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Estimated for August 2008	
Staffing in Primary Schools	

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over 25
homes/travellers Flexibility budget
service needs
overstaffing check at September census

Flexibility budget

Written submission by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

1. DEVELOPMENTS IN CLASS SIZE POLICY

1.1 Until 1998, the maximum class sizes in primary schools had been unchanged for many years, 33 pupils in single stage classes and 25 in composite classes. These limits were in accordance with the teachers' contract. In 1998 the Scottish Office announced funding to allow progress towards a 30 pupil maximum in P1-P3 and subsequently the new Scottish Executive introduced regulations requiring implementation by August 2001. In 2007 the Executive implemented a further reduction, with 25 established as the new maximum in P1 classes from August 2007. The staffing requirement was funded by the Executive, associated with the commitment to increase teacher numbers to 53,000 nationally by that date. Current class size limits are shown in table 1.

Table 1

Stage/class type	Maximum size
Single stage P1	25
Single stage P2-P3	30
Single stage P4-P7	33
Composite classes	25

2.1 In June 2007 the new Scottish Government announced its intention to make progress towards an 18 class size limit in P1 - 3 and this aim was endorsed in the concordat subsequently agreed with COSLA. The government allocated an additional £40m to support initial accommodation upgrading but authorities were permitted to defer the spending to a later date. After full implementation of the P1-P3 18 limit the maximum class sizes will be as shown in table 2.

Table 2

stage/class type	maximum size
Single stage P1 -P3	18
Single stage P4-P7	33
any composite class including pupils in P1, 2 or 3	18
Composite classes comprising pupils in P4-7 only	25

2. EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 It would be misleading to suggest a simple link between small classes and improved attainment. Smaller classes establish the conditions for better teaching, more individual attention to pupils, and a better disciplined environment but there is no guarantee that more effective learning and teaching will result. Indeed the research findings on the matter

are inconsistent. There is some evidence that smaller classes bring learning gains, particularly in the short term. However, other research suggests a much weaker link, with class sizes very low on the list among the factors which influence pupil performance. This suggests that other options would be more cost effective approaches to raising attainment in schools.

- 2.2 An alternative approach could be to adjust the staffing allocation so that enough teachers are committed to the P1-P3 stages to achieve the 1:18 ratio. At school level it would be for the head teacher, based on consultation with staff, to deploy the staffing to best meet pupil needs, for example more individual attention to pupils with additional learning needs, the formation of small groups and a flexible approach to class formation. The key principle would be the deployment of teachers to ensure the effectiveness of learning and the progress of individual pupils rather than a formula-driven adherence to a simple 18 class size limit.
- 2.3 To maximize the educational benefits of smaller class grouping, further consideration of these alternative approaches including the identification of existing good practice, would be helpful.

3. ADES SURVEY OF AUTHORITIES

3.1 Authorities are considering their strategic responses to the class size 18 policy position and ADES is collating information about these developments. To date, details are available for 22 authorities representing 65% of Scottish primary schools. On the basis of an immediate implementation of the 18 limit and existing school provision, catchment arrangements and current rolls, the estimated resource implications are shown below in table 3.

Table 3

Issue	Number	cost
Additional teachers	2173	c£62m (recurring)
Additional classrooms	900	c£360m (capital)
Schools where extensions are either impractical or not offering best value	407	_

- 3.2 Authorities are considering a range of strategies in moving towards the 18 limit, including the following
 - (i) phased or targeted move towards the 18 limit, for example small annual reductions or implementation in areas with the highest deprivation
 - (ii) school extensions and remodelling
 - (iii) temporary accommodation
 - (iv) team teaching, the allocation of two teachers to large classes
 - (v) review of school admission arrangements, including the provision of transport to neighbouring schools and catchment area reviews

In order to monitor progress in the implementation of the policy it is considered that bench marking information about P1-3 class sizes and P1-3 staffing inputs are both required.

4. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Clearly, the implementation of the class size 18 will have a range of practical implications, both for the strategic planning of school provision and the operational management of individual schools, which require to be carefully planned. These issues are outlined below.
 - (i) As part of their annual planning, heads will require to restructure class groupings more frequently, particularly at the P3 to P4 interface. As a result, that interface may become more significant in the educational experience of pupils.
 - (ii) The deployment of existing accommodation in schools will require to be reviewed.
 - (iii) Fewer placing requests may be approved resulting in greater parental dissatisfaction.
 - (iv) There may be implications for school provision arrangements in some areas, for example the redrawing of catchment areas or the transport of pupils to noncatchment schools.
 - (v) The formal capacities of all schools will be reduced. Single stream entries (33 pupils) which could previously be accommodated in 7 or 8 classes will now require 10 classrooms.
 - (vi) School design principles, particularly the size of teaching areas and the allocation of general purpose spaces, will require to be reviewed. The flexibility to redesign classroom spaces, both in response to the variation in class size limits across the stages and year to year variations in intake, will be particularly important.
 - (vii) Spending on upgrading the school estate will require to take account of the need for additional classrooms in addition to addressing existing condition and suitability problems.

MM May 2008.