

Education Executive
30 September 2008

IRVINE, 30 September 2008 - At a Meeting of the Education Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 1.00 p.m.

Present

John Bell, Tom Barr, Reverend David Karoon, Very Reverend Matthew Canon McManus, Peter McNamara, David O'Neill and John Reid.

In Attendance

C. Kirk, Corporate Director; M. Docherty, Head of Service (Educational Services); J. Montgomery, General Manager; P. Shiach, Committee Services Officer; and J. Stevenson, Communications Officer (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Margaret McDougall and John Scott.

1. Glengarnock Primary School and Nursery Class: HMIE Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the outcome of the HMIE report on Glengarnock Primary School and Nursery Class.

Glengarnock Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in April 2008 as part of a national sample of primary and nursery education. HM Inspectors evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school and nursery, the environment for learning, the processes for self-evaluation and the capacity for improvement.

The Report by HM Inspectors was published on 2 September 2008. It highlighted the strengths within the school and nursery, such as the high quality learning experience for P1 pupils, the care and welfare of children and pupils, their personal and social development and the positive relationships and culture of mutual respect between staff, parents and pupils. The report also outlined areas requiring attention including improvement of leadership and quality of provision in the nursery class, continued improvement of the quality of attainment in mathematics and English language and the further development of approaches to evaluating the work of the school, with a particular focus on improving pupils' learning experience.

In consultation with the designated Quality Improvement Officer and staff, the headteacher has put plans in place to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE into the School Improvement Plan. The school's plan to address the recommendations will be submitted to the Head of Service for approval following consultation with staff and the Parent Council and will subsequently be shared with parents and carers.

In terms of the revised follow-through arrangements, HM Inspectors will engage with the Council in monitoring progress and will undertake a follow-through inspection of the nursery. Parents and carers will be informed about the progress made by the school within two years of the publication of the report.

The headteacher of Glengarnock Primary was in attendance at the meeting and the Chair congratulated her on the positive aspects of the report

The Education Executive (a) agreed to approve the proposals made to address the key points for action in the Inspection Report; and (b) noted the arrangements for follow-through.

2. Irvine: St John Ogilvie Primary School: HMIE Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the outcome of the HMIE report on St John Ogilvie Primary School, Irvine.

St John Ogilvie Primary School was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in February 2008 as part of a national sample of primary education. HM Inspectors evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement.

The Report by HM Inspectors was published on 10 June 2008, and highlighted the strengths within the school which included staff commitment to the care, health and well-being of pupils, pupils' involvement in a broad range of activities and their success in wider achievements, the level of parental involvement and the commitment and leadership of the headteacher. The areas requiring attention included raising attainment in mathematics and writing, improvements in the pace of learning and challenging pupils to achieve their potential, and involving all teachers more fully in improving the school through using rigorous approaches to monitoring and evaluating its work.

In consultation with the designated Quality Improvement Officer and staff, the headteacher has put plans in place to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE into the School Improvement Plan. The school's plan to address the recommendations will be submitted to the Head of Service for approval following consultation with staff and the Parent Council and will subsequently be shared with parents and carers.

In terms of follow-through arrangements, the Head of Service advised that a report will be produced within two years to inform parents and carers about the progress made by the school.

The Education Executive (a) agreed to approve the proposals made to address the key points for action in the Inspection Report; and (b) noted the arrangements for follow-through.

3. 5-14 Assessment and SQA Examination Results 2008

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the performance of North Ayrshire schools in 5-14 assessment and the National SQA examinations of 2008.

The Council's Educational Services collects annual data on progress made by pupils at P3, P4, P6, P7 and S2 within the 5-14 programme, on the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, Standard Tables and Charts (STACS) are published each year which give a detailed analysis of the National SQA examination results, pre appeal. The Council has carried out an analysis of these statistics over the past 5 years in comparison with other similar authorities, national performance, and past performance in North Ayrshire.

The comparisons, set out in appendices 1-4 of the report, take account of background social factors, such as the levels of poverty and affluence which are recognised as having an effect on examination performance. Appendix 5 highlighted improved performances at individual schools.

Section 2 of the report provided a summary of 5-14 achievements, an analysis of awards in S4 and national qualifications in S5, a subject summary across the whole authority with regard to performance at Standard Grade and Higher, and an assessment of school performance. The report indicated steady improvement in primary schools in reading, writing and mathematics over 5 years. In secondary schools, achievement has improved in reading and writing over the past five years, while the position was static in terms of mathematics for the past three years.

Educational Services has taken account of this analysis and is planning specific subject support in relation to improving attainment. Other ongoing initiatives include continuing the focus on improvement in attainment from P6 - S2; the promotion of flexible approaches in the curriculum in secondary schools to help provide an appropriate curriculum to meet the general and specific needs of all pupils; and the introduction of further National Qualifications including vocational options as an alternative to some Standard Grade courses.

The Education Executive agreed (a) to note the content of the report; and (b) to receive further reports in due course on (i) performance in 5-14 assessment (ii) the 2009 diet of SQA examinations, (iii) attainment in literacy, (iv) implementation of a Curriculum for Excellence with a view to improving achievement and attainment, (v) more detailed statistical information to back up the summary statistics contained in the report, and (vi) actions being undertaken to address the issues raised in the report, including information on the destinations of pupils leaving school after fourth year and the potential to use the statistics to inform resource allocation decisions.

4. Summer Activities

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the 2008 programme of summer activities for families and young people, delivered during the school holiday period from 30 June to 15 August.

In 2007, a Summer Activities Working Group was convened to review the range of activities delivered by services across the Council's Educational Services and North Ayrshire Leisure. An inaugural programme of activities was provided and, following its success, was continued in 2008, funded from the core budgets of the services involved.

The 2008 programme of events was publicised through the Summer Activities booklet, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report, and distributed to every pupil in primary and special schools. Copies were also distributed to secondary schools, community centres, nurseries, libraries and other North Ayrshire venues, as well as being published on the ERS, Young Scot, and North Ayrshire Council websites. In addition, local buses also carried advertising throughout June, July and August.

In 2007, 3,903 young people attended events and this increased to 4,601 in 2008, an increase of 17%. Most activities were free of charge to participants. Almost all services reported a significant increase in participation. Unfortunately National Play Day was badly affected by poor weather, with three outdoor events cancelled by Children's Outreach Services. In contrast, events programmed by services for indoor venues were often oversubscribed.

Noted

The meeting ended at 2.00 p.m.