

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 8 JUNE 2000**

#### **RAISING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT : EASTER SCHOOLS IN EAST AYRSHIRE**

##### **Report by Director of Education**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the success of Easter Schools in East Ayrshire.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Raising educational achievement is one of the four main areas for continued development within the strategic plan for the Education Department. For the past two years a comprehensive programme of educational opportunities have been offered to students during the Easter holiday period.
- 2.2 In continuance of this successful programme Head Teachers were invited by the Director to provide programmes of Study Support for students about to undertake Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations in May and June 2000, and other programmes to raise achievement in sectors outwith secondary.

### **3. EASTER SCHOOL PROVISION**

- 3.1 Easter school provision is a programme of study support, revision and tutorials provided in addition to the preparation for external examination that takes place during class time. It is designed to provide added impetus to raising educational attainment.
- 3.2 All secondary schools in East Ayrshire provide on going study support through the school year, which is made available to pupils in S3, S4, S5 and S6. In addition some schools decided to allocate study support resources and Excellence Fund resources to Easter school provision.
- 3.3 In addition to secondary school provision, Crosshouse Communication Unit provided an Easter school for autistic children, which included learning and leisure opportunities. Hillhead New Community School provided a nine day programme of indoor and outdoor activities, while Community Education's Youth Conference 2000 attracted large numbers to Auchinleck Community Education Centre with their participative Physical, Social, Personal and Community Action Zones.

**3.4** Many different models of Easter schools have evolved in East Ayrshire. Study support may be provided:

- .in school outwith class time (e.g. after school, in the evenings or at lunch times )
- .in school during the Easter holiday
- .centrally, if needed, by the Education Department at Kilmarnock College .at other locations appropriate to the age and activity provided

#### **4. PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN EASTER SCHOOLS**

**4.1** Easter school participation by pupils is entirely voluntary .Pupils' initial attendance and stay-on rates are one method of measuring the success of the various programmes offered. Many schools identified pupil needs by consulting them before deciding which subjects to offer, and in such cases pupil involvement was well targeted at specific subject areas.

**4.2** Overall a total of 730 students studied at Higher Grade in 17 subject areas, and 680 students studied at Standard Grade in 15 subject areas, with over 130 staff involved in their teaching. A typical school provision shows an increase in numbers compared to 1999, with over 100 pupils from S4, S5 and S6 attending, and each pupil attending for an average of 5 visits per pupil. In one case one S5 pupil made thirty visits over the Easter period. There was an all-round increase in pupil participation. Provision during Easter 1998 catered for 260 pupils, while 1999 showed a further increase in pupil numbers and subjects taught. A special feature of this year's provision was the Youth Conference, Hillhead New Community School's involvement, and Crosshouse Communication Unit.

**4.3** Schools provide a wide range of courses and activities aimed generally at all students studying for Standard Grade and Highers, and, outwith the secondary sector, at all pupils and young persons whom the organisers deem would benefit.

**4.4** Students study specific subjects, general supervised study, and engage in motivational activities designed to enhance learning skills, improve memory and raise student expectations of their own potential for success.

**4.5** Evaluation of student and tutor responses indicates the value placed on programmes by participants and teaching staff. Many pupils and staff enjoy the more relaxed atmosphere of Easter schools, within the overall disciplinary codes of conduct. Improved relationships between pupils and staff further enhance pupil perceptions of school, and lead to improved behaviour and attendance in normal term time.

**4.6** Sample comments from pupils include the following: "I really liked having a place to study other than at home", "the school was a familiar place, and I could call on friends' or teachers' help at any time I needed."

4.7 Comments from staff include: "Pupils were well-motivated and attended a wide variety of classes and private study", and " There was a good mixture of pupils of a wide spread of ability , who enjoyed the less formal atmosphere of their Easter school experience."

4.8 Many schools consulted their pupils before offering the programme, to enable them to ensure that classes matched pupil needs. This aspect of provision brought a sharper focus and more efficient targeting of human and financial resources.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All nine secondary schools received funding from the Excellence Fund Study Support, as did Crosshouse Communications Centre.

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS Nil.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that members of the Education Committee note the contents of the paper .

John Mulgrew  
Director of Education

DF/MM  
30 May 2000

## LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Raising Educational Achievement: Easter Schools in East Ayrshire -Report by Director of Education to Education Sub-Committee 10 May 1999.
2. Study Support in Scottish Schools: John McBeath, Quality in Education Centre
3. Study Support (Out of Hours Learning) The Code of Practice -The Prince's Trust 1997.

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Depute Director of Education, Tel: (01563) 576118 or Kenneth McKinlay, Principal, Quality Development, Tel: ( 01563) 555650.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: GRAHAM SHORT**

**AGENDA**