

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 25 MAY 2004

### TARGETS FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members on the levels of achievement of mainstream schools, special schools and supported learning centres in 2002-2003 in meeting the individual targets set for pupils with special educational needs.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In February 1999 the Government launched the initiative Raising Standards – Setting Targets for pupils with special educational needs. This established the framework to enable all schools to set targets for raising the attainment of pupils with special educational needs both at individual and school level.
- 2.2 The key principles underpinning the target setting initiative are:
- Targets should be set in a manner which is consistent across Scotland
  - Targets should be limited in number and focus on key priorities
  - Targets should be simple, clearly expressed and quantifiable
- 2.3 The individual targets for pupils with special educational needs are set within their individualised educational programmes (IEPs). These are written plans outlining the steps to be taken in learning and teaching to enable pupils who require significant planned intervention to reach specified curricular targets. For the purposes of the target setting initiative targets are set in one or more areas of the curriculum:
- Communication and language
  - Numeracy
  - Personal and social development
- 2.4 Almost all pupils with special educational needs in primary schools follow the 5-14 curriculum at an appropriate level and pace of learning. For those pupils targets are set related to a 5-14 strand or level. Most secondary aged pupils with special needs set targets for attainment in certificated courses such as Standard Grade or Higher Still. Some pupils with more severe and complex needs require to have their targets set against a more individualised curriculum such as the Elaborated 5-14 Curriculum and associated programmes of study.
- 2.5 The national benchmark for schools making provision for pupils with special educational needs is a minimum of 80% success in achieving the targets set. All schools and supported learning centers are required to submit their targets

for individual pupils to the authority in September of each year. Thereafter the information is aggregated and reported to the Scottish Executive.

### **3. CURRENT POSITION**

**3.1** In 2002-2003, 9 Secondary schools, 46 primary schools, 4 special schools and 4 supported learning centres set targets for individual pupils with special educational needs. In primary schools 439 pupils, including 66 with records of needs had individual targets set across the three curricular areas. This represents 4% of the overall primary school population. In secondary schools targets were set for 186 pupils, including 67 with records of needs which represents 2% of the overall secondary school population. Special schools and supported learning centres set targets for all their pupils.

**3.2** Schools in East Ayrshire have agreed to use the benchmark of at least 80% of targets to be achieved across the school. In primary 33 of the 46 schools met or exceeded their target an overall success rate of 75%. In secondary 7 of the 9 schools met or exceeded their target, an overall success rate of 83%. All special schools and supported learning centres met their targets with an overall success rate of 92%.

**3.3** The target setting initiative, now in its third year of implementation, has made a significant contribution to ensuring that all pupils with special educational needs reach their full potential. The targets set by schools are not however an end in themselves. They are a focus for planning for improvement and ensuring that schools evaluate their approaches to learning and teaching.

**3.4** In any analysis of the results the following issues should be noted:

- Overall school levels of success, in relation to pupil attainment as measured by the setting of individual targets, are unlikely to change significantly from year to year
- There is no expectation that schools will achieve a success rate of 100%. The benchmark of 80% is realistic in that it should ensure that the targets set for individual pupils are achievable but challenging.
- Overall school targets can be affected by pupils moving to another school or authority, ill health, social or emotional difficulties or exclusion from school.
- Many special needs pupils can reach a plateau or regress in their learning as a result of their particular difficulty or syndrome.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

**4.1** The setting of individual targets for pupils with special educational needs is an extremely valuable initiative. It provides an opportunity to evaluate the attainment of pupils at school and authority level.

**4.2** There is clear evidence through the monitoring systems of the Quality Improvement Team that the quality of IEPs has improved over the last three years. In line with 'The Manual of Good Practice' the general principle of

SMART targets: specific, measurable, achievable and timed is being followed in schools.

- 4.3** Further support to schools in the future development of this initiative will be provided through the authority staff development programme and by the continuing input from the network support teachers.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

**6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note the 2002-2003 levels of attainment of schools in meeting their targets for pupils with special educational needs;
- (ii) ask the Executive Director to report progress in future years; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/MJR  
10 May 2004

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

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

Implementation Officer: Graham Short