EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AGENDA

8th Meeting, 2005 (Session 2)

Wednesday 18 May 2005

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 6

1. **Pupil motivation inquiry**: The Committee will take evidence from—

   **Panel 1**
   
   George MacBride, Convener of Education Committee, Educational Institute of Scotland

   Victor Topping, Executive Member for Scotland, National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers in Scotland

   Mark Challinor, Professional Officer, Professional Association of Teachers

   David Eaglesham, General Secretary, Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association

   **Panel 2**

   Vicki Aldridge, Teaching Fellow, The Moray House School of Education

   Dr Judith McClure, Head, St. George’s School for Girls, Edinburgh

   Bryan McLachlan, Principal Teacher, Netherlee Primary School, East Renfrew

   Don Ledingham, Head Teacher, Dunbar Grammar School

2. **Pupil motivation inquiry**: The Committee will discuss the issues raised in today’s evidence.

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40, Committee Office
Ext. 0131 348 5204
The following papers are enclosed for the meeting

**Agenda item 1**
Covering note from Clerk
Submission from EIS
Submission from NAS/UWT
Submission from PAT
Submission from SSTA
Submission from Vicki Aldridge
Submission from Dr Judith McClure
Submission from Bryan McLachan
Submission from Don Ledingham
Pupil Motivation Inquiry

1. Both items on today’s agenda relate to the committee’s pupil motivation inquiry, the terms of reference of which are:

   To identify how all children and young people can be motivated by their school experience to enable them to achieve their full potential.

   In particular:
   - identifying the factors which have a positive or negative impact on pupils’ motivation;
   - how pupils’ experience outside school impacts on their level of motivation within school;
   - examples of how to identify early signs that particular pupils may be disaffected by their school experience;
   - examples of effective teaching approaches, learning styles and personalised learning that have a motivating influence on disaffected pupils;
   - examples of approaches which ensure that vocational training and alternative curriculum experiences are recognised and valued appropriately;
   - examples of best practice from Scotland and other countries; and
   - the effectiveness of existing networks and structures for communicating examples of best practice.

2. The Committee has reviewed the written evidence which it has received and has undertaken a series of visits to projects and schools in Perth, North Lanarkshire and Glasgow. A roundtable event for teachers will have been held on Tuesday 17 May.

3. Today, the Committee commences its programme of oral evidence with witnesses from teaching unions and from a panel of primary and secondary school teachers.

4. At subsequent meetings, evidence will be taken from providers of alternatives to school education, from social work agencies, LTS, Careers Scotland, HMIe and from the Minister for Education and Young People. A final workshop will be held in June and it is intended that the report on the inquiry will be published in the early autumn.

Martin Verity
Clerk to the Committee
THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND

PUYIL MOTIVATION

EIS Submission to the Education Committee of the Scottish Parliament

1. The EIS welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Education Committee of the Parliament on the issues of pupil disaffection and motivation. We agree that this is a critical issue for pupils, teachers, parents and for the whole of society. We believe that this the issues of disaffection and motivation are complex and that we can afford them only initial consideration in this evidence.

2. While we do not suggest that the problems of disaffection and lack of motivation are negligible or trivial, it is important to set them in context:

   a. attainment in Scottish schools as measured by certification has improved regularly and continues so to do

   b. international comparisons of attainment are encouraging in their findings about Scottish schools; in particular the recently published report of PISA 2003 indicates that Scotland lies among the highest attaining countries in the OECD in terms of the attainment in reading and mathematics of our 15 year old young people

   c. attendance is generally good though there are some important exceptions especially in secondary schools

   d. the proportion of 16+ young people in school, FE, HE or training is generally high

   e. the proportion of young people entering (and succeeding) in F& HE is high, indeed among the highest in the European Union.

3. There is evidence, other than the statistical evidence of enrolment, attendance and attainment that young people in Scotland generally enjoy and/or respect schools and their teachers:

   a. evidence in Education at a Glance published by OECD suggest that pupils in the UK, and presumably in Scotland, express comparatively high levels of satisfaction in terms of a sense of belonging in their school.

   b. PISA evidence generally suggests that young people in the UK see teachers and schools as committed to and supportive of their learning

   c. statements by young people in Scottish schools indicate a high degree of satisfaction with their schools and levels of teaching

4. However, there is also strong evidence of disaffection and lack of motivation among a minority of young people; in some schools or localities this minority will be significant:

   a. some children and young people simply withdraw themselves from school and do not attend for extended periods, sometimes of years

   b. a significant number of pupils are frequently absent without good reason from school

   c. a minority of pupils have low levels of achievement in school in terms of certification for reasons relating to motivation
d. the recent survey of teacher perceptions of indiscipline conducted by Professor Pamela Munn demonstrates clear evidence that teachers are increasingly concerned by issues of discipline.

e. while incidents of actual violence towards teachers and other pupils remain comparatively rare, an increasing number of such incidents are reported by teachers.

f. there is strong evidence of teacher concern over issues of motivation and disaffection as expressed in correspondence and articles in a number of newspapers and journals in Scotland.

5. Before moving toward recommendations on how to deal with this matter it is important to explore the concepts in somewhat greater depth.

6. There are differences between disaffection and lack of motivation. The word ‘disaffection’ carries with it moral connotations; the phrase ‘lack of motivation’ seems less loaded. ‘Disaffection’ also seems to carry with it a suggestion that the young person is affected more deeply and in more areas of her / his life than the phrase ‘lack of motivation’ implies. It would be helpful to explore these differences in more detail than there is space here to do. For the sake of simplicity we will at times refer to ‘disaffected pupils’ when both groups are being referred to.

7. It is important not to make the assumption that disaffected pupils form a homogeneous group, either in terms of the causes of disaffection, in terms of the symptoms of disaffection or in terms of outcomes. It is also important not to assume that disaffection is a permanent condition: young people at certain stages of their time in school may be temporarily disaffected.

