

Clackmannanshire Council

Services to People

Independent Commission Report

on

Education Provision (3 – 12)

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1 Commission Remit

Clackmannanshire Council established the Independent Commission to consider the current educational provision for all 3 – 12 year olds within Clackmannanshire and to make recommendations to council for all future provision in terms of a preferred strategic framework and any operational issues arising from its strategic recommendations.

2 Introduction and Contexts

2.1 The Commission was set up by Clackmannanshire Council on 20th March 2006 with a membership of six parents, two specialist advisers and an independent chairperson (see Appendix 1). The terms of reference were agreed and have formed the basis of the work of the Commission (see Appendix 2).

2.2 Submissions were invited from interested parties (see Appendix 3) and 20 submissions were received. In addition, presentations were made to the Commission from invited staff within the authority and a range of experts from outwith Clackmannanshire (see Appendix 4). The Commission was also grateful to receive copy of a report prepared by Professor Harry Daniels (University of Bath) and his colleagues on current research on new approaches to multi-agency working. The chairperson and one parent member attended a formal Headteachers' meeting in November 2006 to engage in direct dialogue on the terms of reference and key issues arising.

2.3 The Commission met on 13 occasions and had the opportunity to visit a number of schools.

2.4 From the outset, the Commission operated within two overlapping and specific contexts. The first was the current work of the authority, its successes and the various internal and external evaluations of performance together with current priorities, developments and challenges (e.g. the review of the Pre 5 and Primary Estate and the introduction of a new multi-agency neighbourhood structure).

2.5 The second context was national initiatives and developments with particular emphases on proposed curricular reform to embrace one, holistic curricular strategy (3 – 18) and an evolving re-evaluation of the form and purpose(s) of assessment. (Appendix 5 lists a range of Acts, Initiatives and Developments pertinent to the work of the Commission).

2.6 The Commission has sought to address the key strategic areas and the associated operational tasks and issues arising in order to offer recommendations which identify both the 'the right things to do' but also proposals as to 'how to do them right'.

2.7 The structure adopted for the report offers three interlinked sections:

- **The Key Principles**
- **The Major Areas and Priorities**
- **Core Themes and Development for the Future (with general and specific recommendations)**

2.8 It is the view of the Commission that, subject to the acceptance of its proposals by Council, success will best be realised by an evolutionary approach which is comprehensive and founded on effective consultation and with the participation of the key stakeholders. The Commission recognises that many issues cannot be instantly addressed in their entirety.

2.9 It is hoped that the content and recommendations of the report can inform the major decisions to be made by council for 3 – 12 provision in the 21st. century.

3 The Key Principles

In seeking to offer a comprehensive strategy for future developments in 3 – 12 provision, the Commission identified a number of key, over-arching principles which are both distinct and interlinked. They form a framework which permeates the other sections and recommendations. **These principles are:**

- A. The strategy for 3 – 12 provision will address the needs and potential development of the whole child embracing cognitive, physical, social and emotional learning at all ages and stages.
- B. The Curriculum for Excellence proposals will be the essential curricular framework.
- C. The learning and teaching provision will reflect a commitment to consolidation and sustained development, including higher order skills, in all curricular areas and improvements in both attainment and broader achievements.
- D. The purposes of assessment will be, first, to support learning and, secondly, to evaluate progress and provide information for recording, reporting, making choices and making decisions.
- E. The overall approach to continuity and progression will take account of individual pupils' needs and aim to promote more flexible practices in relating the age of pupils to stages in schooling.
- F. Learning will be most successful and effectively sustained when:
 - there is a shared agenda amongst the learner, teacher/school, home and, as appropriate, community.
 - the roles and contributions of these stakeholders are clear and complementary.
- G. Developments and initiatives will be maximised when supported by a Service with a capacity for review, adaptation and reform.
- H. The Service will promote an explicit culture of participation, cooperation and self-evaluation at all levels from individual learner to the strategic centre.
- I. Competent, confident teachers with high professional self-esteem will be the central element of successful learning and teaching. They will take a creative, reflective and self-regulating approach and exercise reasonable autonomy and discretion within a system of agreed accountability.
- J. Evaluation, reflection and action based on sound evidence at both an individual and school/service level will be an essential feature of the Clackmannanshire approach.

