

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 5 FEBRUARY 2002

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of the continuing developments in inclusive education in East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Social inclusion, non-discrimination and equal opportunities have always been high on the list of priorities of East Ayrshire Council. These are found in the fundamental principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, namely, that all rights apply to all children, including equality of access to education. Members should note the recent East Ayrshire Committee Papers on the East Ayrshire Children's Charter and Children's Commissioner. East Ayrshire Council have always strived to create a community where all are supported and strategies developed to minimise the consequences of social exclusion.
- 2.2 Recent national developments and legislation have given added impetus to the programme of inclusion. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, section 15 emphasises the presumption of mainstream schooling in all but exceptional circumstances. The present consultation on the codes from the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which from September 2002 will encompass education. More recently in December 2001 the Scottish Parliament passed The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records) Bill, planning for access for disabled pupils and access for parents to pupil records.

3. LOCAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 The education service in East Ayrshire continues to strive to create a broad and balanced provision. This is complimented with specialist services that help create a community for a wide range of its citizens. The aim is for a service that:
- promotes an active partnership between itself and the community it serves
 - promotes a whole school approach to support for learning for all.
 - develops an inclusive culture in schools
 - uses the most socially inclusive forms of support
 - continues to reduce the gap between mainstream and specialist support services
 - continues to reduce labelling towards a community that values support, difference and aims to maximise inclusion.

3.2 Past and continuing steps towards these goals have taken place over the last six years. These include:

- expansion of early intervention and pre-school systems including the pre-school assessment team
- development and training of specialist staff for learning, sensory and behaviour support.
- audited assistance to schools for special educational needs and support for learning.
- creation of mainstream units at Patna and Crosshouse Primary Schools to support children with general and specific learning difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment, behavioural difficulties and language and communication disorders.
- recruitment and training of classroom assistants and special educational needs auxiliaries in the Support of Children with special educational needs.
- major national certificated programmes offered to mainstream and specialist staff for an initial and further qualifications in special educational needs.
- continued development towards inter-agency protocol and working practices.
- comprehensive promotion of individual educational programmes and personal learning plans.
- development of National Priority 3 into the local improvement objectives
- opening and development of a new, local respite centre for the support of young people with complex learning difficulties.
- Major reconstruction and amalgamation of Educational and Social Services .
- Introduction of multi-disciplinary systems in schools.

3.3 The success of these strategies may be analysed, in terms of recent trends in a reduction of the pupil population in segregated specialist placements in East Ayrshire. The table below shows that the majority of pupils now recorded are placed within mainstream provision.

	Total
Recorded Pupils in East Ayrshire	534
Special School Sector	162
Mainstream Units	40
Outwith Placements	13

The present percentage of pupils in East Ayrshire under special segregated provision in comparison to the whole school population is approximately 0.84%. This also reflects a social and cultural shift of attitude. Through the continuing development of mainstream support structures, multi-agency co-operation, promotion of Individual educational programmes, provision of specialist staff and resources, there has been a reduced demand for recording and specialist placements outwith the local councils. These trends further emphasise the drive towards mainstream inclusion.

- 3.4** It is essential to note that quantitative measures cannot be the sole indicators but that there has to be recognition of gradually changing attitudes, approaches and ethos. The success of this area is not readily seen in the achievements in learning and teaching as shown by performance in Special Education Needs Targets below.

	Schools and Units Involved	Exceeding	Meeting	Not Meeting
Secondary	8	7	0	1
Primary	43	26	2	15
Special	9	9	0	0

Of the 60 schools 44 met or exceeded the benchmark target set (overall success rate = 73.3%)

4. IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** As a result of Educational and Social Services strategic review, there are a number of further developments that are anticipated in the near future which will further impact on the progress towards inclusion such as:
- continued development of joint agency policy, protocol and practice guidance
 - extension planning of the Framework for Intervention strategy across all schools from recent successful pilot schemes.
 - creation of accessibility plans for access to the school environment and the curriculum.
 - strategic management of the Pathways to Inclusion group - which is a multi-agency approach to reducing exclusion through local integrated services. A model that offers first steps on the road to having an effective cluster based support system which will enhance learning and teaching across the board to create a climate that will facilitate social inclusion.
- 4.2** In this climate of progressing inclusion a major consultation and review is taking place of the policy for Special Educational Needs, namely, "Every Child is Special". The policy will address the support needs of children and young people with special needs in the overall framework of the development of inclusive education for all. This in turn will lead to the review of whole school approaches, authority level management of these, and the staff development needs and the overall effect on overall resource allocation.

5. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) agree to continued development in the integration of support services for young people that promote inclusion; and
- (ii) otherwise note contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

JMcC/TG
10 January 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, Tel: (01563) 576192 or Jim McCaffrey, Tel: (01563) 555650

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: GRAHAM SHORT

AGENDA