8. Within the field of education, ‘disaffection’ on the part of young people is considered, rightly, as an issue which requires causes to be identified and tackled by managers and professional staff in order to reduce the harmful effects on young people. This contrasts with political and media approaches to disaffection on the part of young people in wider society where the favoured approach is that of holding the young person responsible and using approaches of a punitive nature, as demonstrated in recent approaches to anti-social behaviour in the community. It can be difficult for teachers and colleagues in education to pursue effectively the former approach when the latter is given such public approval.

9. There are those who would argue that a level of disaffection, at least among secondary school pupils, is to be expected, perhaps even welcomed, as a sign of critical awareness, constructive or otherwise, related to growing maturity and independence, i.e. a more or less natural concomitant of adolescence. This is not to suggest that disaffection should be ignored, but to argue that some of the moralistic judgements that accompany the word should be removed from our discourse.

10. There are a large number of factors which may affect a pupil’s motivation: on occasion these may be directly the responsibility of the school (eg school ethos) and the school has a duty to address these; others (eg low self-confidence related to poverty in the community) may be related to life outwith the school but the school may be able (possibly in collaboration with others) to reduce the effects of these factors; in other cases while the causes (eg mental illness) may not be open to being dealt with by the school, it may temper the results, again often in partnership with others.

11. Disaffection is not simply the result of conflicts between individual pupils and their school. It is clearly related to issues of equality and social justice. Young people in families and areas of social deprivation and poverty are more likely to be disaffected at some point during their school career, are more likely to be disaffected for longer periods, even permanently, are more likely to be seriously affected by any disaffection, and are less likely to be able to recover from the effects of disaffection in childhood.
12. It is also evident that patterns of disaffection typically shown by girls are different from those typically shown by boys, both in terms of feelings expressed and of behaviour.

13. It is again well documented that for some pupils disaffection is the result of racist incidents, whether within the school or in the wider community.

14. There is considerable evidence that a number of policy initiatives in the 1980s and early 1990s may have contributed to increasing disaffection. In particular the need to increase headline attainment statistics (as opposed to broader measures of achievement) appears to have increased pressures on teachers and pupils which have led to further pupil disaffection.

15. Schools, especially in recent years, have undertaken a considerable range of activities to reduce disaffection and to enhance motivation. These have often reflected national initiatives. However, we regret that all too often an initiative beneficial in particular circumstances is publicised as a panacea for all schools in all circumstances. We would argue that many of these practices are successful because they reflect certain underpinning principles; it is critical examination and adoption of the principles which is required rather than the uncritical importation of details of practice.

16. Many schools which have sought to reduce disaffection have used as their starting point changes in the curriculum. This is understandable since the curriculum is one very evident defining characteristic of an educational establishment. This is unlikely to be sufficient, even if necessary. Schools which are genuinely inclusive are those in which efforts are made to encourage all pupils to participate not only in the curriculum but also in the culture and communities of the school. Ethos and relationships are as important as the formal curriculum.

17. One route to countering disaffection is through recognising that change is possible; through avoiding labelling young people and through developing understanding of the relationships within schools and classrooms.

18. There is clear evidence that an important factor in promoting disaffection is the labelling of pupils and the use of simplistic notions of ability. The EIS has consistently argued that initiatives such as skills for work courses or college experience must not be seen as solutions targeted at ‘lower attaining’ or ‘challenging’ pupils.

19. There is strong evidence that many disaffected pupils feel that the school has had little time for them. This may relate to the culture of the school but at times it can refer literally to the amount of attention which they have received. The EIS is clear that a key feature in countering disaffection is affording time for individual pupils. This has clear implications for class sizes and the levels of teacher staffing within schools.

20. There is significant evidence that young people who feel that they are in control of their lives and of their learning will be more successful in school; it would seem that the development of such self-efficacy is significant in preventing disaffection. We would argue that this is a more complex concept than developing self-confidence. We welcome the work that is being done in Glasgow on the SELF Programme.

21. We would point out more generally the work that is being carried out under the umbrella of Better Behaviour – Better Learning and the number of related education authority initiatives being supported by the Scottish Executive; almost all of these require the development of emotional intelligence or self-efficacy.

22. There are a number of existing networks which seek to reduce disaffection through encouraging the sharing of good practice: these include the Anti-Bullying Network and the Scottish Schools Ethos
Network. There are other networks and initiatives which although not so directly related to issues of disaffection also counter this and improve pupil motivation through the sharing among staff of good practice which enhances pupil control of their learning and lives, particularly those related to assessment, citizenship and inclusion.

23. *A Curriculum for Excellence* and the Ministerial response to it recognises four purposes to education and encourages teachers, schools, and education authorities to develop greater flexibility as they seek to ensure that all pupils achieve in these four areas. Provided that flexibility is not interpreted as yet another exercise in labelling and marginalising challenging pupils, excluding them from the cultures and communities of the school, these proposals should contribute to reducing disaffection and enhancing motivation. This should result both from a better match between provision and the views of disaffected young people and from the enhanced confidence of teachers freed to take more decisions.

24. However, disaffection within schools is reduced not only through the implementation of formal initiatives but also through the development of a culture and ethos which is welcoming, supportive and challenging. This requires school staff who are themselves confident in their employment and who are themselves well motivated and respected by their employers. The implementation of *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* both in principle and spirit by employers will be a key factor in promoting the reprofessionalisation of teaching in Scotland.

25. While schools can take and have taken significant steps to reduce disaffection but we would argue strongly that it is necessary to consider disaffection as a societal issue, not simply a matter for schools to address. The links between social exclusion and disaffection are strong. The structures of our society exclude many from active power and participation economically or socially or politically. It is therefore not surprising that many people of all ages, including the young, become disaffected. For young people this sense of exclusion can only be exacerbated by the regular media portrayal of young working class people.

