

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 14 SEPTEMBER 2004**

#### **PROJECTS TO IMPROVE PRIMARY/SECONDARY TRANSITION, FOCUSING ON LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

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

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1** To advise Members of externally funded projects designed to improve primary/secondary transition, with a particular focus on improving standards of literacy and numeracy.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The transition of pupils from primary to secondary school remains an issue at both national and local level. Efforts continue to be made to improve the transition between primary and secondary school for pupils, particularly in terms of curricular fit and familiarity with buildings and teachers.
- 2.2** There continues to be a need to improve the standards of literacy and numeracy across the authority. Analysis of national test results in East Ayrshire indicates a dip in attainment for the number of children expected to achieve level D or better in Mathematics and in English. This focuses on pupils between the Primary 6 and Secondary 2 stages.

The Early Intervention work within the authority has been progressing through the different stages of the primary school and is now targeting upper primary in literacy and numeracy. Thus, further work to support literacy and numeracy from Primary 6 onwards dovetails with the strategy being developed through Early Intervention.

- 2.3** Discussion with the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) indicated that they shared the above concerns, particularly those related to primary/secondary transition. Further, SEED are particularly interested in the teaching of Mathematics and English in the first and second years of secondary, where it is planned that class sizes will be reduced to a maximum of 20 pupils in 2007. Thus, SEED expressed an interest in funding two projects which related to these areas of interest and concern.

### **3. LITERACY PROJECT**

#### **3.1** The Literacy Project will ensure that:

- There is a clear emphasis on curricular liaison to complement existing good work in both sectors.
- There is sufficient challenge in tasks provided for pupils and that this challenge is sustained from P7 to S1, improving attainment in literacy.
- Potential models for reduction in class sizes in English in S12/S2 are identified.
- Programmes of study provide a planned progressive continuous experience for pupils as they move from primary to secondary schools.
- There is a consistency of practice in the assessment of pupils' attainment in order to encourage the effective use of assessment information in secondary schools.
- Staff work together to promote a shared understanding of levels of attainment.
- There will be support and challenge in literacy for all pupils in P6 and P7, S1 and S2.
- Formative assessment will take place in all schools.
- The staff/pupil ratio in the secondary school will be reduced.

**3.2** This project will continue, and expand within Auchinleck Academy and St. Joseph's Academy Learning Partnerships, the good work which has been established in the Building Bridges project that has been carried out in Catrine Primary School and Auchinleck Academy in 2003-04. The focus will be on literacy, performance in which in East Ayrshire is below the national average, with an emphasis on a joint approach in the teaching of this subject.

**3.3** Two new temporary posts will be created for secondary English teachers in two Learning Partnerships, Auchinleck Academy and St. Joseph's Academy, both covering areas of rural and urban deprivation. The enhanced staffing level will facilitate staff in the secondary schools to work on a weekly basis with their associated primaries over two years. They will observe classroom practice from P1 to P7 and team teach with the P6 and P7 teachers. Joint planning for and assessment of the children in those classes will be part of the remit of the additional teachers, and they will work together with their primary colleagues to minimise inconsistencies in reporting to parents and others. This will ensure that there is a consistency of approach across both sectors.

Two new temporary posts will be created for primary teachers within the two Learning Partnerships. Simultaneously it is proposed that P5, 6 or 7 teachers from the associated primaries should observe classroom organisation and classroom practice, leading to those teachers teaching in S1/S2. This model of

cross-sectoral working will operate in English classes and class sizes will be reduced to 20 in S1/2. Throughout the life of the project, staff will receive training on formative assessment as well as training on good practice in the teaching of literacy across the sectors.

**3.4** All additional staffing, staff development and resources will be fully funded from a SEED grant.

## **4. NUMERACY PROJECT**

**4.1** The Numeracy Project will ensure that:

- There is a clear emphasis on curricular liaison to complement existing good work in both sectors.
- There is sufficient challenge in tasks provided for pupils and that this challenge is sustained from P7 to S1, improving attainment in numeracy.
- Potential models for reduction in class sizes in Mathematics in S1/S2 are identified.
- Programmes of study provide a planned progressive continuous experience for pupils as they move from primary to secondary schools.
- There is consistency of practice in the assessment of pupils' attainment in order to encourage the effective use of assessment information in secondary schools.
- Staff work together to promote a shared understanding of levels of attainment.
- There will be support and challenge in numeracy for all pupils in P6 and P7, S1 and S2.
- Formative assessment will take place in all schools.
- The staff/pupil ratio in the secondary school will be reduced.

**4.2** The project will be based on the Doon Academy and Grange Academy Learning Partnerships. The focus will be on improving standards of numeracy, with an emphasis on a joint approach in the teaching of this subject.

**4.3** The project will create two new temporary posts for secondary maths teachers in the two Learning Partnerships. Given an enhanced level of staffing for the subject, this will allow the additional teachers in both schools to work on a weekly basis with their associated primaries over the period of the project. They will observe classroom practice from P1 to P7 and team teach with the P6 and P7 staff. Similar to the literacy project, joint work will take place on assessment and reporting.

**4.4** Two new temporary posts will be created for primary teachers within the two Learning Partnerships. Simultaneously it is proposed that P6 and P7 teachers from the associated primaries should observe classroom organisation and classroom practice in the teaching of mathematics in the secondary sector,

leading to those teachers teaching in S1/S2. Cross sectoral working will operate in Mathematics classes and class sizes will be reduced to 20 in S1/S2. This practice will loosen the boundaries between primary and secondary, and there will be a shared understanding of pupils' attainment, and an ethos of achievement and high expectation in both sectors.

- 4.5** Throughout the life of the project, staff will receive training on formative assessment as well as training on good practice in the teaching of numeracy across the sectors. The children in both sectors will be taught to peer and self assess in this subject. This will support the class teachers in identifying differentiation and challenge for all pupils. This increased awareness of pupils' ability will lead to better learning and teaching within the classroom, in itself leading to raised attainment.
- 4.6** All additional staffing, staff development and resources will be fully funded from a SEED grant.

## **5. MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF THE PROJECT**

- 5.1** Head Teachers in all schools involved in the project have been consulted and involved prior to the project commencing. All schools have made a commitment to work closely together to investigate the potential for the following:
- Improving the primary/secondary transition.
  - Improving standards of literacy in P6 to S2 pupils.
  - Improving standards of numeracy in P6 to S2 pupils.
  - Investigating potential ways of reducing class sizes to 20 in English and Mathematics in S1 and S2.

Members of the Quality Improvement Team will support the work within the respective partnerships.

- 5.2** Timescales and milestones have been agreed with SEED in terms of implementation of the projects. SEED will also evaluate the project on an external basis.

## **6. FINANCIAL/POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The projects are fully funded by SEED for 2 years for sessions 2004-05 and 2005-06. The funding will provide for additional staffing, staff development and resources as required. The funding details are:

2004-05	£312,408
2005-06	<u>£312,408</u>
	£624,816

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Approve the projects as outlined above.
- (ii) Approve the staffing and resource requirements as outlined above.
- (iii) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JMcC/EO'N  
25 August 2004

### **List of Background Papers**

Nil

Members requiring further information should contact Hilary MacGillivray, Early Intervention Co-ordinator (01563) 555650, Carole McConville, Quality Improvement Officer (01563) 555650 or John McCarney, Head of Service: Schools Support (01563) 576126.

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