

CUTS FEEDBACK: UPDATE

NOTE: Names and addresses have been supplied for all comments used. All contributors, schools, colleges and universities have been anonymised to protect the identity of those who have provided this information. For the same reason, some editing has also been carried out.

SUPPLY WORK HAS DWINDLED.

I used to be very busy in one local authority. My supply work has dwindled since the office took charge of contacting us. I have had 90 minutes teaching from one authority this session. I registered with a neighbouring authority last spring. I've had 10 days in this area - they can call us direct.

My daughter wanted to train as a teacher but changed her mind in light of my recent experience.

LIMIT OF 20 FOR S1/S2 MATHS AND ENGLISH CLASSES REMOVED.

Authority plans to remove limit of 20 for S1/S2 Maths and English classes.

Staff have been warned there will be a reduction in staff next year.

LEARNING ASSISTANT SUPPORT FOR PUPILS HAS BEEN CUT PROGRESSIVELY FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE SITUATION HAS BECOME UNTENABLE.

Cuts to dedicated learning assistant support for pupils with Exceptional Support Needs mean the shortfall has to be covered by the school's core learning assistant allocation, in order for pupils with MLD, ASD, etc. to access the curriculum, engage in active learning opportunities, and cope at break times. This means that very little learning assistant time remains available to support children with additional support needs, such as dyslexia. Hardly any time for administrative support tasks such as photocopying, either. SMT have done their best to allocate a limited resource fairly, but as this has been cut progressively for the past few years, the situation is becoming untenable.

Requests for support for children with Exceptional Support Needs in 2010-11 are subject to further cuts. We have had to accept more than 10% less than we really need, and we are told, "This is the easy year" - it will get worse, as the Council will have an even smaller budget for this purpose next year.

Inadequate funding for inclusion of pupils with Exceptional Support Needs is affecting those with Additional Support Needs such as Dyslexia: class teacher and support for learning teachers are doing their best to support these pupils but they will not make the progress they could if they had adequate additional support. If we can't get the support we need to

enable them to achieve an adequate level of literacy skills at Primary School, the prospects for High School and work are grim. Inadequate support for 'Exceptional' children will also affect whole classes where the child presents with severe or persistent challenging behaviour - alternatively there is the risk of increased exclusions for such pupils.

TRYING TO IMPLEMENT ACfE IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DO WITH LITTLE OR NO RESOURCES OR TRAINING.

I have been waiting since August 2009 for the carpet in my classroom to be replaced. It was supposed to have been fixed in the school holidays. Since then my class and I have been using another room. This room has no computers for the children to use so they have had no ICT this year. There are no curtains in the room which is south facing and the sun streams through the windows all day. I suffer from headaches because of this.

Half of the children in my class are EAL. I currently get about ninety minutes of support in a week.

Printer ink is scarce in the school also.

CPD courses are always over subscribed and I have bought my own books to study in order to fulfill my CPD requirements. Trying to implement ACfE is almost impossible to do with little or no resources or training.

We have been told that there will be more cuts in funding per capita, year on year, but I am unsure of how much money this will be.

The school building is in need of repair.

We took in 90 new children this year when 4 other schools were closed. We were not a designated school and received no funding. Other schools took in much fewer children but as they were designated schools, they received money from the Council to accommodate these children. This is very unfair. Our school is 49% EAL, many of whom are new to English and not literate in any language.

IN THE END I AM JUST A NUMBER. A NUMBER WHO IS MUCH CHEAPER AND EASIER TO DISPOSE OF.

I am 26 and gained my secondary Mathematics teaching qualification in 2007. After doing my probation, I was offered a full time permanent contract, which commenced in August 2008. Recently, there was a whole school meeting where the staff were told that the school is 4 teachers over. The headteacher then came to tell me I was now surplus to requirements. As a result in August 2010 I am looking at general supply, transfer to another school or the unthinkable - redundancy. This is despite the fact that there are some members of the department nearing retirement and have said if they were offered a package they would take it. I have been overwhelmed by the support from the staff in my department

and across the school. They, like myself, are amazed, saddened and shocked that senior leadership/council leaders are prepared to get rid of 'new blood' who is much more likely to be involved in Curriculum for Excellence than some of the other members of staff. It has left me completely devastated yet I am expected to carry on as if nothing has happened. I have not slept properly since the headteacher informed me of the news. I am continuing to work hard for the sake of my pupils but it has left a bitter taste in my mouth, so much so that I have been looking at jobs in other sectors and getting out of teaching altogether.

I have always been one of the teachers who will get involved outwith school hours - lunchtime clubs, fundraising events, discos etc. Not to enhance my CV or to make me popular but because I enjoy it and have a great rapport with the pupils. But obviously that means nothing and in the end I am just a number. A number who is much cheaper and easier to dispose of.

