

Note from SCORE Chair

SCORE was established with Government encouragement to provide a means for science to be consulted on STEM; from the partners' perspective, given independence, the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts and there is an opportunity to be pro-active as well as reactive. We are becoming increasingly successful at carrying out research projects and using these to inform policy. A bonus is the sharing of intelligence from the very high level of expertise around the SCORE table.

My three years as Chair leaves me feeling that there are perhaps three big issues for the future: first, the quantity and quality of teachers; secondly, the curriculum – overcoming the clash of objectives, 'scientific literacy for all' verses 'stretch and challenge' for the scientific workforce of the future; thirdly, system leadership – ensuring that the national agencies are fit for purpose. After three years, I can confidently assert that we have worked well as a partnership and much of our consultative work has borne fruit. SCORE has become a force and has a terrific platform for the future!

Alan Wilson



About SCORE

The SCORE partnership was formed in October 2006 and brings together organisations in the science community to work on key issues in science education. The partnership is currently chaired by Sir Alan Wilson and comprises six organisations; Association for Science Education, Institute of Physics, Royal Society, Royal Society of Chemistry, Science Council and Society of Biology.

The SCORE partners recognise the importance of taking a strategic approach to strengthening science education. SCORE's priority areas over the next four years are: the curriculum, the schools and colleges workforce, the wider learning experience and qualifications and assessment. By working together on policy in these four areas, the SCORE partners aim to take a multidisciplinary approach to key issues of mutual interest in science education policy.

SCORE partners are developing a sound evidence base to inform their work. They commission a small number of research projects to address specific policy areas which are each supported by a working group. These working groups enable the partners to draw on expertise from across the science and science education community.

SCORE is also asked to respond to particular policy issues on science education and the partners often collaborate shared consultation responses. In addition to our research projects and reactive work, SCORE holds a number of events throughout the year including a series of policy seminars and an annual conference. To keep updated on SCORE activities and events, sign up to the monthly e-newsletter at www.score-education.org



Practical work in science

The importance of practical work in science is widely accepted, and it is acknowledged that good quality practical work promotes the engagement and interest of students, as well as developing a wide range of skills, science knowledge and conceptual understanding.

SCORE is the lead organisation for the *Improving the quality of practical work in science* action programme in the STEM Framework and continues to work on the recommendations from the SCORE report on effective practical work. In 2009, SCORE focused on the assessment of practical work in science, specifically with regard to informing the revised GCSE science criteria.

One of SCORE's earlier recommendations on CPD has resulted in the *Getting Practical* programme, led by the ASE. In its first year, *Getting Practical* has used a cascade approach to train 100 local trainers who will deliver professional development events to over 1000 teachers, technicians and teaching assistants over the next year.

The next stage for SCORE is to undertake wider benchmarking of the current state of practical work in schools and colleges. The project aims to provide a framework to enable science departments in secondary schools and colleges to review and evaluate their practical science work and, where necessary, to make a case for improvement.



Science GCSE

In the summer of 2009, SCORE published *GCSE Science 2008 examinations*. This review highlighted the need to include more and higher level mathematics in science examinations papers and to consider the assessment of How Science Works. The report has influenced the new science GCSE criteria and specifications and has helped to secure the inclusion of an appendix of mathematical skills requirements in the GCSE science criteria.

Progression routes

SCORE has recently published *Choosing the right STEM degree course*. This report investigates progression from post-16 education in schools and colleges into STEM first degree programmes. It summarises research carried out by the Centre for Education and Industry at Warwick University and proposes a number of recommendations for improving levels of communication among the main stakeholders.

Subject specialism

SCORE has commissioned a small-scale study looking at the motivations of and intended destinations of trainee teachers. The report will be published in September 2010.

The SCORE partnership is also developing policy advice on specialist teachers in the sciences. SCORE recently held a seminar on the issue and a report will be available in March 2010.

New projects

SCORE is planning to embark on a series of international comparison studies of the secondary science curriculum. This year's annual conference launches the start of this project. The second major project for SCORE in 2010 and 2011 will support the work of partner organisations by developing a coherent science curriculum mapping framework.

Recent reports (available electronically):

Choosing the right STEM degree course: Investigating the information available for prospective applicants:

www.score-education.org/2/projects/progression_routes.htm

Summary of SCORE seminar: Assessment of practical work in science at GCSE:

www.score-education.org/2/projects/practical_work.htm

GCSE Science 2008 examinations:

www.score-education.org/2/projects/gcse_science.htm

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Technical Education Projects

