

# ambitious, excellent schools

progress report



CHOICE



ACCOUNTABILITY

OPPORTUNITY

LEADERSHIP

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progress report

**Who is this for?**

Directors of Education

Quality Improvement Officers

School Senior Management Teams

**What is it for?**

Information

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# foreword

In November 2004, I set out our agenda for reform in *Ambitious, Excellent Schools*, the most comprehensive modernisation programme in our schools for a generation.

This package of reforms clearly spelt out our agenda: an agenda which recognises the many strengths in our schools and targets action on the challenges.

The agenda set out five key themes:

- › heightened expectations, stronger leadership and ambition
- › more freedom for teachers and schools
- › greater choice and opportunity for pupils
- › better support for learning
- › tougher, intelligent accountabilities

Under these we set out 69 commitments. Just over one year on, 39 have been completed and we are well on the way to achieving the rest.

Achievements include:

- › a new excellence standard for school inspections
- › 20 Schools of Ambition, with more to join this year
- › revising the Standard for Headship to strengthen school leadership
- › removing barriers between sectors so that primary teachers are free to teach in secondary schools
- › flexibility for pupil to sit exams at the right time for them through the abolition of 'age and stage' regulations
- › an international benchmarking group with other European countries

At its heart, our agenda is about taking a strong education system and making it even stronger. We need to challenge the unwritten but clear expectations that sometimes limit excellence and ambition. I want to encourage all our schools to gear up their efforts in the pursuit of excellence and we will help them do that.



**Peter Peacock,**  
Minister for Education and Young People



# heightened expectations, stronger leadership and ambition

## ➤ High expectations, high quality leadership and confident, ambitious schools

Good leadership is critical to a successful school. Success comes from aiming high with the clear vision, ethos and communication that good leadership brings. We will act to support high quality school leadership and inspired, ambitious school communities.

### **Excellence standard to set new levels for ambition and inspection**

#### **HMIE has:**

- established a new 6 point Quality Indicator scale which institutes a new excellence standard and is being used in school inspections
- defined the key characteristics of excellent schools and will publish these in early 2006

### **Leadership development, supported by the Hunter Foundation, to foster talent**

#### **We are:**

- establishing a broad programme of leadership development, to give access to world class thinking on school leadership and to share experiences of school leadership from around the world
- enhancing leadership development opportunities for senior school and local authority staff by continuing support for Columba 1400 and potential pilot projects with local authorities
- establishing mentoring and coaching programmes with the Scottish Leadership Foundation for leaders and potential leaders

### **Schools of Ambition programme to bring about transformation**

#### **We have:**

- selected the first 20 Schools of Ambition, to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement, with others to follow

### **Standard for Headship and selection procedures to ensure all headteachers are prepared for school leadership**

#### **We have:**

- revised the Standard for Headship to reflect shared leadership priorities in education

#### **We are:**

- establishing new routes to achieve the Standard for Headship and have issued a formal consultation
- consulting on more rigorous headteacher appointment procedures

**Revitalised Initial Teacher Education (ITE)****We have:**

- › published the report of the review of ITE and the Ministerial response outlining clear challenges for universities and local authorities

**Enhanced Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to support confident, able teachers****We have:**

- › supported the National CPD Co-ordinator by establishing a dedicated team

**We are:**

- › delivering CPD opportunities by developing the framework for teachers during the early years of their career to build on the success of the induction scheme
- › promoting further the chartered teacher programme by exploring the potential of a development module to help teachers make informed career choices before joining the programme or at other stages in their career
- › promoting opportunities for joint training for teachers, social workers, community learning/development workers and health workers as part of our plans to revitalise ITE



# more freedom for teachers and schools

## ➤ Professional freedom for teachers and schools to tailor learning to the needs of individual young people

The people best placed to make judgements about the learning needs of individual young people are those who work with them most closely. Within a framework of clear national standards and local authority support, teachers and other professionals in schools must have the freedom to exercise their professional judgement to deliver excellent learning and teaching. We will act to give them that freedom.

