

Educational Services Standing Sub Committee
5 May 2006

Irvine, 5 May 2006 - At a Meeting of the Educational Services Standing Sub Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 pm.

Present

Jacqueline Browne, Drew Duncan and John Scott.

In Attendance

J Ward and C Kirk, Heads of Service, G Johnstone and A MacLean, Quality Improvement Managers (Educational Services); and J Bannatyne and E Fisher, Corporate and Democratic Support Officers (Chief Executive's).

Chair

Councillor Browne in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Gordon Allison, Jean Highgate, Peter McNamara, Donald Reid, John Reid and Elaine Shaw.

1. Follow-Through Reports

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on schools which have completed the Follow-Through process following HMIE inspections between February and April 2006.

HMIE reports contain action points for improvement and there is a well established and rigorous monitoring system in place in which the Quality Improvement Service is involved. Responsibility for publishing Follow-Through reports is shared between HMIE and local authorities. Since February 2006 Follow-Through reports have been finalised for 2 schools in North Ayrshire, namely, Greenwood Academy, Dreghorn and St Luke's Primary School, Kilwinning. Copies of the finalised individual school reports were appendiced to the report and provided details on the HMIE inspection, continuous improvement and the steps taken to progress towards meeting the main points for action.

The Chair undertook to write to the 2 schools to acknowledge the improvements introduced by them following the inspections and to congratulate them on their achievements.

The Sub Committee agreed to (a) commend schools for their work in meeting the points for action; and (b) otherwise note the report.

2. Enterprise in Education Evaluation

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational services) on an evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Enterprise in Education Action Plan.

In May 2004 the Scottish Executive approved the Council's Determined to Succeed Strategy and Action Plan. The Action Plan detailed how Enterprise in Education would be taken forward over the period 2004 to 2006 and outlined how it would be delivered in all North Ayrshire schools through:-

- Embedding Enterprise in Education in the curriculum P1 to S6;
- Involving the business community in supporting the delivery of Enterprise in Education programmes through partnership working with schools;
- Extending the range of vocational-based educational opportunities for post 14 students; and
- Communication with Stakeholders.

The report provided details of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Determined to Succeed Strategy Group has responsibility for monitoring progress in implementing the Action Plan and the annual evaluation and monitoring report has been submitted to the Scottish Executive detailing progress in Year 2.

How Good is Our School at Enterprise in Education, a set of quality indicators, was launched in March 2004. This self-evaluation guide is designed to support planning for improvement in Enterprise in Education with a framework providing advice and guidance to support classroom teachers in the use of quality indicators. Enterprise in Education is also included in the Standards and Quality Report and progress will be monitored as part of the school development planning process.

Noted.

3. Race Equality Policy and Action Plan

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Educational Services) on the implementation of the Race Equality Policy and Action Plan.

At a meeting of the Educational Services Committee on 21 February 2006 it was agreed that the implementation of the Educational Services Race Equality Policy be referred to the Sub Committee for further discussion. The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) places a duty on education authorities to make provision for minority ethnic groups and to promote equal opportunities. The Scottish Executive has also adopted the Race Relations (Amendment) Act in 2000 in which the importance of proactive work combating racism and inequality is underlined. To meet the requirements of the Act, the collection of data on the achievement of pupils from minority groups is likely to be a priority.

Currently parents or carers who complete enrolment forms are asked to identify the pupil's ethnic background and the language spoken at home from a range of categories. Pupils identified as ethnic minority represent 1.9% of the total number of pupils in North Ayrshire. Details of the numbers of pupils from each ethnic group and of the attainment of pupils in 5-14 national assessments and in SQA examinations were given in appendices to the report. Indications are that the majority of children from the main ethnic minority groups are performing well against the North Ayrshire average. It will, however, be important to examine further the performance of

secondary aged Chinese children, the largest single group within ethnic minorities, to ensure that adequate strategies are in place.

Attendance of pupils within the main ethnic groups compares well with the population as a whole but the attendance of travellers from all categories at primary and secondary schools remains an issue. Work has been undertaken by the Pupil Support Service to ensure that primary aged pupils are encouraged to enrol in their local school at their arrival on site and the pupil support teacher makes regular contact with parents. There are links with the site provision made by Community Learning and Development and this will be enhanced over this session. Details of attendance for all primary and secondary categories of children were also provided in an appendix to the report.

There are 157 pupils for whom English is an additional language in North Ayrshire schools. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported by teachers within the Pupil Support Service and additional classroom assistant time is also allocated through the annual audit, if required. Special exam arrangements are allowed through the Scottish Qualification Authority for candidates who require them. Schools have identified a need for more effective translation services both for written information and in face to face meetings with parents and this is being done by the Equalities Officer Group.

Under the Race Equality Policy, schools must submit reports of racial harassment and bullying, containing an outline of the incident and action taken by the school. There are indications that there is a degree of under reporting and it will be important to continue to raise the awareness of staff and pupils in relation to this.

The Scottish Executive is currently piloting a range of curriculum support materials which promote race equality which will be added to current school curricular programmes.

Race Equality monitoring will be given a high priority at school and authority level in the following ways:-

- Quality Improvement Officers will review schools' self evaluation against Routes to Equality and Fairness;
- The Race Equality Action Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis; and
- Guidance to schools on the impact assessment of school policies will be issued when the authority pilot has been completed.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 2.40 pm.