

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2006

ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT FOR 2005

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** To seek approval for the submission of the standard annual report to the Scottish Executive on the progress made by the Authority in overtaking the National Priorities in Education.
- 1.2** To seek approval for the publication of the annual Standards and Quality Report covering 2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 established a system of National Priorities in Education. After consultation these were detailed for education authorities, and are described in the Authority's document "Priority to Improvement" which is widely available through all educational establishments and services, and is re-issued annually. The National Priorities are central to all improvement planning in relation to school-based education in this Authority.
- 2.2** It is an essential part of this process that the Scottish Executive gather information annually on progress against National Priorities in education authorities.
- 2.3** Once collected, the Scottish Executive publish the results of the exercise widely– including, for example, individual authority reports on the national web-site.
- 2.4** In East Ayrshire, the practice has always been to associate the National Priorities with the Authority's own local improvement objectives. Achievement against these has also, therefore, formed the core of the annual Standards and Quality Report. The publication of such a summary of achievement against the local improvement objectives is also a statutory requirement under the Standards in Scotland's School's etc Act, 2000.

3. PROGRESS MADE AGAINST NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The Annual National Priorities Report is a detailed and technical document. It is available in the Member's Information Point. The main points emerging from this year's annual report are:

- while standards of literacy under the 5-14 programme have remained stable in primary schools, attainment in numeracy has improved by 4% since last year, with 84% of children reaching expected levels;
- standards of attainment in secondary schools continue to run ahead of the averages for comparator authorities, and in some cases are edging ahead of the national average (for example the rolling average percentage of young people gaining SCQF Level 3 in English and mathematics was 93% in East Ayrshire compared to 91% in similar authorities and the national average of 92%);
- in self-evaluation exercises 85% of schools rated themselves "good" or "very good" for overall quality of attainment;
- similarly, 85% of schools rated themselves "good" or very good for expectations and promoting achievement;
- 93% of schools rated themselves "good" or "very good" for the continuing professional development of teachers' skills;
- Exclusions in secondary schools show a reduction of 22 per 1000 pupils to 135 from the previous reporting year;
- 60% of schools rated accommodation and facilities as "good" or "very good";
- 85% of schools rated themselves "good" or "very good" at supporting children's learning;
- highly successful promotion of Gaelic medium education with representation at all educational stages and links with other authorities;
- highly successful target setting exercise for the attainment of children with additional support needs;
- close monitoring of racist incidents in schools with 9 incidents being reported in primary schools and 14 in secondary schools;
- a diverse approach to developing new methods of learning and teaching;
- increased use of curriculum flexibility;
- development of innovative approaches to managing pupil discipline;
- commitment by all establishments to health improvement;
- piloting of the integrated assessment framework;
- deployment of a range of staff to support the work of schools at learning partnership level;
- successful integration of children with additional support needs into mainstream education;
- active adoption of drugs education programme and related policies;
- a wide-ranging programme of international links;

- participation by pupils in a wide range of arts, sporting and cultural activities;
- 3,248 sporting activity sessions provided within the Active Schools programme amounting to 98,176 actual participant sessions of which 47.4% related to female participation against the national average of 39.8%
- widespread adoption of enterprise in education approaches; and
- a structured approach to promoting creative thinking in young people.

4. COMMENT ON THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES REPORT

- 4.1** The report shows significant and productive activity across a wide range of areas. This level of progress is due to the hard work and commitment of a wide range of people – most notably the teachers and young people themselves. Such success merits recognition.
- 4.2** However, the outcomes highlighted in the report also show that there is no scope for complacency. Maintenance and improvement of the standards reached will require continued work and emphasis. This is particularly true of the most disadvantaged children and the need, in particular, to raise the levels of attainment of the lowest 20%.

5. STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2005

- 5.1** Members will recall that at its meeting of 24 May 2005 Committee gave approval to a new format of Standards and Quality Report. This report, for the first time covered all aspects of the Department's work, reflecting its multi-disciplinary nature and the increasing emphasis on integrated service delivery. It was presented in a folder, with separate booklets representing the different aspects of work. This format proved to be highly successful, and attracted substantial amounts of national interest.
- 5.2** It is therefore proposed to produce a report in similar format this year. A copy is available in the Member's Information Point. Although highlighting the achievements described principally in section 3 of this report, relating to the National Priorities in education, the report also describes progress against the Authority Special Objectives described in Priority to Improvement 2005, which relate to:
- the integrated assessment framework
 - the evaluation of integrated service delivery
 - child protection
 - the curriculum for excellence

The emphasis here on integrated services makes the social work element of the report particularly valuable and important. Particularly, in the elements that relate to child protection and looked after children.

5.3 As before, there is a specific report on Early Years' Services. This reflects the distinctive place of this service in the life of the Department. The provision of a clear and distinct statement on early years has proved to be of specific interest to parents and staff. The early years report highlights considerable achievements across:

- Sure Start
- Pre-school education and care
- Childcare strategy
- Wrap around care
- Workforce Training and Development, and
- Community Capacity building

5.4 A report has also been compiled for Onsite services, recognising the significant contribution made by this service unit to the lives of people in East Ayrshire and the Department. This also reflects the role that Onsite plays in the delivery of initiatives that have strong educational and social dimensions – most notably “Hungry for Success” but also the commitment to best value. Onsite’s award of Investors in People status is of particular note.

5.5 The innovative Community Learning and Development part of the report highlights the considerable contribution of the service to a number of aspects of the Authority’s work. This is particularly true in the areas of Community Planning and Best Value. Community Learning and Development staff have been active in the promotion of family and adult literacy and integrated services at learning partnership level.

5.6 These individual reports are concise, readable and contain a wealth of factual information. They will be of interest to workers within the services of the department and to their colleagues. Most importantly there is information that will be of interest to particular service users. Individually, and as a whole, they describe the considerable achievements within the Department. They provide an opportunity to celebrate success.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The findings of the full National Priorities annual report are relevant to the Improving Opportunities strand of the Community Plan. The Standards and Quality Report contains information which is of relevance across all aspects of the Community Plan.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Nil

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) approve this report as the basis for the mandatory submission to the Scottish Executive on National Priorities;
- (ii) ask the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to write to headteachers, teachers and school boards highlighting the progress that has been made against the National Priorities in education and local improvement objectives in 2005;
- (iii) approve the publication of the Standards and Quality Report for 2005;
- (iv) note that a report dealing with the specific elements of standards and quality reporting that relate to social services has been considered by the social work committee; and
- (v) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director (Educational and Social Services)

GRS/GRS

26 January 2006

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

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1.** Priority to Improvement 2005, Education Committee, 01 February 2005
- 2.** Standards and Quality Report, Education Committee, 24 May 2005

Implementation Officer: Graham Short