

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 1 APRIL 2003

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN EAST AYRSHIRE

#### Report by Director of Educational & Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the key points which emerged in the recently published report on the inspection of the education function of the Council and to seek agreement to the plan for action which results from a consideration of the recommendation for action within the inspection report.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) have been commissioned to provide an independent external evaluation of the effectiveness of the education function of all 32 local authorities in Scotland. All local authorities will be involved in inspection between 2000 and 2005. In taking this forward, HMIE work in partnership with Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission for Scotland. They also include an associate assessor from the senior management team of another education authority in the team.
- 2.2 A national evaluative framework has been established for these inspections – Quality Management in Education (2000) - and systematic and thorough evaluation, based on evidence gathered during the inspection, is conducted within this framework. The evaluative framework is very detailed and has a complementary role in developing approaches to self evaluation.
- 2.3 The five key areas which have been identified within the evaluative framework for the inspection of the education function of a Council are:
- strategic management
  - consultation and communication
  - operational management
  - resource and financial management
  - performance monitoring and continuous improvement

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the education function based on these areas presents the opportunity to look in considerable detail at the work of a Council in delivering an education service. The framework is realistic for the task in hand and provides a coherent national framework.

- 2.4 Further, in the final evaluation of an education function, presented in the form of a national report, the following levels are used:

- very good – major strengths
- good – more strengths than weaknesses
- fair – some important weaknesses
- unsatisfactory – major weaknesses

**2.5** Through a detailed and careful sifting of evidence gathered through a system 3 review of the views of the education authority expressed by Head Teachers and Chairs of School Boards, a range of visits and discussions with a wide range of participants and analysis of policy papers, a rigorous evaluation of the education function is progressed. The final output includes a clear statement of progress analysed by quality indicators. The process is meticulous and the final evaluation is evidence based.

**2.6** In mid August 2002, HMIE advised that our education function was to be inspected. The final report was released on 18 February 2003 and copies were circulated to all Members by the Chief Executive.

### **3. THE REPORT**

**3.1** The inspection report shows quite clearly that much has been achieved since the establishment of the Council in 1996. The report rates with the very best yet to be published in Scotland. Inspections are now at the mid way process. The East Ayrshire report is the sixteenth to be published in Scotland and five more inspections are presently underway.

**3.2** Many significant strengths have been identified by the inspection team. A wide range of very good and good practice has been identified. Amongst many positive comments, the following are of note:

- the high quality of vision and planning
- the production of clear, helpful policy statements
- strong approval for clear leadership from the Director and team
- the introduction of Learning Partnerships
- very positive working relationships with schools
- energetic and enthusiastic political leadership
- strong support from Elected Members of all political parties
- high degree of participation in policy formulation
- praise for Quality Improvement Team, the early intervention initiative and support for learning and development planning approaches
- a strong financial monitoring regime is in place
- budget setting is clear and transparent
- strong culture of quality improvement exists
- thorough approach to inclusion
- strong commitment to the involvement of all children and young people in their education
- very young pupils were receiving a high quality, and improving, educational experience
- staff in the department were helpful, gave prompt and well informed responses to communities both within and outwith the Council

- education is very much involved in the corporate activity with the Council

**3.3** In addition to this range of positive comment, a number of characteristics of the education function were mentioned in the report in a very positive manner. The inspection team noted and evaluated highly the commitment of education to the following areas of the service:

- the Arts in education  
"Creative Minds helped take forward the Council's very strong commitment to arts and culture as a way of engaging pupils and raising achievement"
- Sports  
"The schools sports co-ordinator programme is well established"  
"The Authority had developed a positive approach to sports development based on a productive partnership with schools and other Council departments and external agencies"
- Modern Languages  
"Through 'Partners in Excellence' pupils had access to websites, residential weekends, film making, foreign exchange. Significant gains in pupils attainment in European language had resulted"
- Enterprise Education  
"The key role for education in the social and economic regeneration of the area was widely recognised and appreciated by staff and pupils. Elected Members and senior managers gave strong support."

**3.4** In summary, the report outlines in headline format the key strengths of the education function. For East Ayrshire, our key strengths are summarised in the following terms:

- The clear vision, values and aims of the Education Service which were widely understood and accepted by staff within the Education Department and those working in establishments across all sectors.
- The strong, purposeful, leadership provided by the Director and the Heads of Service, the strong sense of teamwork within the Education Department and the effective links to other departments.
- The effective procedures for the management of resources and finance in relation to Education Services.
- The prominent part played by Elected Members and officers of the Council in recognising and celebrating a wide range of pupils' achievements.
- The effective procedures for consultation and communication with a wide range of stakeholders, including pupils.
- The high quality support for development in pre-school and the early years of primary school education.

