

Engagement Day for Teachers - Islay

Islay High School

Thursday 17 August 2006



Planning for the roll out days for A Curriculum for Excellence in Argyll and Bute began early in 2006. The intention was to engage all staff in a collaborative enquiry into the values, principles and purposes of A Curriculum for Excellence. The logistics of this were considerable considering that all areas of Argyll and Bute would be involved. The Quality Improvement Team would have to travel by land, sea and air to facilitate the programme and sometimes in two venues in the one day. It soon became apparent that the team needed reinforcements so some willing staff were invited to become involved as facilitators.

Each venue was the local secondary school who were very supportive as the team swooped in and took over the hall/dining room and set up for the day. The room was set up with tables at which sat ten staff from across the sectors and was facilitated by a member of the team, frequently involving staff from other schools who had completed the engagement day.

The tantalizing smell of cooking bacon hung in the air as bacon rolls were served and the craic with colleagues enjoyed. Curiosity about the meaning of the day was soon satisfied when the event led off with the “big picture” for the “Curriculum for Excellence Programme in Argyll and Bute” presented by either Ronnie Gould Head of Service Secondary Education or Carol Walker Head of Service Primary and Early years Education.

The first sessions were devoted to exploring current practice around the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence and identifying the considerable good examples currently being undertaken in schools.

The following was identified as current good practice taking place in the schools present which contributed to the four capacities

Responsible Citizens

- ◆ Mutual Respect - Pupils, Teacher, Parents - Relationships
- ◆ Take Ownership - Learning, Healthy living – Making right decisions
- ◆ Recognising others needs- Fund raising, Peer influence, Community Cultures
- ◆ Recycling
- ◆ School Grounds
- ◆ Committees with in Community
- ◆ Student Forum
- ◆ Learning in the Outdoors
- ◆ Participation in Council Reviews
- ◆ ICT projects
- ◆ Emotional and Behavioural Support
- ◆ Steps to Excellence Project
- ◆ Assemblies
- ◆ Positions of Responsibility
- ◆ Assertive Discipline
- ◆ Loch Eil/Ardroy Outdoor Trip
- ◆ School Trips
- ◆ Breakfast Club and Healthy Eating
- ◆ Buddy/Mentoring Schemes
- ◆ Anti Bullying
- ◆ Music Therapy
- ◆ Citizenship Projects e.g. Chocolate Raffle
- ◆ Smart Club
- ◆ Taking responsibility for own learning
- ◆ Duke of Edinburgh and Expedition Group
- ◆ Pantomime and Shows
- ◆ Devising classroom rules
- ◆ Extra curricular activities
- ◆ Conferences

Responsible Citizens (cont'd)

- ◆ Understanding consequences
- ◆ Social Behaviour
- ◆ Routines and Timetables
- ◆ Pupil councils
- ◆ Community Projects
- ◆ Eco – Schools
- ◆ Music/Pupil performances
- ◆ Responsibility should be recognised and rewarded
- ◆ Opportunity for creativity
- ◆ Communication skills
- ◆ Working with the broader community
- ◆ Improving Relationships
- ◆ Breaking down barriers – staff and pupils
- ◆ Innovative and flexible teaching approaches
- ◆ Alternative approaches and motivation

Confident Individuals

- ◆ Failure is not the problem – it's the fear of it that is
- ◆ Activity and involvement grows confidence and makes learning fun
- ◆ Teaching positive thinking through share activity grows us all – the teacher has to 'give up' the front of the classroom
- ◆ Opportunity for creativity
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Working with the broader community
- ◆ Ownership
- ◆ Improving relationships
- ◆ Breaking down barriers – staff and pupils
- ◆ Innovative and flexible
- ◆ Alternative approaches and motivation
- ◆ Success
- ◆ Group ethos
- ◆ Responsibility for Learning

