

**Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh
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**Fiona Hyslop MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning**

Thank you Graham and good afternoon SICI delegates. The Scottish Government is strongly committed to international engagement and an outward looking approach. As Scots, we need to protect and bolster the international reputation we enjoy for excellence in education and to apply a global perspective to our approach and ambitions. I am, therefore, delighted to welcome inspectors from 14 different European countries and 18 different educational inspectorates here today.

This event provides us with a unique opportunity to exchange views about educational priorities and approaches to inspection across Europe and to explore the important educational issues which we all face. I was very interested to note the rich variety of themes covered in your programme over these two days. I look forward to hearing more about your activities and discussions over lunch.

SICI delegates are joining us here in Edinburgh at an important time for Scottish Government, Scottish society and Scottish education. Over the past year, we have developed and are implementing radical new policies and approaches across the full range of public services. Through the historic Concordat that the Government has agreed with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in November 2007, we are enabling Scotland's 32 local authorities to take real responsibility for meeting the priority needs of the populations they serve, while also making a vital contribution, working together with central government in the achievement of national outcomes. We have set up a National Performance Framework to help us to achieve and measure improvements in public services and the quality of life for people in Scotland. Yesterday we launched a new website, Scotland Performs, which will record publicly our progress in meeting the

agreed

national outcomes. HMIE have a key role to play in this National Performance Framework and I shall return to that later.

The Scottish Government's overarching purpose is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing and sustainable economic growth.

This purpose is supported by five national strategic priorities, to achieve

- a Wealthier and Fairer Scotland
- a Safer Scotland
- a Greener Scotland
- a Healthier Scotland

and perhaps the most relevant to my own portfolio and to this gathering

- a Smarter Scotland

These five priorities are designed to overlap and support each other. For example, education has obvious roles in developing the workforce needed for a country to be wealthy, in establishing the habits for healthy living and in fostering positive attitudes to green issues. The services and establishments that deliver education and training also provide or work in partnership to deliver a range of other services related, for example, to care and health.

Our five national strategic priorities are supported by 15 high-level national outcomes. One that relates particularly to the Smarter priority is for our young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. These are the intended outcomes of *Curriculum for Excellence* our current major national development in the curriculum for children and young people aged 3 -18.

Curriculum for Excellence is about providing the best possible teaching and learning experiences for our children and young people to ensure they have skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life. We know from inspection evidence that we already have a great deal of excellent teaching and learning in Scotland. We have a strong, well-qualified teaching

profession and there has been considerable investment in initial training and induction, continuous professional development and leadership skills.

What we need now is exciting, engaging, relevant teaching from every teacher in every pre-school centre, school and college. *Curriculum for Excellence* encourages and challenges teachers to think about their own teaching and develop it so that it is as good as it can be.

The Government's role and the role of local authorities are to create the conditions which allow us to get excellent teaching, learning and achievement everywhere. There are tools which the Scottish Government and local authorities can provide to help. We are:

- revising the guidance on how the curriculum can be organised to allow space for innovation;
- producing draft curriculum guidance to update content, focus on outcomes and emphasise the need for every teacher to contribute to literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing;
- providing guidance and examples on inter-disciplinary work so that teachers can work together on outcomes; and
- looking at how assessment can be used to support real learning.

In addition to the *Curriculum for Excellence* developments, we are also working to deliver a smarter Scotland through the following key priorities.

- In order to ensure all children have the best start in life and to prevent long term problems, we are developing a new approach to the early years and early intervention for young children and their families. Our Early Years and Early Intervention Framework will be published in the autumn.
- Through our *Getting it right for every child* programme, we are helping to remove the obstacles that can block children's paths to the curriculum and learning and impede their journey from birth to adulthood.
- Our *More Choices, More Chances* strategy, we aim to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training.

• We are producing a new science strategy for Scotland, to outline how science will underpin our success as a nation.

- Our Skills Strategy aims to create a cohesive lifelong learning system which equips individuals with skills that are flexible enough to meet the needs of today and the demands of tomorrow.
- We have set up a Universities task force to inform future thinking on higher education in Scotland, to ensure we have a sector that is competitive and contributing to Scotland's success in the decades ahead.

I said I would return to the Inspectorate's role within the National Performance Framework. Through its role in the Framework, HMIE will make an essential contribution to supporting the Government in taking forward its priorities, in particular the Smarter objective.

The most detailed level of the National Performance Framework comprises 45 national indicators, selected to demonstrate direction of travel across all of our public services. Fortyfive indicators cannot, of course, cover the full range of public services comprehensively. We have selected them to be representative of key outcomes, to be touchstones of wider performance.

In developing this approach, we have drawn upon practice in the high-performing State of Virginia, USA and its *Virginia Performs* website. As I said earlier, the website that we launched yesterday to provide real-time information on how we are performing in Scotland takes the name *Scotland Performs*.

Some of the indicators in the National Performance Framework provide straightforward readouts of numerical data. But we value and need to focus on what is important, not just on what that is easily or directly measurable. One approach also includes indicators that relate to public perceptions as gathered by surveys.

