

## Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Minutes of the sixty-sixth meeting of Council held on Thursday 14 December at 13.30 hours in the Boardroom, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, CCEA, Clarendon Road, Belfast.

### Present

Dr A Lennon (Chairman)	Mrs D Black
Ms M Watson	Mr J Clarke
Professor P Roebuck	Mrs H McClenaghan
Ms M Crilly	Dr I McMorris
Mr M Lowe	Mr M Bowen
Mr D Thompson	Ms P O'Farrell
Mr D McKee	Mr J Collins
Dr M Brown	

Mr D Woods, DE Assessor

Mr G Boyd, Chief Executive  
Mr N Anderson, Director of Examinations Operations  
Mr R Hanna, Business Manager, Chief Executive's Office  
Dr C Sproule, Business Manager, Curriculum & Assessment  
Mr R McCune, Business Manager, Accreditation  
Mr M Fegan, Business Manager, Finance  
Ms AM Duffy, Business Manager, Examinations  
Mrs L Lynch, Principal Officer, Curriculum & Assessment

Miss N Kennedy, Manager, Council Secretariat

### Introduction

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Mr David McKee for deputising for him during his absence.

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Wilkinson; Ms C McKinney; Mr N Downing and Mrs M Cree.

#### 2 Chairman's business

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Mr Gavin Boyd on his recent appointment as Chief Executive Designate of the ESA and wished him well in the challenges that lay ahead.

The Chairman thanked Dr McMorris and Mr Brown for attending the SCORE concert and urged members to make every effort to attend, what would be CCEA's last concert in 2007. Mr Brown suggested charging a nominal fee in place of free tickets to encourage attendance. It was agreed that this would be considered.

The Chairman informed members that the item on Management Structures would be dealt with at the end of the meeting.

The following papers were tabled:

- Early Years Background Paper
- Regulation, Qualification and Lifelong Learning Committee Minutes - 28 November
- Business Committee Minutes – 21 November.

The following officers attended during the course of the meeting :

- Mr Mark Fegan for Item 4;
- Mr Richard Hanna and Ms Anne Marie Duffy from Item 5; and
- Dr Charlie Sproule and Mrs Lyn Lynch from Item 6.

#### *Education Committee : Friday 15 December 2006*

The Chairman reported that he and the Chief Executive had been asked to speak to the Education Committee at Stormont on Friday 15 December regarding Pupil Profile. Mr Richard Hanna and Dr Charlie Sproule would also be in attendance.

The Chief Executive clarified that CCEA would not raise anything that had not been discussed by the C&A Committee and assured members that he would report on the purpose of the Pupil Profile and what it would not be used for.

The Chairman stated that CCEA had already given advice on the Pupil Profile and that position had not changed. He confirmed that selection would not be discussion and CCEA would remain within its remit in any discussions with the Education Committee.

#### *Celebrating Excellence Events*

The Chairman reminded members that 2 GCE Celebrating Excellence Events would take place on Thursday 21 December 2006 and encouraged members to attend if available.

#### *NCCA/CCEA Joint Conference*

Members were advised that the Joint NCCA/CCEA Conference due to take place on 14-16 February 2007 had been postponed until later in the year. Miss Kennedy would issue new dates as soon as they were agreed.

#### *EFQM Feedback*

Mr Anderson reported that CCEA's 2006 submission for the UK Quality Award had scored 625 points. This was an increase of 90 points on the 535 scored in 2005. The Chief Executive said this score was a good reflection on the organisation and that CCEA would enter for the 2007 Award.

The 2006 UK Quality Award was won by St Anne's Primary School in Londonderry. CCEA won the award for Customer Service.

### **3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 18 October 2006**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 October 2006 were agreed as a true and accurate record and a copy was signed by the Chairman.

#### *Action points*

The Chief Executive updated members on the following :

- Corporate Plan – changes have been incorporated and plan will be placed on website by 31 December 2006.
- ALTA Business Case – has been sent to the Department of Education. Mr Woods confirmed that discussions were taking place with ALTA.

- Pupil Profile – discussions continue with C2K and DE regarding training and capacity issues.
- Learning for Life and Work – work continues on policy development in this area.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Fegan, Ms Duffy and Mr McCune to the meeting.

