

Education Committee, 5 February 2019

Report of the Meeting of the Curriculum and Assessment Board

St Paul's High School, Glasgow

Friday 28th January, 10.00am-1.00pm

Attendees

Co-Chairs: Gayle Gorman, Chief Inspector of Education and Fiona Robertson, Scottish Government Director of Learning

A Bradley attended on behalf of the EIS. In attendance, also, were representatives of the following: ADES, AHDS, SSTA, NASUWT, College Development Network, Colleges Scotland, Community Learning and Development Manager Group, COSLA, Early Years Scotland, Education Scotland, Scottish Council of Independent Schools, Scottish Government, SQA, SDS, Universities Scotland. Professor Louise Hayward of the University of Glasgow and two young people from the hosting school were also in attendance.

2019 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

The meeting was presented with a paper providing an overview of the recently published NIF Improvement Plan and asked to identify key curriculum and assessment priorities.

EIS echoed previous calls from the EIS for a national re-visiting of the Scottish approach to assessment and its fundamental purpose, in light of the recent over-emphasis, echoed in the paper presented, on the importance of SNSAs.

EIS suggested that there was prematurity to the claims being made in the paper that the evidence gathered thus far 'confirms' that the use of SNSAs going forward 'will support consistency in assessment' within the BGE, given that the Independent Review of the SNSAs is only just commencing.

EIS also highlighted the contrary evidence gathered from our members to the statement in the paper that the data provided by SNSAs is being used to 'plan effective next steps in learning'.

With the growing demand for 'big data' to serve political and accountability agendas, EIS cautioned again on the risk of this leading and dominating conversations about assessment rather than the data that teachers gather richly and daily from observations, interaction and engagement with children and

young people, in relation both to the process and the products of their learning- the purpose of this assessment data being genuinely to support learning.

There was support among a number of the attendees for this position, including from Louise Hayward.

Louise sought to focus the discussion on young people's experiences of assessment. The young people had relatively little to say on this, commenting on prelims and study leave: prelims pre-Christmas had been timed too early, they said, making the assessment unfair; and study leave, they thought, had meant that they were missing out on their education.

When prompted to talk about their experience of assessment day-to-day and the feedback that they were given from their teachers, the focus of their answer was on a system of praise and rewards in S1-S3 initially, though they did agree that they were given feedback from their teachers in class ongoingly.

EIS also highlighted the role of teachers when using effective formative assessment in teaching young people how to evaluate their own progress and that of their peers, and to identify next steps, formative assessment as an approach, equipping learners with the skills of metacognition.

Other key points of discussion were in relation to school leadership and school improvement and how the empowerment agenda is likely to impact on these elements.

On teacher professionalism, SSTA highlighted issues around teachers' ability to access professional learning provided by the SQA. SQA responded, indicating their endeavour to provide PL in an increasingly diverse range of ways: face to face during the school week, webinars, videos accessible on the website, exemplars and commentaries, in addition to responding to bespoke requests from local authorities for visits of webinars.

Developing the Young Workforce

A paper providing a summary of DYW progress to date and the recommendations from the recent Education and Skills Committee Inquiry was provided. Areas of focus in the next five years will be:

- Ensuring that the messages for the Careers Education Standard and Work Placement Standard are reaching the classroom
- Expanding the college offer and the uptake of Foundation apprenticeships
- Providing more support to disabled young people in the context of DYW
- Strengthening school/employer partnerships in all secondary schools.

Issues discussed included:

- The continuing lack of parity for vocational qualifications and the need to promote awareness of the value and SCQF equivalence of qualifications

- The unhelpful nomenclature of 'vocational' and 'academic' learning and qualifications
- The need to offer work-based qualifications within senior phase options
- Future funding of Foundation Apprenticeships post- Brexit
- The potential of RICs to support DYW and to work with colleges going forward
- The need to embed careers education from 3-18.

STEM Education and Training Strategy

The meeting was asked to comment on a paper providing an outline of the draft report on the first year of implementation of the STEM Strategy. EIS echoed comments made in our submission to the Scottish Government consultation on the STEM Strategy that the purpose of education, including STEM education, is not solely or even primarily for the purposes of employability. EIS suggested that the report should reflect the wider purposes of STEM education as reflected in the aims and values of CfE.

EIS highlighted the importance of the work being done as outlined in the report around encouraging girls into STEM though suggested that this should be in the wider context of addressing sex stereotypes more generally, which result in gender segregation of subject choice and resultant career pathways, and in the relative under-valuing of the subjects studied predominantly by girls and the career pathways followed, predominantly by women.

Early Years Scotland were in agreement, citing the current campaign to promote childcare as a career option for males; and Louise Hayward who agreed that there should be much stronger reference to CfE within the work related to the STEM Strategy.

ADES cautioned around competing curricular priorities and stresses on teacher time as schools seek to take on board the further development of STEM; and stressed the need for greater focus on Maths and Numeracy.

CAB Workplan 2019

Agenda items for the next two meetings will be:

- PL in relation to curriculum and assessment
- Curriculum narrative
- Review of P1 SNSAs
- ELC expansion
- Curriculum design 3-18