Effective Contributors

- ◆ Importance of considering the individual
- ◆ Consistency of approach by all working with students
- ◆ Impacts of talking and thinking skills
- ◆ Choosing fun opportunities to contribute
- ◆ Using existing techniques e.g. “show and tell”
- ◆ Involving all pupils in questioning
- ◆ Pre5 baking – all involved with a purpose at end e.g. for the mums
- ◆ Importance of colleagues/peers “approval” of their contribution
- ◆ Freeing up the way pupils are allowed to contribute at end of something
- ◆ Importance of English Language skills on being able to contribute
- ◆ Achievement
- ◆ Confidence
- ◆ Using ICT
- ◆ Genuine decision making and consultation
- ◆ Enterprise and Eco schools activities
- ◆ Transferring skills
- ◆ Ownership and responsibility
- ◆ Communication skills
- ◆ Pupils involved in evaluating, teaching leading to dialogue between adults and young people
- ◆ Impact and change leading from pupils views and opinions
- ◆ Partnership working between pupils

Successful Learners

- ◆ Share assessment criteria/staff and peer assessment
- ◆ Relevant content leading to ENJOYMENT! and engagement!!
- ◆ AIFL techniques applied to learning
- ◆ Colour coded tracking in Pre-5 and infants
- ◆ Successful and confident learners through the use of ICT gaining confidence to skill share including their teachers!
- ◆ Healthy Lifestyle – diet, emotional health
- ◆ Thinking Skills – innovative problem solving (Maths)
- ◆ Investigative Skills – Social Education
- ◆ Set tasks – Open for creativity
- ◆ Skills – adapted to other areas
- ◆ Responsibility within community
- ◆ Success Criteria explained – open ended set tasks
- ◆ Own planners – children and parents
- ◆ Peer assessment – pairs, small groups
- ◆ Reward System –
 - Constructive praise
 - Enhanced motivation
 - Social skills
 - Assertive Discipline

After coffee and scones the discussion deepened into the values, principles and purposes of a Curriculum for Excellence with the focus on the recommendations contained in “Progress and Proposals” document. A wealth of discussion then took place between colleagues from all sectors leading to the production of the “key question” from each table.

During the excellent buffet lunch staff were able to read and sign up for their chosen question for the afternoon session. This led to a stimulating debate at each group as the key question was fully discussed often raising more questions than answers.

Feedback was taken from the tables and served to illustrate the range of debate which had taken place. This was followed by staff breaking into school and departmental groups to discuss and feedback the “way forward for us”. This information was copied on the day and taken away by each school of department

The following are the questions raised and a summary of the points made during the afternoon discussion

Key Questions

How do we effect the culture shift (home/school/society) necessary to develop the 4 capacities?

- ◆ Issues of “whole school” i.e. all staff not passed off as belonging to someone else.
- ◆ Secondary/primary – primary is pupil centred but secondary in “subject boxes” also in secondary the influence of “exams”.
- ◆ Trusting colleagues to cover areas of work to avoid duplication brings need for collaboration. Encouraging pupils to link between subjects. Working in ‘themes’ to allow coverage getting secondary teachers to “work out of their boxes”.
- ◆ Teacher qualification centres on “competences” rather than subject knowledge – primary staff able to work up to S1/S2.
- ◆ Team teaching between areas and staff to use staff skills to a better extent.
- ◆ “Consistency” - develop and encourage pupil and staff to exchange ideas and methodology and content, have co-op teaching across departments.

- ◆ Getting pupils especially teenagers to come on board and give their best when peer pressures are taking them in another direction.
- ◆ Work with parents to have a common approach and be aware of targets, not common standards.
- ◆ Pupils need to be able to make mistakes and pick up from these in a positive manner.
- ◆ Need to consider school reward systems to at best equal the present emphasis an academic school and reflect the success in the four capacities.
- ◆ Communicating with schools and working with agencies and organisations to the benefit of the pupils.
- ◆ Improve publicity for pupils' achievements to help the recognition of success.
- ◆ Success boards, closed circuit TV to show success especially any involvement of a pupil in the school or community in a positive way.
- ◆ Rewards for pupils for achievement in the four capacities, recognition of any 'involvement'.
- ◆ Moves for training of staff and other developments.
- ◆ Community resources for young people to be involved in during out of school hours. Real need of a positive influence. Other activities presently to the fore.
- ◆ New facilities in school – under “schools of ambition” resources can be available after school hours.
- ◆ Strong commitment to after school activities has a positive effect.
- ◆ Consideration for staffing allowances to make ACE take a grip.
- ◆ Need for further joint events and possibility even involving some mainland schools to gain further ideas and a broader involvement.
- ◆ Breakfast clubs and benefits to pupils – use of “hungry for success”, nutritional and behavioural benefits to pupils and school.
- ◆ School websites to have contributions from pupils and recognition of success built in to the site.
- ◆ Keeping pupils' motivation high.
- ◆ Creating publicity from Education Authority to media.