4 Major Areas and Priorities

4.1 The Curriculum for Excellence (3 – 18), as the driver for fundamental curricular reform, aims to ‘declutter’ the curriculum, reduce prescription and curricular rigidity, promote choice and depth and develop attainment and broader achievements. All of these aspirations were reflected in responses received from within Clackmannanshire.

4.1.1 Historically, different curricular strategies for 3-5 and 5-14 curricula, 14 – 16 Standard Grade and Higher Still have created some discord and a fairly rigid emphasis on age and stage. The new proposals seek a continuum of learning from 3 to 18 with a concern for coherence and continuity, minimisation of barriers and ‘checkpoints’ for both learners and staff, and an explicit emphasis on broader areas of learning (e.g. Emotional Intelligence).

4.1.2 The proposed framework has four interlinked development areas focussing on pupils as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. The promotion of concepts such as pupils’ citizenship, rights and responsibilities, learning how to learn, self-confidence and self-esteem requires more than new content. It will involve the review of the learning environment and culture, and an understanding of the prerequisites for new areas for development such as learners’ emotional intelligence (Appendix 6 provides some guidance as to the contents of the Emotional Intelligence agenda). These pose challenges to everyone in the learning partnership about what is learned, how it is taught and how it is assessed.

4.1.3 Learners, staff and parents are faced with:

- an emphasis on the “whole child”, which takes account of broader achievements and educational experiences as well as traditional attainments and outcomes;
- enduring issues about individual, group and independent learning processes;
- challenges to the traditional “age and stage” strategies;
- the impact on teaching methods arising from the new curricular approach;
- an acceptance that the teacher’s role will be less externally directed and more autonomous, creative and reflective;
- an increased involvement of the learner as an active and proactive participant in choice and evaluation as part of successful learning and teaching and the rights and responsibilities agenda;
- the comprehensive development of partnerships (learner, school, family and community);
- the inclusion of achievement centred activities (such as Clackmannanshire’s successful Sports Development programme) as integral to the school curriculum and extended, for example, to areas such as Art and Music.

4.2 Assessment for Learning

The current approach to assessment is overly committed to a testing regime based on specific outcomes, largely cognitive, for all learners at specific ages and stages. National advice now favours systems that promote assessment as a support for learning. The intention is to bring forward a general and coherent assessment strategy for 3 – 15 that provides a single portfolio of attainment and achievement for each young person throughout the years of Pre 5, through Primary and into Secondary education. There will have to be an agreed format for reporting progress that is informed by the new strategies for learning and teaching.

- 4.2.1 The move away from the simple “assessment by measurement” systems of the past will have significant implications for staff, learners and parents.
- 4.2.2 Issues yet to be resolved involving communications among staff, learners and parents include:
- relationships between the assessment and reporting of attainment and achievement;
 - the creation of an assessment model which is more effectively understood by everyone;
 - the establishment of an interactive system of assessment involving staff, learners and parents that effectively assesses higher order skills.
- 4.2.3 The Commission regards the following as crucial elements for any new assessment regime:
- it should facilitate high expectations and ambitious, excellent schools, and allow greater freedom and discretion for teachers within a scheme of agreed accountability;
 - assessment should place learners at the centre, take place in the learning and teaching environment and, as far as possible, be tailored to each individual’s needs and development. It is recognised that the provision of 30 separate learning and assessment programmes per class is unrealistic;
 - the provision of better communications and understanding within the learning partnerships are essential, but without increased bureaucracy;
 - all stakeholders should be given sufficiently reliable feedback to inform the judgements, choices and decisions that facilitate learning, provide effective remediation as appropriate to needs and extend challenge;
 - the complementary roles of learners, teachers and parents should be promoted;
 - the preferred regime should legitimise, and encourage acceptance of, greater empowerment of classroom teachers in their professional role of assessing learning when most appropriate for each learner.

4.3 Continuity and Progression

Given local authorities’ past experience of difficulties where attainment at various stages can plateau or even regress (e.g. boys’ apparent underperformance), a crucial challenge is to ensure that throughout their school career each learner maintains continuous progression. Young people’s learning is not necessarily consistent and linear, but the initial achievement of success, building on that success and realising overall progression are all essential.

