make a valuable contribution include enabling peer learning and networking and facilitating mobility. The established policy peer learning clusters should continue, with the inclusion where possible, of input from practitioners in the field. It is important that the EU ensures that results of peer learning are disseminated effectively and that a wide range of users have the opportunity to benefit from them.

The Lifelong Learning Programme provides a vital platform for enabling children, young people, teachers and non-teachers to come together to learn across structural and national boundaries. The focus should be on continuing to encourage greater participation in the programme and simplify the bureaucratic processes. The Commission could also consider extending such programmes to 3rd countries, although it would be important to ensure that EU action provided added value in comparison to bilateral exchanges.

The Commission also has an important role in sharing key messages from international surveys and facilitating the exchange of information between Member States and the leading OECD countries. However, benchmarking and target-setting for the Union as a whole should not dominate at the expense of local solutions to local issues – retaining the integrity of Member States, whilst still benefiting the European community as a whole.