How big a change will take place to the curriculum to incorporate ACfE and what will the implications be?

- ◆ less duplication
- ◆ more emphasis on thematic studies (secondary) across the curriculum
- ◆ importance of values
- ◆ schools will need to develop wider partnerships with the community
- ◆ how can we recognise wider achievement in a meaningful way
- ◆ the big change will be in the how as opposed to the what of learning
- ◆ more AifL – ‘AifL and assertive discipline
- ◆ change to learning outcomes – more user friendly
- ◆ less paperwork

How can we ensure that there is genuine progression 3 – 18? This will require time for effective communication across school communities?

- ◆ Make sure ring-fenced time is available to ensure quality discussion.
- ◆ This is essential for ACE to have a positive impact.
- ◆ Staff need to visit colleagues in their classes across the sectors – finance needs to be available to allow this.
- ◆ Effective communication
- ◆ Restarting local cross sectoral curriculum groups, with represented for pre-school, primary and secondary.
- ◆ Looking at examples of good transition practice from other schools locally and nationally.
- ◆ Opportunities to team – teach, observe colleagues.
- ◆ Share resources
- ◆ Using shared Improvement Plan priorities to take forward aspects of across schools (pre school, primary and secondary).

How do you measure and assess capacities and strands and when do you do it?

- will you carry out base line assessments on capacities
- how often will you measure
- who will collate the information
- would we have to video everything we do to chart ? re confident individuals
- what is confidence
- how will HMI measure our response to ACE

This led to a view that the capacities and strengths are a scaffold that describes and legitimises activity and events in schools. We felt that there are only a limited number within the 'scaffold' mostly in 'successful learners' that lend themselves to generally hand data of a numeric or percentage native.

We believe we will have a better view of the ACE landscape when the review groups begin to report.

We also believe that class teachers must be given their say re the review documents while in draft stage.

How do we ensure that ACE does not become a box ticking exercise?

- ◆ Professional attribute/professional acceptance of ACE
- ◆ Bureaucracy and creativity – resolving tension
- ◆ Influences on teachers – SQA, HMI etc. - re-alignment/re-adjustment of control
- ◆ Greater control of profession by teachers
 - Trust in peers/peer network
 - Reflection of practice
 - Shadowing – within/between establishment
 - Turn 4 capacities on teachers
 - How will attainment demands be satisfied?

How can we ensure adequate time is available to plan and co-ordinate the introduction of ACE.

Balance between competencies and core skills.

Issues Raised:

- Planning
- strategic decisions regarding the implementation of ACE needs to involve a wide body of stakeholders i.e. teachers, pupils, parents, support staff and the community.
 - planning should take account of minimising visits to pupils.
- Communication
- Sectors, schools and departments need to communicate effectively to ensure adequate depth and breadth in our curriculum design.
 - inter-departmental liaison within secondary schools needs to focus on removing the boundaries of curriculum structures and provide pupils with a whole school approach.
 - The wider community within and outwith the school needs to support learning and teaching in the classroom.
 - Do not allow the changes to S3 – 6 to reduce the impact of ACE on S1 and S2.
- Staff Development
- invest time in staff as a longterm investment.
 - teachers strengths should be utilised to encourage collegiate development.

How are all staff to be involved in the development of the guidance for ACfE and marry up with the SQA structure and expectations of HMle?

Time

Ensure everyone voices are heard – requires time. Possibility of CPD.

Requires time to implement this properly with all involved.

Requires time to share intentions of whole school/facilities.

Involvement

Involvement of pupils from beginning.

Involvement of all practitioners.

Good to share practice cross-sector to gain ideas from each other.

Involvement of parents required.

How much of this is **NEW?** Not starting from blank page.

