

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 19 SEPTEMBER 2000

QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** To inform Members of the introduction of a national evaluation framework for the evaluation of education authorities and to seek approval for the use of this framework within arrangements for Best Value.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Over recent years there has been a developing approach to self-evaluation within the education service. This gathered pace with the work of the Quality Assurance Unit of the former Strathclyde Region. But, more recently, this work has been reinforced by the publication by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) of the *"How Good is Our School?"* (HGIOS) series of performance indicators.
- 2.2** At the corporate level, evaluation systems such as the European Foundation for Quality Management/Excellence Model (EFQM/EM) have been introduced to cover services that lack a customised set of performance indicators. The introduction of such systems has been one of the main planks within approaches to Best Value in East Ayrshire.
- 2.3** Under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, HMI now have a statutory duty to inspect Education Authorities. Hitherto, such inspections have been voluntary with HMI involvement in the former Dumfries and Galloway and Tayside Regions, East Renfrewshire, West Lothian and Aberdeenshire. HMI are committed under the new act to inspecting 7 education authorities each year, and already the inspections of two authorities – Highland and East Dunbartonshire – have been announced over the summer of 2000.

3. THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION (QMIE) FRAMEWORK

- 3.1** This new evaluation system was published by the Scottish Executive in August 2000. It is the result of extensive and thorough consultations at national level, including the extensive involvement of Education Authorities and the Accounts Commission. Although it will be used by HMI to evaluate the work of education authorities it is also intended to be used by the authorities themselves as a system of self evaluation.

3.2 The document “*Quality Management in Education*” is available in the Members’ Lounge.

3.3 The overall set of performance indicators are divided into groups which are known as Key Areas:

- Strategic Management
- Consultation and Communication
- Operational Management
- Resource and Financial Management
- Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Each Key Area is subdivided into a number of Quality Indicators which in turn are divided into a number of themes. In this way 27 separate areas of operation within an Education Authority are identified which can be evaluated against features of good practice. These 27 areas are shown at Annex A. The features of good practice are derived from a range of sources including EFQM/EM, but also from the pilot inspections undertaken by HMI.

3.4 The QMIE system is used in exactly the same way as “How Good is Our School?” at establishment level. For each Quality Indicator, two illustrations are provided. The level 4 illustration is comparable to a “very good” rating in an HMI report, while a 2 level could be translated as a “fair”. For example the Level 4 illustration for the Quality Indicator “Policy Development” is:

- *“The department’s work is directed by a straightforward policy framework which covers all its main areas of activity and responsibility, is reflected in the structure and content of the Strategic Service Plan and is carried through into actions.*
- *The policy for quality development fits the context very well, is clearly perceived and understood by stakeholders, and provides a very good basis for related operational practice.*
- *Policies reflect national and local priorities and related improvement objectives.*
- *Individual policies give specific information about roles, responsibilities and procedures, expectations of quality and evaluation processes. They take into account all relevant contextual information.*
- *The links among cross-cutting initiatives, and education’s contribution to these, are indicated clearly and are reflected in policy and practice at establishment level.”*

As would be expected, therefore, the analysis by HMI is in considerable, and helpful, detail.

3.5 In carrying out an external evaluation, HMI would obtain evidence from a wide variety of sources. Although based on an evaluation of policies and documents, there would be a wide range of supporting interviews. These would include discussions with the Chief Executive, other Heads of Service, Elected Members, and education staff. A substantial amount of HMI activity would be directed to interviewing headteachers, other teachers and locally based staff, and members of school boards. Inspection activity would draw on other HMI reports including those undertaken in Community Education.

4. QMIE IN EAST AYRSHIRE

4.1 In the near future it is to be anticipated that East Ayrshire will be inspected by HMI. Everyone associated with the delivery educational services will want the considerable amount of work that is being done at all levels to be shown in the best possible light. In practice this means that full account must be taken of the QMIE framework, and that there will be a resulting readjustment of priorities and systems. In this way there will be a focusing on what will be regarded as core activity within the department in order to fulfil the statutory requirements.

4.2 The QMIE framework will therefore become the top priority in the work of the Quality Development Team. They will be expected to manage the service's self evaluation processes and introduce any measures such as surveys and consultative forums that are necessary to deliver this system. They will also be responsible for ensuring that that the vision for the department that is described in the Strategic Plan and Statement of Commitment are delivered in practice through established development planning systems. The aim will be to produce an annual Standards and Quality Report that uses the QMIE structure.

4.3 A seminar for Elected Members and Senior Officers will be held to explore the QMIE framework.

5. QMIE AND BEST VALUE

5.1 It is now an explicit part of Scottish Executive thinking that Councils should be relieved of the burden that comes from "over-audit". Nationally, a Joint Scrutiny Forum has been established on which the Inspectorates of Education, Social Work, Fire and Police Services are represented together with Audit Scotland. The QMIE framework takes full account of the requirements of Best Value. At the national launch of the document it was emphasised by senior members of HMI and Audit Scotland and the Minister that this system was fully compatible with Best Value, Performance Management and Planning (PMP) and Public Performance Reporting (PPR). There should therefore be no requirement to superimpose other evaluation systems on the education service, so long as the requirements of QMIE are being fulfilled.

- 5.2** Clearly, for this to demonstrate the necessary rigour it will be important for the outcomes from QMIE activities within the education service to be integrated with the corporate Best Value structure. This is why this report and the QMIE structure deserves scrutiny by the Best Value Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 5.3** Any Standards and Quality Reports which result from QMIE will need to be integrated into the PPR framework for the Council, and recognised as such. Members will recall that a prototype Standards and Quality Report has already been produced and widely disseminated.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The implementation of the QMIE system will assist the Authority in fulfilling the requirement of Sections 3 to 7 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act, 2000.
- 6.2** Against this background there would be benefit in restructuring and reforming the Quality Development Team. This will be the subject of a separate report to Committee.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** None arising directly from this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) agree to the use of the Quality Management in Education set of performance indicators;
- (ii) note the potential for the use of Quality Management in Education system within the Council's arrangements for Best Value, remitting this report for consideration by the Best Value Sub Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
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GRS/GRS
25 August 2000

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools (01563-576089).

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Quality Management in Education, Self Evaluation for Local Authority Education Departments, Scottish Executive
2. Standards and Quality Report 2000
3. How Good is Our School?, Scottish Office Education and Industry Department.
4. Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act, 2000.

Implementation Officer: Graham Short

AGENDA