

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2006

LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRESS REPORT

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Early Intervention Programme and to advise of continuing developments to support literacy and numeracy in educational establishments.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Early Intervention is a national initiative, aimed at raising standards of literacy and numeracy in pre school education and in the early years of primary schools. The Initiative has been funded by the Scottish Office/Executive since 1997; it 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 in both a pre school setting and the early stages of primary school.
- 2.3 The Authority has also instigated a programme of support to raise attainment and achievement in Literacy. The programme involves comprehensive Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and head teachers, a focus on assessment, and direct support to individual schools. This is supported by using probationer teachers to release experienced staff to work with other schools. This programme commenced in August 2005.
- 2.4 The Future Learning and Teaching (FLaT) projects in Literacy and Numeracy have been operating since August 2004. These are based in the Auchinleck, Doon, Grange and St Joseph's Learning Partnerships. The focus is on improving transition between primary and secondary school and raising attainment in numeracy and literacy. These have been fully funded by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED).

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Current staffing to support the implementation of the Early Intervention and Literacy Initiatives is: one Project Co-ordinator, two Early

Intervention Support Officers, four Literacy Developers (released by the probationer teachers) and five Early Years Workers. 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 since the original three-year period (1997-1999) with additional schools and early years establishments joining in each phase. Currently all Pre 5 (including Partner Providers) 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.
- 3.4 The FLAT projects have been successful in improving the transition from Primary to Secondary schools for those pupils involved; and in improving the programmes in Literacy and Numeracy studied by pupils; in allowing staff from each sector to teach in other sector and undertake significant professional development. SEED have commissioned external research and evaluation which will be published in late 2006.

4. FUTURE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Future proposals for the Early Intervention Programme are designed to:
 - continue the use of the Profile of Skills
 - consolidate and extend existing good practice at key transition points
 - continue to develop systems, policy and practice to optimise early identification and intervention in nursery and P1
 - provide additional support in literacy for identified children in community nurseries and associated P1 classes
 - facilitate access for teachers to train to deliver high quality support to non-readers in P2
 - continue to embed early intervention strategies within the nursery curriculum and into learning and teaching in P1 to P7
 - support vulnerable parents in lifelong learning and the development of core literacy and numeracy skills through the Essential Skills Service
 - 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
- consolidate and extend the Future Learning and Teaching projects in literacy and numeracy at the Primary to Secondary transition stage.

4.2 The rolling programme of CPD will continue to progress Early Intervention strategies for all staff, from nursery to S2 in literacy and numeracy.

4.3 Session 2006/7 will continue to have a focus on literacy for all teaching staff in the authority, from early years to S2. This will incorporate support for Head Teachers, Continuing Professional Development for all staff involved and a planned programme. Direct support to schools will be provided by Literacy Developers, who will be released from part of their teaching duties by probationer teachers allocated by SEED.

4.4 SEED have confirmed that the initial evaluation results of the FLAT projects are very positive. Thus, SEED will continue to fund the FLAT projects for a further year.

5. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The above programmes all contribute directly to the theme of Promoting Community Learning and Improving Opportunities.

6. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Literacy Developers will support the development of literacy 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. The staffing capacity to support this is provided via probationer teachers who are fully funded by SEED.

6.2 All financial requirements for the Early Intervention and Literacy Initiatives will be met within the Early Intervention budget within the National Priorities Action Fund.

6.3 SEED have provided full funding for the 3rd year of the FLAT projects.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Members:

- agree to the continuation of the focus on literacy of the Programme for all early years establishments and primary schools;
- agree to the continuation of the Early Intervention Initiative in

- Literacy and Numeracy for all Early Years Establishments;
- (iii) agree the continuation of the FLAT Projects for session 2006/07 and note the financial implications;
 - (iv) invite the Executive Director to provide 6 monthly update reports on progress; and
 - (v) otherwise, note the contents of this report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

HMacG/MR
8 May 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Education Committee Report 6 May 1997: Early Identification and Intervention
2. Education Committee Report 28 August 1997: Early Intervention and Identification
3. Education Committee Report 16 April 1998: Early Intervention and Identification
4. Education Committee Report 1 June 1999: Early Intervention and Identification
5. Education Sub-Committee Report 31 October 2000: Early Intervention and Identification
6. Education Committee Report 3 September 2001: Early Intervention and Identification
7. Education Committee Report 28 May 2002: Early Intervention and identification
8. Education Committee Report 24 May 2005: Early Intervention and Identification

Members wishing further information should contact John McCarney, Head of Service: School Support, Tel: (01563) 576089; Hilary MacGillivray, Early Intervention Co-ordinator; Carole McConville, Quality Improvement Officer, Tel: (01563) 555650

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JOHN McCARNEY