26. Schools and education authorities have sought to promote social inclusion through a wide range of initiatives which attempt to reduce the effects of inequality: these have included action to counter the causes and effects of illegal substance use, of alcohol abuse and of smoking. Though the evidence is not always consistent, these have resulted in some success in some areas. It is evident that success in these areas is almost always associated with programmes which develop the dispositions and skills which allow and encourage young people to take greater control of and responsibility for their lives. More generally they have introduced programmes which enhance the capability of young people to solve problems and to work in partnership with others.

27. While the evidence of research on the New Community Schools Programme is not unequivocally clear there is little doubt that partnership working with other agencies has at least for some pupils led to a reduction in disaffection; such approaches are often labour intensive and expensive, a feature which must be recognised in developing provision.

28. Finally, while we would point out in the strongest terms that there are no panaceas for reducing disaffection, we believe that schools and teachers can do (indeed have done) much to counter disaffection and poor motivation. But this requires schools to be stable organisations in which pupils are afforded both structure and space for development, both challenge and support, opportunities for working with others and opportunities to work individually, opportunities to develop both intellectual and emotional skills, to be known and to have opportunities for privacy. This is demanding on staff, requiring not only high levels of skill (and opportunities to enhance skills) but also considerable emotional resilience. It is both right and necessary that schools be adequately staffed, that staff are supported and treated with respect by their employers and that they have the opportunities to work in a collegiate way to reflect on and improve their practice if they are to be able to meet these requirements.
Factors which may have a positive or negative impact on the motivation of pupils.

The motivation of pupils in our schools can be thought of as being like a triangle, each side of which directly exerts a force which affects pupil motivation.

The three sides of the triangle represent the school environment including teachers, teaching techniques, teaching resources etc; the influence of society and the local environment; and the home environment. If each of these is strong and equal, then in theory the pupil should be motivated enough to attain his or her full potential. If one side is weak, then the triangle will collapse, resulting in little or no motivation.

The Home Environment.

Pupils will never be motivated if they are seen to be constantly at fault / never receive praise / parents show no interest in school activities or pupil progress / pupils have nowhere to do homework / parents never attend parents’ nights / send pupils to school out of school uniform or without the tools to take part in the educational process i.e., a school bag with their books, and at least a pencil with which to write.

The converse of this is that parents who are keen and enthusiastic will motivate their children. These parents are more likely to put in placing requests to magnet schools and are more likely to employ private tutors if they are unhappy with the educational progress of their children. Pupils of such parents are more likely to receive gifts and bribes as a way of ensuring motivation. Such pupils it can be argued are more likely to achieve their full potentials.

Perhaps we should be looking at ways to motivate parents? Can we not get more parents involved in Parents’ Associations, and School Boards? Perhaps an electronic school based chat room is the answer, or a ‘virtual’ parents’ meeting?

We understand that Home School Liaison officers are having some success in getting some parents more involved in schools.

The School Environment

No matter what material resources are thrown at the classroom teacher, when (not if) pupils are unintentionally ignored in class because their teacher is having to enforce discipline with unruly pupils rather than maintain discipline, then certain groups of pupils will be not motivated to perform their best, since the teacher may not have enough time to look at their work properly. Social inclusion strikes again!

NASUWT has received information about classes of S1 pupils where the majority of pupils in each class turn up to school without pens, pencils, bag or any of the tools necessary for the educational process. They seem just to have been thrown out the door in the morning by their parents – or
perhaps they put themselves out as parents were working. These children are poorly motivated; school is like a habit, or like dressing in the morning. We are aware that various strategies have been tried in many schools to try to motivate pupils. These have ranged from stickers, stamps and certificates to free entry to discos and discounts on school trips, or free trips. Many pupils must have certificates coming out their ears. Some members have expressed their concern about stamping a smiling face on a Standard Grade pupil’s jotter.

Pupils are of course not motivated when they are presented with work in school which is too difficult for them. Why then do we have such a broad school curriculum in the Primary School, which results in some pupils only achieving a level A or B in English or Mathematics? More time must be spent on the basics. Such children may end up in a mixed ability Science class in a Secondary school studying a topic at level E or F? They cannot understand the concepts, read the scientific words, the test paper or answer the questions. Do we need to stream pupils into ability groups, where they can compete with each other on a level playing field? This could provide motivation within classes.

Society and the Local Environment
School children often show a lack of respect for authority in society as a whole. Anyone who lives on a large housing estate and sees the attitude of school pupils to the local police will realise this. Gangs of rampaging P7s with alcopops clutched in their little hands are not uncommon. Older teenagers with their bottles of ‘wine’ are of course more common. Against this background we are trying to motivate pupils in school to work hard do their homework and become interested in their subjects. We are trying to put pupils through courses where they are required to learn work. This is totally alien to a large number of Secondary pupils. A lot of Secondary pupils hate subjects such as Modern Languages or Biology, where ‘you need to learn these “mad” words’ (Mad seems to be the new ‘in’ word). There seems to be little of the concept of learning work. There is no motivation to learn work. Is this something which needs to be brought in much earlier in a pupil’s education? We have had reports that more and more pupils are losing books and jotters when they are taken home. The temptation is now not to let pupils take their work home.

There is it seems no fear or respect towards for the police, indeed the prepaid mobile phone network is used to keep tabs on exactly where the local police are during the evening. It could be that we need to make the modern school child respect the police in an effort to motivate respect and progress at school. At the moment there seems to be very little respect from many pupils, but an awful lot of expectations placed upon teachers and schools. Some pupils and parents are often very quick to claim their rights, but are silent about their responsibilities.

Vocational Courses
Vocational courses are a very valuable part of the school curriculum. Why were these courses ever dropped? Secondary schools built in the 70’s often had a car bay, or facilities to teach other vocational courses such as painting and decorating. These facilities in many schools have remained unused for many years, even although there has been a need to find relevant work to motivate some difficult disinterested pupils.