**3.5** Initially, a number of points for action have also been identified in the report.

- The Service Plan should be improved, in line with the recommendations contained in this report, to specify more clearly the outcomes of initiatives and provide a firm basis for evaluating their success.
- Senior managers should proceed with plans to clarify the management, roles and responsibilities of the Quality Improvement Team and ensure that Quality Improvement Officers have a manageable number of targets including those relating to their prime function of quality improvement in schools.
- The Education Department should continue to develop the use of statistical data by central staff and schools to help inform approaches to raising standards of attainment among pupils.
- The Council should continue to improve the overall quality of school accommodation to ensure that buildings and facilities provide an appropriate learning environment.
- Improved support should be provided for developments in the secondary school curriculum.
- The Education Department, working with other agencies, should continue to refine and implement its inclusion policies. In particular, it should ensure coherence in planning and providing for pupils with special educational needs, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

**3.6** It is rewarding to comment that in the overall evaluation of the national indicators, the authority performed very well. No evaluation was recorded as fair or unsatisfactory. Quality indicators were judged to be either very good or good in the following way:

we judged the following to be *very good*

- Vision, values and aims
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Policy development
- Mechanisms for consultation
- Mechanisms for communication
- Resource management
- Financial management

we judged the following to be *good*

- Service planning
- Deployment and effectiveness of staff
- Measuring, monitoring and evaluating performance
- Continuous improvement in performance

#### **4. COMMENT**

- 4.1** The very positive outcome of the inspection is due to the major commitment from all involved to ensuring that education is a very high priority in East Ayrshire. That commitment has resulted in the development of a very effective education service which ensures that all who benefit from the service, in particular pupils in schools, are receiving a quality experience. There is no doubt that the inspection team were very thorough, spent considerable time in evaluation of written documents and spoken comments and formulated their evaluations on a well informed basis. The experienced team have provided us all with a comprehensive, well-balanced, most encouraging report.
- 4.2** The principal and most significant conclusion to be drawn from the report is that education in East Ayrshire does make a difference.

#### **5. PLAN FOR ACTION**

- 5.1** Building on the outcome of the inspection, an action plan has to be prepared and submitted to the Scottish Executive. It is this plan which HMIE will monitor when they return to East Ayrshire in due course.
- 5.2** The Action Plan (attached as Appendix 1) covers the “Main Points for Action” identified on page 53 of the report. Each action point is sub-divided into individual objectives with an implementation strategy, target outcomes, responsibility for delivery and timescale clearly identified. How success will be monitored and evaluated is also shown. The idea is to produce a clear and concise statement that can be implemented without distorting the general pace and direction of improvement within the Authority.

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

- 6.1** Nil

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1** Members of the Education Committee are invited to:
- (i) welcome the very positive inspection report on the education function of the authority;
  - (ii) agree to the plan for action, Making a Difference in East Ayrshire, resulting from the report; and
  - (iii) otherwise, note the content of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational & Social Services

JM/JP

12 March 2003

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact John Mulgrew, Director of Educational & Social Services, tel: (01563) 576017.

**INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Action Point 1**

The Service Plan should be improved, in line with the recommendations contained in this report, to specify more clearly the outcomes of initiatives and provide a firm basis for evaluation their success.

Education Authority's Objectives	Strategy for Implementation	Target Outcome	Responsibility / Timescale	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a more rigorous approach to Service Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy group formed to take forward this objective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Improvement Plan outcomes are more clearly stated in terms of service provision, support to schools and pupil learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy group with responsibility to the Director</li> </ul> <p>April 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using QMIE to systematically carry through an evaluation towards the final outcomes of the Plan.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation Officer to be identified at the most appropriate level.</li> </ul>		

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### Action Point 2

Senior managers should proceed with plans to clarify the management, roles and responsibilities of the Quality Improvement Team and ensure that Quality Improvement Officers have a manageable number of targets including those relating to their prime function of quality improvement in schools.

Education Authority's Objectives	Strategy for Implementation	Target Outcome	Responsibility / Timescale	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Head of Service – Quality Improvement</li> <li>b) Head of School Support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy group formed, and chaired by Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear roles and responsibilities identified.</li> <li>• The management structure produced in the form of a clear wiring diagram.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director</li> <li>• Heads of Service</li> <li>• Strategy Group</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">June 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service user and provider surveys confirm clarity of arrangements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationalise the Quality Improvement Team's Improvement Plan to relate only to the core functions of school improvement, and responsibilities as identified in SNCT12.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To disaggregate the existing overarching service plan into               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Core Plan</li> <li>b) Project Plans</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resultant Quality Improvement Team Plan to relate to the core function of quality improvement in schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director</li> <li>• Heads of Service</li> <li>• Principal Officer of Quality Improvement Team</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">August 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core and project documents audited against local improvement objectives.</li> </ul>

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### Action Point 3

The Education Department should continue to develop the use of statistical data by central staff and schools to help inform approaches to raising standards of attainment among pupils.

