

## From the Editor

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This volume brings to an end Mark Priestley's tenure as editor of the Review. After almost 4 years his final edition will be in November of this year, so it is fitting that I can open the May edition as Deputy Editor with a short tribute to the work that Mark has done as editor. The editions he has presented have focused very much on current educational issues in Scotland, in particular the papers and special edition on the Curriculum for Excellence, an issue he returns to in this edition. The papers he brought together about the curriculum development and his work in that area have raised the profile of the Review across the education profession in Scotland. The editorial board also wish to recognise the work he has done behind the scenes to bring the Review into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, particularly with the development of the website and greater use of modern editing technology. Nominations or expressions of interest for the post of Editor should be sent to Angela Roger, Chair of the Editorial Board, at the University of Dundee: [a.m.roger@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.roger@dundee.ac.uk).

Not all technological changes are to be welcomed with open arms and this edition opens with a paper which addresses the use of biometric technologies in school. Tom Bryce and his colleagues present a challenging discussion about the increasing use of 'surveillance' technology in schools, from registers and library systems to cashless catering. Their disturbing vignette of future developments raises important issues for teachers to address now, not least the role of schools in preparing people for life in a society where such technologies are commonplace. The article reports that 14 of the 32 local authorities are currently using some form of biometrics in schools, although most have a 'tentative and experimental feel about them'. The analysis of the current position and the draft Government guidelines which supports their discussion highlights the rapid developments in the management of schools.

In the second paper Mark Priestley presents a critique of Curriculum for Excellence. He relates the curriculum to the introduction of national curricula in New Zealand and England and discusses in particular the curricular model that has led to these developments. He suggests steps which would support practitioner engagement with 'policies for reform' and highlights the need for understanding of both the policy and the context into which it is to be embedded. This is a discussion paper rather than a research article, which highlights one of the key issues facing Curriculum for Excellence, the lack of

research about this key development in Scottish Education. It is to be hoped that the opportunity of the new curriculum will indeed foster, 'creative impulses', both in school and in the research community.

David McLaren addresses Curriculum for Excellence in his analysis of the development of Personal and Social Education alongside and within recent curricular developments. This paper provides a clear account of the role of guidance in Scottish secondary schools and an analysis of the developments since the publication of *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential* (SEED, 2005). The account of the different 'parallel lines' of development is set in three strands: that of the standards recommended in the national review, curriculum building in schools and the *Journey to Excellence* from HMle (HMle, 2006, 2007). It concludes with hope for the future and sets important questions for the new National Steering Group.

The next paper returns to the issue of technology, but with a very specific curricular focus. Lorele Mackie and colleagues researched the ICT skills of new entrants to the B.Ed. programme in the University of Edinburgh in 2005. They were interested in the impact the level of knowledge and skills would have on the ways in which students used ICT themselves and their confidence in delivering the 5 – 14 ICT curriculum. The data analysis provides uncomfortable parallels with other curricular areas where lack of experience, linked to lack of confidence led to an unwillingness to tackle applications they were unfamiliar with. The authors highlight the need for partnership working between placement schools and the universities, perhaps more worrying is that the students, 'underestimate the ICT abilities displayed by primary children'.

Gale Macleod and Anne Pirrie, present a paper which addresses some of the challenges involved in negotiating access to research participants. They explore their own experience in working with service providers to gain the requisite permissions to meet informants and consider the different perspectives offered through these structures.

The issue concludes with the Parliamentary Report and book reviews. The reviews cover such diverse topics as social capital, Physical Education, Alan McLean's latest text on motivation, issues of child protection, and a new edition of *Learning to Teach in the Secondary School*.

## REFERENCES

- HMle (2006) *How Good is Our School – Journey to Excellence Parts 1 and 2*, Edinburgh, HMle.  
HMle (2007) *How Good is Our School – Journey to Excellence Part 3*, Edinburgh, HMle.  
SEED (2005) *Happy, Safe and Achieving their Potential*, Edinburgh, SEED.