

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 20 MARCH 2007

### LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN EAST AYRSHIRE

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

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To inform the Education Committee of the progress made with regard to literacy development in East Ayrshire; and to seek approval for the literacy strategy.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** One of our aims as an education authority is to enable all children and young people to develop the capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Competence and confidence in literacy is essential to enable progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- 2.2** In August 2005 the Authority instigated a programme to support the development of a coherent approach to raising attainment and achievement in literacy.
- 2.3** A wide variety of strategies have been initiated to support literacy development throughout the Authority. This has included support for headteachers, Continuing Professional Development for all staff involved and a planned programme. Direct support to schools has been provided by Literacy Developers, who have been released from part of their teaching duties by probationer teachers allocated by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED).

#### **3. CURRENT SITUATION**

- 3.1** A literacy steering group has been established in East Ayrshire. The group consists of representatives from a wide range of backgrounds and sectors. The purpose of the group is to facilitate the continuing development of literacy initiatives in East Ayrshire and to disseminate information and guidance to schools and establishments.
- 3.2** The literacy steering group has produced a range of documents which provide schools and establishments with information on current initiatives in literacy in East Ayrshire. This documentation includes:
- East Ayrshire Department of Educational and Social Services Literacy Strategy (appendix 1)
  - Guidance for the development of literacy in schools and early years establishments

- Policy planning guidance
- Literacy across the curriculum in Secondary Schools : examples of interesting practice
- A planning guide for teachers on current methodology in reading and writing.

**3.3** The literacy strategy and the above developments are consistent with the review of the curriculum and developments within “A Curriculum for Excellence”. These developments are also a core element of the Department’s Priority to Improvement 2007.

#### **4. FUTURE PROPOSALS**

**4.1** Literacy will continue to be the major focus for all East Ayrshire schools and establishments as set out in Priority to Improvement 2007.

**4.2** All schools and establishments will be required to update their policy or position paper on literacy in light of the guidance issued.

**4.3** Support to establishments will continue to be provided by the Early Intervention initiative. This will include Literacy Development staff who are released from part of their teaching duties by additional probationer teachers provided by SEED.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** All financial requirements for this initiative will be met within the Early Intervention budget within the National Priorities Action Fund.

#### **6. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Nil.

#### **7. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** The above noted literacy developments will directly contribute towards the themes of “Promoting Community Learning” and “Improving Opportunities”.

#### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** Nil.

#### **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1** The Education Committee is recommended to:
- i) agree to the continuation of the focus on literacy in all schools and early years establishments
  - ii) approve these developments to support literacy
  - iii) approve the Literacy Strategy
  - iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

CMcC/MR  
26 February 2007

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact John McCarney, Head of Service : Schools Support (01563 576549) or Hilary MacGillivray, Early Intervention Project Co-ordinator (01563 555650)

**Implementation Officer : John McCarney, Head Of Service: Schools Support**

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**LITERACY STRATEGY**

**1. LITERACY IN EAST AYRSHIRE**

- 1.1** Literacy is defined as the ability to understand, analyse, critically respond to, and create spoken, written and visual communications, and use information communication technology in different contexts.
- 1.2** Improving literacy is fundamental to providing all children and young people with the best possible opportunities to become successful and self-fulfilled at school, at work and in the community. Developing the skills of reading and writing helps children and young people to achieve and communicate a greater understanding of the subjects within the school curriculum and the wider context of society.

**2. LEGAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act, 2000 establishes the right of the child to school based education, although parents retain the right to educate by other means.
- 2.2** This act places a statutory obligation on Education Authorities to: 'secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential'.
- 2.3** The Act established a framework for improvement in the education service in Scotland. Central to this approach is the National Priorities.
- 2.4** There are five National Priorities for the education service:
- 1. Achievement and Attainment**  
To raise standards of educational attainment for all schools, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including examination results.
  - 2. Framework for Learning**  
To support and develop the skills of teachers, the self-discipline of pupils and to enhance school environments so that they are conducive to teaching and learning.
  - 3. Inclusion and Equality**  
To promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and additional support needs, and to Gaelic and other lesser used languages.

#### **4. Values and Citizenship**

To work with parents to teach pupils respect for self and one another and their interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society and to teach them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.

#### **5. Learning for Life**

To equip pupils with foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society and to encourage creativity and ambition.

In addition to the National Priorities, local improvement objectives are defined by the Education Authority. In East Ayrshire the annual statement of local improvement is published in a document known as 'Priority to Improvement'.