THE HOME LINK TEACHING SERVICE IS TO BE CUT.

My post as home link teacher serving 3 primary schools is being cut when I retire in the summer. Home Link teachers provide invaluable support to headteachers, class teachers, children and parents as early intervention helps with literacy, numeracy and social and emotional issues that might be impacting on learning. We can work with individual children and families, both in the school and at home and also in class, team teaching to address an individual's difficulties in a holistic way. We also have a valuable input at transition times, from nursery to P1 and, if required, for the more vulnerable children transferring to High School. We run groups for parents which focus on raising awareness of the importance of their role in fostering early communication and listening and talking skills in their children and are trained in delivering parenting groups. We also work with other agencies to support the wider needs of families. Unfortunately, although our education authority has recognised the importance of our role, our home link posts are all part-time and, therefore, we are all spread very thinly over several schools. We are all aware that we cannot meet the needs of some schools with a high ratio of vulnerable children and families because of the constraints of the time available to us. It seems incomprehensible that when it has been identified that early intervention has such an impact on raising attainment, that the home link teaching service is to be cut.

CfE IS SO AIRY-FAIRY AND LITTLE SUBSTANCE OR RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

In terms of CfE as a Dept our school is very good at offering time for us to prepare new units of work etc BUT we have very little to go on from the CfE documents. It's so airy-fairy and little substance or resources available.

CPD courses offered by the region are of little use in terms of subject content - mostly to do with "teaching skills". After 25

years I reckon I can do the teaching bit!!!!!! Always looking to find courses outwith those offered by the Council but can only go on those that are FREE due to budget restraints. As a result I have been on NO CPD courses this session apart from the CfE days organised by the region - yet more consultation.

Last year we managed to retain our probationer but only with "creative accounting" by the Management Team. Now he is going in June and we will still have to provide the same classes/courses but be in real terms 0.6 teachers down. Impact is that the PT is stressed and the rest of the Department are wondering how we are going to manage. I am currently on a 0.6 permanent contract and know that come June I will be asked to increase my time. Probably the week before the new timetable begins. Pressure is on me as I really want my Department to provide the right learning experience for all the pupils and feel I will have to say yes. Because if I don't then we will have to cut courses offered. Part time work is what I want personally but for the good of my Department I will probably have to increase my time and create pressure in my private life.

I often buy resources for the Department out of my own pocket - I don't grudge it but it does seem that this is the slippery slope.

I don't believe that parents, or society as a whole, have any real idea of how difficult and demanding the role of a teacher/school is at present. Plenty glossy brochures but little money to carry out these drastic changes.

NO PERMANENT JOBS ADVERTISED.

Nine years ago when my little boy was a year old I went job-share. The climate was quite different then.

I am now at a stage where I need to work full-time again for financial reasons but there have been no permanent jobs advertised for several years now.

I have been told I can apply with the yearly intake of NQTs, but who in the current climate, given the choice of paying my salary (top of scale) and an NQT's salary, is going to opt for me?

There are not enough jobs going for the NQTs either, which is also a shame.

There are many experienced teachers who for various reasons would at some point like a move. But it is virtually impossible at the moment.

This cannot be healthy.

An element of change is essential for growth and development both of the individual and for the establishment involved.

STAFF MORALE LOW, ANXIETY LEVELS HIGH!

Cut in ICT investment for department with ICT exam. No real direction being provided on CfE - need for additional time to prepare resources, not just one day! Previous CfE time

allocation used for other initiatives. Staff morale low, anxiety levels high!

8-10% cut in departmental budgets threatened despite rise in uptake.

Have been subject teacher down since November 2009 - no replacement will be employed. Classes out to general cover - severe attainment concern, but at least it is budget savings!!!

THE CUTS ARE IMPACTING ON FAMILY LIFE TOO.

The cuts are impacting on family life too. My daughter could not get work after completing her probation and has had to go abroad to work. This meant her fiancé leaving his job to go too. I therefore don't get to see her much - had she got a job here she would still be here. She has had to rent out her home too and the first people who let it wrecked it!!

She won't be back in the foreseeable future.

OUR SCHOOL MUST "SHED" TWO MEMBERS OF STAFF.

So far there have only been rumours but we have been told that our school must 'shed' two members of staff. The budget is to be cut but I don't have any more information on this.

LACK OF BASIC RESOURCES.