Ideas

- Schools assess where they are at present in terms of the 4 principles and see what needs developing.
- More discussions of whole school issues rather than just departmental issues.
- Creation of facilities assists this
- Development in secondary cross curricular projects e.g. health promotion week
- Make ACfE a standing item on Faculty meetings like AiFL etc.
- Use most interested teachers to start ACfE developments
- Can secondaries use the model of assessment of Core Skills to assess 4 capacities?
- Use of staff's particular skills (outside their own curricular area) in secondaries across the whole school.
- Schools design own modules to address AifL and how it would be assessed and submit to SQA for appreciation.
- Need for ACfE co-ordinator in schools to co-ordinate developments. This might be a faculty one or school one.

Discussion issues



Secondary staff so driven by SQA/exams it is difficult to see the big picture



Discussions with Pre 5/primary colleagues can help to re clarify this big picture



It's easier for Pre5/Primary to do cross curricular developments



Secondaries have started doing this e.g. Health Promotion which involves different faculties



Discussion on HMle approach to this and how they will view it



Port Ellen's recent experience e.g. re film project – HMle very positive about the development



Discussion on what evidence is required by e.g. HMle



Up to schools to define what the evidence will be. Take the initiative!



Importance of having the flexibility to concentrate on different aspects of the capacities, depending on the children involved.

Method/format/approach should vary according to the pupils



Discussion on a "Rich Task" approach of assessment of capacities at certain defined stages



If the emphasis is on the development of the 4 capacities (as opposed to coverage of content)

and

We work on that from Pre 5 – Standard Grade.

result

Pupils with high levels in the 4 capacities to approach whatever the external exam structure is.

We welcome the idea of decluttering and joined up learning. How is this to be achieved from Pre 5 to S6 and beyond?

Find ways of using flexibility to join up areas of the curriculum. Need to audit to ensure that areas of the curriculum are covered. Meaningful contexts could be created to allow pupils to have joined up learning.

Process should not be contrived. Thematic approach does not need to be all the time. Education should be for skills that can be used in life long learning. Involvement of the children in the planning. Moving out of comfort zone of heavy timetabled and subjects. Decluttering paperwork would give more time to teach. In decluttering parents should be involved to build information, knowledge. National Assessments will not sit comfortably with ACE and are not suitable for the purpose. How do we account for balance – termly? Weekly? Who are we to be accountable to? Exemplar themes and projects of good practice could be developed.

The final session saw staff returning to their “home” groups to share what they intended to take forward in the next 6 weeks. There was considerable enthusiasm expressed that the day had helped to clarify where aCfE was going and had allowed for a good exchange of ideas between staff.

A Head of Service ended the day by summarising the day’s events and explained the novel evaluation process

The evaluation – something I liked about the day

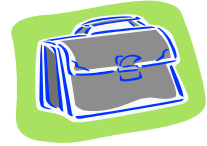


- ◆ The Ethos and Idea
- ◆ Pre-school, primary and secondary discussing topics together
- ◆ Talking with colleagues
- ◆ Having a bit of the 'Craic' with colleagues
- ◆ Sharing ideas with others Having the opportunity to work closely with Pre 5 and secondary colleagues
- ◆ Working with all Islay schools
- ◆ Focused Grouped primary/social sector/secondary discussion
- ◆ Fact that so many colleagues and schools are already doing many of the ACfE activities
- ◆ Listening to primary sector colleagues
- ◆ What I loved: Meeting and networking with new colleagues. Funding their reactions to ACfE
- ◆ Great to mix primary and secondary
- ◆ Realising that everyone feels the same about the need for improved communication
- ◆ The idea that there is nothing new under the sun, just different ways of trying to sell it
- ◆ Good to mix high school and primary school/Pre5 staff all together
- ◆ Primary and Secondary staff can work together
- ◆ Meeting staff from other schools and sectors
- ◆ The opportunity to share ideas with colleagues from other schools
- ◆ Talking/discussing in 'mixed' groups
- ◆ Positivity of the primary school staff
- ◆ Meeting other school staff
- ◆ Shared views and opinions of colleagues
- ◆ Working in groups including colleagues in pre-school and primary
- ◆ I liked the opportunity of speaking things through with Primary colleagues and support staff
- ◆ Shared information meeting others
- ◆ I have enjoyed all of it
- ◆ Interaction with wide range of staff

