

## Standards and Quality Report 2016

Dept Name: Social Subjects

Date: 19/09/16

### Improvement Planning

#### Review

(Headlines of developments since last year and comment on impact)

Geography - Development of Higher course  
- Consolidation of assignment.

History - Consolidation of new Higher course.

- Consolidation of assignment @ Nat 5 with improvement shown.
- Development and implementation of WWI primary transition project.
- Completion of Outdoor Learning unit 1 toward MA.

Mods - Consolidation of assignment @ Nat 5 with improvement gained

- Consolidation and further development of new Higher course
- Development of new Advanced Higher course material.

#### Next Year

(Headlines of initiatives being taken forward and likely impact)

Hist - 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of recording the past resulting in WWI Battlefield trip in October.

- Consolidation of new courses
- Opportunities for SQA marking sought and continued

Geog – Consolidation of new courses

- Opportunities for SQA marking sought and continued
- Development of Fair Trade resources for S3 elective.

Mods - Consolidation and development of new course in light of recent elections and referenda.

- Opportunities for SQA marking sought and continued
- Undertake Tapestry programme.

Soc subjects: Closing the attainment gap: all students presented at National 5 in Social Subjects

#### BGE

Comment on courses, including electives. Comment on uptake in S3 (where appropriate)  
Social subject uptake has improved since Social Subjects offered in two columns. More than 70% uptake, which is very healthy.

Geography teacher offering Fair Trade elective for first time; Uptake 6 students.

History teacher – offering Outdoor Learning, which was oversubscribed therefore uptake very healthy, with 2 x 12 groups.

Wider Achievement: Duke of Edinburgh, whole year group signed up.

### **3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement (From How Good is Our School 4)**

“Almost all pupils are attaining appropriate levels and a few have exceeded these”

Comment: (How do we know? How are we reporting this? –this may include developments this year) Students workbooks are monitored and feedback is given. Reports are regularly completed and followed by staff meetings. Good practice is praised and student work is displayed. Students are supported by staff on visits and are included in fundraising events. Speakers and subject experts are invited in to classes to give insight into their work role, e.g. MP and archaeologist visits.

“Confident teacher judgements together with benchmarking and an appropriate range of assessments are leading to improvements in attainment”

Comment: Students are given learning opportunities and consulted about their work.

### **Senior Phase**

Professional judgement had to be used to decide who should and should not be presented for N5 based on their assignment, which was obviously successful on the whole. This was due in no small part to the marking of N5 and Higher assignments during the 2015, 2016 diets and exam marking diet that was undertaken by the faculty.

Comment on courses: Including grade breakdown and uptake

**Nat 5** ¾ As all students were entered for Nat 5, five students were unable to reach the standard. They were made up of one Geographer two Historians and two from Modern Studies. All were entered for Nat 4, having previously completed the appropriate assessments.

### **Nat 5**

Social Subjects - Closing the attainment gap: all students presented at National 5 in Staff review results. Nat 5 Assignments were targeted for improvement with all staff involved with SQA marking. Impacted on results as all assignment average grades were improved on. Every pupil who was entered for the N5 exam produced an assignment that was marked as a pass (with marks ranging from 10 to 19 out of 20). This was very pleasing given the lack of availability of samples of pupils work from the SQA (although previous pupils work had been used, with their permission, to provide pupils with an idea of the standard of work expected of them).

Geography, The average mark for the assignment was 14 out of 20 (70%) and although this was one mark less than last year, it was still a very strong result - showing that not only were pupils managing to pass the assignment but were passing at what could potentially be a grade A if this result was replicated in the question paper. These strong marks can also be attributed to the opportunity to participate in fieldwork trips (such as the S4 Social Studies trip to Edinburgh and the S4 River Broom trip) both of which greatly benefit pupils as they

can actively experience the work that they produce helping them to retain the information that is needed for the write up under exam conditions. Moreover doing more than one trip ensures that pupils have two opportunities to produce an assignment, ensuring that the best one can be sent away. This benefits many pupils as they usually learn from their first experience of writing up an assignment meaning that on their second opportunity, they do much better. This practice has been replicated for the current school session.

