



## Engagement Day for Teachers - Tarbert Tarbert Academy

Tuesday 20 February 2007



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

- ◆ Eco schools committee
- ◆ MER course, examining river pollutants
- ◆ Classroom and school rules, giving ownership to pupils
- ◆ Learning to access learning via, ICT in the library and ICT class/books and responsibilities attached there to
- ◆ Recognising challenges in today's society through drama role play and video
- ◆ Mutual respect for each other through collaborative learning
- ◆ Developing trust in new ideas through Shakespeare
- ◆ Duke of Edinburgh
- ◆ Composting team
- ◆ Healthy eating
- ◆ Health promoting tuckshop
- ◆ Fair trade competition and coffee morning
- ◆ Silent auction –raising funds for PTA
- ◆ Global citizenship- re Malawi –Zambia
- ◆ Enterprise activities
- ◆ Space schools
- ◆ Community environmental work (up at the castle)
- ◆ Work experience SFL general
- ◆ Buddy system
- ◆ Senior pupils (primary/secondary) taking on supervisory rules, homework and games
- ◆ Pupil council / p1 – s6)

- ◆ Learning responsibility for self, bringing in “tools of the trade”
- ◆ Charity work – UNICEF
- ◆ Cycling proficiency

## Confident Individuals

- ◆ Ability to self assess
- ◆ The Golden Boot competition
- ◆ Cross curricular French/Art lessons
- ◆ Responsibility and challenge of assessment of recipes
- ◆ Experience of the real world
- ◆ Competitions
- ◆ Outdoor activities (avalanches! ) S1 referendum
- ◆ EFW- the real world

## Effective Contributors

- ◆ Responsibility for self – moving to future – learning for life!
- ◆ Change physical environment to suit activity
- ◆ Use non competitive games
- ◆ School council
- ◆ Enterprise activities –class fete
- ◆ S3 enterprise days
- ◆ Activity days
- ◆ Charity days – red nose/comic relief.....

- ◆ Organisation of social events –s6 prom.
- ◆ Confidence building and trust
- ◆ Playground buddying
- ◆ Timed challenge ,specific outcome

## Successful Learners

- ◆ Group work – preparing power points (3 PUPILS MAX) showed marked improvement in effective co-operative working and learning improved.
- ◆ Project work –self/peer evaluation – understanding the standard
- ◆ Individual projects used to engage. Contextualised to pupils need
- ◆ Presentation of S.G work , pupils had control and choice of medium and responsibility for this
- ◆ Homework - non standard h/w involving practical work and for own ability (differentiation by outcome)
- ◆ “I can” bank, Instead of learning outcomes given learning intentions in pupil speak
- ◆ Pupils attempt learning intentions at own pace. Cross curricular
- ◆ Project – environmental – groups to create own “tee-pee” working teamwork improved, understanding of environment, culture
- ◆ AIFL

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**

**Table 1**

**High quality learning and teaching in every classroom” what if it isn’t – how can this be addressed in the short term within the framework of ACFE?**

- ◆ If not high quality teaching and learning there are consequences for pupils
- ◆ How do you monitor and evaluate in a positive and supportive way
- ◆ Comes down to leadership
- ◆ How do we know where the good practice is?
- ◆ Visits to other schools help develop competence

- ◆ Ethos, culture, values and teamwork and leadership, leadership needs to set clear expectations / guidance for the school, pupils and teachers and securing “buy in” from the whole school
- ◆ What would high quality teaching learning in an ACFE environment – noise- positive – engagement –challenge
- ◆ Element of purpose /culture/mutual respect
- ◆ Open doors

***Table 2***

**Teachers are the key to taking forward “a curriculum for excellence”**

**How do we support teachers to be – confident –effective- responsible – enthusiastic –successful professionals**

- ◆ CPD – good quality CPD is essential to take ACFE
- ◆ Enthusiastic teachers will be engendered by good quality CPP
- ◆ “we” – other teachers, school, authority, school community, ourselves
- ◆ Initiative overload/”burnt” out tension against enthusiastic
- ◆ New initiatives may not be new but based on existing practice
- ◆ CPD only one strand – how to make time to support ourselves through peer support
- ◆ Change culture – more comfortable with this the more often you do this
- ◆ Implications for cross teaching – lead to cross curricular tasks
- ◆ Initial teaching education has to change to develop capacities in professional development
- ◆ “open air” classrooms used to support teachers

- ◆ Build team – teaching opportunities for whole school community
- ◆ Important that pupils are prepared for future not past
- ◆ Sharing skills between teachers

**Table 3**

How can we reduce content in the curriculum and satisfy the needs of all?

How can we benefit all pupils?

