

## CHAPTER 6: ENTITLEMENT CRITERIA AND OPTIONS FOR NEW ARRANGEMENTS

### Context

- 6.1 The Entitlement Framework sets the general context for future provision for all pupils. It provides a basis for the review of current provision in each locality and thence for proposals for the development, enhancement or reconfiguration of provision in order to achieve the range and choice which we believe should be available. To assist managing authorities and schools with this review, the following criteria and supporting guidance about the content of proposals crystallise the high level statements of the Entitlement Framework against which schools can measure their current provision and bring forward proposals for the development required. The arrangements by which schools' proposals will be developed and considered are described in a later chapter. The aim is to ensure that the provision proposed in and by individual schools contributes to meeting the overall needs of the area in which the school is located.

### Pupil Entitlement

#### 6.2 Criteria

- Each school will provide for its pupils, as a minimum, access to the full range of learning pathways outlined in the Entitlement Framework for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and post-16 where applicable.
- Schools must take account of the range of pupils' needs, aptitudes, interests and aspirations and the range of teaching approaches required to meet these needs.

##### 6.2.1 Proposals will indicate:

- the range of curriculum provision that will be available for pupils at Key Stage 3 through the statutory core curriculum and extension and enrichment courses;
- the range of learning pathways that will be available for pupils at Key Stage 4;
- the full range of learning pathways for post-16 pupils;
- the arrangements for the provision of Careers Education and Guidance;

- the arrangements for making available the curricular choice for pupils and for meeting the full range of learning needs of pupils;
- the range of accommodation, resources and teaching skills available to provide the required range of learning pathways for all their pupils and demonstrate that this range can be delivered; and
- the components that will be delivered directly by the school in which the pupil is enrolled and those delivered in cooperation and collaboration with other schools, the FE sector and other providers.

## Special Educational Needs

### 6.3 Criterion

- Pupils with special educational needs (including non-statemented pupils) must have access to a full range of educational opportunities to meet their individual needs.

#### 6.3.1 Proposals will indicate:-

- how appropriate provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (including non-statemented) is secured through cooperation and collaboration to ensure that pupils have access to a full range of educational opportunities to meet their individual needs; and
- how account has been taken of the educational implications of proposed SENDA legislation in schools.

## Choice and Flexibility

### 6.4 Criteria

Each school must:

- provide pupils with the opportunities to exercise choice about learning pathways at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and provide appropriate information and advice to inform that choice; and

- provide pupils with the opportunity to exercise choice at other times where the learning pathway or components being followed are not in pupils' best educational interests and provide appropriate information and advice to inform that choice.

#### 6.4.1 Proposals will indicate:

- the arrangements for providing choice at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, including the availability of enrichment programmes. Such arrangements should include:
  - the processes to exercise choice, including the arrangements to deal with course over-subscription or with unmet demand;
  - the arrangements for advising pupils and parents about the choices available;
  - the types of information (i.e. the Pupil Profile and other information) together with support to be made available to inform choice (including how careers advice and guidance will be provided);
- the circumstances where choice may be exercised at other times and the arrangements to be used;
- the accreditation arrangements and their link to the National Qualifications Framework (Appendix 4); and
- that arrangements for the Pupil Profile are in place, including transfer of information between institutions when courses and programmes have been agreed, and that arrangements for recording and accrediting attainments and achievements are in place in the interim period before the Pupil Profile is fully operational.

## Cooperation and Collaboration

### 6.5 Criteria

- Arrangements for cooperation and collaboration must:
  - be for the purpose of providing all pupils with access to the full range of learning pathways and teaching approaches from 11-18;

- provide for children's welfare and safety;
- maximise pupils' learning time;
- guarantee continuity of provision for the full duration of a course by a cohort of pupils to ensure that they are able to complete a course provided under these arrangements; and
- be based on clear and mutually understood agreements between all the providers.

#### 6.5.1 Proposals will indicate:

- the arrangements to secure children's safety and welfare if pupils are moving between providers;
- what form cooperation and collaboration will take within an area;
- the curricular areas involved;
- the other providers involved (e.g. other schools, FE, training organisations, business organisations, the wider community) and the provision they will make available;
- the agreements reached with other providers, including any transfer of funds, or quid pro quo arrangements, agreed by all participating institutions;
- the content of memoranda of understanding or service level agreements which clearly set out agreed roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability including any ramifications of collaboration for pupils, for example pastoral care, transfer of information;
- how they have maximised pupils' learning time by minimising the disruption to the school day; and
- if pupils have to change location within the school day and indicate the travelling time involved.