Three of the indicators in the framework will be derived from the evaluations made in the course of inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. We shall be reporting on the proportion of schools, pre-school centres and child protection in local areas that have positive inspection reports. These indicators will provide very good information about our success and progress in Scottish education.

We recognise that inspection will provide us with accurate and reliable information about the quality and performance of Scottish education and

services for children. We couple that with recognition of the other positive ways in which HMIE has demonstrated that it can support improvement, development and policy making in the areas that it inspects.

In the course of this 2-day workshop you will have heard that we are reviewing and adjusting approaches to inspection. These changes represent a key contribution to taking forward the Government's strategic priorities and commitments. I am pleased that inspections are to be aligned with the future requirements of National Performance Framework reporting and will take account of the current direction of travel for Scottish scrutiny bodies. The 2007 report by Professor Lorne Crerar suggested a more proportionate approach to scrutiny, greater reliance of self-assessment by providers and reorganisation to produce a smaller number of scrutiny bodies. In accepting the broad thrust of the report, the Government reaffirmed the importance of inspection in providing assurance and in driving improvement.

HMIE is well placed to respond to these developments because for around 15 years it has been actively promoting and supporting self-evaluation by schools, other establishments and services. In recent years it has already adopted proportionate approaches across the sectors in which it inspects, on the principle of what Graham calls, "maximum impact, minimum intrusion".

The proposed changes build constructively on an approach to inspection which has achieved world-wide recognition. HMIE is an agency described in the recent OECD report on the Quality and Equity of Schooling in Scotland as *an inspectorate that aims at cultural change and strategic action rather than compliance*. I am pleased to endorse this positive view and have high expectations of what the Inspectorate can do to support the Scottish Government with our priorities.

I want to see the best of current inspection practice built upon to continue to provide assurance to all stakeholders, promote self-evaluation and act as a powerful driver of improvement and transformational change through successful innovation. In other words, I see HMIE as having an integral role in delivering the Government's priorities for improvement as well as reporting on them.

The work of HMIE also supports Ministers directly in their statutory duties under the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000* to endeavour to secure improvement in education. Its inspection and other evaluative activity have the core purpose of providing assurance, but are also integral

to the ability and credibility of HMIE in other areas. Its effectiveness in supporting policy and decision making, for example, is founded directly upon the evidence gained on its day-in, day-out engagement across the system in inspection, reporting, providing advice and professional dialogue with practitioners and managers of services.

The interlinking of scrutiny with improvement and successful innovation will be even more important as we develop the new ways of working through Curriculum for Excellence. The ability of inspectors to engage directly with staff during inspections provides a unique purchase on improvement at the points where learning takes place. Other Scottish bodies play important roles in encouraging improvement but none has the direct impact which comes from inspection. We know that follow-through activities by inspectors and local authority staff working together after inspections provide powerful evidence of clear and sometimes dramatic improvement.

Similarly, the identification of good and cutting-edge practice during inspection allows the dissemination of that practice in ways which command respect through confidence in its high quality. Too much of the 'good practice' promoted in other ways is based on theory or is linked to self-promotion. HMIE's *Journey to Excellence* resources, for example, enjoy high credibility largely because of confidence in their contents.

The Inspectorate's series of aspect reports on specific educational themes include examples of good practice, recommendations and areas for improvement. I and my fellow Ministers are often involved in good practice conferences linked to the launch of these aspect reports. I can see the impact of these events from the reaction of practitioners and managers who attend them. I can understand why contributions from inspectors are in great demand at national and local events and why changes in practice follow.

I mentioned the move in Scotland towards a more central role for self-evaluation. Education is the sector of Scotland's public services in which self-evaluation is furthest advanced. Important aspects of that approach have been widely emulated in other sectors, not least through the HMIE-led initiative with other scrutiny bodies to establish joint inspections of child protection services, looking forward to inspections of wider children's services.

In recognition of the international nature of this gathering today, I would like to finish with a few words about Scotland's international outlook. Finding ways for Scotland and young Scots to learn from the experience of those in

other countries is a key part of preparing our young people for success in a globalised world.

We want to ensure that all our young people are outward looking and confident about themselves and their nation and that they have a modern and enterprising world view. In order to achieve that aim, our education system needs to provide them with knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it. This is a thread that runs through *Curriculum for Excellence* for all young people at all stages of their learning. The experiences and outcomes that are currently the subject of engagement and trialling in schools have been written such that they will provide ample opportunity for learning and teaching from an international perspective.

We must ensure that our young people understand and can respond to the challenges that are presented by globalisation. If the curriculum is to be excellent, it must incorporate an international perspective; if it does not, our society and economy will be poorer. The Government is, therefore, committed to ensuring that an international education, including learning other languages, is part of the experience for young people in all our schools.

I know that HMIE is also strongly committed to international education. Participation in international activities is an important dimension of the work of HMIE, complementing the core business of inspection at home. It helps to build the reputation of Scottish education abroad, informs thinking about policy within Scotland and allows HMIE to learn as an organisation and inspectors to develop their own expertise. I am sure that this SICI workshop will advance all of these purposes.

I congratulate you on the success of this workshop. I now look forward to hearing some traditional Scottish music from pupils from an Edinburgh City school and to meeting SICI delegates over lunch.