In one school we know of, the car bay was reopened 12 years ago, with an interested member of staff running a course in basic car maintenance. This course ran for 5 years, before it was transferred to the local college. It did work; pupils who were a problem in normal subjects were fine in overalls, with hands covered in oil. A few however were looking for the easy option as they did not want to ‘chip their nails’.
We must be aware however that some pupils will try to drop into the ‘easy option’ rather than a more difficult academic course. Nevertheless these courses must be properly certificated and moderated by the SQA, and must appear on pupil examination certificates. There is a need to explore this avenue further to allow for the training of GTC registered teachers in these areas.

Vocational courses must expand to fill the gap being created by the shortages of work experience placements in many areas. Only this type of course will motivate certain pupils and prepare them for life after school.
Further Comments on Factors Which Could Effect Pupil Motivation

In our original paper we represented Pupil Motivation as a triangle, with the three main factors affecting motivation being the three named triangle sides – Society, School and Home.

We would like to expand on this to suggest further ways that pupils might be motivated.

School

Some form of Work Experience in S1 might motivate pupils to plan ahead, to look towards the future. We do not envisage the same form of Work Experience as exists at the moment for S4 and S5 pupils, but rather something like an afternoon a week for a few weeks. Do we need a national register of quality work experience providers? This coupled with careers advice could be beneficial.

An early start to Standard Grades in S2 for the majority of pupils could motivate pupils. Any pupils having difficulty in English and Mathematics could follow an intensive course in this area, with the target of catching up and starting Standard Grades the following year.

It is essential that the school environment is welcoming and friendly. Do colour schemes affect pupil motivation? Does an open plan environment affect motivation?

Stimulating challenging extra curricular activities motivate pupils. There must however be protection for staff involved in such activities in the event of an accident.

Home

Many school handbooks list what is expected of parents in relation to the education of their children. We would like to see this strengthened, possibly with parents signing a contract which clearly states parental responsibilities in relation to education. What is done when a parent fails to fulfil this contract is difficult to imagine. Procedures are in place at the moment to facilitate action when a parent refuses to send a child to school, but we are not advocating that such procedures should be used in this case. Do we need some sort of reward system?

Perhaps the school should be the centre of the community. Schools with extensive sports facilities should be encouraged to get parents and the local community involved in the school. Community Education hires of school facilities are sometimes inexpensive. We understand however that the hire of school facilities across Scotland varies dramatically. Should the local community have control over school facilities after the pupil day? This would promote community and parental ownership of the facilities.

Society

We need to get back to society valuing education. Hopefully improvements in motivation at school and home levels would kick start this process.
OFFICIAL RESPONSE FROM PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS

SUBJECT: Pupil Motivation Inquiry
REQUESTED BY: Scottish Parliament
DATE SENT: 3 February 2005
REF: OR.842(a)

FACTORS WITH A POSITIVE IMPACT ON PUPILS MOTIVATION

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
Welcoming atmosphere at entrance foyer of school eg corridors displays / school / class / pupil activities.
Health Promotion – health and well being of pupils and staff.
Facilities at playtimes are available eg toys/sports equipment and supervised.
Range of extra curricular activities.
School environs eg. school garden, woodland trail to be used for pupils’ leisure and field studies.

CLASSROOM ETHOS
Well planned, prepared and presented classroom practice: interactive teaching, plenary sessions to recap/reinforce instruction, differentiated work, appropriate pace of work for all pupils, independent learning, positive recognition of pupils input using formative assessment / display or pupils work.
Resources are accessible.
Positive behaviour of management of classroom discipline.

TEACHER / PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS
Management team are available and are visible eg in corridors, playground. Pupil participation in school issues eg Pupil Council
Regular School Assemblies – Worship and Awards
Behaviour Management – Fair and respectful built upon agreed rules and maintained standards.
Wearing of School Uniform by all pupils.
Appropriate PSD programme eg Circle Time, Golden Times, integrative with RME programmes.
Restorative Intervention Practices to develop / resolve relationships amongst pupils eg Peer Mediation.
HOME / SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Regular and frequent communication through Newsletters, Social Activities, Parents Meetings / workshops.

Active PTA, supportive School Board.

Solution Focus Meeting to identify problems and agree strategies.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Developing Citizenship outwith school environment eg fund raising for Charities, inviting to school / visiting senior members of community.

Enterprise ventures

Use of Community to extend learning.

Setting up a Safer Routes to School Committee.

Kirsti Paterson, SEC

On behalf of Highland Federation PAT (Scotland)
Submission from the Professional Association of Teachers in Scotland (PAT)

PUPIL MOTIVATION INQUIRY

I am very pleased to see that the Parliament’s Education Committee has launched this Inquiry as it is of great concern to those in the front line of education that many young people of school age are not well motivated to make the best of the opportunities that are open to them.

A crucial factor that must be taken into consideration when looking for explanations of pupils' lack of motivation is the influence of outside agencies. These range from the media in all its forms, advertising, parental desire to do provide so much for their children and successive government policies which have reduced the need for many young people to work hard at school because everyone can succeed and achieve.

Undoubtedly, there are many actions that are internal which can help to motivate children and young people and these must be addressed but in the scheme of things these are relatively minor, as for many children and young people they are constantly told that it is not necessary to do well at school in order to succeed in the outside world and the sanctions for not trying their best at school are virtually non-existent, so why bother.