## Professional Development of Staff

### 6.6 Criterion

- Schools must identify the training and development needs of teaching and support staff.

#### 6.6.1 Proposals will indicate:

- how the training and development needs of teaching and support staff have been assessed and the arrangements and timetable for providing the necessary training and development to implement new arrangements; and
- that the assessment of needs and provision of staff training and development to implement new arrangements links with needs identified by the teachers and the school development planning process.

## Options Compatible with Entitlement Framework and Criteria

6.7 The Entitlement Framework and criteria described earlier provide the context for the consideration of future post-primary education provision. The Entitlement Framework sets out the characteristics of the curriculum to which each pupil should be entitled. The criteria establish the requirements on schools to demonstrate how proposals for new arrangements would deliver the Entitlement Framework. This section examines a range of options which would facilitate the delivery of the Entitlement Framework, through a variety of structures.

6.8 The current arrangements are characterised by a sharp dichotomy of provision, the closing down of options, a lack of flexibility and an inadequate range of learning pathways. When considered against the Guiding Principles and the Entitlement Framework, we concluded that few schools, if any, could meet the requirements fully at the present time and that the status quo was therefore not an option. To varying degrees, schools would need to make changes to their curriculum, including offering access for all pupils to a much richer provision in the vocational area, and to ensure that provision is made to meet the needs of all pupils. This would involve working in cooperation and collaboration with other schools, with FE institutions, and with other providers. It is important to stress also

that collaboration should involve giving as well as receiving, so that a school with, say, specialist facilities or expertise could serve as a resource for other neighbouring schools in a given subject area.

- 6.9 There was a view expressed in the responses to the consultation on the Burns proposals that a “one-size-fits-all” option for future post-primary arrangements is not appropriate: the Group concurs with this view. Accordingly, it is envisaged that future structures should comprise a variety of school provision to meet the specific needs of different localities. The provision made by each school should complement and support what neighbouring schools are offering. In a locality as a whole, the tapestry of provision available should encompass the full range of opportunities and provide for the full range of pupil needs, aptitudes, interests and aspirations.

### **Range of Possible Future Arrangements**

- 6.10 The Entitlement Framework is capable of being delivered through a very wide range of school types and structures. Those outlined below and in Appendix 6 are intended to serve only as exemplars of how future arrangements might be structured. It is possible that other approaches could emerge at local level, and these would be acceptable provided they conform to the Entitlement Framework.
- 6.11 Schools may differ in a number of ways.
- Schools’ curricular emphasis. For example, this could be academic, vocational or ‘specialist’.
  - The age profile of their pupils. Arrangements could include provision for pupils aged 11-14, 14-16, 11-16, 11-18, or 14-18 and 16-18.
  - Schools’ management structures. In addition to conventional management structures, alternative arrangements could be considered where appropriate, for example a ‘combination institution’ involving a number of schools combining to act as a single institution with a single management body, or a ‘confederation’ involving a number of schools, perhaps of different management types and/or including an FE institution.
  - The type of collaborative arrangements that exist between the school and neighbouring schools and FE institutions. These could be formal

arrangements, such as between an 11-14 school and a 14-16 school, or other less formal arrangements perhaps based on a service level agreement under which one school offers provision to certain pupils from another.

6.12 Whatever the configuration, the key factors determining the arrangements should be:

- the need to ensure a sufficient critical mass of provision of a given type and to secure optimum utilisation of the existing estate;
- sufficient complementarity and cohesion in the provision to guarantee a clear learning pathway for all pupils wishing to pursue their education through to age 18; and
- compatibility with, and contribution to, meeting the needs of the area in which the school is located.

6.13 'Specialist' schools have not hitherto existed in Northern Ireland. However the Group believes that this type of school has a contribution to make to the range and diversity of provision in an area, and at the same time provide a more direct response to, say, the needs of a local economy. Pupils would be assured of the range of opportunities set out in the Entitlement Framework while at the same time benefiting from provision geared to local needs and circumstances.

6.14 Examples of the type of school provision and arrangements that could arise out of various combinations of the above features are given in Appendix 6. It is stressed that these are examples only and are intended to be neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

### **Key Recommendations**

- Schools and managing authorities should assess their current provision in light of the Entitlement Framework and criteria and draw up proposals for new arrangements.
- Schools and managing authorities should engage with others in the local area to consider how the overall provision required by the Entitlement Framework should best be secured at local level.

*(continued overleaf)*

- School structures in a local area can take a wide range of forms and exist under a number of different management arrangements so long as the Entitlement Framework criteria are met.
- Specialist schools should be developed where appropriate to meet specific needs.