Education Authority's Objectives	Strategy for Implementation	Target Outcome	Responsibility / Timescale	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To plan for, acquire and install a Management Information System, part of which will enhance data analysis and distribution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of personnel able to take the planning and set-up forward.</li> <li>• Effective use of consultants to provide best value in the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational staff in place.</li> <li>• Effective system installed, operational and widely used by schools and central staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Resource Support</li> <li>• Corporate ICT</li> <li>• Research Unit</li> </ul> <p>June 2004</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation strategy is measured against agreed time lines and the use of the system is monitored by Corporate IT and the Research Unit.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic management decision making is informed by the effective use of the Management Information System.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff training</li> <li>• Produce a calendar for data collection in respect of information retrieval, analysis, subsequent distribution and action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy and policy development is informed by hard information on current service levels.</li> <li>• Improved data provision on school performance.</li> <li>• School staff use the available data systematically to raise standards of pupil attainment.</li> <li>• Full integration of ScotXed, SEEMIS and related partner ICT systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of School Support</li> <li>• Research Unit</li> <li>• Establishment Heads</li> </ul> <p>September 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data retrieval, analysis and distribution is actioned within calendar deadlines.</li> <li>• Performance to be monitored by Quality Improvement Officers and the Head of School Support.</li> <li>• Management Information System and its usage are benchmarked against "best in class".</li> </ul>

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### Action Point 4

The Council should continue to improve the overall quality of school accommodation to ensure that buildings and facilities provide an appropriate learning environment.

Education Authority's Objectives	Strategy for Implementation	Target Outcome	Responsibility / Timescale	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the development of an estate management strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordination with the Council's Technical Services.</li> <li>• Introduction of an Asset Management Programme which holds data on all properties within the Education portfolio.</li> <li>• Continuing financial investment in properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy for dealing with accommodation issues is based on clear and concise information.</li> <li>• Prioritisation of resources is based on clear rationale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Resource Support</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">December 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress will be monitored by Head of Resource Support, in accordance with guidelines from the Scottish Executive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to the fabric of educational establishments across all sectors of the service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of PPP unit to drive forward the PPP process.</li> <li>• Partnership working with both internal and external organisations.</li> <li>• Preparation of annual Capital Programmes, based on information from Asset Management Programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital programme will continue to deliver improvements to accommodation across all sectors.</li> <li>• PPP process will deliver 8 new builds / refurbishments by August 2006.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Resource Support</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Capital programme - on-going.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PPP – August 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Resource Support and PPP Project Manager will manage PPP process</li> <li>• Performance will be measured against priorities established through the estate management strategy.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationalisation of accommodation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of school rolls against capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure best use of resources.</li> <li>• Reduce surplus capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Resource Support</li> </ul> <p>On-going</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in surplus capacity over a set timescale.</li> <li>• Reduction in property running costs.</li> </ul>
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### Action Point 5

Improved support should be provided for developments in the secondary school curriculum.

Education Authority's Objectives	Strategy for Implementation	Target Outcome	Responsibility / Timescale	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of enhanced support for areas of the secondary school curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with focus groups of Principal Teachers to identify curricular needs.</li> <li>• Review electronic networks across schools and further develop self-help forums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary subject areas are effectively resourced and supported at school and authority level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director</li> <li>• Head of School Support</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Team</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">November 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the service provision and materials to be monitored by the service providers.</li> <li>• Curriculum Management Meetings monitored through self-evaluation by Principal Teachers and externally moderated by the Quality Improvement Team.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of relevant CPD for Principal Teachers (Secondary) to enhance their role in developing the secondary school curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the process of Professional Review and Development of Principal Teachers to further focus on an individual's contribution to subject networking across the authority.</li> <li>• Provision of access to centralised national curricular materials and training as well as the local development of secondary curricular material where necessary.</li> <li>• Revision of Standard Circular 16 with regard to the recruitment and selection process for Principal Teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Leadership and management role of Principal Teachers within the redefined McCrone Structures to be clarified and delivered.</li> <li>• New job descriptors for teachers and Principal Teachers to be agreed through the LNCT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment Heads</li> <li>• Quality Improvement Team</li> <li>• Head of School Support</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">June 2004</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitored through the Professional Review and Development Process.</li> <li>• Recruitment to be monitored through revised selection procedures.</li> <li>• Monitoring improvement in curricular provision through analysis of SCQF and use of STACS.</li> </ul>

**INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Action Point 6**

The Education Department, working with other agencies, should continue to refine and implement its inclusion policies. In particular, it should ensure coherence in planning and providing for pupils with special educational needs, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Education Authority's Objectives	Strategy for Implementation	Target Outcome	Responsibility / Timescale	Monitoring and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an overarching statement for pupils with special needs, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties and any children at risk.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a working forum to produce an overarching statement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An overarching statement produced to integrate the approaches to planning and delivery of the papers already agreed by the Education Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director</li> <li>Heads of Service</li> <li>Psychological Service</li> <li>Quality Improvement Officer with responsibility for Special Needs</li> <li>Seconded Head Teacher.</li> </ul> <p>June 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitored by the Pathways to Inclusion Group using the framework laid out in the base line documents.</li> <li>Data analysis using statutory quality indicators and performance measures.</li> <li>Stakeholder survey to test understanding.</li> </ul>