- 4.3.1 An approach that focuses on confirmation, consolidation and development will fulfil the aspiration of progression to higher order skills in each of the areas of learning which is subsumed within the Curriculum for Excellence. This approach must take successes (e.g. Clackmannanshire’s pioneering work on phonics) and ensure that the initial core and access skills are consolidated and used as a springboard to higher attainment and achievement.

4.4 The Key Interfaces of Pre 5/ Primary and Primary/ Secondary

These merit fundamental review in the context of a 3 – 18 Curriculum and a single, continuous assessment strategy 3 – 15. The review should consider the relevant evidence from other successful models and include the general context of Pre-5 provision and Pre-3 provision in family centres.

- 4.4.1 Parity of esteem between the current three distinctive sectors is necessary together with a willingness to commit to joint working and training that draw on the expertise of fellow professionals. The Commission noted:
- evidence that starting formal education too early is often detrimental to the child's subsequent achievement;
 - an absence of research evidence to suggest that children benefit from beginning 'formal' education as early as age 5 or younger and that this is even more significant in the context of a single entry date per annum.
 - that starting at 5 is not the norm across Europe.
- 4.4.2 New approaches in the Curriculum for Excellence provide opportunities to review current practice and consider improved continuity between Pre 5 provision and the first year of Primary. Primary 1 could adopt some successful approaches deployed in Pre 5 for which Clackmannanshire is already recognised. The essential value of play in learning could be reflected in the first year of primary school. If primary 1 is seen as the final year of early years experience, the support and continuity for the child's learning and development will require closer and more effective working in the general liaison between Pre 5 and Primary and the maximising of all staff skills and potential. This will allow greater emphasis on the 'school being ready', but will not hamper pupils' phased moves, based on maturity and skills acquired, into more formal learning.
- 4.4.3 This strategy might be challenged by traditional notions of children "being held back". It will require a concerted effort to inform parents about the potential benefits of the new approach and to present, for individual children, the evidence for the timing of the 'transfer' to more formal learning and teaching. A clear benefit arising from the strategy could be an extension into Primary of the strong relationship between home and school which is a feature of Pre 5 provision (see the recent HMIE pilot report on education provision in Clackmannanshire). Parent members of the Commission commented that the atmosphere in nurseries, in comparison with the primary sector, is more welcoming, more participative in regard to parents' roles and generally more open.
- 4.4.4 One issue noted by the Commission is the variety and diversity of experience for the 3 – 5 age group. This may include, nursery placement, play group, family centre, childminding and home provision. Given the recognised importance of a 'good start' there is a strong case for promoting consistency and coherence across that range of experiences. The authority may wish to develop guidelines and opportunities to support the various providers and adopt an inclusive model wherever possible (e.g. accommodating play groups on 'campus').
- 4.4.5 An even bigger gulf has often existed between primary and secondary school. Despite the 5 – 14 curriculum, the move from experiencing one classroom teacher with some specialist support, to dealing with up to 15 separate subject teachers has often hindered continuity and progression.

The Curriculum for Excellence and Assessment for Learning may now challenge the subject dominated approach of the early secondary with its emphasis on ring-fenced content. They may also enhance, for the learner, a sense of a continuum of accreditation for skill development, a continuity of progression and a parity of esteem between generalist and specialist teachers

The Commission understands that Clackmannanshire intends to review its S1/S2 learning and teaching strategies to coincide with the opening of its three new secondary schools. This may well afford the opportunity to adopt approaches which better cohere with primary experience, build on that experience and allow for a clearer focus on skill development together with progression to higher order skills. Revised approaches could better maintain

and consolidate the duality of attainment and achievement targets and outcomes, and address the balance between breadth and depth.

4.5 Learning Partnerships

These are considered by the Commission to be central to effective learning. There is evidence of the significance of home/school partnerships and the positive impact on learning of informed and committed parents/guardians. Clackmannanshire has been commended for its commitment to such partnerships and this offers valuable opportunities for further development in the context of national initiatives.

