

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 25 MAY 2004**

#### **INCLUSION STRATEGY FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

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

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To seek approval for a strategy on inclusion for educational services.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Since the Council was formed in 1996 a number of important papers have been approved by the Education Committee dealing with an number of separate aspects of inclusion. During discussions, the Committee has continued to reaffirm its support or inclusive approaches to education. To date, these approaches have been seen as relating to two main areas of provision – special educational needs (SEN) and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Three key documents exist to support these areas of provision – “Every Child is Special 2002”, “Pathways to Inclusion” and the accessibility strategy.

- 2.2 The new Bill on additional support needs was passed by the Scottish Parliament in April 2004. There has been very little change to the substantive issues that were reported to Committee on 04 February 2004, although some of the detail has been modified in the light of parliamentary discussion. This Bill has brought together the former categories of SEN and SEBD under the single category of “additional support needs”. This development was anticipated by the recommendations of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in their report on East Ayrshire’s work as an education authority. The resulting action plan therefore included specific provision for a new “overarching” strategy on inclusion.

### **3. THE NEW STRATEGY**

- 3.1 In the time since the inspection, officers have been considering the developing literature on inclusion, taking account of national guidelines and consulting schools an educational services. As a result, a new draft strategy statement has been prepared. This draft has itself been the subject of further consultation with schools, school boards and the range of educational support services. The Quality Improvement Team has also conducted focused consultations with teachers, parents and children.

**3.2** The resulting proposed strategy statement is available at the Members' Information Point.

**3.3** In summary, its contents cover:

- the legal background;
- the relevant policy areas of the Scottish Executive and East Ayrshire Council;
- the expected features of educational provision under this strategy;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- a glossary of key terms; and
- useful contacts in the Council and nationally for parents and young people.

The purpose is to provide a concise overview of what parents and young people should be able to expect from the education service.

**3.4** The Impact Statement contained in the strategy provides the most straightforward insight into its purpose and intention:

*“Policies should inform, influence and direct practice. This strategy will make a difference by:*

- *Ensuring that all children will receive education in a mainstream school or nursery establishment unless exceptional their special needs dictate otherwise;*
- *All parents, carers, children and young people will be involved in drawing up educational plans;*
- *The planning process will identify choices and options will be explained to parents, children and young people;*
- *Plans will be reviewed at least annually, or if needs demand it, at shorter intervals;*
- *All relevant policies and strategies at Authority and establishment levels will reflect the intentions of this strategy;*
- *All children with additional support needs will have an appropriate plan which will include specific learning outcomes tailored to their needs;*
- *Equipping staff to meet additional support needs will be an explicit part of arrangements for continuing professional development (CPD);*
- *Services to children and young people with additional support needs will be continually reviewed and developed;*
- *Resource distribution will be subject to continual review to ensure that the maximum benefit is available to directly benefit individuals.*

*And:*

- *Parents, carers, children and young people should be able to recognise the benefits of this strategy in the provision they receive and ask questions of the authority, schools and service providers based on its contents.”*

- 3.4** Taken together with “Every Child is Special”, “Pathways To Inclusion” and the Accessibility Strategy provide a comprehensive strategy base to all aspects of how inclusion will be delivered in educational services.

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1** This is a key strategy development which complements existing statements. It is designed to influence the practice of all in the education service and to inform future strategy development. The following activity is therefore proposed:
- that it is launched as part of the activities in a good practice conference scheduled for June 2004;
  - copies of the document are widely distributed within the service and to all establishments;
  - a summary leaflet is prepared for parents, children and young people;
  - an electronic version is to be available on the Council web-site; and
  - that it should be available in a variety of formats to suit people with a visual impairment, hearing impairment and minority languages.
- 4.2** The strategy will also form an integral part of staff induction, including probationer training.

## **5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Nil

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The costs of publication and associated training will be met within existing budgets.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) approve this strategy as the basis for implementation of inclusion in educational services;
- (ii) ask the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to ensure that it is distribute widely and in a variety of formats; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report

**John Mulgrew**  
**Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

## **GRS/GRS**

**21 May 2004**

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Service: Quality Improvement, (01563-576089).

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Every Child is Special 2002
2. Pathways to Inclusion
3. The Accessibility Strategy

**Implementation Officer: Graham Short**