

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 21 OCTOBER 2009**

**TAPESTRY / HARVARD TEACHING FOR UNDERSTANDING**

**“LEADERS OF LEARNING”**

**Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Cabinet on the development of the ongoing partnership with Tapestry through the Harvard Teaching for Understanding (TfU) and Tapestry Leaders of Learning Programme and to seek approval for the continued development of these partnerships which support Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and the raising attainment agenda.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Tapestry is a unique organisation, which brings together a range of bodies, governmental and non-governmental, involved in Scottish education in its broadest sense. Tapestry is managed by Emeritus Professor Brian Boyd, Strathclyde University, Professor Nigel Osborne, Edinburgh University and Katrina Bowes, a retired Head teacher. The Tapestry Board is chaired by Keir Bloomer, Ex Chief Executive of Clackmannanshire. Tapestry prioritises innovation and creativity and acts as a platform for world-leading new ideas in Scottish schools. This is acknowledged by world leaders in education such as Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves and Professor Howard Gardner.
- 2.2** East Ayrshire has developed strong links with Tapestry and is recognised as a key Local Authority partner. Previous work has included Mindmapping with Tony Buzan, the development of a New Musical Instrument for young people with significant additional support needs with Professor Nigel Osborne and the ongoing CfE developments supported by Emeritus Professor Brian Boyd.
- 2.3** The Teaching for Understanding (TfU) Framework was developed by researchers and educators at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as a tool to design, revise, and review curriculum and instruction that helps pupils to develop understanding. The programme is delivered through WIDE World (Wide-scale Interactive Development for Educators) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. WIDE World has successfully combined 30 years of research and practice to address the top educational challenge of the 21st century - helping schools implement sustained, systemic improvement in teaching practice and pupil performance.
- 2.4** Teaching for Understanding (TfU) has four interacting elements that guide teachers thinking about fundamental question linked to learning and teaching. TfU assists in focussing those teaching decisions, whether in planning, review, assessment, or the moments of teaching that focus on helping pupils develop understanding. Each of the four key elements is defined by specific criteria that remind teachers how to help students develop genuine, flexible understanding of important subject matter, concepts, and topics.

### **3. THE PROGRAMME IN EAST AYRSHIRE**

**3.1** Reflecting prior experience, the programme in East Ayrshire will focus on supporting a significant body of teachers across one Learning Partnership. 25 teachers from the St. Joseph's Learning Partnership have embarked on the course with a further 5 staff from across the authority also participating. The selection process is based on expressed interest from prospective participants, matched to the readiness of the respective school to incorporate the revised methodologies from the training. A small team, including the Head of Service: Schools; Links Officer in the Arts and Education and Curriculum for Excellence Co-ordinator representatives from Quality Improvement Team deliberate on who to involve in the programme. Participant commitment includes reading prescribed texts, participating in group discussions and group assignments and reflection on understanding and informal self-review.

**3.2** The initial TfU course is designed to introduce participants to the Teaching for Understanding Framework. Gradually over six sessions, they explore the "performance view" of understanding and the four elements of the framework (Generative Topics, Understanding Goals, Performances of Understanding, and Ongoing Assessment). Each individual participant or team creates a unit of instruction to apply the Teaching for Understanding Framework to a topic of their choice.

**3.3** Programme Aims:

- Introduce the Teaching for Understanding Framework to complement Curriculum for Excellence and contribute to raising attainment across the curriculum.
- Promote and understand how the Teaching for Understanding Framework may be used as a guide to develop lesson plans and/or inter-disciplinary curriculum projects
- Plan new teaching strategies to motivate and engage students in developing powerful understanding
- Reflect upon the impact of new practice.

**3.4** Programme Outcomes:

- Introduction to Teaching for Understanding Framework
- Training/Support in Teaching for Understanding for teachers
- Established Teaching for Understanding Communities to improve classroom practice
- WIDE World at the Harvard Graduate School of Education Certificate
- General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Certificate of Professional Recognition

### **4 SUPPORT**

**4.1** Tapestry has brought together a team to support participants. While progressing through the Harvard module they will be supported by Harvard staff, team colleagues and a Harvard Coach. During the other elements of the programme there will be additional support from key Tapestry staff. In addition there will be also a masterclass led by Emeritus Professor Brian Boyd for other teachers in the authority.

**4.2** The Links Officer in the Arts in Education within East Ayrshire has recently successfully completed the Harvard TfU Coaching Course. As one of only two Harvard Coaches in Scotland, he will provide valuable additional support.

## **5 CERTIFICATION**

- 5.1 Through participating in this programme teachers will have the opportunity to apply for three General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Certificates of Professional recognition: Project leadership, Assessment, Support to Learning. Successful completion of the module leads to certification from WIDE World at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Department of Educational and Social Services contributes £32,500 to the programme from the Curriculum for Excellence budget. As well as the training and support already described, Tapestry also contribute a one day Masterclass Learning and Teaching programme for up to 500 teachers; four additional twilight sessions focussing on practical classroom strategies linked to a Curriculum for Excellence (up to 100 teachers); and all support materials and all costs associated with research and evaluation into the impact of the programme.

## **7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Teaching for Understanding Programme/Leaders of Learning programme particularly supports the increasing participation of young people in learning via the theme of Improving Lifelong Learning.

## **8. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members:
- (i) approve the continued partnership with Tapestry;
  - (ii) be kept informed of future progress of the Harvard/Tapestry TfU/Leaders of Learning programme and the impact on CfE and the raising attainment agenda
  - (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**NIL**

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services, Tel: (01563) 576017 or Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service: Schools, Tel: (01563) 576126.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER**

John Wilson, Links Officer in the Arts and Education