

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Concerns about a repetition of the 2000 examinations crisis at the Scottish Qualifications Authority having proved unfounded, the schools sector of the Scottish education system has been dominated during much of the second half of 2001 by the ramifications of McCrone (Scottish Executive, 2001a). The warm glow surrounding the agreement and its associated salary increases earlier in the year started to fade as teachers and managers began to appreciate the implications of some of the fine print. There has been some resentment over the expectations surrounding the 35-hour working week, the perceived erosion of preparation time and the new contractual arrangements for the addition of a further 35 hours for continuing professional development (CPD). The imminent introduction of new pay scales with a uniform starting salary caused controversy particularly among mature students in initial teacher education who had based their decisions about entering the profession on the clear (pre-McCrone) expectation that their starting salary would take account of their age and previous experience. The new arrangements for the one-year probationary period with guaranteed 70% class contact and 30% for professional development activity were also the focus of concern among student teachers and field professionals. Local authorities have been concerned about how these posts will be funded. Students who expect to enter the profession in August 2002, when these arrangements are due to come into effect, remain unclear about how the system will operate to provide them with guaranteed positions in schools and about what will be their fate at the end of the probationary year. Nevertheless, despite these anxieties, the teaching profession can be said to be in a period of opportunity. Although there is to be no departure from target setting and the continuing quest for improvements in standards of attainment, the Education Minister has signalled a relaxation of guidelines across the sector to allow more autonomy for teachers and schools to make curricular decisions according to local needs and professional judgement.

The SERA Lecture for 2001 was delivered by Professor Donald McIntyre at the Annual Conference in Dundee and addressed the theme of the importance of partnerships between educational researchers in the university faculties of education and staff in schools. This was explored through the example of the mutually beneficial arrangements established by the Department of Educational Studies at University of Cambridge and its partner schools. Increasing importance is being attached to a broadly conceived model of CPD especially in the Standard for Chartered Teacher in Scotland. This is expected to include the need for teachers aspiring to chartered status to engage in enquiry and research in their own professional contexts. In future, therefore, there will be an increasing need to develop partnerships as advocated by McIntyre which may in turn create constructive communities of enquiry which have considerable potential to enhance educational practice. We hope to publish the text of Professor McIntyre's 2001 SERA Lecture in the next issue of SER.

This issue of SER focuses on a range of topics which are of current interest to those who work in schools, local authorities and faculties of education as they enter the new climate of enhanced professional expectations, arising out of the McCrone agreement. The "first stage" review of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has been conducted by Deloitte Touche (Scottish Executive, 2001b). Among the areas investigated was the question of the experience of staff in teacher education institutions (TEIs). The review report avoided drawing any firm conclusions as to whether TEI staff were indeed out of touch with classroom practice as had been alleged in the original McCrone Report. Instead, it simply presented the predictably

contrasting views on this matter of school and local authority staff on the one hand with the perspectives of TEIs on the other. The report did, however, recommend increased and more flexible use of secondments, citing the practice of Stirling University in establishing part-time teaching fellowships for field professionals to enable them to provide key input to ITE. Therefore, it is timely that the present issue of SER contains a critical analysis by Stephen Sharp of the implications of the McCrone salary increases on the recruitment of staff to TEIs. The article by Aileen Purdon explores the perspectives of newly qualified teachers on the nature of teacher professionalism and on the purpose and benefits of CPD and contributes to our understanding of the probationary period, itself the subject of intense scrutiny in the field as we enter a period of major change in the prevailing arrangements.

The implications of local government reform in Scotland are examined in Derek Johnston's analysis of the delivery of instrumental music instruction. Another current area of key concern for local authorities is how to make provision for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The article by Paul Hamill and Brian Boyd focuses on the evaluation of one council's attempts to restructure its provision. Hamill and Boyd portray the issues raised by the evaluation as particularly relevant in the context of the multidisciplinary approaches advocated in the New Community Schools initiative.

Curricular issues are addressed empirically in three articles. Effie Maclellan attempts to shed light on the question, "What counts as numeracy?" by reporting on her detailed content analysis of a sample of HMI reports on primary schools. On the basis of her findings, Maclellan argues that there is a need for much clearer delineation of what is meant by understanding number. In this the European Year of Languages, we have a timely article from Norman Diffey and his colleagues comparing attitudes towards language learning in Canada and Scotland. Julia Davidson's article explores the phenomenon of setting in Scottish primary school classrooms, properly treating it as an experimental, rather than an established model of organising groups of pupils.

The editorial team commends to readers the contents of Volume 33, Part 2 of *Scottish Educational Review* and again extends its thanks and appreciation to all those who have contributed either as authors or as referees.

REFERENCES

- Scottish Executive (2001a) *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.
- Scottish Executive (2001b) *Report of the 'First Stage' Review of Initial Teacher Education*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

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