Need to look at qualifications for all children?

- ◆ A lot of pupils have a lot to offer that is not measured on paper
- ◆ The “topic” based curriculum is now very rigid within the primary department – time limits are a major problem( depth)
- ◆ Freedom in the curriculum to look at current affairs –ethics etc
- ◆ Collaborative work across secondary departments
- ◆ Audit of curriculum p1 – s6 how many times do we teach world war 2- sex education
- ◆ Time to look at content
- ◆ Offers – an opportunity to cross check learning
- ◆ Young people learn through collaborative enquiry?
- ◆ Develop an curriculum that motivates the disengaged – life skills – finance
- ◆ Boundaries need to be softened
- ◆ Transfer some primary curriculum up to s1 and s2

#### **Table 4**

### **What measures are/will be available to facilitate transitions between levels and to promote building on prior learning ?**

- ◆ Transition is more than information transfer but also consider the teaching and learning
- ◆ Geography of transition needs to be considered – is there coherence in the work between feeder primary?
- ◆ Necessary to consider the methodology being used at each transition
- ◆ Good co-ordination between associated primary schools
- ◆ Reflection on preparation time for choice decision at s2/s3 and short sharp transition
- ◆ Transition from school life long learning needs to be carefully looked at and involve wider community

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**

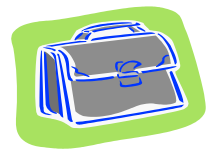
#### **The evaluation – something I liked about the day**



- ◆ Opportunity to speak frankly, all be it small group settings, about issues we as teachers consider important
- ◆ Time to think
- ◆ Reflecting from different teachers on the 4 capacities

- ◆ Listening
- ◆ Move away from levels A – F towards a more consistent 1- 4
- ◆ Being able to talk to colleagues
- ◆ Opportunity to think
- ◆ Comforting to know that ACFE is a step forward, not a giant leap, and builds on current good practice and recent developments
- ◆ Enjoy talking across the sectors- sharing some concerns and some ways forward
- ◆ Other peoples ideas
- ◆ It got everyone brain storming how we could be more effective “teachers”
- ◆ Lunch – bit obvious I know – very good
- ◆ The prospect of teaching ACFE
- ◆ General aims of C for E
- ◆ Enjoyed chatting to teachers in secondary department – finding out what’s going on!
- ◆ Enjoyed time to take stock and listen to views of colleagues

### **The evaluation – what you have taken from this today**



- ◆ The four capacities as the focus of learning
- ◆ I hope we will be given the freedom to make education more interesting
- ◆ Web site bit more understanding
- ◆ Goody bag
- ◆ Re – examine why I teach
- ◆ Learning more about ACFE
- ◆ The pack – sure the memory stick will be useful

- ◆ Cross curricular projects
- ◆ Reflecting on four capacities with others
- ◆ Others opinions
- ◆ New opportunities
- ◆ “I can “ approach
- ◆ Have an open mind to new concepts
- ◆ Lots of other people feel the same

### **The evaluation – something I want to know more about**



- ◆ How do we make this new. Not just reinvent the wheel|?
- ◆ Lack of real ideas to take the whole thing forward
- ◆ Is the authority going to allow time and planning for teachers to visit other schools to meet with colleagues
- ◆ Does ACFE team support the forest school ethos
- ◆ How to measure adherence to the 4 capacities
- ◆ Where we go from here – a sense in which we have heard /discussed some of this before
- ◆ What will happen if SQA and HMIE decide not to support ACFE
- ◆ Is this reinventing the wheel?
- ◆ What’s in the documents
- ◆ Need for much better information exchange and collaboration

- ◆ How is the school going to take forward the ideas which came out today when we are short of key staff
- ◆ Rich tasks
- ◆ How to use ACE principals in teaching and learning
- ◆ Find out more about rich tasks
- ◆ More information on new curricular areas
- ◆ How the 4 capacities are incorporated in T& L
- ◆ Not sure that I haven't heard it all before
- ◆ Next steps, web sites
- ◆ School primary secondary interface



### The evaluation – something I want to put in the bin

- ◆ Too much “directing” of discussions by Q10
- ◆ The assumption that changes can be introduced without any impact on teachers time
- ◆ Hopefully –some of the pet hates of others and pet projects
- ◆ That photo of me
- ◆ 3- 6 year olds being in school with a curriculum
- ◆ Cross curricular projects they encourage less depth in subject areas rather than more
- ◆ SQA, HMI are they on board with this
- ◆ Presenters reading power point presentations /slides to us
- ◆ Please don't read slides

- ◆ Antagonism between departments
- ◆ Judgemental attitudes
- ◆ Negative attitudes of others
- ◆ Nothing