#### 4 Finance and Planning

##### ***Business Committee report : 21 November 2006***

The Chairman drew members' attention to the tabled minutes and reported on:

- Capital – a draft capital requirements plan was discussed by the committee to ensure those listed were prioritised and put forward in a formal proposal.
- Developments in Examinations – a significant amount of work continues in education/assessment research and development; the use of technology in assessment and participation in national initiatives.

Edexcel have been proactive in embracing technology to provide enhanced services to candidates and centres. The Chief Executive said it was important that CCEA meet this standard of service going forward and to do this a significant amount of funding is required.

Members said it was important to ensure that :

- Technology does not drive the shape of examinations;
- Examinations are designed to ensure highly structured responses – and that professional markers with subject expertise continue to be used;
- Technology provides fit for purpose examinations and assessment.

Mr McKee sought clarification on whether professional markers with subject expertise would be retained for marking examinations in future. Mr Anderson confirmed that it was intended to maintain teaching expertise in marking through the use of technology and no consideration had been given to off-shore marking.

The Chairman asked that any changes in arrangements for marking examinations be brought forward to Council at the earliest opportunity.

- Facilities Management – the committee asked for an assessment of accommodation to ensure all organisational requirements are met.
- RPA Vacancy Control – CCEA has now implemented vacancy control and in order to protect employment the workforce has to stay static. New appointees will be appointed on a fixed term contract until 31 March 2008 and any promotions will only be effective until this date.

##### ***Finance report end October 2006***

***C/66/1***

##### *Income*

Mr Fegan reported a slight shortfall of £200K in examinations income due to policy changes made to charges to schools. This has been reported to DE who will offset this against other activities. Account of the changes have been taken on board for the 2007/08 forecasts.

##### *Baseline*

Issues arising in October were :

- An overspend in Education Policy due to a coding problem. These areas were brought back into line during November.
- A small overspend in Assessment and Skills as a result of NFER charges in relation to Transfer Test being higher than budgeted.
- Savings of £136K in Examinations as a result of lower markers fees.
- Examinations & Assessment Administration overspent due to a rise of 6% on invigilation fees and expenses. These have been offset against the savings identified in the Examinations Unit.
- Overspend of £90K in the Operations Support Unit. This is a phasing issue and will be brought into line by year end.

#### *Projects*

A saving of £1.7M within the Pupil Profile was identified due to changes made to the scope of the project in areas of training and procurement. This funding has been returned to DE for reallocation within the system.

The Chairman sought clarification on the savings. The Chief Executive confirmed that the original budget allocation included training and procurement which was now being carried out by C2K.

#### *Capital*

Capital spend continues to be monitored tightly. DE had officially confirmed that in-year bids have been awarded for:

- £120K to upgrade the AS400 system;
- £25K for access controls and health and safety for work required following a Fire Authority inspection; and
- £100K for ICT related improvements.

The Chairman asked that any critical capital requirements be identified and reported to the Committee and Council as soon as possible.

## **5 Regulation & Qualifications**

### ***Regulation, Qualifications and Lifelong Learning Committee report: minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2006***

Professor Roebuck, Chairman of the Committee, reported on the following:

- *Self assessment report*: progress against the improvement action plan arising from the assessment report was reviewed.
- *Reducing the monitoring burden on centres': interim report* – members' discussed and commented on draft recommendations. Final recommendations would be presented at a future meeting of the committee before going to Council.

- *Quality assurance arrangements for Progress File*: the remit and membership of the group was agreed by the committee.
- *Proposed arrangements for e-regulation*: the proposals on procedures drawn up by Regulatory Authorities were discussed prior to consultation with stakeholders in early 2007.
- *Sector Qualifications strategies*: the committee received an overview of the nature and scope of the strategies. Further information would be provided at the next meeting.
- *Specifications developments*: arrangements have been put in place for the Committee to review the new GCE specifications for first teaching in 2008. Members were assured that the timetable was on target and most of the work would take place during January and February 2007.
- *GCSE Science provision*: procedures for reviewing the science specifications were agreed.

It was confirmed that the specifications would be more relevant to the environment and would include social aspects. This would also meet the needs of the Northern Ireland market.

The Chairman asked that the Leitch report be discussed by this committee at its next meeting before coming forward to Council in March 2007.

Mr Thompson queried the value of having a separate progress file (new Record of Achievement) and asked if consideration had been given to integrating this with the Pupil Profile Summative Report in order to provide a valuable record of achievement/progress for schools and prospective employers. Ms Watson, Chair of Curriculum & Assessment, confirmed that work is underway and draft proposals would come forward to the committee for discussion.

