

5 December 2016

JS/16/69

Dear colleague

Teacher Workload

At the SNCT meeting on 5 October 2016 the SNCT considered a report relating to the 2015/17 Pay Agreement. This report is appended and should be considered as part of your LNCT's ongoing work on tackling teacher workload and excessive bureaucracy.

The SNCT also agreed to circulate What to Do/What to Avoid drawn from Education Scotland's, Curriculum for Excellence – A Statement for Practitioners from HM Chief Inspector of Schools (August 2016).

Finally, LNCT's should be taking account of the Education Scotland report, Review of Local Authorities' Actions to Tackle Unnecessary Bureaucracy and Undue Workload in Schools. This can be accessed on the Education Scotland website.

Yours sincerely

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PLANNING LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT USING THE EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO DO

- Use long-term plans to outline the structure of the year and the ways in which learning is organised throughout the whole year.
- Keep medium-term planning short and focused on the main learning activities developed from the Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os). Group Es and Os together in ways which best suit learners.
- Short-term planning on a daily or weekly basis should be flexible and be regarded as working notes to help organise learning.
- Take a collegiate approach to moderation of planning learning, teaching and assessment.
- Work together with colleagues to review and reduce any unnecessary bureaucracy. Plan and organise learning in a way which avoids each week at school feeling too cluttered to provide space and time for depth of learning.
- Planning should include consideration of how best the needs of individual and groups of children and young people will be met.
- Prioritise literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum to ensure that all learners make the best possible progress.
- Plan interdisciplinary learning (IDL) to make natural links across learning. Be aware of what is happening in other subjects and make connections.
- All planning must focus directly on enhancing the learner journey. When asked to complete paperwork which does not directly relate to improving the learner journey, challenge this with your colleagues.

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid writing overly-detailed plans for the year ahead which limit your flexibility to respond to children's and young people's needs, interests and progression.
- Do not plan for individual Es and Os or spend excessive time writing detailed descriptions of learning activities.
- Do not 'tick off' all of the Es and Os separately.
- Do not spend excessive time completing detailed daily or weekly planning templates or writing detailed evaluations of plans.
- Avoid unnecessary bureaucracy creeping back in over time.
- Stop doing too many things at the same time. For example, in a primary school, covering all eight curriculum areas every week.
- Do not lose a clear focus on helping all children and young people to progress at an appropriate pace and achieve the highest standards in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Do not spend time on IDL which does not provide opportunities to apply and deepen learning or is contrived.

PLANNING LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT USING THE BENCHMARKS

The purpose of the Benchmarks is to set out very clear statements about what children and young people need to learn to achieve each level of the curriculum. Benchmarks streamline and embed a wide range of existing assessment guidance (significant aspects of learning, progression frameworks and annotated exemplification) into one key resource to support teachers' professional judgement.

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO DO

- Periodically (from time to time) use assessments to sample and pull together learning in a joined-up way.
- Plan an appropriate balance between on-going and periodic assessment – this will vary from stage to stage.
- Moderate assessment judgements by taking account of a sample of evidence from different sources to discuss standards and the progress of learners.
- As a school, develop simple and effective approaches to monitoring and tracking learners' progress particularly in literacy and numeracy. Tracking needs to be as easy to use as possible.
- Regularly discuss tracking information with colleagues to plan additional support and interventions to help improve learners' progress.
- Evaluate learners' progress on an on-going basis and keep short concise notes to help planning for next steps in learning. This will include identifying where additional support and challenge may be needed.
- Use the benchmarks to help monitor progress and support overall professional judgement of when a learner has achieved a curriculum level.
- Involve children and young people in leading their own learning and involve them in profiling their achievements.
- Reporting to parents should highlight latest progress, identify next steps in learning and build on profiling. Discussions should highlight ways in which parents can support their child's progress.