The success in the assignment component bodes well for future classes as the department has now got experience in marking the N5 Assignment for the SQA and copies of the work that were sent away have been retained. There is therefore a wider range of assignments available to show the level of work expected of pupils to obtain a high mark.

Streamlining the unit assessment process ensured that there was plenty of time available for revision this year. Moreover the department also now has three years' worth of experience in marking the N5 question paper, which has benefited pupils not only in the familiarity with course content but also with exam technique and how individual questions are marked and treated by the SQA.

Looking at the overall grades, there was a high pass rate of 89% of pupils obtaining an award (3% higher than last year) and 50% of pupils who passed, passed with a grade A (8% higher than last year). Unfortunately this year, the fall back N4 ahead of the exam was not available meaning one pupil ended up with a no award on their original exam certificate.

However, pushing all pupils to attempt the N5 rather than just restricting them to N4 was still a worthwhile practice. This is because the N4 AVUs were undertaken with all pupils, so it is now down to a simple administration exercise to get a new certificate issued showing a N4 course award for this pupil.

### **Higher**

#### **Geography**

This year was the first year that the department undertook the new Higher and although the overall marks are good, there were still some disappointing marks for the assignment. This is incongruous to the teacher expectation as The average mark for the assignment was 17 out of 30 (57%) and one pupil who was entered for the Higher exam did not produce an assignment that was marked as a pass with marks ranging from 10 to 23 out of 30\*. This was concerning especially as SQA exam marking was undertaken by the department for the assignment component during the 2015 exam diet and then had used this knowledge to mark all of these assignment as passes before they were sent away. There is no doubt that the lack of availability of samples of pupils work from the SQA is a hindrance to success in this portion of the exam and given that the department had no previous student work to go on, it was difficult for pupils to understand the standard expected of them.

On the other hand, the marks in the question paper were much stronger. This can be attributed to the department choosing to continue with the Development and Health topic for Higher to extend and build on previous knowledge gained during N5. It is also worth noting that a quarter of the class had taken environmental Science for N5 and their previous knowledge from this course of Climate Change (taught by the department) was also valuable. Moreover, delaying the implementation of the Higher for a year meant that materials used in other schools during the previous session were more readily available, as well as course textbooks which were published a month before the department started the course. This helped to reduce the assessment burden placed on pupils - a lesson that was learned by the department from the difficulties that occurred during the first year of the N5

courses. This resulted in a substantial period of time being available for revision at the end of the course.

Looking at the overall grades, there was a high pass rate of 83% of pupils obtaining an award (21% higher than last year) and 50% of pupils who passed, passed with a grade A (8% higher than last year). Two pupils failed to achieve an award: one of which did not attend the exam. This was disappointing given that their assignment was marked as a pass.

As this was the first running of the new Higher by the department, there are many changes that will be made moving forward to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential. To improve pupil performance in the assignment, the department will seek to mark the Higher assignments again (as they did in 2015). Also, copies of the assignments that were sent away have been retained by the department and the best of these will be shared (with the permission of the pupils concerned) to help make the standard expected by the SQA clear to pupils. As there are no SQA events being run for Higher Geography this year, a colleague is already in the process of organising a workshop on the Higher assignment for the September inset to pass on their advice from having marked the assignments during the exam diet this year and the department will certainly be attending this to get the latest, up-to-date information.

\* It should be noted that the cut-off marks for the Higher Geography exam this year were significantly lower than expected: A (66%), B (54%), C (44%) and D (39%).

#### Higher History

There was a 100% pass rate with all students achieving an award at grades A and B.

Every pupil who was entered for the Higher exam produced an assignment which was marked as a pass. This was very pleasing given that there is still a lack of availability of samples of pupils work and guidance from the SQA regarding this piece of work. Therefore, professional judgement had to be used to decide who should and should not be presented for higher based on their assignment, which was generally successful. The marks for the assignment were 19 – 27 which meant all three students presented achieved a band 4 or above. The results for the exam were also very good with all three students achieving 56% or above which is a band 4. 33% achieved an A award and 67% achieved B awards. This is very pleasing and compared very favourably with 2015 for both the percentage rate pass and the grade passes. An area to build on is the uptake for Higher. With the success of this year's results and Ms Middleton having marked the Higher Assignment, students should feel more inclined to choose it. Students will be actively encouraged to move from Nat 5 to Higher in the future.