The Chief Executive said this was work in progress and would require full discussion at the Curriculum & Assessment Committee before full proposals would come before Council. He confirmed that the progress file would be owned by the pupil but would be intrinsically linked to the pupil profile.

The Chairman asked that this be trialled and tested to ensure it is of benefit and fit for purpose.

### ***Update on Review of Specifications at GCE***

***C/66/2***

Ms Duffy reported that all 21 draft specifications had been received on time and were under scrutiny to ensure criteria was met. She confirmed that :

- Training for Chairs of sub-groups has taken place;
- All advisory teams have met and quality assurance completed;
- Supplementary resources including microsites are being developed for each subject to ensure adequate support packages are provided for teachers; and
- GCSE revision programme has started.

The Chairman sought an assurance that the programme was on target. Ms Duffy confirmed that this was the case. Specifications content had been refreshed to ensure more relevance, employability and stretch and challenge embedded. Technology would be

embedded throughout GCSE specifications where possible. Professor Roebuck said that subjects had been developed to reflect the changes in the new curriculum.

Ms Crilly commended the management of the project and sought clarification on whether mock papers would be developed. Ms Duffy confirmed that exemplar papers and mark schemes would accompany each specification. Live scripts would be used to exemplify what marks could be achieved.

Mr McKee asked if any thought had been given for providing a student guide to accompany the specifications. Ms Duffy confirmed that this was being considered.

Mr Thompson sought clarification on the implications for GCSE specifications given the decision to scrap some coursework. Mr McCune assured members that coursework had only been scraped in Mathematics because it was not relevant, but that coursework would be more rigorous and conducted in controlled conditions. This was being progressed with QCA.

Ms Crilly sought an assurance that the specifications would be robust enough to compete with the International Baccalaureate. The Chief Executive said that there was not a lot of enthusiasm in Northern Ireland to go down this route and it would be a major decision for post-primary schools to do so. He confirmed that a lot of work had gone into ensuring that the new specifications were exciting, relevant and attractive to centres.

### **GCE Changes**

**C/66/3**

Mr McCune reported that Ministers have agreed that revisions to A levels should enhance 6<sup>th</sup> form students experiences and better prepare them for third level study. They have also agreed to A\* at GCE. This will introduce and reward stretch and challenge for the most able students.

Mr Woods clarified that the A grade would not be recalibrated but sub-divided statistically into an upper tier which would be the A\*. Discussions on the dividing line and rules for awarding the A\* would be progressed with the Awarding Bodies, QCA and DELLS.

The Chairman said he was content that CCEA had had a significant input into these discussions and that additional points for A\* would be a matter for UCAS.

Members noted the information provided.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Hanna, Dr Sproule and Mrs Lynch to the meeting.

## **6 Curriculum & Assessment**

### ***Curriculum & Assessment Committee report : meeting held on 6 December 2006***

Ms Watson, Chair of the Committee, reported on the following:

*Early Years Enriched Curriculum Project – Year 5 report:* were on Council agenda for discussion.

Committee members discussed the reports in detail and agreed unanimously that the reports were poorly presented in terms of understanding and analysis and asked that they be sent back to QUB for redrafting to ensure they were more accessible for various audiences.

*Curriculum Implementation:* Dr Sproule has replaced Ms Gallagher as co-chair of PMB with Paddy Mackey. The work of PMB has moved from planning to implementation and its membership widened to include principals and union representatives.

The 'Implementation Box' of resources and materials prepared to support the revised curriculum will be distributed to all Primary Schools during February 2007.

*Pupil Profile :* on Council agenda for discussion.

The Committee received a report on the BDO evaluation and outcomes of the retrial – manageability and making this happen in schools were issues for debate. The InCAS assessment and principles behind the diagnostic assessment were also discussed.

Members of the committee continued to express concern regarding the hardware and software and asked that DE, although treating this as a top priority, continue to address these issues.

### ***Delivering the Pupil Profile***

**C/66/4**

Mr Hanna reported on the following pupil profile developments:

*InCAS Retrial:* the retrial was conducted to improve the manageability, reliability and validity of the tool and also to increase teacher confidence. The outcomes of the evaluation showed that:

- Teachers were more positive about reliability/comparability issues;
- Manageability – number of machines and length of time taken for class to do the test;
- Developed Ability - teachers found it difficult to understand the concept; and
- Training and support.