THE MEDIA

There is no doubt this is a powerful influence for many young people. The idols are singers, actors and sports personalities who often are proud to announce that they often did not do well at school but look at how successful they are now. Some young people are very gullible and believe that they too can somehow achieve this success. Also the soaps on television are more real to some young people than life itself and they often identify with the characters whereas school is seen as a place you have to go to between 9am and 3.30pm. The influence of the internet is also immense but so far as using it as an educational tool, which should certainly be how it is used in schools, much of the time it is used by some young people to play games and to send E-Mails to friends sitting a few yards away. The advent of the mobile phone with its own language and increasing technology of pictures and videos reinforces other forms of media. All of this is seen as exciting and what life is about. School should be a place where you are expected to think, to work out problems and write about topics you have been taught in the preceding months – why do that when you can do all of these other things and still succeed.

ADVERTISING

The power of advertising and its effect on young people should not be underestimated. Many young people want what they see advertised on television and other branches of the media, be it the latest fashions, the lifestyles of their idols and the relationships which are promoted. There is little or nothing about the worth of education the need to do well at school. Even adverts which have an educational basis often stress that everyone can succeed no matter what – hardly an incentive for young people to be well motivated at school.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE

Understandably the vast majority of parents want to do the best for their children to enable them to have a comfortable, secure life. In order to achieve this many parents indulge their children with material possessions and as these come easily to the young people, again it is reinforced that they do not have to work hard at anything and this, of course includes school. In addition there are a growing number of parents who are not supportive of school and education and this is counter-productive when trying to motivate some pupils.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

1. There is a serious problem which the Scottish Executive will find rather unpalatable. Increasingly in recent years successive governments, for all their policies and associated strategies of raising attainment and
improving standards, have, in many ways contributed to pupil demotivation. Even the quotation from the Education Committee’s Call for Evidence

“Education is the basis of everything. Unfortunately, many children and young people are not seeing school as something that offers them anything meaningful or useful,” – highlights an underlying problem i.e. the suggestion is that there is a direct outcome and immediate benefit of achieving at school. There is no emphasis on the benefit of education for its own sake and the wider good of society. It is much more “How can this be of direct benefit to me?” and if this is not seen then its importance is seriously affected.

2. Another strand to this problem is how relatively easy it is to “succeed” under the present qualifications system. You only have to speak to experienced teachers to confirm that it is now much easier for pupils to do well in exams (if the pupils work even a fraction as hard as those pupils 5-10 years ago). We are constantly told how many more pupils are gaining 5 or more Standard Grade passes at level 3 or above and likewise with larger numbers achieving 3 or more Highers at level C or above. As it is easier to do well, why try as hard in the first place.

CONCLUSION

It is quite probable that pupil motivation could be improved among disaffected young people tinkering with the system and introducing different subjects and embarking on more vocational courses, this will not tackle the underlying causes of the problem. The whole emphasis and mindset needs to be addressed and this is a huge challenge for any government – is the Scottish Executive willing to take on this challenge?

Maureen Laing, SEC
On behalf of Fife Federation PAT (Scotland)
SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION

RESPONSE TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE’S REQUEST FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE ON PUPIL DISAFFECTION AND MOTIVATION

Factors which have a positive or negative impact on pupils’ motivation

Fundamentally, it has to be understood that, with particular reference to secondary school and the onset of puberty, internal motivation among young people is at low ebb. This is particularly true of males who increasingly operate in a sub-culture where lethargy and apparent disinterest are at a premium. The same is true for certain females particularly those who are more engaged in the male sub-culture. It is imperative that open recognition of this fact is made before any solutions are considered.

It is quite obvious, to those of us who work in schools, that increasingly schools and teachers are being expected to do the motivating for children. This is a trend that has been prevalent since the national obsession with examination results has developed and is part of the despairing “nanny” culture found in so many schools. In spite of exhortations from all quarters that pupils should take control of their own learning, the opposite is often the case with schools, terrified of failure, doing everything for children. Motivation is one of the areas thus affected. Youngsters need to learn self-motivation rather than schools attempting to impose external motivation. That strategy requires a perception of real rewards for achievement being recognised and the immediate removal of all those silly “AWARDS” ceremonies that schools are encouraged to have. Frankly, it is hard to imagine any self-respecting male adolescent having anything but complete and utter contempt for such public mutual back-slapping and it is little wonder that such events are so damaging to the majority of ordinary young people who want their achievement to go unrecognised because they perceive achievement as being in itself worthwhile. In other words, schools and society need to do more to encourage an attitude of achievement has its own reward rather than endorsing public adulation and even worse, “the points mean prizes” culture.

Challenging behaviour has an adverse effect on pupil motivation. Valuable teaching time is wasted dealing with inappropriate behaviour, which in turn affects progress and pace of work in the classroom.

Large classes combined with a lack of resources can lead to a negative effect on pupils. Support is needed in the form of classroom assistants to help prepare work for practical classes in particular. Up to date resources are essential to cope with modern technology, which is needed in most subject areas.
The report must be careful to stipulate that the focus of the inquiry is “pupil motivation for learning whilst in school”, and not the generalisation of “pupil motivation”.

Indiscipline and disaffection could be seen as the results of a rebellion against the existing system of education within schools in Scotland. It is a pupil population that is rebelling against a system that purports to meet their needs. However, these needs have only to be met within the existing provision. This provision is built on a philosophy of economics and competencies. Increasingly, the purpose of education appears to be meet the changing needs/skills of industry and commerce.

The shift in the curriculum towards a greater focus on IT and vocational work experience has been at the cost of positive pupil experiences in Physical Education, Home Economics, Technical Education and the Expressive Arts. Previously these subject areas met a need, still evident, for the physical engagement of the mind and body in learning and teaching. It was this combination of involving the physical self in the act of learning and the embedding of theory in practice that made the activities meaningful for pupils. Each of these subject areas is concerned with relationships: how individuals relate and communicate with one another and how we understand ourselves in relation to others. Using physical activity to develop subject content, acquire skills and explore relationship contexts is essential when working with young people, in particular, those young people who are struggling to find meaning in their educational experiences.

**Outside school**

Lack of parental support/poor living conditions can affect pupil motivation.