In response to your request for information on cuts and how they are impacting on the education of our pupils, the staff at my school have asked me to pass on the following:

- Lack of basic resources - teachers having to account for each resource requested, being asked not to print photographs of children's work, teachers having to buy basic resources e.g. whiteboard pens, pencils, paper, being asked to keep photocopying to a minimum.
- Lack of learning support, early intervention teachers have been phased out, DHTs no longer have time for this as they are stretched to the limit and their management time has been reduced.
- Cover for teachers who have made essential medical appointments seems to be difficult to find!
- Support staff have not been replaced when they have left.
- CPD - Relevant, useful courses non-existent.
- Levels of staffing in supported classes - too much time taken to fill posts - existing staff put under too much pressure.
- No extra allocation of management time for DHTs managing a Nursery and an Infant Department.
- Widening remit of Managers - Pupil Support. They have too many schools to cover due to staffing cuts.
- Funding, courses, support and advice on implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence are sadly lacking.
- Behaviour support has been cut. Advice is given but there is no practical support available.

Thank you for all your work on our behalf.

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING TEACHERS NOT REPLACED

My previous job as a Network Teacher before it was broken up was a terrific job with fantastic training opportunities and I really began to feel that I was gaining the necessary expertise in the field of Additional Support Needs. I and my colleagues were very passionate about our work and worked extremely hard in supporting ASN pupils in our various schools. In supporting the demise of the Network Teacher I don't think that some schools realised that they would actually eventually lose these extra Support Teachers from their schools but simply thought they would then have control of what these teachers did. Now I have heard that several Primary Schools have not replaced their Support for Learning Teachers (ex-Network) when they left the school. Hence my other remarks below.

In one of my present schools several teachers have bought their own scanners and printers out of their own pockets. Any colour printing I need to do at home and in creating new resources for Support for Learning this costs quite a bit.

I think that it is vital to make it clear why Support for Learning Teachers posts must be retained and not enough simply to say that they must. Pupils receiving learning support solely from their class teacher in the future worries me. It seems to me that this is the long-term plan and it is and will be backed up using the term "Inclusion".

THE CUTS ARE IMPACTING ON FAMILY LIFE TOO.

The appointment of a faculty head to the expressive arts dept has resulted in being told I am now surplus to requirements after 12 years of service in this school and will be put on a transfer list.

I have been teaching 30 years in total. This leaves me feeling extremely vulnerable and demoralised. Our department, Art and Design has been reduced from a vibrant 4 full-time plus 2 part-time 6 years ago to now 3 full-time soon to be 2 full-time plus faculty head. So much for creativity at the heart of the Curriculum for Excellence. I despair for education.

CUTS IN SFL STAFF HAVE A KNOCK-ON EFFECT ON THE EDUCATION OF ALL OF THE PUPILS IN THE CLASS.

Cuts in Sfl staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are having a disastrous effect on the education of pupils with identified and well-documented special educational needs. This, obviously, has a knock-on effect on the education of all of the pupils in the class.

Where adequate support cannot be provided, we are told to treat 'disruptions' as disciplinary incidents and, basically 'deal with it'; a far cry from the days when we regarded special educational needs as barriers to learning and circumvented those barriers with the help and advice of our Sfl colleagues.

Major problems started when the laudable policy of Inclusion was introduced. However, pupils requiring a considerable amount of support in specialist settings were moved to mainstream without the promised increase in SfL provision. Since then, the position has deteriorated further and clearly will continue to do so in the current financial climate.

This has had a devastating effect on teacher morale and I can only imagine how hard it must be to be new to the profession and attempting to cope with little experience to fall back on.

Looking back over years of teaching I can only say that pupils today are not getting the learning experience they would have had in the recent past and are not getting the education they deserve.

Staff morale is at rock bottom.

Further cuts to SfL staffing are threatened as staff are not being replaced when they leave.

INSTRUMENTAL SERVICE: NO REPLACEMENT OF ANY STAFF WHO LEAVE THE SERVICE.

Cuts to instrumental service:

£48,000 this year and £125,000 after that in order to make the savings, the Council has proposed to phase out instrumental instruction in all Primary schools.

At present we cannot start any new Primary pupils.

How this cut is to be further implemented has yet to be worked out.

We have all been asked to fill in questionnaires re voluntary severance etc.

INCREASED WORKLOAD, AND LOWER MORALE IN FE COLLEGE.

Top HMIE review for two consecutive years yet a 0% pay award and a round of hidden cuts in fixed-term contracted academic staff, not to mention a round of redundancies among non-academic staff. The impact being increased staff workload through more staff cover, lower morale, agency staff being employed on a "one off" basis.

Is this the way forward for a Curriculum for Excellence?

SUPPLY TEACHERS ARE VERY VULNERABLE.

Very little work available compared with previous years, reason is always given as budget cuts. Nothing to do with children's education.

Suppose the fire brigade refused to turn out because they had no money for petrol for the fire engine.

Also some schools forcing 6 period + Register days and not giving a period off. If supply teacher objects, they get taken off that school's supply list.

No improvement envisaged

EVEN BASIC RESOURCES ARE MISSING FROM EVERY DAY TEACHING.