4.5.1 To achieve effective joint-working between home and school and support the learner's development, the Commission commends the following to Council:

- a commitment to empowering parents' effective participation;
- the creation in every school of a welcoming environment to encourage opportunities for shared approaches to learning and involve parents' in their child's learning;
- the provision, by the start of each school year, of clear and readable information for parents on the curriculum and assessment that enables them to understand what will be learned and taught and how children will be encouraged to learn and develop a capacity for self evaluation;
- the provision of clear guidelines outlining the complementary roles and contributions of parents/guardians together with options for addressing any learning difficulties that may arise for their children;
- the promotion of effective means for parents' access to, and dialogue with, the school's staff;
- the use of ICT and other means to develop the home school partnership in ways that encourage parents to alert the school to issues (e.g. family bereavement, concerns about aspects of learning) and allow the school to inform parents (e.g. of achievements, progress, current work and activities, homework).

4.5.2 The aim will be for home school partnerships that are based on trust, confidence, complementarity and support for each learner.

4.5.3 One other potential partner, as part of the new curricular strategy, is the community. There are excellent examples available of communities making significant contribution to learning and teaching, e.g. through volunteering, and these would merit consideration by the Service.

4.6 The Inclusion Agenda

This is a major factor to be addressed in any recommendations for 3 -12 provision. The Commission endorses the Council's emphasis on inclusion being pursued where it is demonstrably in the interests of the child. However, the 2004 legislation, in operation from November 2005, assumes that inclusion will be the preferred approach. It poses both opportunities and challenges for the authority, the school and especially the classroom teacher who has to address the needs of all learners in the class and every child's right to learn.

4.6.1 The legislation widens the definition of need and proposes coordinated support plans. Teachers are likely to see the demands made on them as heavy and may experience fears about their ability to deliver what is required. There is a need to ensure:

- opportunities to discuss and develop ideas about what inclusion might mean beyond matters of placement;

- appropriate prior knowledge about individual children that is readily available to staff;
- access to new kinds of CPD and other support;
- the availability of relevant resources.

In addition to the above, it will be crucial to establish a coherent and integrated approach that brings together diverse professional skills to address the needs of the child and Clackmannanshire's new neighbourhood structure may well offer a context for innovative, multi-agency work.

- 4.6.2 Parental involvement will be vital, especially in the context of children with profound and complex needs, but also for the general population whose education is significantly influenced by inclusion initiatives.
- 4.6.3 Most importantly, the voices of young people themselves must be given the opportunity to inform practice. It cannot be assumed that their views will mirror and support those of their parents or communities, and it is the young person's rights on which education must focus.
- 4.6.4 When young people have been excluded or placed in care, it is vital that the authority retains its responsibilities to ensure an appropriate education and support for each young person. This is especially important if it involves young people returning successfully to mainstream provision
- 4.6.5 The Commission recognises that a commitment to an inclusive approach can play a significant part in the promotion of a culture of citizenship and rights and responsibilities for all.

4.7 An Integrated Approach

This is one of the most urgent challenges to be addressed. It requires a diverse range of professionals with different statutory duties, priorities and practices to first understand the changing nature of service provision and then find a common language, shared purpose and collaborative agenda that serve the needs and interests of the child who, along with family members, actively participates with them.

- 4.7.1 The evidence suggests that identification and implementation of revised professional practices within multi-agency settings, and the creation of new knowledge based on reflective and systematic analysis, is difficult, largely because of structural tensions and a lack of flexibility between different working practices.

Successful developments in this area require more than just better communication between different professionals. Joint recognition of the need for change, understanding of the values and priorities of other services (the rules and tools with which they operate) and a willingness to renegotiate traditional professional boundaries are essential. This has major implications for pre-service training and CPD within a multi-agency focus.

- 4.7.2 An important challenge for the Council will be to ensure that strategic decisions, about the resolution of tensions among professionals and the development of inter-agency working and training, are reflected in operational practice.

4.8 Learning and Teaching Strategies in the 21st Century

This will be the subject of review and change. The more comprehensive and wide ranging agenda of the curriculum for excellence and new evidence about how learning takes place, must inevitably influence learning and teaching approaches. In particular, the promotion of broad achievements as well as traditional attainments will have implications for the organisation of schooling, the roles of teachers and other staff, and the design of classrooms and schools.

Furthermore, the recognition of the importance of experiences as well as outcomes together with the promotion of the learner's own voice and choice, as described earlier, will require fundamental and continuing review of the philosophy and practice underpinning classroom teaching and learning.

4.8.1 A reduction in barriers between Pre 5, Primary and Secondary, the pursuit of greater continuity, new approaches to individual, group and independent learning and new breadth/depth balances will all have major ramifications for formal and informal learning environments and influence the overall design of schools, the use and layout of classrooms, playgrounds, libraries and assembly areas.

