

Press Release

Thursday 5 June 2008

Pupils produce ‘Children’s Charter’ in celebration of innovative approaches to learning

A ‘Children’s Charter’ for the curriculum was produced at a national event celebrating innovative approaches to learning.

Up to 170 pupils from 17 primary schools across the country contributed to the Charter at the *What Makes Learning Exciting?* Conference at the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in Nottingham.

The conference, hosted by NCSL and the National Education Trust (NET), was an opportunity for primary school children to let education leaders know what excites them about learning now - and what would make it even better in the future.

It culminated with the nine to 11-year-olds presenting their ideas in a ‘Children’s Charter’ to Mick Waters, Director of Curriculum from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). It will inform the review of the primary curriculum which is currently being conducted by Sir Jim Rose with support from the QCA .

The Children’s Charter says: “We want...

- to learn about real things, things which matter to us.
- to break down barriers between subjects into real live topics.
- to learn from experts who inspire us, eg artists, musicians, writers, mathematicians, scientists...
- to learn more about the world, world events and where we live.
- to be involved in choosing what we learn – what interests and inspires us.
- more opportunities to work in teams, to learn from one another and to work with different age groups.
- more time to learn, more time to research and more time to finish.
- to learn by doing and making.
- to learn with our parents and other adults.
- to communicate our learning through the technologies we use.
- to communicate and learn with children in other countries.
- to learn more by being outside the classroom and outside school.
- to be listened to.

Paul Bennett, Operational Director for Strategic Initiatives for NCSL, said: “It is important that we listen to the voice of children in ensuring that the leadership for learning is attractive and creative and meets their needs. This day represented a great opportunity for the children to tell us how they like to learn and it will also provide valuable feedback for Sir Jim Rose’s review of the primary curriculum.”

Mick Waters, QCA Director of Curriculum, said: “It was wonderful to hear what children have to say about their learning experiences. The Charter which the children created during the conference will provide us with important feedback for the review of the primary curriculum.”

Roy Blatchford, Director of the National Education Trust (NET), said: “As ever with children and young people, the freshness and creativity of what they had to say was a delight to listen to. The National Education Trust exists to celebrate what is good and great about the nation’s schools, and today we witnessed first-hand that there is so much imaginative and inspiring work going on in primary classrooms across the country. A special day for all who attended.”

Notes for editors:

For more information contact Richard Earle at richard.earle@ncsl.org.uk or mobile 07810 656258.

For QCA media enquiries call 0207 509 6789 or email levittj@qca.org.uk

About the Review of the Primary Curriculum:

Ed Balls, the Secretary of State of Children, Schools and Families, launched the Review of the Primary Curriculum in January this year. Led by Sir Jim Rose, it is the most comprehensive independent review of the primary curriculum in over a decade. The Review is being closely supported by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which is taking a leading role in providing the evidence required for the review and managing the associated consultations. An interim report is due at the end of October and the final report is due in March next year.

About the National College for School Leadership:

The National College for School Leadership offers opportunities to develop the potential of school leaders at every level and to enable their schools to work collaboratively with other schools.

87% of school leaders surveyed believe the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) is helping raise standards in schools – an increase on 2006. [Source: survey of 640 heads, deputies and other school leaders in 2007 by independent research agency, EdComs.]

NCSL’s four key goals are:

- to transform children’s achievement and well-being through excellent school leadership
- to develop leadership within and beyond the school
- to identify and grow tomorrow’s leaders
- to create a ‘fit for purpose’ national college that is more strategic and offers school leaders even more leadership support.

The College’s Learning and Conference Centre in Nottingham is the focus for many of its activities, but NCSL programmes can also be accessed regionally through a network of providers.

NCSL programmes fit around school leaders’ busy schedules, with much of the studying done in free time or in school, often via the Internet. Participants can also communicate with each other via the college’s popular online communities, talk2learn, which now has over 120,000 members and is

open to all school leaders including headteachers, deputy heads and middle leaders, as well as all teachers, teaching assistants and school bursars.

For more information on NCSL visit our web site at www.ncsl.org.uk or phone 0845 609 0009

About NET:

The National Education Trust (NET) was established in September 2006, following extensive background research amongst local authorities, government departments, schools, colleges, further and higher education. The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity (No. 1112893). Income derives from donations and from contracted services.

The Trustees – from education, business, health, media and the third sector – identified the need for an independent, national ‘do-tank’ for education. Roy Blatchford, former HMI and secondary school principal, was appointed to lead the Trust.

The Trust exists to influence local, regional and national policy through its work with practitioners across all phases and sectors of education. It is establishing itself as a leading voice in educational debate, and as a third sector provider of education services which have a measurable impact on children, young people, teachers, governors, parents and school leaders. Over time, NET will develop an international profile.

The Trust includes a number of Associates involved in its training activities, and a group of Leading Thinkers who are well respected figures in their educational specialisms.

To maximise NET’s impact during its first five years, the Trust is focused on four key strands of activity:

- National Resource: Developing a national resource of excellent practice and powerful initiatives in early years’ settings, schools and colleges
- Independent Services: Leading high quality school reviews. Providing innovative, personalised training for headteachers, teachers and governors
- Aspire & Inspire: Running ‘chartermarked’ projects for children and young people
- Policy & Research: Influencing stakeholders and policy-makers to shape educational policy, locally, regionally and nationally.

Further information is available from our website www.nationaleducationtrust.net