

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE : 5 FEBRUARY 2002

CITIZENS OF A MULTILINGUAL WORLD

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Elected Members of the action proposed by East Ayrshire Educational and Social Services in response to the SEED document *Citizens of a Multilingual World*.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In response to serious concerns over the teaching and learning of languages in Scotland's schools, the Scottish Executive established the Languages Action Group, to determine the way forward for languages in Scotland's schools in the twenty-first century. The report was published in September 2001.
- 2.2 The Action Group Report proposed a raft of innovations in the teaching of modern languages in Scotland's schools.
- 2.3 The report examines the place of languages in Scotland's economic regeneration and indicates opportunities that Scottish educators require to take in order to ensure that young Scots can compete with their European peers in the jobs market. It also makes a series of major recommendations aimed at securing the place of languages at the heart of children's learning:
- Children's entitlement to a language-learning experience is defined.
 - The duty of local authorities to deliver that experience is described.
 - Innovative local practice is encouraged.
 - The case is argued for a wide range of languages in the curriculum.
 - The need to modernise the methods by which young people learn languages is stated, and different means to do this - such as ICT – are described.
 - The development needs of teachers are also defined, with the recommendation that all new primary staff be equipped with the language skills needed to offer children a suitable language experience and all teachers be made aware of the importance of language skills to Scotland's export efforts.

3. THE CURRENT POSITION

3.1 East Ayrshire Council is committed to the development of languages education and to improving uptake and attainment in languages in all school sectors.

Several major initiatives in modern languages are already underway in East Ayrshire:

- Partners in Excellence is introducing young people at the 16+ stage to a wide range of language experiences involving residential immersion language weekends, the use of video-conferencing and ICT.
- Secondary modern languages departments have been encouraged to develop vocational language elements in national qualifications.
- Languages in Nursery have been successfully pioneered in several East Ayrshire establishments.
- Primary schools have been encouraged to introduce the teaching of languages earlier in children's education.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 As part of a framework for action aimed at further raising uptake and attainment in this area, East Ayrshire proposes to introduce the following measures:

- The successful Languages in Nursery project will be extended to cover Nursery and early years primary education.
- The trend in primary schools to bring language teaching into P5 as well as P6 and P7 will be encouraged.
- Vocationally-oriented units of work will be further developed for secondary school students.
- Through partnerships currently in development with schools and local authorities across Europe, opportunities will be created to link young people through ICT.
- Funding provided by the British Council will be used to develop immersion teaching of languages.
- Opportunities for staff development in languages will also be created in schools and partner local authorities in Europe.
- In order to safeguard the position of languages other than French, East Ayrshire will train a 'pool' of teachers able to provide cover for primary and secondary classes in German, Spanish and Italian
- Funding will be sought to continue and expand the Partners in Excellence project.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Funding for these activities will be made available by the Scottish Executive Education Department and by the British Council.

6. LEGAL AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Not applicable.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This document observes the spirit of East Ayrshire's policies on inclusion, quality and equality and national and priorities on opportunity and inclusion.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that elected members note the contents of this paper

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Work

JN/MR
16 January 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Citizens of a Multilingual World, an SEED consultation document, is available in the Members' Library.

Any person wishing further information should telephone Graham Short, Head of Schools, (01563) 576192 or Kenneth McKinlay, Principal, Quality Development (01563) 555650.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : GRAHAM SHORT

AGENDA