4.8.2 The availability, accessibility and use of ICT will be central. For example, the evolution of 'wireless' networks will have a significant impact on learning and teaching and will require comprehensive forward planning to ensure staff and pupils have the opportunity of using such resources to the full. There is sound evidence to support an approach which recognises and builds on prior ICT knowledge that begins with learning opportunities in the early years.

4.9 Rights and Responsibilities

These are integral to any strategy for education 3 to 12. Teachers have a right to respect and support, and the responsibility for providing effective teaching and assessment. Parents have a right to receive information and to provide information about their child, and a responsibility for helping to support learning. Pupils have the right to learn, and the responsibility to contribute and participate in the process of learning.

4.9.1 The best learning and teaching environment will be one in which these rights and responsibilities are mutually supportive. It is also crucial that processes for conflict resolution are in place and take account of each stakeholder's rights and responsibilities. To take such an approach forward will require goodwill, tolerance, respect for and understanding of individual roles and a shared commitment to developing, maintaining, reviewing and sustaining them.

4.9.2 There would be merit in each school offering guidelines on rights and responsibilities and making these available from the outset to all of the partners in learning. This will reinforce the themes of citizenship and effective contribution which are now central to curricular thinking.

4.10 Management Structures and Resources

These are issues to be considered by the Council in the light of current and future developments.

4.10.1. The flexibility offered by McCrone and the demographic realities facing the teaching workforce, may allow for further review informed by the new curricular strategy. Management structures, roles and remits may also merit consideration informed by the same factors. A new approach to recruitment and promotion should be founded on the

professional practice and standards pertinent to the needs of today and tomorrow. This would contribute to the reinvigoration and renewal of the profession's morale and focus.

- 4.10.2. Changing demography, new learning and teaching approaches, a more integrated approach to the whole child, the inclusion agenda and an innovative curriculum, pose questions about the suitability of buildings. The need for flexible layout of space to accommodate a variety of pupil groupings, multipurpose rooms to support pupils with special needs and outside facilities to reflect the requirements of the new emphasis on health education and fitness for both staff and pupils are challenges for schools.

In general, there is a need for bright clean spaces, warm and welcoming environments and opportunities for free movement and play. It is also important to note that the sustainability agenda is a healthy environment agenda for staff and pupils as well as an important educational theme. The physical and mental well being of staff and pupils and the availability of appropriate support are central to successful learning and teaching.

- 4.10.3 Whether the requirements are met through new build or seeking to improve the effectiveness of the existing estate, the Commission also sees merit in considering a campus approach across sectors and services as a response to the new 3 - 18 curriculum.

5 Core Themes and Developments for the Future

Informed by all of the above, this unanimous report has identified the following core themes and developments which have emerged from its considerations;

- An emphasis on new ways of thinking
- Less central direction and prescription of the curriculum
- The integration agenda
- The roles of parents and communities
- Continuing professional development
- Resources ; human, materials and buildings

Subject to Council's approval of the contents of the report, the Commission offers a number of general and specific recommendations which it hopes will inform both current and future strategies and policy development in Clackmannanshire, and Clackmannanshire's contributions to the major, current national initiatives. In all of the recommended approaches the identification, consolidation, dissemination and celebration of success will be at the heart of good practice.

5.1 An emphasis on new ways of thinking

Provision for young people will be central to the developments and essential if the aspirations behind the new proposals are to be fully and properly realised.

- 5.1.1 Significant challenges for the learning partnerships will be posed by a move away from the heavy focus on largely cognitive outcomes and targets, and assessment regimes founded on "age-and-stage" testing, towards priorities and assessments that address the whole child's needs.
- 5.1.2 The shift from an almost exclusive national focus on academic targets and performance to one of encouraging, assessing and developing both attainment and broader achievements will have a significant impact on learning and teaching.
- 5.1.3 To achieve the goals of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and contributing individuals will require pupils to understand, and have a say in, what they need to know (for example, they will need to know much more about ICT and its implications in our world of rapid social, commercial and industrial change).

