

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 12 SEPTEMBER 2006

THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN EDUCATION IN EAST AYRSHIRE — UPDATE

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Education Committee of the successful use of ICT in schools in East Ayrshire to support learning and teaching.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In November 2004 the Education Committee approved an ICT strategy for Education in East Ayrshire. This document set out a number of targets to be worked towards during 2005-2009.
- 2.2 The Scottish Executive are actively supporting ICT developments which will require that our schools have access to appropriate hardware and a network infrastructure which can deliver these services.
- 2.3 There is an expectation on the part of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) that staff make use of ICT to support learning and teaching across the curriculum, pupils to make use of the internet and staff and pupils use e-mail.
- 2.4 A Curriculum for Excellence states that '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'. To achieve this, our young people need to have confidence and skills in the use of ICT.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

3.1 Hardware

The government have set target new computer: pupil ratios of 1:7.5 in primary and 1:5 in secondary. The target ratio has almost been met for secondary schools but we have not yet achieved the target ratio for primary schools.

Since April 2005, the authority has purchased 795 new computers for the primary sector, resulting in 11 schools with complete replacement and 8 with partial replacement. By the end of this financial year, a further 8 schools will have complete replacement and an additional 7 with partial replacement.

In the secondary sector, 459 computers have been purchased and installed. A further 220 will be purchased and installed over the next few weeks. Schools have purchased additional hardware such as interactive whiteboards,

projectors, digital cameras, digital videos, scanners etc which have allowed the staff and pupils to become more ICT literate. They also now have access to interactive opportunities which enhance their learning experiences.

High speed Broadband connections have been provided to all education establishments, connecting them to the East Ayrshire network and beyond.

3.2 Achievements

The following achievements have enhanced the skills levels of our staff and led to an increase in the use of ICT to support Learning and Teaching:

- Almost all Head Teachers are part of the Heads Together electronic community.
- 23 teaching staff participated in the Masterclass programme
- 3 Early Years teachers have participated in a special Masterclass programme.
- 20 Head Teachers have participated in the Leadership for Learning programme
- A group of senior staff in one of our secondary schools have participated in the pilot of the team version of the Leadership for Learning programme
- A group of almost 100 teaching staff from all sectors participated in the Microsoft sponsored Innovative Teacher programme.
- All secondary pupils have access to e-mail
- ICT resource support pack produced for the primary sector to support the 5-14 curriculum
- Microsoft Office installed on all new computers as part of a standard software package.
- Improved quality of pupil, staff and school displays and presentations

3.3 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

A substantial range of CPD courses and opportunities has been provided to staff. This has included work on interactive whiteboards, the Innovative Teacher Programme and using Office software. Curriculum development staff (teachers seconded part-time from their school post by use of additional probationer teachers) have actively supported CPD provision, particularly the resource support pack for 5-14 primary sector.

Each school has also a nominated ICT co-ordinator with responsibility for

developing and supporting in-school provision. These colleagues meet on a regular basis, outwith school hours, with authority colleagues to progress key developments.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1** The Scottish Executive are funding the Scottish Schools Digital Network (SSDN) in cooperation with Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and Research Machines. SSDN had recently been renamed as GLOW. GLOW will provide Councils with a high speed internet link for their school, access to a wide range of online digital resources and a range of collaborative tools for teacher and pupil working. East Ayrshire have already benefited from this project with the high speed internet link being in place for two years and this link is also currently servicing all corporate internet traffic. Discussions have taken place between Corporate IT and Education staff to ensure full and effective implementation of this function over the next few years.

A key element of development will be the integration of GLOW into the everyday work of schools over the next few years. LTS will provide training for mentors in each authority over the next year; East Ayrshire intend to train 20 mentors drawn from the Early Years, Primary and Secondary sectors. These teacher mentors will then further train colleagues in their own establishment on the effective use of ICT to support Learning and Teaching. This will also involve significant development work for schools and the authority and it is hoped that curriculum development staff can continue to support this work.

- 4.2** The Authority will continue with the implementation of the ICT Strategy to ensure that all schools are equipped with the necessary computers to ensure that the target new computer: pupil ratios are met. It is anticipated that this will be completed in financial year 2008/09. However, the roll-out of new computers has led to infrastructure issues regarding network support and power supplies in a number of schools, mainly in the primary sector. Work is currently being undertaken in cooperation with colleagues from Corporate IT to identify all requirements and prepare a plan of action for dealing with these issues.
- 4.3** All pupils within the secondary sector are currently being given access to individual e-mail addresses. This is being implemented via the RM Easymail system, which will be consistent with the new e-mail system to be incorporated within GLOW. It is intended that this provision will be extended to all pupils from Primary 4 upwards in due course.
- 4.4** It will be essential to provide a range of appropriate CPD opportunities for staff with a particular focus on learning and teaching issues. The implementation of GLOW will provide major opportunities for pupils and staff to use ICT to enhance learning and teaching. However, staff will require to be suitably equipped with relevant pedagogical and technical skills in order to fully utilise these new opportunities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the resources devoted to ICT is essential. The HMIe guide to “Using ICT in Learning and Teaching” has provided valuable advice on this and is being used to inform future decision making.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 East Ayrshire continues to move forward in using ICT to support learning and teaching. As outlined above, full implementation of the Strategy will ensure that:

- East Ayrshire is at the forefront of new developments in using ICT in learning and teaching
- Schools are resourced to a sufficient level to meet all national targets and support developments in learning and teaching
- Teachers are provided with relevant and appropriate CPD in order that they can use ICT effectively and can support pupil learning
- Pupil learning is enhanced by effective and relevant use of ICT

7. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 These activities contribute directly to the themes of “Promoting Community Learning” and “Improving Opportunities”.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Funding for the ICT Strategy is currently being provided from within the existing Education budget. However, this will be kept under review with regard to future developments.

9. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Nil

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note the progress in implementing the hardware roll-out within the ICT Strategy
- (ii) note the developments in the use of ICT in educational establishments

- (iii) note the development related to the GLOW initiative
- (iv) otherwise note the content of this report

Graham Short
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JMc/JW
17/8/06

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. "Information and Communication Technology: The Way Forward" (East Ayrshire Council Education Department Policy Document February 1998)
2. "Implementing the National Grid for Learning in Scotland: Superhighways for Scottish Schools" (The Scottish Office — 1998)
3. "The Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education in East Ayrshire — Strategy and Future Development" (East Ayrshire Council Education Committee paper November 2004)
4. "Using ICT in Learning and Teaching" (HM Inspectorate of Education – 2004)

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