The absence of proper food and nourishment can make pupils lethargic and unable to concentrate in class. Pupils need knowledge about good healthy food to ensure they make wise food choices. Research shows that poor food choices can affect motivation and concentration in class.

**Early signs of disaffection**

To most teachers it is self-evident when a pupil becomes disaffected. Attitude and classroom body language are the signs that present themselves first along with the more obvious deterioration in achievement. All this is inexorably linked with the general discipline problems that exist in schools and attempting solutions is difficult. However, the development of Additional Support Needs departments offer key solutions given the extraordinary early intervention skills exemplified by ASN staff. If we begin to look at the loss of motivation as being a specific learning difficulty, then our ASN colleagues can use their early intervention skills to redress the problem and being the process of restoring self-motivation.
There are two behavioural guises that indicate disaffection with formal education. First, there is that of indiscipline – a physical and visible act of rebellion. Low-level, repetitive disruption through to acts of violence and abuse, these are the often the manifestation of frustration and disaffection.

Second, there are those pupils who become ghost-like. They blend into the background, giving no particular cause for concern, but they withdraw from classroom interactions and avoid drawing attention to themselves. This strategy allows them to opt out of the education experience without confrontation. This technique is more subversive, more worrying because of the greater difficulties in identifying such pupils.

Effective teaching approaches

Successful arrangements for teaching the disaffected rely on the ability of the Executive to fund smaller class sizes and encourage nurture groups and circle time techniques specifically targeting the disaffected rather than assuming that the disaffected are part of the amorphous badly behaved group. Clearly there are diagnostic implications for teachers but, at the moment, classroom teachers are so disempowered that they are unable to make this critical diagnosis. To simply state that a pupil has become “disaffected” has become almost an admission of professional failure. The challenge is to give the teacher the confidence and the professional integrity to make that diagnosis and then appropriate strategies can be used to “cure” the problem.

Staff training and the opportunity to take sabbaticals would help teachers to acquire new skills in learning and teaching approaches. The introduction of new teaching approaches can make learning more meaningful and increase motivation.

The education system in Scotland is not designed to support the development of independent, democratic and responsible citizens because it has removed all responsibility for learning and teaching from pupils and teachers. Pupils are responsible, not for their own learning, but for attaining prescribed outcomes. Teachers are not responsible for their own teaching, but for making sure that pupils meet targets and raise attainment. The language of business and commerce is endemic in education but it is not a language that is sympathetic to those without motivation.

A mistake often made is to assume that disaffection can be removed. A pupil’s sense of being removed from the education experience provided is unlikely to be because of any single factor. The formal classroom is not the forum to tackle pupil disaffection. It is the forum in which disaffection must be responded to and worked with, but it is not the therapeutic environment that the honest unravelling of the roots of disaffection demands.
The personality, subject passions and pedagogical expertise of classroom teachers are perhaps more important than education policy makers would like to admit. These are qualities that are difficult to quantify and measure. They probably constitute the professional integrity of teachers who have effective learning relationships with disaffected young people.

Vocational training and alternative curriculum experiences

All subjects should have equal rating and importance in the school curriculum so that pupils are not dissuaded from choosing vocational type subjects.

Best practice from Scotland and other countries

Sweden’s approach to personalised learning plans, which give pupils more responsibility for their own curriculum, could be worth exploring.

Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association
Pupil Motivation

Motivation is a very powerful learning tool. To increase pupil motivation, I believe you need to find a way to ‘tap in’ to what a pupil can achieve focus upon it. By doing this you raise self-confidence and self-esteem which in turn raises pupil motivation.

In order for a child to learn effectively they need to be in a comfortable state to learn, i.e. well fed, rested and emotionally at ease. Learners also have preferred styles of learning. For example, the VAK classification method focuses on how learners prefer to receive information, whether it is visually, auditory or kinaesthetic.

Finally, a learner needs to make sense of what they are learning. The brain learns more effectively when it can make connections with what it is trying to learn.

I believe the following factors have an impact on pupil motivation:

- Having Breakfast
- Sleeping well
- Teacher interest
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of achievement
- Praise
- Clear Boundaries
- Enjoying learning
- Interested in learning
- Stretched to achieve more
- Supportive friends and family
- Fairness and Consistency
- School Trips

I believe the following factors have a negative impact on motivation:

- Unsettled Home Life
- Lack of Sleep
- Hunger
- No Friends
- Bullying
- Non-achieving
- Lack of teacher interest
- Work overload
- Lack of consistency

Victoria Aldridge
PUPIL MOTIVATION INQUIRY

The Scottish Parliament Education Committee

Statement by Judith McClure

Headteacher of St. George’s School, Edinburgh and Convener of SELMAS
(Scottish Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society)

1. The SPICe briefing of 16 February 2005 provides an admirable summary of recent research on the concepts of pupil motivation and disaffection and on some approaches which are being used to improve motivation and prevent disengagement from school. As a long-serving headteacher I shall focus on the single issue of school leadership, the importance of which is highlighted briefly on page 15 of the briefing. I believe that effective leadership of each school is central to tackling the Committee’s aim to see that all children and young people are motivated by their school experience to enable them to achieve their full potential.

2. Practitioners are well served by current research on the subject of school ethos and pupil motivation and positive behaviour and Scottish researchers such as Professor Pamela Munn from Moray House School of Education have made great efforts to familiarise us with their key findings and to enable us to share effective approaches by conferences and personal links such as the Ethos Network. HM Inspectors of Education have provided us with the tool kit for evaluating our own practice in How Good is our School and its associated publications and in their reports based on their unrivalled familiarity with good practice in Scotland they have advised the Scottish Executive, local authorities and schools on improving the climate for learning and support of individual pupils. We have a very good basis of research and experience on which to base our practice and international models to make us think.