### **2.5 Priority to Improvement**

National Priority 1

Achievement and Attainment

What this priority means for East Ayrshire:

This priority puts achievement for all at the heart of the educational service. All involved in education have a duty to support learners so that they can achieve to the highest levels, particularly in the core areas of literacy and numeracy. The delivery of this priority requires clarity of focus on national assessments, a continuing emphasis on the development of better methods of learning and teaching, provision of assessment data so that teachers can evaluate their work, searching for new and improved learning opportunities, and the dissemination of good practice

### **2.6 Ambitious, Excellent Schools**

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004, Ambitious, Excellent Schools set the framework for policy to deliver:

- Heightened expectations, stronger leadership and ambition
- More freedom for teachers and schools
- Greater choice and opportunity for pupils
- Better support for learning
- Tougher, intelligent accountabilities

To facilitate choice and opportunity for young people to help each of them realise their own potential the Agenda for Action states:

Our young people have a very wide range of individual skills, talents, aspirations and enthusiasms and their success comes through realising their individual potential. All young people should have a secure foundation in literacy, numeracy and other essential skills and capabilities to help them achieve their potential.

## 2.7 A Curriculum for Excellence

In their document 'A Curriculum for Excellence' the Curriculum Review Group (Scottish Executive 2004) outlines the values, principles and purpose for education 3-18 in Scotland.

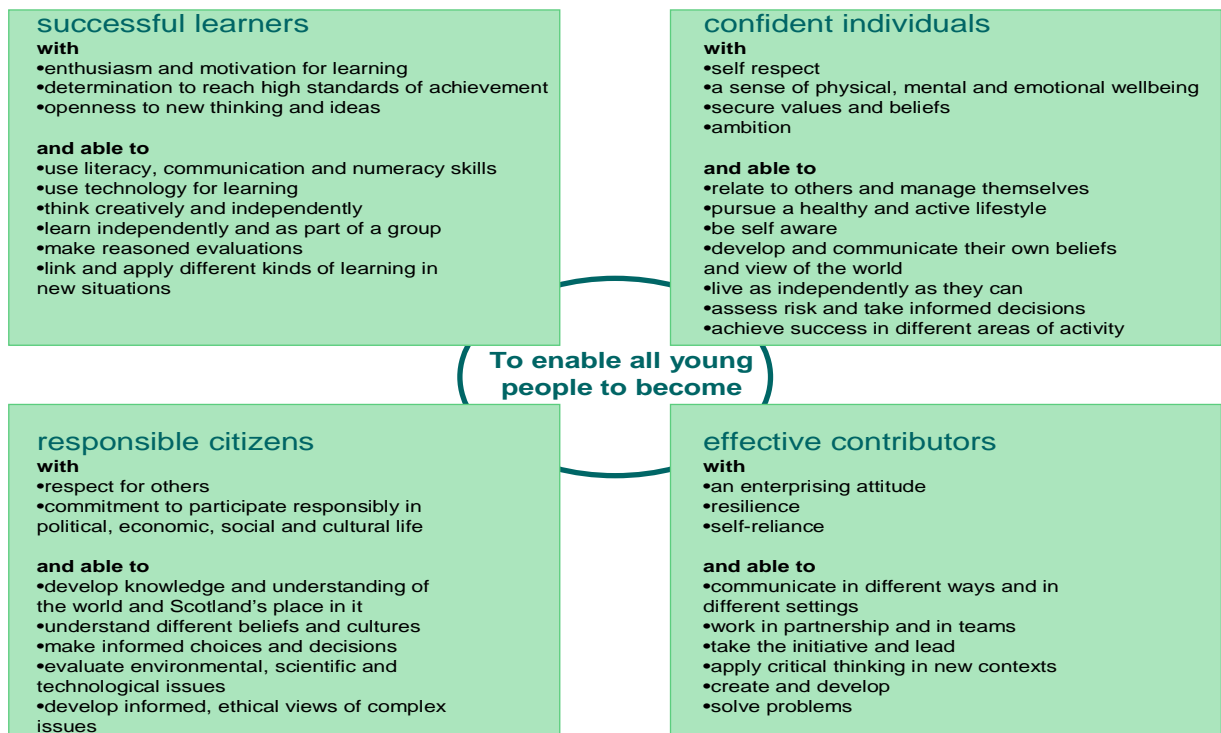
It sets out the Scottish Executive's vision for transforming Scottish education by 2007.

*"Our aspiration for all children and for every young person is that they should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work."*

The principles underpinning the update of the curriculum are:

- challenge and enjoyment
- breadth
- progression
- depth
- personalisation and choice
- coherence
- relevance

The following statement of purpose lies at the heart of the document. It sets out the attributes and capabilities we need to equip children to become successful citizens in an ever changing global environment.



## **2.8 Links with other strategies**

This strategy is fully in accordance with other East Ayrshire strategies:

- Accessibility Strategy 2004-2007
- Pathways to Inclusion: A Strategy
- Information and Communication Technology
- Adult Literacy

## **3. AIM**

To provide maximum opportunity for all East Ayrshire children and young people to acquire the necessary literacy skills to be successful in their community, work and personal life.

