

STARTER PAPER

A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE REDUCTION IN CONTACT TIME IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 “A teaching Profession for the 21st Century” established a requirement to reduce, by August 2004, the contact time for teachers in primary schools from 25 hours to 23.5 hours per week. In general this will apply to teachers who have weekly contact with P4 – P7 pupils, nursery teachers who currently teach 25 hours per week and teachers whose duties involve working with pupils from P1 – P7.

The weekly contact time for all teachers is to be reduced to 22.5 hours by 1 August 2006.

2 DISCUSSION

- 2.1 The reduction of contact time in primary schools should be set in the wider context described below.

- The planned and phased introduction of Principal Teachers (PTs) to primary schools.
- Curriculum development and delivery taking into account the current national review of Curriculum 3 – 18.
- Increasing use of specialist teachers to deliver aspects of the primary curriculum e.g. Expressive Arts, Science and Technology, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Modern Languages.

- 2.2 The principles set out in this paper take account of the developments and issues described in 2.1. Consequently it is proposed that the additional non-contact time for teachers of P4 – P7 be created through an increase in the number and range of visiting specialists employed in primary schools. However should there be difficulty, in the short term, in recruiting sufficient visiting specialists, it may be necessary to increase the core staffing of some schools.

- 2.3 Where it is necessary to enhance core staffing, headteachers will be offered guidance on the use of additional staffing. This guidance will indicate that the time should be used to provide a wider range of specialist teaching across the school.

- 2.4 The deployment of visiting specialists will be phased over sessions 2003/2004 – 2005/2006. In addition to existing specialists additional staff will be recruited to provide specialist teaching in:

- expressive arts
- science/technology
- ICT/technology
- modern foreign languages

- 2.5 This model is based on the assumption that specialist teachers working in primary schools will not be required to work along with the class teacher thus providing the class teacher with the required non-contact time. In some cases this may be contrary to current practice.
- 2.6 It is proposed that the services of specialists be obtained in two ways;
- existing specialists be reallocated following full consultation and agreement (further recruitment of specialists in the Expressive Arts will be required).
 - advertisements will be placed for fully registered teachers interested in working as specialists in identified curricular areas across a number of schools. In addition to the current range, specialists will be sought in modern languages, science/technology and ICT/technology.
 - these posts will be open to both primary and secondary.
- 2.7 As part of the recruitment process it will be necessary to identify career progression for visiting specialist teachers and to ensure that their CPD needs are identified and are met effectively.
- 2.8 There will be an immediate need to provide initial training for teachers who are to work as specialists across a number of schools.
- 2.9 If we are to have sufficient specialists in place it will be essential to start the recruitment process in January 2004.
- 2.10 As noted in paragraph 1.1, nursery teachers currently teach 25 hours per week if employed on a full-time basis. As these teachers already work 10 x 2.5 sessions it is recommended that nursery teachers move to 22.5 hours in August 2004. This will facilitate the recruitment of staff who may be employed in half-day blocks offering the most cost-effective approach.
- 2.11 Non-contact time should be allocated to all primary staff in blocks of not less than 45 minutes.

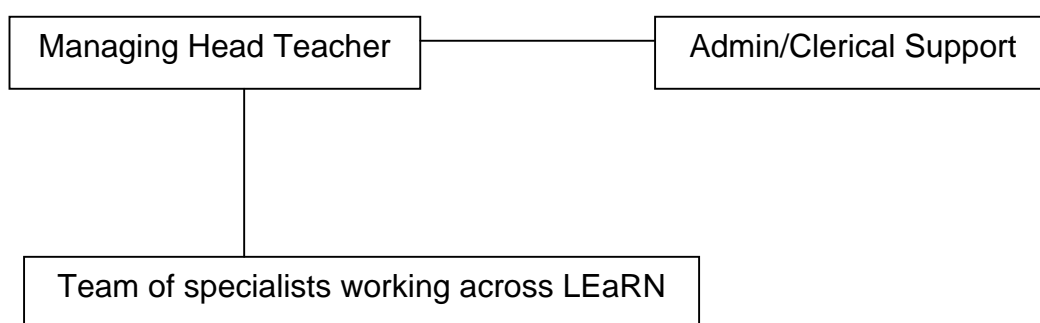
3 MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 If the strategy is to be implemented successfully effective management at local level will be essential. Consequently it is proposed that specialists be appointed on a LEARN basis. Where necessary and appropriate specialists will work across two adjacent LEARNs.
- 3.2 Overall strategic management for the deployment of the specialists will be the responsibility of one of the primary Head Teachers within the LEARN. That person will also have strategic responsibility for issues such as quality assurance and CPD for visiting specialists. The mechanism for identifying that individual will have to be

