

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 23 MAY 2006

RAISING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT: EASTER SCHOOLS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Education Committee of the success of Easter Schools 2006 in East Ayrshire.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Promoting community learning and improving opportunities are priorities within the Community Plan of East Ayrshire Council, and since 1998 a comprehensive programme of educational opportunities has been offered to students during the Easter holiday period.
- 2.2** "More than 9 to 4: Out-of-School-Hours Learning in Scottish Education" (Scottish Executive 2006) observes that "Out-of-School-Hours Learning (OSHL) has a clear and important contribution to make to the development of all these capacities" (i.e. successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors).
- 2.3** This successful Easter Schools programme continues to be organised by schools to support students about to undertake Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations in May and June 2006, and to give other opportunities to some primary school pupils to learn new skills and enjoy the company of their peers in a structured but challenging environment.
- 2.4** Community Learning and Development also provided a varied programme of activities throughout the holiday period.

3 EASTER SCHOOL PROVISION

- 3.1** Easter School provision is a programme of supported study, or Out of School Hours Learning, comprising tutorials, classes, revision and tuition and other activities for all sectors and stages of East Ayrshire's pupils and wider learning community. Classes are provided at Standard Grade, Higher and Advanced Higher level.

At primary or transition stages, activities include sport, enterprise and outdoor learning. At nursery, a full range of play activities indoors and outdoors was available.

Community Learning and Development provided events as diverse as Dialogue Youth Action Group and a Duke of Edinburgh Award promotion. These took

place across the authority in Auchinleck, Drongan, Dalrymple, Logan, Kilmarnock and Patna.

- 3.2** All secondary schools provide study support throughout the academic session by way of study clubs, homework clubs, and subject specific additional classes, usually end-on to the school day. The main beneficiaries are pupils of S3, 4, 5 and 6. Seven of the nine secondary schools were open for students during the Easter period, eight primary schools across three Learning Partnerships, and nursery schools.
- 3.3** Other features of good and interesting practice were evident in the use of activity motivators, outdoor learning staff, volunteers, and other agencies, who bring variety and a fresh approach to delivery of learning experiences.

4 PARTICIPATION AND OUTCOMES

- 4.1** Pupil numbers averaged about 200 in each secondary school, with Higher and Standard Grade English, Higher and Standard Grade Mathematics and Higher Grade Art and Design being particularly well attended. Some schools reported almost 100% attendance by pupils for specific subjects.
- 4.2** Pupils benefited in improved attainment and achievement across the ability ranges, enhanced attitudes towards study, increased motivation and confidence, improved physical well-being (especially in those activity-and sports-based Easter Schools), and a sustained learning experience at a vital time of students' careers.
- 4.3** Teachers reported important outcomes in improved relationships, a more flexible curricular experience, opportunities for a more collaborative and relaxed approach to partnership learning, and increased teacher and learner motivation.
- 4.4** Schools generally used the opportunity to complete assignments and reinforce the importance of full attendance at final examinations, to emphasise the benefits of study beyond the school day and term, and to develop innovative teaching and learning practices.

5 COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** These activities contribute to the themes of "Promoting Community Learning" and "Improving Opportunities".

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** All schools receive funding from the Supported Study budget of the National Priorities Action Fund, and will continue to receive funding from "A Curriculum for Excellence".

7. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Nil

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that members of the Education Committee:

- (i) note the success of the Easter Schools 2006 programme
- (ii) otherwise, note the contents of this report

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services.

DF/MR
22 May 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 More than 9 to 4: Out-of-School-Hours Learning in Scottish Education (Scottish Executive 2006).

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