KEY MESSAGES – WHAT TO AVOID

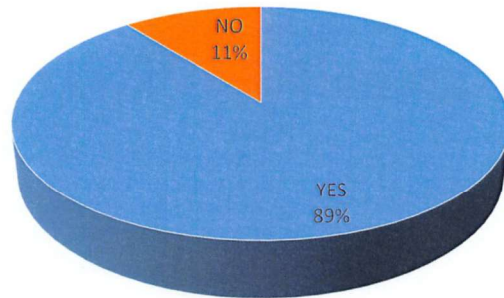
- Avoid spending time on assessment activities which do not help to identify children's and young people's next steps in learning.
- Do not over-assess learners or assess the same content repeatedly in different ways. Do not create large portfolios of evidence.
- Avoid duplication and keeping evidence of every detail within the Benchmark.
- Avoid waiting until learners have demonstrated evidence of every aspect of learning within the Benchmarks before moving on to the next level.
- Avoid undue pressure on learners with too many assessments in different subjects at once.
- Avoid spending too much time collecting a wide range of evidence for moderation purposes.
- Do not track and record progress against individual Es and Os.
- Do not track progress and achievement using the terms 'developing, consolidating, secure'.
- Do not spend time writing long reports for parents which describe lots of classwork or use professional jargon.

Review of the SNCT Pay Agreement 2015/17

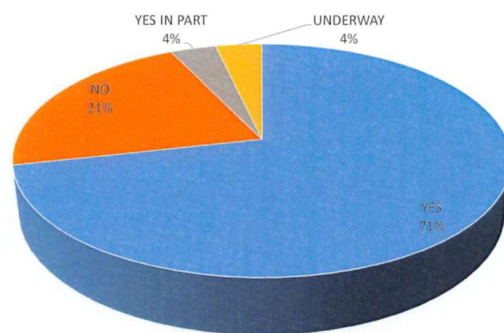
Survey

- 7 key questions
- 28 Responses to date
- Jointly signed off by LNCT
- 3 LNCTs attached additional papers and examples of good practice (Aberdeenshire, Stirling and South Ayrshire)

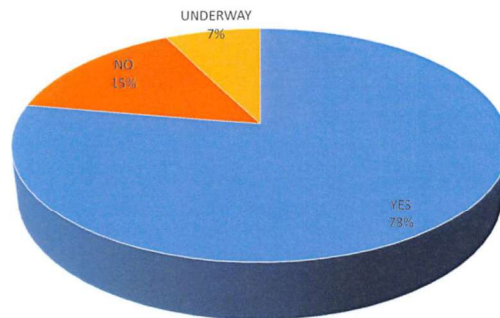
Has SNCT Appendix 2.18 been discussed at your LNCT?



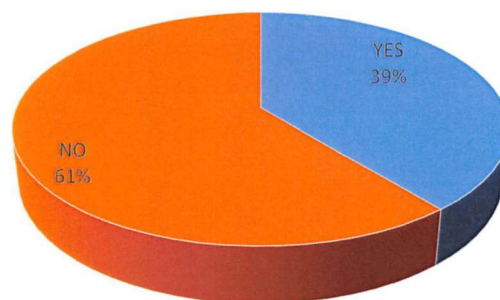
Has the LNCT revised WTA guidance to take account of the terms of Appendix 2.18?



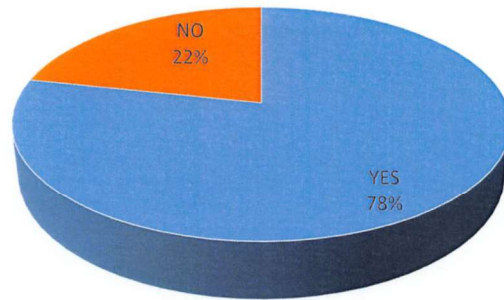
Has other guidance been issued to schools arising from the agreement, taking account of the Tackling Bureaucracy report?



Are copies of such documents posted on the LNCT section of the SNCT Website?



Are school WTAs annually sampled?



Are School Improvement Plans monitored to ensure that the Plan reflects actions to reduce bureaucracy and tackle workload?

