

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

COMMITTEE:	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE:	<b>15<sup>th</sup> April 2010</b>
DIRECTOR:	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Class Sizes in English and Mathematics in S1 and S2</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/10/041</b>

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report seeks approval from the Education, Culture & Sport Committee to provide increased curricular flexibility for secondary school head teachers by removing the current constraint of maintaining average class sizes of 20 pupils in English and Mathematics in S1 and S2.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee agree:

2.1 to remove the constraint of maintaining average class sizes of 20 pupils in English and Mathematics in S1 and S2 in time for the implementation of the new timetable for the academic school session 2010 -11 (from June 2010).

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The increased curricular flexibility will allow schools to operate more effectively within the budgetary constraints of the reduced teaching staffing level that will be implemented from August 2010 and any devolved education management (DEM) savings.

Removal of this constraint will provide schools with increased timetabling flexibility. As a result they will be able to target other areas of the curriculum where it is felt that smaller class sizes would be more beneficial to pupils or, alternatively, reduce the number of classes being taught.

### **4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT**

This report supports the Council's commitment to the principles of equality in relation to pupil access to schools, best value when considering the distribution of resources and the provision of the highest quality of service delivery.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to providing the best possible education for all our children, which is essential if we are to ensure that Aberdeen and its citizens have a prosperous future. It is related to the following priorities within Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking:

3. Ensure expenditure on education delivers maximum benefit to pupils'
4. Continue to involve parents and pupils in their schools
5. Continue to improve attainment across city schools
6. Ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs and ensure pupils leave school with skills essential for living
9. Review best teaching practice and trial projects in Aberdeen and beyond to identify the best ways of delivering an even higher quality education to all pupils
11. Allocate resources to support for learning, targeted to areas of greatest need
12. Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the City.

## **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **People:**

A school's basic staffing complement is allocated according to a roll related formula and decisions on the deployment of staff are made by senior managers within each school. Where staff excess is identified as a result of adjustments to staffing, this is managed through agreed policy and procedures.

### **Risk Management:**

It is important to timetable classes and deploy staff efficiently and effectively to best meet the needs of pupils. Allowing schools the flexibility to create appropriately sized classes and deploy staff to meet the learning needs of pupils and provide curricular choice for pupils is essential. Failure to implement the proposal is likely to have a negative effect on curriculum delivery and support for pupils.

### **Equal Opportunities:**

Increasing timetabling flexibility for schools will prevent a decrease in the curricular choice available to pupils, allowing more pupils a broader range of options to meet their particular circumstances.

## **6. REPORT**

### **6.1 Background**

6.1.1 In relation to the recruitment of extra teachers, the 2003 Partnership Agreement for a Better Scotland stated that

*'We will target these additional teachers on reducing class sizes to a maximum of 20 in S1 and S2 for Maths and English.'*

6.1.2 More recently, Circular 1/2007 from Scottish Executive confirmed that,

*'The Executive's commitment will be met if, in each school, S1 Maths, S2 Maths, S1 English and S2 English classes each average 20 pupils.'*

6.1.3 All secondary schools in Aberdeen have implemented the guidance contained in the 2007 circular and have maintained an average class size of 20 in English and Mathematics in S1 and S2.

6.1.4 Due to the challenging financial climate, schools have been required to reduce staffing costs by a further 5% from the start of the August 2010 session. In this context, maintaining average class sizes of 20 in S1 and S2 in English and Mathematics would have significant implications for schools.

## **6.2 Exemplification of Risks**

6.2.1 Failure to implement the proposal is likely to result in

- a reduction in the range of curricular choice available to pupils, particularly in the middle and upper year groups;
- a reduction in management time available to senior management teams and
- a reduction in time available to guidance staff to work on pupil caseloads, which, in turn, is likely to result in less support for vulnerable pupils.

## **6.3 Advantages to Schools**

6.2.1 Schools would welcome the flexibility to decide internally upon the best deployment of staff to effectively deliver a curriculum for each pupil.

6.2.2 The proposal will allow schools to target teaching staff at the areas of most need as determined by the schools own self-evaluation. These areas may differ across schools but the process would be carried out in the best interests of all pupils.

## **6.4 Example of Implementation**

6.4.1 In a school of just over 1000 pupils, the teaching staff savings required in 2010/2011 amount to a reduction of **4.96** full-time equivalent posts (FTE).

6.4.2 Through the removal of the requirement for an average of 20 pupils in S1 and S2 in English and Mathematics classes, a saving of 1.2 FTE or full-time equivalent staff in each of English and in Mathematics, amounting to **2.4** FTE or full-time equivalent posts can be made.

6.4.3 As this would account for over 50% of the required savings, the impact upon other aspects of educational delivery within the school will be reduced. Schools could use the flexibility to deploy staff, according to need, by increasing class sizes in English and Mathematics in S1 and S2 up to 30 but retain a number of classes in English and Mathematics in S3 and S4 at a lower class size to meet the needs of pupils whose attainment and/or behaviour management would benefit from more support.

6.4.4 Any potential changes to existing policy will be communicated to parents in advance of the new school session 2010/11 by chief officers from Education, Culture and Sport directorate.

## **7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

Derek Samson  
Learning Estate Project Manager  
Summerhill Centre  
Stronsay Drive  
Aberdeen AB15 6JA  
[dsamson@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:dsamson@aberdeencity.gov.uk)  
(01224) 346315

Alistair McKay  
Service Manager  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
St Nicholas House  
Broad Street  
Aberdeen AB10 1XJ  
[amackay@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:amackay@aberdeencity.gov.uk)  
(01224) 522044

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2003 Partnership Agreement for a Better Scotland

Circular 1/2007 from Scottish Executive