

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2001

ACTION PLAN : ANNUAL REPORT

Report by Director of Educational & Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of progress in the Education Action Plan Initiative in Shortlees and Bellfield Primary Schools and Grange Academy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the conditions for the grant for the Action Plan, the Authority was required to submit a report to the Scottish Executive by 31 July 2001.
- 2.2 A report has been compiled and sent to the Scottish Executive. A copy of this document is available at the Members' information point.

3. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

3.1 Overview

East Ayrshire Council accepted the offer of grant for year 2 on 13 September 2000. The second year of Education Action Plan has centred on the areas of project management, personal learning plans, differentiated curriculum, differentiated learning and teaching, use of ICT, primary/secondary liaison, study support and out of school hours learning. The steering group has overseen the entire project, including the appointment of senior teachers and the fitting out of project bases.

3.2 Objectives and Performance Indicators

The plan requires:

- outcomes to be specified and measured;
- setting out baseline measures against which outcomes will be assessed;
- rigorous procedures for evaluating, monitoring and reporting;
- accounting for relevant costs, such as staffing, training and materials.

3.3 Statement of Outcomes

3.3.1 Project Management

Project management has successfully driven the project through its second year, with all personnel, and most equipment and ICT in place.

3.3.2 Personal Learning Plans

Personal Learning Plans are now established in all three schools, and have been the subject of positive national interest, including a pupil-centred delivery of a workshop at a national conference. In the primary schools the Senior Teacher has devised Personal Learning Plans which the pupils complete themselves, emphasising that ownership and authorship are closely linked. The questions encourage positive thinking, and include the areas of personal responsibility for attitude and behaviour, attendance and timekeeping, personal appearance and hygiene, and responsibility for their own learning. In Grange Academy the entire programme has been given the umbrella title of W.I.N.G.S. (“What I Need for Greater Success”), which emphasises the positive nature of all the support mechanisms in place. Personal Learning Plans have been successfully introduced in S1 and S2, and departments are now being consulted to determine appropriate targets in S3 and S4 for each Standard Grade subject. Full parental and pupil involvement in the development of these will add value to their currency.

3.3.3 Learning and Teaching

Differentiated curricular, teaching and learning initiatives are in place in all schools, using a computerised programme named SuccessMaker, particularly in numeracy and literacy. Pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged in appropriate tasks, and given positive reinforcement at all stages. The Mathematics and English departments have been fully involved in training for the implementation of this initiative. Evaluations from staff and pupils are very positive in this area. All S4 pupils undertook a half-day of examination preparation with The Learning Game, which helped them think positively, aim high and be aware of stress management techniques. In the Primary schools the impact of Successmaker has been described as “marvellous”. Primary 6 and 7 pupils have commented that they feel they are improving, have been fully engaged with the learning system and are keen to meet realistic yet challenging personal targets. Pupil confidence has increased, and their attitude to learning has also received a major boost.

3.3.4 Pupil Performance

Standardised testing in Mathematics, Reading and Spelling has enabled staff to track individual pupils and appropriate groups. Cognitive Ability Testing is an integral part of Primary/Secondary liaison, as is a database of primary transfer information, which incorporates close liaison between schools and involves Learning Support.

3.3.5 Project Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation techniques include pupil and staff questionnaires relating to Quality Circle Time, SuccessMaker Elective, Learning Game examination preparation and computerised Primary Transfer information. Head of Schools, and the Head Teacher elect of Grange Academy visited

Grange on 14 June 2001, and were able to witness and evaluate some of the work of Bellfield and Shortlees pupils.

3.3.6 Out of School Hours Learning

Some delays which occurred in setting up ICT and training appropriate staff have largely been overtaken. Primary/secondary liaison has been greatly enhanced, not least in joint staff training and an innovative 3-day summer school for new S1 pupils. Over 50% of the new intake attend, and experience a variety of educational and enterprise challenges. Pupils also gain experience in iMovie technology, creating excellent feedback to staff and each other. Pupils evaluate their own work and provide evidence of initiatives, which are subsequently used, for staff training purposes. Study support and out of school hours learning have been similarly improved with before and after school clubs. In Bellfield and Shortlees Thinking Skills, is being delivered, with 50% of P6 and 7 in attendance. Grange Academy's Early Bird Club at 8.15 a.m. provides a stimulating environment for its users, and pupils attending have improved work habits and attitudes.

3.3.7 Financial Management of the Project

Financial matters and procedures are overseen by the regular presence of the departmental finance officer to advise on current and proposed spending. An outline of proposed spending is provided in advance to the departmental finance officer to facilitate tracking and monitoring. For the final year spending will amount to £14,000 for Grange Academy, and £11,000 for each of the two primary schools. This is in addition to the staffing budget for the two Senior Teachers. Spending has been fully committed and within budget.

3.3.8 Sustainability

All initiatives within this scheme have been designed to be sustainable beyond the life of the project, by involving all staff in consultation and training. Early concerns that pupils would be labelled, and parents might have negative attitudes towards the scheme have been unfounded. National recognition of all three schools has been enhanced by their innovative Personal Learning Plans and pupil-centred participation at an inter-authority national conference. The involvement of all three schools, and the participation of East Ayrshire pupils, gave all other Scottish authorities the opportunity to have an overview of the wide range of developments being pioneered in East Ayrshire, and attracted high numbers to the interactive workshops, with very positive feedback.

4. POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Project is fully funded by Scottish Executive Grant.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services

24 July 2001
GRS/SB

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- | | |
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| 1. The Excellence Fund for Schools
Core Programme
Education Action Plans
Specialist Provision in Schools | Education Committee - 28 January 1999 |
| 2. The Excellence Fund for Schools : Year 2 | Education Committee - 16 March 2000 |
| 3. The Excellence Fund for Schools : Year 3 | Education Committee - 3 April 2001 |

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, Tel: (01563) 576089.

Implementation Officer – Graham Short

AGENDA