

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
11 February 2015

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	ECAS 17/15

Delivery of the Broad General Education

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform members about the support provided by the Authority to take forward the Broad General Education in Highland Schools. The report supports a presentation that will be made at the Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1 Curriculum for Excellence set out to achieve a transformation in Education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3-18.
- 1.2 The Curriculum was divided into the Broad General Education (BGE) from Early Years to the end of S3, and into the senior phase from S4 and above.
- 1.3 The BGE is divided into five levels The experiences and outcomes are grouped into five levels:
 - early (in which most children will undertake learning to the end of P1);
 - first (in which most children will undertake learning by the end of P4);
 - second (in which most children will undertake learning by the end of P7);
 - third (in which most young people will undertake learning during S1 – S3)
 - fourth (in which most young people will have undertaken learning by the end of S3).
- 1.4 In the 2014 inspection advice note, Education Scotland published increased expectations for the curriculum.
- 1.5 The Quality Improvement Team (QIT) and Curriculum Development Officers have provided guidance and support for schools to meet the increased expectations. This paper refers to the support in place for the Broad General Education and identified next steps.

2. Curriculum rationales

- 2.1 The curriculum is now defined as the totality of all that is planned for children and young people and encompasses ethos and life of the school as a community, curriculum areas and subjects, inter-disciplinary learning and opportunities for personal achievement.
- 2.2 Schools have been asked to articulate their vision for their curriculum taking into account the four contexts for learning detailed above. Guidance has been produced and as a result many schools have revisited the rationale behind the delivery of their curriculum and shared this with the wider school community. Good examples have been shared across schools by the Quality Improvement Team.

- 2.3 Following feedback from inspections, work is being undertaken in Special Schools to look at the curriculum for pupils with severe and complex needs. Highland Council is jointly hosting a conversation day for Authorities across the North of Scotland to look at the curriculum for pupils with severe and complex needs and to consider the implications of the DORAN report.

3. Progression through curricular areas in the Broad General Education

- 3.1 It is important that pupils experience a curriculum that is both coherent and progressive. To support this, the QIT and development officers have led working parties to produce progression frameworks to ensure that each curricular area has appropriate progression and challenge through the BGE. By Easter 2015 we hope to have completed all eight curricular areas.
- 3.2 Unusually, but commendably, the working groups were formed from cross-sector practitioners – i.e. primary and secondary. In this way the hope is to make as seamless a transition as possible from primary to secondary in the BGE. The frameworks have been very well received by schools in Highland and wider.
- 3.3 A Highland wide site has been created on GLOW and a tile created for each curricular area. In this way we have created a one-stop shop for Highland resources that will make it easily accessible for users. Whilst GLOW is a closed community available only within Highland, some of the work produced is now hosted on a blog that is openly available. The Highland Literacy Blog currently has over 7,000 hits a month and is followed by more than 400 teachers in Highland. The hope is to use this approach for other areas of our work, starting with support for the revised Learning and Teaching Policy.
- 3.4 Work continues to take place on Government initiatives such as two hours (or two periods) of PE and the introduction of 1+2 languages.

4. Inter-disciplinary learning

- 4.1 In order for the curriculum not to become overcrowded it is essential that schools make meaningful links across learning for pupils. In the primary this involves grouping subjects together so that skills and knowledge can be transferred. This may be, for example, using the science Experiences and Outcomes covered in the water cycle with a geography topic on the weather, or linking literacy outcomes to a drama production. In secondary schools there are many examples of departments working together to deliver high quality learning experiences for pupils.

5. Assessment and Tracking through the Broad General Education

- 5.1 Across schools in Scotland tracking and monitoring of pupil progress through the BGE has been an area for development, and this continues to be developed in Highland.
- 5.2 The report to committee in May 2013 identified the management information system Phoenix e¹ as the main vehicle for tracking pupil progress. This is no longer available, and the replacement system SEEMIS does not currently have a similar module for tracking through the BGE. Accordingly, an interim solution has had to be found. For secondary schools, the senior phase tracking module has been adapted, and a spread sheet has been produced for primary schools. This is less than ideal, but allows schools to continue the important work of tracking pupil progress while a

longer term solution is considered.

- 5.3 A recent series of eight head teacher seminars provided advice on tracking and monitoring through the BGE. The emphasis was very much on the impact on learners' achievements and not on an extra layer of bureaucracy. We are still very much in the early phase of taking this forward, but the aim is to make a seamless link to the process of on-going profiling and the progression frameworks.

6. Implications

- 6.1 **Equalities:** there is a need to ensure that a highly effective curriculum is available to all young people across Highland and prepares our young people to be responsible citizens of the future.
- 6.2 **Risk:** there are risk implications regarding the interim arrangements for tracking, but these will support ongoing activity while new solutions are developed.
- 6.3 There are no specific **resources, legal, climate change/carbon clever, rural or Gaelic** implications associated with this report.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Members are invited to note and comment on issues raised by the report and presentation.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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Author: Ruth Binks Quality Improvement Manager