At the moment I have to buy my own board pens and supply my own paper - don't even ask about a computer or any ICT resources! How on earth we are supposed to be implementing 'A Curriculum for Excellence' when even the basics of resources are missing from every day teaching? The whole education system is depending on teachers dipping into their own pockets in order to supply basic teaching tools.

CHILDREN WILL HAVE NO CHEMISTRY TEACHER FOR SOME TIME.

Just been told today we are to lose 2 teachers, 2 classroom assistants and no maternity leave for two teachers due to leave soon. Our children will have no chemistry teacher for some time, totally unacceptable.

THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER IS BEING ASKED TO DELIVER ALL THESE CHANGES WITH LITTLE TRAINING.

CPD budgets cuts.

CPD is in house - to save money (very repetitive).

No access to specific subject training or TIME to develop the new courses.

No idea about assessment.

Our department (Art) has been squeezed for the last 5 years with crippling budget cuts. Mostly due to the Council and its debts. My colleagues and I are having to supplement the shortcomings with our own money. This scenario is repeated in many schools. There are no fancy extras and we are relying on our pupils to pay for many materials themselves, particularly at Higher and Advanced Higher.

What is the essence of this Curriculum for Excellence? I am only aware of the changes in the structure of the curriculum and the excellence part has been glossed over.

Once again the individual teacher is being asked to deliver all these changes with little training. Goodwill appears to be how the Government is expecting this to run.

PREPARATION FOR CFE IS WELL MEANT BUT FEELS LIKE LIP SERVICE.

The English Department teachers have been told not to use the

staffroom photocopier at all and to use reprographics sparingly. No more pens, pencils and few jotters.

Preparation for CfE is well meant but feels like lip service. What is the evidence that the changes suggested in CfE have real benefits for Secondary pupils? People are disgruntled and confused. There is anxiety about what CfE actually is, about implementing it effectively, about having time and resources to prepare for it and still help students to achieve good grades.

I am also confused about the funding for the replacement school which is about to be built, when we have no pencils and pens and restricted photocopying.

PROBATIONER IN MODERN STUDIES ASKED TO TEACHER STANDARD GRADE GEOGRAPHY WITH NO QUALIFICATION/TRAINING IN THE SUBJECT.

We have seen a probationer in another subject (MS) having to teach S3 Standard Grade (Geography) with no qualification/training in the subject. We are told this is acceptable by the GTC as long as the teacher agreed to it, although it didn't count towards their registration. This happened last session and the impact on pupils' understanding is clear. This may happen again due to cuts in staffing to try and keep costs down.

LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHERS ARE IN SHORT DEMAND, LEARNING ASSISTANTS ARE BEING PAID OFF.

CfE letter going to parents - worried that the letter was issued too early. ICT-GLOW really important - how will we implement that when we have one shared computer suite amongst the whole school....I am all for new learning tools, but I would not like it to have a big input in lesson - i.e. sit H/AH students in front to do their own learning - cut staffing - any teacher could babysit. Statement CfE hopes to raise standard - how by kids getting to do knitting, sewing in personalised learning. i.e. letting them choose from knitting, sewing, dancing, should that not be at lunchtime or after school?

CFE - starting for S1 in August, Courses not fully developed or resourced.

Teachers working with other teachers - does this mean the reduction in specialised teachers. lose some departments and build up others?

CfE - want pupils to get involved in their own learning, fair enough statement, but what about pupils who do not have the ability to do that? Learning support teachers are in short demand, learning assistants are being paid off.

All for change - but we are not ready to start in August 2010....

MUSIC INSTRUCTORS ARE BEING PHASED OUT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

A few weeks ago Music Instructors were invited to attend a meeting with the Director of Education. At this meeting it was stated that a massive saving had to be made on our budget over two years. We are also being phased out of the Primary School sector. In a small authority this is the beginning of the end for instrumental instruction. What about the SQA exams, standards of playing in High Schools (while we are still there), & Curriculum for Excellence? - I don't think so!!

REMITTS OF INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTORS MAY CHANGE.

No confirmed cuts for 2011 but no guarantee thereafter.

Local EIS Association says that there may be no cuts but our remits as instructors may change drastically as the Authority tries to cut 3% in 2011 and again 3% in 2012.

POSSIBLE LOSS OF INSTRUMENTAL STAFF.

Threatened cuts: Possible loss of Instrumental staff.
Introduction of Tuition fees!
Work load increase due to staff shortage!

I have been an Instrumental Music Teacher now for some 17 years and over this time I have supplied most of my own material! However, Instrumental Music is an "important" part of young people's Education and therefore should not be seen as an easy option to save money!

We must give a varied and comprehensive input of all Subjects! (That's what Education means.)