established. Additional time will be made available to carry out management duties associated with the expanded visiting specialist model.

- 3.3 While the Head Teacher will have overall strategic responsibility he/she will be supported by an increased allocation of admin/clerical time to address operational issues and meet the requirements of Annex E of "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century".
- 3.4 Arrangements will be made to introduce Principal Teachers to the primary sector. It is recommended that those arrangements include the appointment of principal teachers to oversee the management of specialists at LEARN level subject to negotiation and agreement at the LNCT of a structure for the introduction of principal teachers to nursery and primary schools.
- 3.5 Should principal teachers be introduced to the primary sector it will be necessary to review the management arrangements described in 3.2 and 3.3.
- 3.6 As noted previously, training programmes will be required for managing Head Teachers, specialists, and, possibly, principal teachers. Training will also be required for those staff providing admin/clerical support. The E&R CPD and the corporate Development and Training Service teams will be required to ensure all necessary training is carried out by the end of the current session.
- 3.7 It will be necessary to develop a timetable to ensure arrangements are in place by June 2004. A draft timetable appears as appendix 2.
- 3.8 Reduction in teacher contact hours will inevitably result in additional costs for additional staff and absence cover.
 - 3.8.1 Additional staffing will be required to support the model set out in this paper. Additional non-contact time will be required for managing Head Teachers and, possibly, for PTs. Subject to the agreement referred to in 3.4.
 - 3.8.2 Training will also involve additional expenditure for both training and "cover" costs.
 - 3.8.3 The model will also require additional resourcing for schools, particularly for science, technology and ICT.

Management model for “specialist” option 2004 – 2005



Notes

1. The “managing head teacher” will be one of the LEARN primary head teachers. S/he will still be responsible for the management/leadership of her/his school.
2. The number of specialists and, possibly, principal teachers will be determined by the number of schools opting for the specialist model and the number of teachers in the LEARN with weekly responsibility for teaching classes including pupils drawn from P4 – P7.
3. It may be necessary, in the first instance for the specialist option to be spread over two adjacent LEARNs.
4. The first group of specialists will be recruited/trained in expressive arts, science, modern languages and technology/ICT.

DRAFT TIMETABLE JANUARY 2004 – JUNE 2004

By 31 January 2004

- Task group formed
- Draft strategy prepared
- Job descriptions/person specifications and particulars of employment for specialist option prepared
- Consultation/communication plan prepared.

By 29 February 2004

- Report prepared for E&R Committee
- Job descriptions and particulars of employment agreed by LNCT
- Advertisements placed for additional specialists
- Consultation/communication plan implemented
- Survey of primary schools to establish indicative needs and option to be followed

By 31 March 2004

- Applications/references received
- Job description for managing head teacher prepared and agreed by LNCT
- Survey of additional resources required
- Interview dates set

By 30 April 2004

- Start of procedure to appoint specialists
- Training needs identified
- Training planned
- Trainers identified
- Resources identified/acquisition begin

By 31 May 2004

- Appointment process for all options continues
- Training continues
- Resource acquisition continues
- Admin/clerical needs identified
- Timetabling of specialists to clusters/schools

By June 2004

- Appointments completed
- Resources acquired and in schools
- First stage of training complete
- Timetabling of specialists complete