The new learning environment has to explore the possibilities of transferable skills, the promotion of adaptability and flexibility, the skills of enterprise, and qualities for ethical and tolerant living. Young people will require to develop the critical skills that enable them to make their own rational judgements about cause-and-effect or choices-and-consequences, rather than being told what they need to know.

- 5.1.4 It is unlikely, therefore, that the desirable learning experiences and outcomes will be realised by a didactic approach to 'truth'. They should be taken forward in a culture which is inclusive and participative and reflects democratic and ethical values. Clackmannanshire has been commended for developing philosophic and ethical reflection within the current curriculum and that provides a sound basis for young people to address the important issues through their own learned skills, rather than by direct instruction.

Recommendation:

In light of the principles identified in this report it is recommended that, subject to the report receiving general approval, it should be widely circulated to all in the learning partnership and thereafter be the basis for dialogue, consultation and implementation.

5.2 Less central prescription and direction of the curriculum

This is a basic feature of the new approach. It emphasises the need for teachers' greater professional freedom and discretion to reflect on the curriculum and be involved in crucial education decisions. This will require changes in some current decision-making and accountability processes. It will also depend on the willingness of all teachers to engage with the new approach and new forms of accountability. The proper balance between legitimate professional autonomy and a shared understanding of professional accountability will be a vital prerequisite of success.

The recognition of the importance of effective leadership in every classroom combined with professional support and collegiality is central to the approach for today and tomorrow. To move from a top-down prescriptive cascade model to a more consensual, profession led approach within an enhanced model for devolved decision making will be neither straightforward nor rapid. It will be essential, nonetheless, and will also require a review of the roles and responsibilities of other levels of leadership.

- 5.2.1 The more devolved system will seek the empowerment of parents and young people and significant interaction between the partners in learning in a culture that is inclusive and participative, based on trust and confidence and which recognises the complementarity of knowledge and interest.

Recommendation:

The Commission recommends the development of a comprehensive strategy made available to all in the learning partnership, which addresses, explicitly, the interface between legitimate professional autonomy and appropriate professional accountability.

5.3 The Integration Agenda

This will also figure prominently in the adoption of an approach dedicated to the whole child and fostering of inclusion. Successful inter-agency working will require an understanding of different roles, responsibilities, philosophies, training, values and priorities, and a facilitation of shared action, effective dialogue and commitment to resolve difficulties. Furthermore, priority must be given to ensuring that strategic decisions about such developments are applied in practice within the reformed structure for multi-agency work now being established in Clackmannanshire. The proper balance between legitimate professional autonomies and a shared understanding of professional accountabilities will be a vital prerequisite of success.

- 5.3.1 Effective engagement by a range of professionals with different skills within education and the wider services (e.g. educational psychologists, social workers, NHS therapists and paediatricians, the police and the children's hearings) is a fundamental requirement. It will require major developments in Continuous Professional Development and other training. Such training should be joint wherever possible and the integration agenda should also be reflected in individual CPD opportunities and activities.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Council further develop a strategic, joint policy framework to support its new neighbourhood structure, seek to promote joint training opportunities in Clackmannanshire and influence the regular national discussions with Pre Service providers with a view to promote a greater understanding of the importance of effective, joint working.

5.4 The roles of parents and communities

It is necessary to re-emphasise the need to enhance parental and community involvement. Their participation in the developments on the basis of mutual trust and confidence with the professional partners is central to the realisation of the most effective learning approaches. It is recognised that the necessary involvement of parents and other professionals will make the task more complex but such issues can be addressed by an evolutionary approach building on and replicating successful developments.

5.4.1 Time-constrained parents' meetings and generalist PLPs should be examined to assess their effectiveness and accessibility in providing information for parents who need to know about curricular tasks and priorities, assessment and their own potential contributions. It is also essential to avoid further bureaucracy when considering alternatives.

5.4.2 Within a new curriculum that promotes both attainment and broader achievements there are opportunities for communities to develop both resource and support roles thereby helping to ensure that the school is integral to its community.

Recommendation:

The Commission recommends:

- a review of current home school partnership links and formats,
- the development of information and prior knowledge of key issues (e.g. curricular activities) to be made available to parents at the start of each year with advice as to parental contribution;
- the extended use of ICT to further enhance the home / school partnership in an efficient and effective manner;
- the preparation of a range of options for greater community participation.

