

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 29 MAY 2001

UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Education Committee of the progress made by the department in relation to the “Quality Management In Education” (QMIE) initiative.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In June 2000 HM Inspectors of Schools (HMI) and the Accounts Commission of Scotland published the document 'Quality Management in Education: Self-evaluation for Local Authority Education departments' (QMIE). Members will recall that the QMIE initiative was the subject of a previous report to committee.
- 2.2 The desire to promote self-evaluation in local government services is well established and the unique skills of the Department of Educational and Social Services are particularly suited to promoting rigorous self-evaluation.
- 2.3 The main purpose of the QMIE self-evaluation is to provide a basis for improvement in service delivery. The self-evaluation is also a means of demonstrating that we are providing value for money to the communities of East Ayrshire.
- 2.4 As part of the overall QMIE framework of self-evaluation, five key areas are identified:
- ◆ strategic management
 - ◆ consultation and communication
 - ◆ operational management
 - ◆ resource and finance management
 - ◆ performance monitoring and continuous improvement

This framework, including key areas, quality indicators and themes, was used to take a broad view of the work of Educational Services.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF QMIE IN THE DEPARTMENT

- 3.1 Between October 2000 and February 2001 an initial evaluation of the quality of the work of Educational and Social Services has been conducted using the procedures specified in QMIE. Headteachers and others involved in the delivery of educational services were involved in an audit of the quality

indicators and each of the themes. Levels of performance were assigned to each theme on the basis of professional judgement. This audit process has provided an initial analysis of areas of major strength and also areas where action for improvement is required.

3.2 The overall response of the headteachers and others was positive. Analysis of results identify more strengths than weaknesses in the work of Educational and Social Services. The key strengths are in the areas of strategic management and in resource and financial management. The department has a number of clearly identified strengths in the operation and the delivery of the service we provide. These specifically include:

- ◆ a good strategic vision and clear aims and values
- ◆ effective leadership
- ◆ a hard-working, committed, SMT with good management skills
- ◆ attendance of the directorate at SEN meetings, School Board Steering Group etc.
- ◆ a widely circulated Strategic Plan
- ◆ a structured approach to strategic planning, the plan has a good structure and there is a "good vision"
- ◆ an agreed system in place for the allocation of resources
- ◆ good use of flexibility in staffing and financial flexibility
- ◆ strategy of protecting school budgets and of keeping staff informed of financial decisions
- ◆ an improvement in monitoring and feedback of development planning
- ◆ a process where successes are published through the authority standards and quality reports and education newsletters
- ◆ excellent relationships with elected members

The main areas identified as requiring further development were:

- ◆ consultation and communication,
- ◆ operational management (centrally-deployed staff) and
- ◆ performance monitoring and continuous improvement.,

although even in these areas there are a number of clearly identified strengths which help to balance any perceived development needs.

3.3 The initiative is now in a second stage with the wider involvement of those involved in the delivery of the service.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The department have already taken positive action to address some of the areas requiring attention and intend to develop and implement an action plan to improve performance in all key areas.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) Note the strengths of the service and recognise the contribution of all staff to the service
- (ii) Request that the Director provides an opportunity for members to actively participate in a “workshop” as part of the initiative.
- (iii) Request the Director to provide further reports as required.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services

Reference
Date 21 May 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. None

Members wishing further information should contact (Name & Tel No)

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IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: GRAHAM SHORT

AGENDA