### **Curriculum for Excellence 3-18 to free up learning and teaching**

#### **We have:**

- accepted in full *A Curriculum for Excellence*, the report of the first phase of the curriculum review

#### **We are:**

- systematically reviewing the curriculum, with a set of broad principles and rationales for change due to be published in spring 2006

### **More flexibility and choice in exams**

#### **We have:**

- abolished the age and stage regulations and issued new guidance on the appropriate time for young people to sit exams
- provided funding to the SQA to develop ICT to support assessment

#### **We are:**

- expanding choice for schools through new Skills for Work courses and are piloting these in construction crafts, sport and recreation, early education and childcare, and financial services
- planning announcements to take forward the review of Standard Grade and its links with other National Qualifications as part of the wider curriculum review, to simplify the structure, widen opportunities and improve progression

### **Improving assessment of 3-14 year olds to support learning**

#### **We are:**

- reporting annually to parents by publishing the first report of the new Scottish Survey of Achievement in the near future
- expanding schools' involvement in the highly innovative Assessment is for Learning (AifL) programme
- extending the on-line assessment bank for teachers

### **Greater devolved school management to give headteachers new opportunities to develop their schools to best meet local needs**

#### **We have:**

- › issued guidance to extend devolved school management

### **Wider opportunities for teachers to teach across sectors**

#### **We have:**

- › repealed the School Code to give primary teachers more scope to teach in secondary schools
- › introduced new regulations to maintain safeguards relating to registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland by ensuring teachers have the appropriate professional skills and knowledge for their post irrespective of the sector they work in

### **Smaller class sizes and more teachers and other staff to support learning**

#### **We have:**

- › in the last year, released an extra 2,700 probationers into schools and recruited nearly 3,300 extra postgraduate students to ensure we have 53,000 teachers by 2007
- › released an extra £63 million to reduce class sizes in P1, S1 and S2 Maths and English and meet our wider teacher numbers targets

### **Promoting better behaviour to support a positive learning and teaching environment**

#### **We have:**

- › supported schools and teachers to develop and share effective approaches to classroom discipline, such as restorative approaches and staged intervention, by establishing new regional teams
- › provided support to teachers, support staff and home-school link workers to promote positive behaviour
- › introduced the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Bill into Parliament to support more parental involvement in their child's education

#### **We are:**

- › introducing a new teacher survey on perceptions of positive behaviour and indiscipline in 2006
- › working in partnership with stakeholders, including teacher representatives, headteachers, Directors of Education, local authorities and the GTCS and continuing to monitor the implementation of *Better Behaviour – Better Learning* with HMIE



# greater choice and opportunity for pupils

## ➤ Choice and opportunity for young people to help each of them realise their own potential

Our young people have a very wide range of individual skills, talents, aspirations and enthusiasms and their success comes through realising their individual potential. All young people should have a secure foundation in literacy, numeracy and other essential skills and capabilities to help them achieve their potential. We will act to give young people the opportunity to gain these essential skills, and to give each of them the opportunity to choose and develop the other personal skills and talents most important to them.

### **Curriculum for Excellence 3-18 to give the right pace and challenge for young people**

#### **We are:**

- reviewing the curriculum and ensuring it is built to deliver, from our schools, young people who are responsible citizens, effective contributors to our society, successful learners and confident individuals

### **Recognising achievement of all young people in S1 to S3**

#### **We are:**

- working with local authorities to develop ways of recognising young people's achievement in areas such as sport, community activity and leadership as part of the wider curriculum review
- developing standards for this recognition of achievement to ensure it is valued by employers, colleges and universities

### **Partnership between schools and colleges to provide young people with the best possible learning environment and experience**

#### **We have:**

- created new Skills for Work courses and are piloting these in construction crafts, sport and recreation, early education and childcare, and financial services
- published the *Lifelong Partners* strategy to give pupils better access to colleges
- made extra funding available to colleges to enhance school/college partnerships

### **More specialists in subjects such as PE, Music, Art and Drama, and in primary schools, to open up opportunities for pupils**

#### **We have:**

- as part of the 53,000 teacher commitment by 2007, increased the number of postgraduate teaching courses in PE as part of our plans for an additional 400 PE specialists
- provided funding for CPD opportunities which allow primary teachers to develop specialist skills

### **More out of school hours opportunities across a wide range of activities to help young people develop their skills and confidence**

#### **We have:**

- › encouraged more opportunities for all pupils for out of school hours activities and commissioned Learning and Teaching Scotland to take forward a development programme on outdoor education

#### **We are:**

- › ensuring shared good practice and innovation across Scotland through the Out of School Hours Learning Network (formerly the Scottish Study Support Network)