3. The National Debate on Education of 2003 and the parallel debate in the Scottish Parliament have been followed by the presentation of a programme of reform in Scottish education which aims to enable each pupil to become a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor. The report of the Curriculum Review Group and the raft of initiatives in Scottish Executive’s Ambitious, Excellent Schools have provided us with the incentive to work together to produce a modern, flexible and diverse curriculum, with 21st century, lively methods of learning and personalised approaches which should improve school education for all pupils, in particular the substantial minority of our children and young people whose needs are not met
effectively and who become disengaged from school, to the detriment of their own learning and future and the experience of their peers.

4. These improvements can only be achieved if policy-makers, researchers and practitioners at national, authority and school level are confident and work collaboratively and if our schools are effectively led in a collegiate manner. The best way for the individual pupil to be at the heart of education is for each school to be the best it can be. In the end children and young people are helped to develop not through national initiatives and programmes, important though these are, but through the teachers and support staff who know them as individuals in the learning community to which they feel they belong.

5. The teaching profession must be central to all efforts to improve pupil motivation. The national agreement following the McCrone report has begun the work of recognising the professionalism of teachers and enabling them to develop their professional skills throughout their careers. Just as education should be personalised to meet the needs of each pupil, so support for teachers should be individualised, as the recent submission to the Scottish Executive by Teacher Support Scotland, Creating the Conditions for Ambitious, Excellent Schools, emphasises. The needs of teachers and support staff to lead healthy working lives and their role in determining the distinctive ethos of each school must be recognised. The General Teaching Council Scotland and the professional associations remind us that many teachers do feel demoralised and recent research, such as The Teachers’ Health and Wellbeing Study Scotland, Dunlop and Macdonald 2004, indicates that something like one in five of them finds pupil indiscipline stressful. These issues must be tackled in the particular circumstances of each school and this is why leadership is so significant. The best school leadership involves all teachers and support staff and it includes pupil leadership and strong parental involvement.

6. The leadership agenda in Scottish education is being taken forward and there is a broad consensus which is heartening. Given the rapid changes in our society and in technology and our great determination to improve what we offer in our schools to all our young people, it is crucial that we work together to build leadership capacity at every level. All our headteachers need personal strengths and leadership skills which they are constantly refining and developing if they are to empower their colleagues at every level to bring all their professionalism and experience into creating the best learning environment and the best support for each pupil in every school. We are at the beginning of a period of change in education which should improve the motivation of all pupils and each of us must embrace it; to do that we must be prepared to take calculated risks confident in support, we must take every opportunity to share good practice with the help of SEED, Learning and Teaching Scotland, HMIe and SQA, we must value our teachers and we must create partnerships locally and internationally. For all this we need effective leaders.
It is difficult to know where to begin commenting on pupil motivation. In truth, there are many factors that impact upon the levels of motivation within our school children in Scotland. I have one or two comments in relation to the terms of reference of the inquiry that I hope will communicate my ideas more fully. The terms of reference indicate that the committee is particularly interested in a number of different aspects of pupil motivation and I will endeavour to deal with these points specifically.

‘The Committee is particularly interested in identifying which factors have a positive or negative impact on pupils' motivation.’

Firstly, allow me to make comment on the factors that I believe have a positive impact upon pupil motivation:

1. We must accept that the teacher in the best resource in any classroom and he or she can also be the most motivating or de-motivating factor in the education of our young people; if we desire to have motivated pupils we must have motivated and hard-working teachers. There is no way I can expect the children in my class to be motivated if I am not.
2. We must also have teachers in our classrooms who are able to foster positive relationships with the children and are able to adapt to the various needs of each class.
3. Our schools must have an ethos of hard work, where all of the children are valued and can achieve success.
4. Children have to be able to succeed at school. I believe that there are teachers who believe that not all of the children in their classes can succeed at school and therefore these children do not - becoming less motivated with every perceived failure that they have. Teachers must set realistic targets for each child and have the children in their classes working at the appropriate pace and level.
5. The teacher must provide regular and appropriate written and oral feedback to the children, ensuring that anything that is worthy of positive feedback is rewarded appropriately.
6. Children must participate in a curriculum that provides variety and depth, and allows each child to find something that they are good at. Frequently, children are skilled outside the ‘academic’ subjects and schools must provide pupils with projects (perhaps through Enterprise Education) that utilise these skills, involve children in the decision-making process, and allow children to work independently.
7. Children should be provided with an environment that is conducive to hard
work and high levels of motivation. This means providing our children and teachers with school buildings that are pleasant and well resourced.

8. Finally, much has been made of the effects of technology on the teaching and learning process in our schools. As a user of technologies such as interactive whiteboards, electronic voting machines and laptop computers in class, I have found them to have a very positive effect upon the levels of motivation within the children in my class. These technologies provide the children with a more exciting and interesting way to interact with their education and encourage more frequent whole-class participation in lessons.

Needless to say, the factors that have a negative impact upon the levels of motivation within our children are the reverse of the various situations I have mentioned above. Disorganised and de-motivated teachers, negative and infrequent feedback, an unpleasant working environment and a lack of success and variety in their school experience can all contribute to a lack of motivation amongst our young people at school.

‘The Committee is particularly interested in how pupils’ experience outside school impacts on their level of motivation within school.’

I have four brief comments linked to the above statement:

1. I believe that children who are raised in a home where the value of education is impressed upon them can be more motivated in school.
2. Levels of motivation amongst young people can be improved if they are involved in youth organisations outside of school that teach them the educational and social skills that they require at school.
3. Levels of motivation can also be improved when children experience situations out of school where skills that they have acquired in school are useful to them.
4. Our schools must take time to recognize that children learn everywhere and schools must take time to reward children for their achievements, even if they are gained out of school.

‘The Committee is particularly interested in examples of how to identify early signs that particular pupils may be disaffected by their school experience.’