#### Modern Studies

Modern Studies attempted to consolidate the new Higher and although the overall marks are good, there were some disappointing marks in the assignment and one very disappointing and highly unexpected exam mark. 28.6% of students gained A passes, 28.6% of students gained B passes, 28.6% of students gained C passes and 14.2% got no overall award. The average mark for the assignment was 20 out of 30 (67%) which represents a fall of 2 marks (6.7%). However, last year's assignments were used as templates for this year and in the teacher's professional opinion, they were better. However, the overall feedback from other teachers involved in the marking process is that the SQA were more stringent in their awarding of marks.

Conversely, the marks in the question paper were more varied ranging from 15 -56/60. This can be attributed to the department choosing to continue with the Terrorism topic for Higher to extend and build on previous knowledge gained during N5. It is also noteworthy that the student who gained N\A had studied this for his assignment for which he gained a B pass 18/30, making his exam performance even harder to understand.

Looking at the overall grades, there was a high pass rate of 86% of pupils obtaining an award (14% lower than last year) and 28% of pupils who passed, passed with a grade A (equivalent to 2015). One student failed the exam which was very disappointing as this student gained an A at Nat 5 and passed both class prelims. However, a paper remark and review has been requested for this particular student.

**Adv Higher** Only one marginal student attempted Adv Higher Modern Studies for which she was awarded a D, instead of the predicted C. This may have been caused by the student not being awarded her additional time on the day of the exam.

### **3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement (From How Good is Our School 4)**

“Almost all pupils are attaining appropriate levels and a few have exceeded these”

Comment: (How do we know? How are we using tracking and monitoring within departments to keep pupils on track?)

Students are given regular feedback on their performance in class and on reports. They are given a range of opportunities that have on the whole been successful.

When using SOSCA data the overall trend is that students generally perform better for National 5 than predicted.

At Higher, in History all students achieved their target grade.

In Geography this was also the case. However in Modern Studies the predicted were lower for two students and higher for three. This tended to be a grade or two out.

### **Wider Achievement**

Comment

Contribution from dept on Wider Achievement agenda

The History teacher with her interest in outdoor learning and wider achievement helped 27 students realise a John Muir Award at level 2. Furthermore, this member of staff organises and runs the Duke of Edinburgh Award for all students in S3-S6, including 16 students achieving a bronze award, 10 Silvers and one Gold.

The WWI transition History project has been taken up by the local museum as part of their exhibits and has received much community praise.

### **Developing Young Workforce**

Comment: Any events/ links developed with partners; work experience etc being offered?

This faculty runs the school's work experience programme in conjunction with PSE. Opportunities are given to students to attend work fairs, open days and employers are brought in to help students with interview skills.

### **Closing the Gap**

Comment: (any initiatives running or planned to help with our more disadvantaged pupils Eg study club, in-class support etc)

Social Subjects - Closing the attainment gap: all students presented at National 5 in Staff review results.

The Social Subject faculty offers a range of learning opportunities outwith the classroom. In September, a visit to London specifically Westminster for an interactive workshop and tour for S4-6. November – S4 students are offered a trip to Glasgow/ Edinburgh for Geography, History and Modern Studies fieldwork to enhance the delivery of the Nat 5 assignment. S4 are offered a workshop visit to the Scottish Parliament and tour of the building with a chance to meet and question MSP's. Adv Higher Mods students also have the opportunity to visit Holyrood and question MSP's regarding their dissertation topics.

Duke of Edinburgh helps deliver life skills to students and is open to all, from S3 up.

The faculty runs a summer wider learning experience trip. In 2016 a visit to China for eighteen days was run. This enabled 22 students from a variety of backgrounds and with different needs to participate.

The faculty runs several fundraising opportunities to assist those from poorer backgrounds accessing trips and members of the faculty offer advice and give assistance to those participating on Project Trust.

Members of the faculty support the Homework club and offer additional supported study classes in the run up to exams.