

## **PAPER FOR MANAGEMENT BOARD – SKILLS FOR LEARNING, SKILLS FOR LIFE AND SKILLS FOR WORK – PROGRESS UPDATE**

This paper provides an update for the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board as to the work that is in progress on developing a publication that describes how skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work will be delivered through Curriculum for Excellence.

### **BACKGROUND**

We are preparing guidance on the delivery of skills within Curriculum for Excellence. We have been looking at the delivery of skills within the curriculum for a number of reasons:

- Importance of equipping young people with high levels of literacy, numeracy, thinking, employability and enterprising skills and to support the development of their health and well-being;
- To provide young people with opportunities to develop transferrable skills to use as a base and preparation for further study or work;
- To meet the commitment in *Building the Curriculum 3 – A framework for learning and teaching* that every child and young person is entitled to skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy, health and well-being and that these skills will be embedded across all curriculum areas; and
- To deliver the commitment within *Skills for Scotland – A Lifelong Skills Strategy* to “ensure that Curriculum for Excellence provides vocational learning and the employability skills needed for the world of work and is the foundation for skills development throughout life”.

In May the then Management Board considered a short paper on the delivery of skills within Curriculum for Excellence. This paper had been developed in discussion with a short-life thinking group, engagement with partners and following policy discussions with Ministers. The Board endorsed the purpose, vision, key themes and messages on skills and agreed that this should be taken forward through the preparation of a Building the Curriculum guidance paper. Cabinet Secretary subsequently endorsed this approach and specifically a move away from the language of vocational learning towards a focus on skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

### **VISION**

Curriculum for Excellence will support all children and young people in developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work through their experience of all areas of the curriculum. In addition, there will continue to be specific provision such as Skills for Work qualifications which place learning into a more practical context.

### **WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?**

There are three main elements to this work:

- Undertaking a thematic review of the outcomes and experiences to ensure that they do provide opportunities for all children and young people to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work with skills embedded across all curriculum areas;
- Developing guidance for all those involved in planning and delivering the curriculum in whatever setting to ensure that there are opportunities for skills development for all young people; and

- Providing examples of good practice in the delivery of skills in a range of settings including opportunities for experiential learning.

### **Thematic Review**

Management Board agreed in June that there was a need to undertake a short-term light-touch review of the experiences and outcomes to ensure that, amongst other principles, they provided opportunities for skills development in all curriculum areas.

This work is being taken forward by the Curriculum Governing Group who met to consider and agree the scope of the thematic reviews on 18 November. In addition to the professional advisers a small group has been identified to support this work including representatives from HMIE, the College sector, voluntary sector and local authorities.

### **Curriculum Guidance**

In order to support the delivery of skills across the curriculum we are committed to developing curriculum guidance in the form of a Building the Curriculum paper on skills.

Following the Management Board meeting in May we have engaged with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders to discuss the place of skills within Curriculum for Excellence; linkages with other work-streams such as assessment, qualifications, the early years strategy and More Choices, More Chances; and to test out our thinking on key themes and messages. These meetings have confirmed widespread support, notably amongst employer organisations, for a focus on skills within the Curriculum for Excellence programme and an endorsement of the vision and key themes. A number of additional points, as well as some re-focusing of the key message, has been identified through these meetings and we are in the process of refining the broad outline of the paper for further consultation and the preparation of a first full draft before Christmas.

In addition we commissioned and in June published a literature review of attitudes to vocational learning and have been working closely with colleagues in the Determined to Succeed Policy Team in Lifelong Learning on a review of work experience which is closely linked to the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work agenda.

### **Good Practice**

We have commissioned the Scottish Centre for Research in Education to identify, review and write up some good practice examples of the delivery of practical or applied learning which could be used to support the Building the Curriculum document. These examples reflect the importance of delivering experiential learning for all, as part of the curriculum not as a separate experience perceived to be of lower value. This report is currently being finalised.

In addition we are seeking to identify other examples of good practice, across a range of partner organisations.

### **What happens next**

We will be continuing to engage with stakeholders to test out and confirm our policy thinking on skills. We are in the process of updating the report outline agreed by the previous Management Board, to reflect the comments and views of stakeholders. This revised outline and key issues will be circulated for further discussion and comment with a view to preparing and circulating a first full draft paper.

We will also be continuing to:

- Feed into and reflect emerging themes from other Curriculum for Excellence work strands;
- Take forward the thematic review of experiences and outcomes to confirm that it provides opportunities for the development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work; and
- Identify and support the disseminate good practice.

## **KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED**

We have identified a number of key issues through discussion with stakeholders including:

- The shift towards focusing on the skills that young people need and away from the delivery route (vocational or academic) through which these skills are delivered. There has been strong support from all stakeholders for the focus on skills;
- Embedding the work on skills clearly within the Curriculum for Excellence framework and the four capacities. Making it clear that the skills are important stepping stones in the development of the capacities rather than a parallel framework;
- The balance between specification – providing details on what skills come under the heading of *skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*, and the appropriate level of skill development – and support. A number of commercial organisation have developed very detailed skills development and assessment programmes. However, we are keen to avoid a bureaucratic tick box or prescriptive approach to skills development and rather to focus on providing support for professional development and assessment of skills through guidance and exemplification. Engagement with stakeholders suggests a strong desire for support rather than prescription;
- Reflecting the fact that to a large extent those delivering learning will already be supporting and developing the delivery of skills across the Curriculum. However, young people may not recognise those opportunities and therefore the fact that their education has equipped them with transferrable skills as well as knowledge and how we make that process more explicit, delivering an increased focus on skills whilst not becoming prescriptive;
- Reflecting the importance of practical or applied learning whilst also making it clear that this is about delivering skills across all curriculum areas;
- The importance of establishing and maintaining a common language around skills that is understood by practitioners, employers, parents and young people; and
- Ensuring that the focus on skills has credibility with employers, practitioners, parents and young people.

## **MANAGEMENT BOARD ACTION**

Management Board is invited to:

- Note progress on the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work work stream; and in particular
- The work on developing curriculum guidance on the delivery of skills within Curriculum for Excellence.

**Scottish Government  
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