## **4. OBJECTIVES**

- children and young people will develop effective literacy skills
- the development and expansion of opportunities will allow children and young people to build on their existing strengths through the development of effective literacy skills
- appropriate development opportunities for staff in all sectors will be available to help them to develop and improve effective literacy teaching skills
- children, young people, parents and educators will be involved in partnership for learning
- the potential of ICT will be fully utilised to support literacy development
- continuity and progression will be ensured especially at transition stages
- systematic monitoring and evaluation of literacy skills will be fully developed
- appropriate learning and teaching approaches will be advocated for all learners

## **5. FROM VISION TO ACTION**

East Ayrshire Council will realise the aim of this strategy through the following actions:

- working with establishments to implement recommendations arising from a Curriculum for Excellence
- provide support to establishments to facilitate literacy development at all stages including Early Intervention, literacy curriculum developers and PT curriculum networking.
- provide support and CPD to in-school Leaders in Literacy
- provide high quality data on attainment in literacy to schools and establishments
- collate and disseminate example of excellent practice in literacy through the literacy strategy group
- support the Literacy across the Curriculum planning group to develop and disseminate examples of excellent practice
- encourage participation in family literacy initiatives
- support learning partnership literacy initiatives
- provide guidance on transition arrangements and reporting to parents

- provide high quality CPD opportunities
- challenge and support heads of establishment to improve literacy provision and attainment and achievement.

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.1 The Department of Educational and Social Services will:**

- ensure a coherent and integrated approach to effective learning and teaching in literacy throughout the authority
- identify and disseminate excellent practice in learning and teaching of literacy
- create a climate which supports partnership working within and across establishments
- support the implementation of the Scottish Survey of Achievement (SSA) and other international pupil sample surveys.
- support schools to make well-informed use of national and authority data from the SSA as part of self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- use schools' attainment information, including National Assessment and SQA, to monitor performance and support school improvement in literacy
- provide guidance, support and opportunities for continuing professional development for all staff
- monitor, evaluate and report on performance in all aspects of learning and teaching in literacy
- support the promotion of a positive learning for life culture in all establishments
- celebrate success in literacy learning and teaching.
- provide access to high quality ICT provision to support learning

### **6.2 Educational Establishments should:**

- produce a written policy on literacy
- plan and implement a comprehensive literacy programme of study
- promote school and departmental self-evaluation in relation to the teaching and learning and the quality of pupils' literacy experiences; and monitor the implementation of the school policy at all stages and in all departments
- work in partnership with parents to ensure children's success, and encourage parental involvement in working out ways forward for their child's educational future
- give clear information on the aims and objectives of the establishment both in terms of the curriculum and procedures
- identify and disseminate good practice in learning and teaching in literacy
- encourage co-operation and consultation between teachers and pupils in supporting learning
- maintain an overview of the effectiveness of literacy learning and teaching throughout the establishment
- support and challenge teachers and learners with new initiatives and benchmark performance

- monitor, evaluate and report on performance in all aspects of literacy learning and teaching
- celebrate success in learning and teaching of literacy

### **6.3 Teachers and educators should:**

- be committed to developing the literacy skills of all pupils
- recognise their responsibility as teachers of literacy regardless of their subject specialisation
- ensure all children experience a variety of modes of learning
- employ an appropriate range of teaching approaches, including the use of ICT
- create a classroom ethos which values and encourages a high standard of challenge, achievement and attainment
- encourage and support pupils to take responsibility for, and become active in, their own learning
- develop skills and expertise in formative assessment strategies to support literacy
- develop their own skills through appropriate CPD
- assist in the development of partnership working with parents
- Establish manageable and straightforward systems and procedures that will ensure timely transfer of information, particularly at transition stages
- evaluate their own effectiveness
- celebrate success in learning and teaching of literacy

### **6.4 Children and young people should be given the opportunity to become:**

#### Successful learners

- develop competence in language and communication skills
- develop skills in talking and writing to enable them to communicate thoughts and opinion effectively
- use technologies to help them develop and apply literacy skills
- develop an openness to new ideas and thinking

#### Confident individuals

- relate well to others and interact successfully in different social contexts
- explore other people' experiences, emotions and relationships through literature
- work independently to achieve clearly understood purpose
- self assess effectively
- develop self confidence and ambition

#### Responsible citizens

- reflect and develop ideas and stances
- communicate thoughts and feelings through talking and writing
- participate in discussions, help to resolve conflicts and learn to play a part in influencing decisions and actions

#### Effective contributors

- contribute to the life of the school and community through sharing literacy work with others
- develop an awareness of audience and register to communicate successfully in diverse situations
- work collaboratively to achieve clearly understood purposes
- make connections between literacy and other learning situations and apply transferable skills

## **7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

East Ayrshire is committed to programme of monitoring and evaluation that is based on reviewing provision at both authority and establishment level. Establishments in conjunction with the quality improvement team will use the following guidelines to monitor and evaluate progress and provision in literacy:

'The Child at the Centre' (1999)  
'How Good is our School 2?' (2001)  
'The Journey to Excellence' (2006)  
5-14 National Assessment and SQA data

Establishment improvement planning will be instrumental in evaluating and monitoring the provision and success of literacy initiatives. The effective use of self evaluation processes will enable all establishments to continue to evolve and deliver a wide variety of aspects of literacy provision.

March 2007