### **Personalising learning and personal learning planning**

#### **We have:**

- › developed personal learning planning as a central part of the Assessment is for Learning (AifL) programme to encourage involvement of pupils and their parents in planning their own learning

#### **We are:**

- › developing new guidance that builds on good practice on annual reporting to parents to ensure parents' basic right to information on their children's performance

### **Promotion of better, more flexible parental involvement in their children's learning**

#### **We have:**

- › introduced the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Bill into Parliament to improve parental representation and involvement in school decision-making
- › published *Making the Difference* leaflets to help parents become more involved in their children's learning

#### **We are:**

- › promoting good practice by publishing case studies so that schools and parents can build on what works well for others
- › enhancing information for parents on school performance by launching a refreshed Parentzone website in spring 2006



# better support for learning

## ➤ Support for learning for young people in challenging circumstances

Many young people face challenges in their lives that, left unaddressed, would limit their capacity to learn and succeed. Those challenges may be temporary or long term. Whatever the cause, our schools and other children's services must work together to maximise the opportunities for these young people to benefit from the learning environment. We will act to give these young people the best opportunities to develop their potential through better support for learning.

### **Implementation of the Additional Support for Learning Act to address the needs of young people who require extra help for learning**

#### **We have:**

- published a statutory Code of Practice to provide practical advice and guidance on implementing the Act and made extra funds available to local authorities and health boards for implementation
- given parents of children who require extra help access to mediation and, where necessary, dispute resolution services, to help them discuss and resolve any concerns relating to their child's education
- introduced statutory Co-ordinated Support Plans for those young people with the most extensive support needs
- given parents access to new independent Tribunals to consider issues relating to Co-ordinated Support Plans

### **Personal support systems in schools to help young people benefit from learning**

#### **We have:**

- published *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential*, the report of the national review of guidance to re-focus and drive improvement in school guidance and pupil support

**Integrated community schools to meet the needs of the child****We have:**

- › made integrated community schools part of our wider agenda on joining up children's services and made clear to local authorities and schools that integrated working is a central part of an excellent school

**HMIE has:**

- › published a consultation document on an inspection and self-evaluation framework, as a precursor to publishing a set of quality indicators, to help schools with the delivery of integrated services to pupil

**We are:**

- › providing new resources, under the 53,000 teachers commitment, to employ more teachers working with young people who require additional support for learning

**Equal opportunities to enable all young people to benefit from learning****We are:**

- › rolling out anti-sectarian education materials for use in schools and youth groups
- › developing guidelines that will ensure anti-discrimination is mainstreamed into the curriculum
- › supporting schools on the implementation of race relations legislation



# tougher, intelligent accountabilities

## › Tough, intelligent accountabilities

Delivering excellence in education requires both professional freedom and public accountability. Scotland already has a world renowned system of inspection and evaluation: we will build on this to ensure further, sustained improvement in our schools. We need systems that are proportionate, that focus on outcomes, that promote self-evaluation, and that provide targeted support to those who are struggling. We will focus the role of the Scottish Executive on the national framework to ensure that Scotland performs well, that we stand comparison with other high performing nations, and that we improve our performance over time. We will expect local authorities to drive improvement at the local level and to add value to the work of their schools. We will expect schools to meet the needs of their community and each and every one of their pupils. We will act to build, at each level, systems of tough, intelligent accountability that foster ambition and allow proper, informed public scrutiny.

### **Testing Scotland's performance internationally**

#### **We have:**

- › benchmarked Scotland through the establishment of an international benchmarking group with other European countries, and are taking part in the next round of international attainment studies

### **Integrated, proportionate inspection to support improvement and target action**

#### **HMIE has:**

- › begun a new round of inspections of local authorities
- › ensured all schools are inspected at least once during a pupil's time at both primary and secondary school

### **Support and challenge for local authorities to deliver continuous improvement**

#### **We are:**

- › publishing a report on the impact of the National Priorities in 2006
- › refreshing the National Priorities measures and indicators to focus on outcomes
- › encouraging local authorities to work together to deliver better services and cost efficiencies

### **Integrated framework of planning to support joint working**

#### **We have:**

- › introduced integrated children's services planning and reporting and received and reviewed plans from local planning partnerships
- › promoted partnership working by piloting joint inspections of child protection services and these will be rolled out across Scotland
- › introduced flexibility in the National Priorities Action Fund to allow local authorities to more effectively target resources to meet local needs



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