Responsibility for the above again lies with the classroom teacher. There are a number of factors that are evidence that a child is becoming disengaged or de-motivated by their school experience. A good classroom teacher will monitor the following:

1. Standards of behaviour within their class; deteriorating behaviour being a symptom of decreased levels of motivation.
2. Children’s levels of participation and interaction during lessons.
3. The standard of work produced by the children.
4. The general disposition of the children in their class, bearing in mind that a lack of motivation might manifest itself by children ‘switching off’, not necessarily misbehaving.

‘The Committee is particularly interested in examples of effective teaching approaches, learning styles and personalised learning that have a motivating influence for disaffected pupils.’

In many ways, the strategies that can be used to motivate disaffected pupils are the same strategies that are used with all pupils, disaffected or not. Below are some examples that I feel are most important and effective:

1. Regular, positive feedback can have a massive impact upon the levels of motivation, especially in disaffected pupils. This feedback can be offered orally or in written form and should be offered in front of other pupils as frequently as possible.

2. As I have already mentioned, the use of new technologies, such as interactive whiteboards and voting systems, can provide disaffected pupils with something different and more interactive. However, I must stress that these technologies will never overtake the role of a teacher. Technology is only as effective as the person operating it!

3. Involvement in a variety of different educational experiences, such as Enterprise projects, school performances and group work can impact positively upon disaffected pupils. These projects often provide children with responsibility that they might not otherwise have and this can have a positive impact on them.

4. All children must be treated with respect and trust at all times. This can very often lead to that respect being reciprocated. This issue is closely linked to my earlier point which referred to the importance of a teacher fostering good relationships with his or her pupils.

5. Finally, and most importantly with disaffected children, they must know that there is always a chance to gain a fresh start. Disaffected children cannot be given up on and must always be given a chance to ‘redeem’ themselves.

‘The Committee is particularly interested in examples of approaches which ensure that vocational training and alternative curriculum experiences are recognised and valued appropriately.’

This moves us back to the issues most commonly associated with Enterprise Education, where vocational skills are taught, utilised and celebrated. I have had experience of children running businesses, arranging events in school for members of the local community, organising exhibitions and producing saleable goods of their own. I work in a school where we endeavour to provide the children with two opportunities during every academic session when they can

Bryan McLachlan, Netherlee Primary School, East Renfrewshire
become involved in some kind of Enterprise activity. These activities are supported by the rest of the school and quite often involve the local community and provide the children with a new opportunity to become involved in something different.

‘The Committee is particularly interested in examples of best practice from Scotland and other countries and the effectiveness of existing networks and structures for communicating examples of best practice.’

These two issues are closely linked and I believe that there are a number of examples of good practice mentioned in the sections above. Good use of technology, enterprise and good daily teaching practice being the most outstanding ones. The final issue then becomes the way in which we disseminate this good practice throughout the teaching profession in Scotland. My only real experience outside the localised sharing of methods and resources is my involvement in the Scottish Executive funded Masterclass programme. This course trained six hundred teachers in Scotland in the recent advances in ICT and afforded these teachers regular opportunities to meet and share examples of good practice. These meeting were held at national and regional levels and the work of Masterclass is ongoing through the participants' willingness to share their knowledge and experiences with others. This has proved to be a very successful way of sharing good practice and is a model that can work with other areas of the curriculum.

Bryan McLachlan, Netherlee Primary School, East Renfrewshire
**Pupil motivation**

**What are the key features of a motivating school**

**Outstanding teachers:** Pupils are always motivated in the classrooms of the best teachers. There are no “good” subjects or “bad” subjects, popularity and the level of student motivation between on subject and another is almost always down to the quality of the learning experience, which in turn is dependent upon the teacher.

**Motivated teachers:** Pupils are unlikely to be motivated by teachers who are not motivated themselves. Schools must attempt to create an environment for teachers where their motivation levels are maintained – throughout their careers.

**The right to learn without disruption:** The rights of all pupils to learn are protected and upheld by staff and management. The rights of an individual who wishes to disrupt the learning of the majority are automatically forfeited.

**Sense of community/family:** Schools should attempt to replicate the sense of belonging, security and love, which characterise family life at its best.

**Environment for learning:** Provide high quality buildings and classrooms. Don’t tolerate any vandalism or damage. Overreact to the slightest incident. Once things begin to slide it is impossible to get it back.

**Secure and safe:** In line with the commitment to replicating the sense of family, pupils must feel that their welfare, emotional and physical, is a non-negotiable right.

**Opportunities to experience success and demonstrate mastery:** We must try to provide as many different opportunities both curricular and extra-curricular for pupils to experience success and demonstrate mastery. Mastery leads to confidence and raised self-esteem.

**Recognise that success in one field can lead to improved motivation for learning across the school:** Enabling pupils to experience success and mastery in one activity can be transferable to their experiences beyond that particular activity.

**Clear expectations and consequences:** Pupils like to know where the line has been drawn. They expect and are very upset when that line appears to shift. Children like to have something to “rub up against” They do not appreciate if every time they step up the line the line shifts back. They will always keep moving forwards. Don’t court cheap popularity by giving way.

**Praise:** There can never be too much praise!
Optimism/"can do" mentality: Pupils respond well to an environment which adopts an optimistic perspective on all issues. It rubs off.

High profile from staff: Children need to see staff outwith the classroom. School trips, extra-curricular and sitting down with them in the canteen are all invaluable to the motivation process.

Fun and laughter: Schools need to be fun. Laughter should be encouraged.

Drive to high standards: Children respond best when they are encouraged to reach high standards. They instinctively know when second best is being accepted.

Curriculum – opportunities for choice – following passions: Enable as many pupils as possible to follow the subjects for which they have a passion.

Believe that every child has an innate gift: If the starting premise is that every child has an innate gift in at least one area of the formal or informal curriculum, then the purpose of schools is to enable that gift to be discovered and developed.

D.J.Ledingham
Headteacher
Dunbar Grammar School