- ◆ Sharing experiences and ideas as an Island Community
- ◆ Time to talk, share, reflect and learn about the range of people within the co-operative
- ◆ Talking to colleagues
- ◆ Having the chance to talk to others re existing practices
- ◆ The opportunity to debate in a wider group – at all levels of education Pre5 – 18 yr olds
- ◆ Uplifting end, meeting with colleagues across the sector and opportunity to discuss issues with them, Cyber key – good idea to have all the info on it
- ◆ Positive – focus pre-5 is on the right track
- ◆ Working together with my group and other schools
- ◆ Opportunity to be involved in ACfE at an early stage
- ◆ Discussions with colleagues from other sectors
- ◆ What I liked: Opportunity to talk with primary and secondary teachers
- ◆ Being in mixed groups, Pre 5, Primary and secondary
- ◆ Very pleased with the approach taking for today - secondary/primary/pre5
- ◆ Discussion groups, direction from QIOs
- ◆ Input from primary, secondary and pre-school staff
- ◆ Really enjoyed the chance to get the inputs from pre-school right up to secondary
- ◆ Mixed groups – good to hear opinions from all sectors
- ◆ Positive ending
- ◆ Swapping ideas with other teachers
- ◆ Meeting new people/new ideas
- ◆ Information Pack and Goody Bag
- ◆ Discussions in different groups and the food
- ◆ Working together with all sectors
- ◆ Getting the opportunity to talk to colleagues in other sectors
- ◆ Re-enforce of course principles
- ◆ Working with colleagues from other sectors
- ◆ Opportunity to meet with all the teachers on our island
- ◆ Changing groups, during the day
- ◆ Being with other schools

- ◆ Lunch
- ◆ The promise that QIOs would do something about Qs
- ◆ Enjoyed the holistic approach to the day
- ◆ Good to get another perspective i.e. Pre5 workers to High School teachers
- ◆ Loved having the opportunity to meet up with everyone and listen to everyone's point of views and ideas
- ◆ The opportunity to share thoughts with others
- ◆ I loved getting back into our school groups to discuss the way forward for us
- ◆ Good conversations
- ◆ Having High School and Pre5 staff as well as primary was really beneficial
- ◆ Meeting teachers from other schools – learning different ideas
- ◆ Meeting with pre-5, primary and high school staff
- ◆ Very good to meet all the teachers together and get to know and share community
- ◆ Organisation of day – not just sitting listening gathering lots of sheets of paper
- ◆ Lunch
- ◆ Discussion re role of staff/parents/society

The evaluation – what you have taken from this today



- ◆ Professionalism of all staff
- ◆ Take away the ideas to put into practice
- ◆ Ideas for better communication between colleagues/schools etc.
- ◆ Cyber Key
- ◆ Some of the ideas given by others. Start focussing on 'how' I teach straight away.
Good Day!
- ◆ How we can all try to implement these changes to an already busy education system
- ◆ Good communicating
- ◆ Voices and words
- ◆ Assertive Discipline. Posters to download.
- ◆ We (Education) are moving on
- ◆ "The Way Forward for Us". Group/Dept Task
- ◆ Time to think more about ACE
- ◆ Goodie Bag! - ideas to take forward
- ◆ What we are doing in the nursery setting is good practice. Using topic work and sharing resources within the school, we have good links with P1. It is interesting to hear the primary and secondary teachers talking about practices they can adopt
- ◆ Different ideas to take away
- ◆ Plus Ça change Plus Ça la même-chose
- ◆ Constructive Discussion
- ◆ Encourage confident individuals
- ◆ The strength of sharing knowledge
- ◆ Realised other groups appreciate pre 5 education
- ◆ The importance of educating well rounded confident, socially conscious individuals
- ◆ Improve communication with other teachers, parents and agencies
- ◆ To try and implement a more thematic approach to planning
- ◆ Existing practice – reflect on
- ◆ New ideas
- ◆ Great ideas from colleagues which I will try out

