

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 24 MAY 2005

EARLY INTERVENTION AND LITERACY INITIATIVE

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To update Elected Members on the progress of the Early Intervention Programme and to advise of a proposed development to support the development of literacy in all Early Years establishments and Primary Schools.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Early Intervention is a national initiative, aimed at raising standards of literacy and numeracy in the early years of primary schools. The Initiative was funded initially for a 3 year period by Scottish Office Education and Industry Department with contributions from East Ayrshire Council. This initiative was then extended by the Scottish Executive for a further 2 years through the Excellence Fund for Schools. The Initiative is now fully funded by the National Priorities Action Fund.
- 2.2** Quantitative and qualitative data has provided evidence of the success of Early Intervention in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy at the early stages of primary school. This was reported to committee on 28 May 2002.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1** Current staffing to support the implementation of the Initiative is: one Project Co-ordinator, two Early Intervention Support Officers and four Nursery Nurses. Overall planning and evaluation is managed by a Steering Group comprising senior officers of the department.
- 3.2** The Early Intervention Initiative has used a phased programme to increase the number of schools involved over a three-year period (1997-1999) with additional schools and early years establishments joining in each phase. Currently all Pre 5 and Primary establishments are involved in the Initiative.
- 3.3** Projects within both nursery establishments and primary schools have been set up to foster increased parental participation in the development of early skills through play opportunities or through structured parental support. The Early Intervention team has devised a home-link project to support parental involvement in children's learning at the middle and upper

stages of primary. Parental commitment has been high and the response from parents has been enthusiastic.

4. FUTURE PROPOSALS

4.1 Future proposals for the Programme are designed to:

- Continue the use of the Profile of Skills
- Consolidate and extend existing good practice at key transition points
- Sustain the development of systems of early identification procedures in primary 1
- Embed early intervention strategies within the nursery curriculum and into learning and teaching in P1 to P7
- Continue in joint work with the Network Support Team to support pupils identified as 'at risk' in pre 5 and primary establishments
- Continue to develop systems, policy and practice to optimise early identification and intervention
- Support vulnerable parents in lifelong learning and the development of foundation skills
- Continue the phased programme of implementation of East Ayrshire's pilot research project, 'Closing the Gap'.
- Continue the phased implementation of the 'Question Quest' parental involvement project to all schools
- Provide significant continuing professional development for all teaching staff in 2005-06
- Provide direct classroom support in primary schools for the further development of literacy

4.2 The rolling programme of staff development will continue to progress Early Intervention strategies for all staff, from nursery to S2 in literacy and numeracy. Similarly, resources will be identified to support the extension of the programme in literacy and numeracy in these stages.

4.3 Session 2005/6 will have a focus on literacy for all teaching staff in the authority, from early years to S2. This will incorporate:

- Information sessions for Head Teachers
- Continuing Professional Development for all staff involved
- Either the Depute Head Teacher or Principal Teacher being responsible for "Leadership in Literacy"
- Continuing Professional Development for such Literacy leaders
- A planned programme of classroom support for teachers in the development of literacy in all primary schools

5. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The remit for the posts of support teachers will be to support the development of literacy and numeracy from primaries 1 to 7, and to

monitor and evaluate the implementation of the East Ayrshire Early Intervention Initiative in the middle to upper stages of the primary school.

- 5.2** Additional fully funded probationers have been requested from Scottish Executive in order to release experienced staff to undertake the role of support teachers.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** It is recommended that Elected Members:

- (i) agree to the focus on literacy of the Programme for all early years establishments and primary schools
- (ii) invite the Director to continue to monitor progress of the Early Intervention programme and report back in due course
- (iii) otherwise, note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JMc/HMacG
9 May 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Education (Community) Sub-Committee paper – 6 May 1997: Early Identification and Intervention.
- 2 Education Committee paper – 28 August 1997: Early Intervention and Identification.
- 3 Education Committee paper – 16 April 1998: Early Intervention and Identification.
- 4 Education Committee paper – 1 June 1999: Early Intervention and Identification.
- 5 Education Sub-Committee paper – 31 October 2000: Early Intervention and Identification.
- 6 Education Committee paper – 3 September 2001: Early Intervention and Identification.
- 7 Education Committee paper – 28 May 2002: Early Intervention and Identification.

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