

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE : 12 NOVEMBER 2002

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Elected Members of the publication in June 2002 of national guidelines "Education for Citizenship in Scotland", and the proposed response by the Department of Educational and Social Services to it.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 National Priorities 2 "Framework for Learning" and 4 "Values and Citizenship" set Citizenship in a national context, while East Ayrshire's Local Improvement Objectives ensure that each school's improvement plan addresses this issue. In particular, each school must show the ways and extent by which the headteacher has consulted the pupils and sought to involve them when decisions require to be made concerning the everyday running of the school.
- 2.2 Two reports by the Director of Educational and Social Services "Education for Citizenship in Scotland – A paper for consultation and discussion" (31 October 2000) and "Working with Young People : Active Citizenship in East Ayrshire" (6 June 2001) detail the full commitment of the Department to this major national initiative.
- 2.3 The Department is now a member of a Scotland-wide "Education for Citizenship Network", the work of which is managed through Learning and Teaching Scotland.
- 2.4 The "Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000" imposes a duty on education authorities to consult children and young persons and give them an opportunity to make their views known. Such participation is, in its own right, an invaluable contribution to education for citizenship.
- 2.5 East Ayrshire's Strategic Plan (2002-2005), its Children's Service Plan, the Children and Young People's Rights Group, and its Young Persons Charter of Rights all reflect a structured and strategic development of the citizenship initiative.

3. NATIONAL GUIDELINES

3.1 The paper for discussion and development deals with four main questions:

- What do we mean by “citizenship”?
- Why is “education for citizenship” important?
- What should education for citizenship do for young people?
- What does effective education for citizenship involve in practice – for the curriculum, for schools and early education centres and for communities?

3.2 The paper asserts that young people should be regarded as citizens of today rather than citizens in waiting. As they grow into adulthood, new rights and responsibilities are acquired. Education for citizenship is important because it enables young people to make informed choices and decisions, and act upon them.

3.3 Education for citizenship seeks to develop capability for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. This capability is rooted in knowledge and understanding in a range of skills, and in a variety of personal qualities. Effective school delivery of citizenship does not involve the creation of a new subject, but can be secured through learning set in the daily life of the school, discrete areas of the curriculum, cross-curricular experiences and activities linked with the local community. Each educator has education for citizenship as a key responsibility.

3.4 Learning experiences should provide opportunities for active engagement, and should be seen by young people as purposeful and relevant. The ethos and climate for learning should be

- positive and challenging, reflecting and encouraging high expectations on the part of pupils and teachers;
- characterised by respect and care for individuals and their community;
- stimulating and motivating, promoting thoughtful interaction and critical debate;
- conducive to enterprising, constructive thinking.

3.5 The paper identifies areas for development for schools and early education centres. They should

- review existing provision and practice to ensure young people can participate in decision making, participate actively in relevant learning experiences, learn to make connections between different areas of study, and understand and participate in the life of their communities;
- promote education for citizenship within the development planning process;
- ensure opportunities for meaningful and responsible involvement in decision-making by young people and adults associated with the establishment;
- designate a member of staff to co-ordinate provision for development of capability for citizenship.

4. DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

4.1 Local Improvement Objectives relating to citizenship aim to:

- increase the self discipline of pupils by supporting school-based initiatives to improve self discipline;
- form student/pupil/school councils in all establishments and provide a range of experiences to develop self reliance and self discipline, for example through buddy systems, mentoring programmes and Quality Circle Time;
- increase respect for self and others by extending the range of community involvement for young people in schools through, for example, local committees, youth forums, and support for the elderly and other vulnerable groups;
- increase awareness of interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society, and increase awareness of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society by extending the involvement of young people in the decision-making processes of the establishment.

4.2 Schools should aim to use these objectives to help identify their own priorities for development. They will publish these through establishment improvement plans and may report on them in their Standards and Quality reports. Parents are entitled to be consulted on and have access to school improvement plans, and pupils and parents are expected to have input into the identification of priorities, and to comment on the published plans.

4.3 The principles by which these aims will be delivered are the key principles of East Ayrshire Council. The Council aims to achieve quality within a climate of achievement, by identifying and disseminating good practice in education for citizenship. It fosters equality of opportunity for all, values diversity and encourages those aspects of citizenship which promote respect for individuals and their communities. Access is addressed through participative decision making at school, local and community levels. Partnerships with parents, school boards, learning partnerships and community groups help to ensure that educational initiatives and progress are based on consensus.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All developments and recommendations will be funded from within existing resources.

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The initiatives referred to in the paper substantially underpin the social inclusion strategies of the Council.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that members of the Education Committee:

- i) endorse the response of the Department of Educational and Social Services to the “Education for Citizenship in Scotland” Paper; and
- ii) otherwise, note the contents of the paper.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

DF/MR
17 October 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i) Education for Citizenship in Scotland Paper (Learning and Teaching Scotland – June 2002)
- ii) Education for Citizenship in Scotland – A paper for consultation and discussion – Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services (Education Sub-Committee – 31 October 2000)
- iii) Working with Young People – Active Citizenship in East Ayrshire – Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services (Education Committee – 6 February 2001)

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AGENDA