5.5 Continuing Professional Development –

5.5.1 In the new form that CPD has to adopt it will be important to accept that there is not an existing bank of knowledge about “how to do it”. It will draw on teachers' individual and collective processes of creativity and reflection, and advocate the exploration of new possibilities, alternative practices and evidence from research, whether carried out in Scotland or further afield.

5.5.2 The commitment to CPD and new approaches to CPD will complement and facilitate the new curricular and assessment strategies and the crucial balance between legitimate professional autonomy and open accountability.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Continuous Professional Development has the highest priority on a continuing basis if the aspirations for a new curriculum and a reformed assessment strategy are to be realised and that the approach adopted reflect the key issues identified in this report.

5.6 Resources: human, material and buildings

- 5.6.1 Reference has already been made above to vital aspects of staff needs and expectations. Similarly, the opportunities which will arise as Council addresses the demographic issues that will arise in the teaching profession in the next 10-15 years have been identified.
- 5.6.2 The new strategy implies that new criteria for, and approaches to, the recruitment and promotion of teachers should be adopted. These would be informed by the agenda for change and the challenges for teaching in the 21st century.
- 5.6.3 Notwithstanding economies of scale, consideration should be given to ways of introducing greater flexibility and devolution of decision making about the classroom resources required for revised approaches to curriculum and assessment. Similarly, whole school resources may well be looked at differently given new developments such as the enhanced focus on broader experiences and achievements.
- 5.6.4 In terms of buildings and layouts, the following observation from one Clackmannanshire primary head teacher is salutary:

“Education has moved on and the needs and demands placed on Primary schools have great difficulty in being met within the style and structure of the existing buildings”

Council is committed to a review of the Pre 5 and Primary Estate. Undoubtedly there will be the ever-present constraints of funding, planning and diverse interests. If, however, Clackmannanshire is to build on its successes, embrace the essentials required to provide appropriate learning and teaching environments and respond to changing demographics of pupil numbers and place of residence, then difficult choices have to be made.

The current estate struggles to address the demands placed upon it and those demands will change and may well become greater. This emphasises the urgency for an identification of what is required for the future, in comparison with current provision 3 to 12, so that estate decisions can be made which reflect Clackmannanshire's vision for this aspect of education in the 21st century.

It is highly unlikely that sufficient resources will be made available to Council for the replacement or major refurbishment of all current 3 -12 establishments. It is equally unlikely that care and maintenance can address the needs and demands which are and will continue to be central to the most effective and appropriate learning and teaching environments in the twenty first century. The Commission hopes, therefore, that its report provides a basis for the required prioritisations and reforms that must be made.

The Commission sees considerable merit in a strategy which would develop the campus model thus promoting continuity and progression from 3 – 12, allow for the inclusion of other, relevant provision (e.g. playgroups) and other services (e.g. sports, art and music development, relevant social services and NHS provision) and so provide an integrated approach to the whole child. Such an approach can be very beneficial to young people, families and staff, promoting an inclusive and integrated model and at the same time maximising possible capital gain and capital resources.

The Commission is confident that such a comprehensive approach, founded on consultation and a guarantee of high quality provision appropriate to the needs of young people in the twenty-first century would be supported by all in the learning partnerships.

Recommendations:

In regard to resources the Commission offers the following specific recommendations for Council's consideration :

- **the preparation of a 10 year strategy, informed by the contents of this report, to address the vital issues of future staffing, recruitment, promotion and structures;**
- **on the basis of this strategy and the parallel policy developments in areas such as the new curriculum, new approaches to assessment and Clackmannanshire's commitment to CPD, to provide for all teacher education institutions a synopsis of the Clackmannanshire approach. This could be circulated to and form the basis of discussion with all students having placement in and/or an interest in being appointed to Clackmannanshire schools;**
- **this material to be provided to all applicants for posts in education at all levels;**
- **to pass this report to the School Estate Review sub-group of CAMPT (Corporate Asset Management Planning Team) for its information.**

In the process of addressing all of the issues pertinent to 3 – 12 provision, it has become clear that this report is partial in terms of the current national agenda and priorities.

Final Recommendation:

The Commission would offer one final recommendation for the consideration of council. Given the national initiatives on the curriculum (3 - 18) and assessment (3 -15) the Commission sees considerable merit in a review of 12 -18 provision as a necessary complement to this review of 3 - 12.

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