The Chairman sought clarification on 'developed ability'. The Chief Executive said Peter Timms had developed this concept. We have asked him to provide a definition which can be easily understood and distributed throughout the system.

Dr McMorris sought clarification on how this would be shown to parents. Mr Hanna drew attention to the Exemplar Summary of InCAS Assessment Outcomes and explained that the graphs would be superimposed on each other and the developed ability would be superimposed on top of this again.

Mr Clarke asked how teachers would benefit from this information. It was confirmed that the information produced by the child would assist the teacher in reflecting their needs at that time.

Mrs McClenaghan welcomed the information and asked what way it would be communicated to parents. It was confirmed that teachers would share the diagnostic information with parents and the parent/teacher meeting in the autumn term.

The Chairman asked that the information be trialled with parents to ensure it is easily understood, accessible and based on the informed discussion between teachers and parents. Mr Hanna agreed that this would be the case.

*Formats :* The formats provided in the papers for primary Pupil Profile; Summative Profile and the PMLD/SLD Pupil Profile reports had been agreed by the Pupil Profile Management Board.

### *Further developments*

Mr Hanna reported that:

- InCAS maths: C2K are currently testing the InCAS maths tool. Trials will begin in February 2007.
- Planning was underway to provide a comprehensive training and support programme for teachers on the use of the InCAS tool and interpretation of the assessment data.
- Work continued with DE and C2K on all aspects of hardware and software provision, including Lot 6 refresh.

Members asked that the following points be taken into consideration:

- Information provided on the graphs to be made more user friendly;
- Issues around manageability continue to be addressed;
- DE to be made aware of the concerns regarding hardware and software; and
- The need to ensure that all schools have the Lot 6 refresh to enable them to use the report writer.

The Chief Executive asked Mr Hanna to progress the issues raised.

### ***Draft Early Years Enriched Curriculum Project Report (Year 5)***

***C/66/5***

Dr Sproule drew members' attention to the substantive papers. He informed members that the reports had been discussed in detail at the Curriculum & Assessment Committee on 6 December.

As a result of this a brief summary paper was tabled. Dr Sproule reported that:

- Year 5 is the first year that KS2 Enriched Curriculum (EC) pupils have been involved;
- 24 schools involved (18 mainstream schools from contrasting areas and 6 original Shankill schools);
- Over 1650 pupils now involved in this large and representative sample.

### *Issues emerging for policy and practice*

- The interpretation of 'developmentally appropriate' practice.
- A consistent approach is required on EC pedagogy – should it become part of the whole school culture?
- Teachers require sufficient time, good INSET/support and need to be able to raise concerns to ensure they provide better EC teaching.

### *General*

- There are 27 other intervention programmes listed in the report
- Evidence related to pupil attitudes and dispositions is limited; and
- There is no substantial classroom observation evidence.

Mrs Lynch reminded members that QUB were conducting this longitudinal study over a long period of time, building on best practice already apparent in pre-school. She reported that a Steering Group had been set up to produce a literacy framework.

The concerns of and issues raised by the Curriculum and Assessment committee were noted. Following discussion, members asked for the following to be addressed:



- the lack of parental involvement in certain parts of the province;
- guidance to be produced on the strategies available when children are ready to read, write and spell;
- consideration be given to using the pupil profile to give a better information base;
- the role of the classroom assistant and the need for further representations to be made to DE for adequate funding;
- how pupil behaviours can be influenced, controlled and managed to create a positive impact on learning.

The Chief Executive said that all of the information had been shared with parents and schools. We have sent the report back to have it rewritten to ensure accessibility for a wide range of audiences. He confirmed that DE would incorporate the information provided into a new literacy strategy for Northern Ireland.

The Chairman welcomed the positive attitudes, engagement and self-esteem in the EC, but stressed the need for multiple interventions to assist. He asked that the EC be monitored closely and a progress report be provided to Council at a future meeting.

Dr Sproule said that the report may be understating the progress made by young children through the EC and agreed to discuss this further with QUB. A redrafted report would go back to Curriculum & Assessment before coming forward to Council in 2007.

The Chairman thanked members for their input.

## **7 Any Other Business**

None identified.

## **8 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14 February 2007. Following this meeting it was agreed to postpone this meeting to Wednesday 28 March 2007 at 1000 hours.