
MIDLOTHIAN NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS**New forward planning agreement for primary schools**

The MNCT is committed to tackling bureaucracy and workload.

This new guidance for Forward Planning in primary schools seeks to ensure that professional dialogue plays an integral part of the planning process, and minimises the risk of unnecessary paperwork.

Head Teachers are asked to ensure that all permanent teachers, visiting specialist teachers, and fixed-term teachers within the establishment are given a copy of the attached.

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Circulated to: All Schools, Teacher Unions, SNCT

**MIDLOTHIAN NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS
PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

BACKGROUND

The MNCT has been committed for a number of years to addressing the demands of forward planning in primary classes. The initial report of the Curriculum for Excellence Working Group on Tackling Bureaucracy was published (November 2013). A clear message emerged from this group: that the purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is to promote better learning and teaching. This must not be obscured by bureaucracy and unnecessary paperwork.

One of the identified main drivers of excessive bureaucracy from the working group was over-detailed planning processes. The 2015 Follow-Up Report advised schools to simplify their procedures.

To avoid approaches being overly-bureaucratic, Midlothian primary schools may wish to consider the following as an example of what might as a maximum be considered as appropriate, remaining mindful of the fact that complex and lengthy plans are not required. Plans should continue to relate to the needs of individuals.

Below in bold are the main points from the working group, along with guidance from a Midlothian perspective.

Forward Planning should support professional dialogue rather than support an audit function:

Opportunities for professional dialogue across stages/ CfE levels should be built into the school calendar. The following gives a sense of the type of collegiate discussion professionals may want to have. Key priorities in the School Improvement Plan may also provide ideas for such dialogue:

- How have you planned under the 4 contexts of learning?
 - how do you ensure an appropriate balance between discrete subjects and IDL?
 - why have you structured this block's curriculum map in this way- what is the IDL outcome for your IDL project?
 - what opportunities are there to link with the ethos and life of the school/ opportunities for wider achievement?

- How are you ensuring 'freedom within a framework'?
 - what opportunities are you giving for personalisation and choice while still being clear about what the learning outcomes are and why?
- How does your curriculum meet the needs of the children in your class?
 - what data/ information/ evidence do you hold about the children in your class?
 - who are the highest achieving 20% and how are you challenging them?
 - who are the lowest achieving 20% and how are you supporting them?
- How and what are you assessing specifically in the next block? What evidence will you have and how will you use it?

Where appropriate, learners should be involved in the planning process for next steps in their learning.

Teachers should plan to the level of detail which will work best for their pupils. This will vary with the teachers' level of experience, familiarity with material and preferred style, so there should not be a 'one size fits all' approach.

To avoid approaches becoming overly bureaucratic, the following is a guide to maximum planning expectations:

Long Term Plan (Annual)

- A broad overview of the experiences and outcomes which will form the basis of planning across the four contexts of learning for the session
- The long term plan is informed by transition information from the previous session
- It contains experiences and outcomes from each curricular area, without any detail of learning intentions or specific activities

Medium Term Plan (3 per year)

- Within Literacy and Numeracy, existing programmes are highlighted to reflect planned learning and assessment for the block
- Head Teachers will be supported to further develop the curriculum in their schools to ensure progressive and cohesive programmes for other curricular areas which should then be highlighted within the medium term plan. Many of our schools already have such programmes in place.
- Teachers could group together related experiences and outcomes from across the curriculum (Interdisciplinary Learning), and focus on the most significant aspects of teaching and learning if this has not already been done in the Long Term Plan

Short Term Plan (weekly or daily)

- This plan will build on prior learning and will be informed by discussion with learners, teachers' own reflections of learning and teaching and most recent assessment evidence if appropriate

- Specific intended learning could be detailed on this plan, depending on a teacher's own requirements
- This plan is a reactive working document which is adapted on a daily basis according to needs identified in previous lessons
- Is for the teacher's own use (where teachers know in advance of an absence they should ensure a clear plan of work is left for the class; in the case of an unplanned absence teachers are asked, where possible, to communicate work plans to the school as soon as possible if weekly or daily plans are not left in the classroom)

ICT Planning Systems should be used with caution

The MNCT has concluded after its evaluation of the recent pilot of *On Track with Learning* that it does not reduce teacher workload. It will therefore not be used in Midlothian.

Next Steps

- Future meetings of Head Teachers will provide further discussion and support surrounding the guidance in this document
- Individual schools' Forward Planning procedures will be monitored and advice and support given as required
- A report on progress will be given to MNCT following the February break in 2016
- Schools will be reminded of the existing planners for Literacy and Numeracy
- Good practice in planning other areas of the curriculum will be gathered and disseminated