- ◆ New insight into all areas of education
- ◆ Information from other members of staff in primary and secondary
- ◆ New approaches
- ◆ Hoping that future inservices will be run this way....
- ◆ The need to re-work
- ◆ Ideas to take CFE forward prior to its introduction in '08
- ◆ K & V of ACfE in its basic format
- ◆ Cyber Key with all the relevant info
- ◆ The goodie bag and a few extra pounds
- ◆ An interest and desire to promote ACfE
- ◆ What I take away - more focussed for beginning of term
- ◆ Cross-subject, cross curricular project based learning as a way forward
- ◆ The intention to build on/renew links with Primary Schools to aid ACfE curriculum
- ◆ Pleased to see that ACE might actually match with approaches I have investigated during PGDE training
- ◆ Ideas about how to implement ACfE
- ◆ Ideas to be considered and discarded/developed
- ◆ Confidence to change
- ◆ Ideas for working/sharing tasks with other schools
- ◆ How to take present practice forward with regard to ACE
- ◆ Read more of the Bulletins and use website
- ◆ To continue motivating children and enhancing their learning – making it meaningful and fun!
- ◆ Questions
- ◆ Take away – plans to branch the high school out into the community and work with the primaries
- ◆ Refer to website regularly
- ◆ Possibility of disseminating information into the community of positive achievements within the school
- ◆ Restarting local curricular groups

- ◆ I'll be quietly confident that we are well on our way in many aspects but look forward to change that are for the better
- ◆ ACE is what teaching should be about



The evaluation – something I want to know more about

- ◆ Practical support and reassurance that thematic teaching approach will be approved by HMIE?!
- ◆ Look forward to hearing more detail about Curriculum for Excellence
- ◆ Will there be more events like this in Islay later this session or next session?
- ◆ What will this mean for our children?
- ◆ How do we ensure development of collaboration through Pre5 – Secondary (and beyond) to build on success and sharing of good practice today?
- ◆ Find out more about ‘A Curriculum for Excellence’
- ◆ Think about ways of losing the “add-on” activity perception
- ◆ Concerns about level of funding being adequate
- ◆ How effective can ANST teachers be in the work they do – do we fit with what schools are doing?
- ◆ How is it going to be achieved
- ◆ Will authority provide resources to let us visit and see examples of good practice in action
- ◆ Authority – wide plan to recognise wider achievement of students in schools?
- ◆ How will the tension between assessment and ACfE be resolved?
- ◆ How can I effect this
- ◆ When will the rationales be available

- ◆ Where is the time needed and money to implement
- ◆ Will we get updates of progress in ACE
- ◆ Will it happen!! And will the teachers survive!!
- ◆ Can we have a definitive assessment sheet/way of assessing children's progress
- ◆ Need more information about the content of ACfE
- ◆ Need much more concrete info relating to the new Curriculum for Excellence
- ◆ Time? Space?
- ◆ Will pre 5 educators be included and valued in future training and publications
- ◆ Rationale of ACfE
- ◆ Balance of curriculum in line with ACfE
- ◆ How do we take this to parents – the consumers!!? We must engage with them!
- ◆ Authority plan for this very important development
- ◆ I'd like to be more informed in order to take some of the ideas forward into my classroom/teaching practice
- ◆ When will words be put into action
- ◆ What I'd like to know: How/when will the course changes be implemented Timetable (subject)
- ◆ What I'd like to know: What does my headteacher not know
- ◆ Want to know more: How to deliver/monitor report/gather evidence on ACfE
- ◆ When will we get feedback and who will do it
- ◆ Is funding available for ACfE
- ◆ What does ACE mean for what I do in the classroom
- ◆ Why were all staff not involved given that this is crucial to ACE working (i.e. office and janitors)

The evaluation – something I want to put in the bin



- ◆ Too many breaks
- ◆ Coffee Breaks too frequent
- ◆ Not enough importance placed on excellent practice and ACE work already being nurtured in Pre 5 Education (work from 3 – 28 respect of 3 – 5 Ed)
- ◆ Introducing new initiatives without proper support in terms of time, training and resources
- ◆ Negativity
- ◆ Nowt!
- ◆ Negative attitudes
- ◆ Too long spent on some sessions
- ◆ Hosts should be allowed to move group for a little bit
- ◆ “I came into teaching to teach my subject, I’m not a *@!!# or social worker, policeman or priest” AR PT subject, 1979
- ◆ Don’t have a closed mind
- ◆ Extra paper work taking our time away from our children
- ◆ Jargon
- ◆ Different format for Key Questions session after lunch
- ◆ Departmental meeting
- ◆ Ditch the music and pictures
- ◆ Break up of main groups for faculty meetings
- ◆ Faculty meeting
- ◆ The lighthouse people as background music
- ◆ The final Slide Show!