

Education Executive
12 April 2011

IRVINE, 12 April 2011 - At a Meeting of the Education Executive of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

John Bell, Tom Barr, Margaret McDougall, Gordon McConnell, David O'Neill and John Reid.

In Attendance

E. Murray, Chief Executive; C. Kirk, Corporate Director, M. Docherty and M. Armstrong, Heads of Service, K. Bryce, Performance and Policy Officer (Education and Skills); H. Hair, Principal Accountant (Finance and Infrastructure); and C. Rowney, Communications Officer and P. Shiach, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Chair

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Reverend David Karoon and Peter McNamara.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 16.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Education Executive held on 1 March 2011 were signed in accordance with paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. The Introduction of a Youth Achiever Award in North Ayrshire

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the introduction of a Youth Achiever Award in North Ayrshire.

Authority-wide schemes to recognise exceptional or outstanding achievement among schools and communities currently operate throughout a number of local authorities in Scotland.

In North Ayrshire, a scheme currently exists to acknowledge and celebrate the achievement of staff. All secondary schools have an award in place to recognise the achievement of pupils. The Youth Achiever Award will compliment North Ayrshire's Civic Pride Award, which is being introduced in the summer of 2011, by providing mechanisms to recognise outstanding achievement in young people aged 11 to 18 years.

The report proposed the introduction of a Youth Achiever Award in North Ayrshire on an annual basis for secondary aged pupils commencing session 2011/12 with an award ceremony in June 2012. Schools and Youth Leaders would be asked to nominate individual pupils or groups who had demonstrated outstanding achievement in a range of areas including: -

- Exceptional academic attainment;
- Sport or cultural activity at national or international level;
- Overcoming significant barriers to learning;
- Individual or group citizen projects that make a difference within schools, the local community and globally, and
- Community service.

Details of the criteria against which nominations would be judged, were contained in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on various issues relative to the report including the timescale for the introduction of the Award.

The Education Executive approved the introduction of a Youth Achiever Award.

4. Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on a draft response from North Ayrshire Council to the Independent Review of all aspects of teacher employment in Scotland.

The 2010 spending review agreement between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, published in November 2010, included an agreement for an Independent Review of all aspects of teacher employment in Scotland. A review team, chaired by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Stirling University, Professor Gerry McCormac, was established and will publish recommendations in the summer of 2011, aimed at improving educational outcomes for children and young people.

Details of the remit of the review, output and issues for consideration, together with the principles underpinning the Review, were contained within the report.

The Education Executive was advised that the Review is currently undertaking a "Call for Evidence" which will close on 21 April 2011. The Corporate Director (Education and Skills) has prepared a draft response to the Review, details of which were contained in Appendix 1 to the report.

In preparing a response, input was sought and considered from a number of sources, details of which were provided in the report and accompanying appendices 2 to 4. Individual members of school's staff have been informed of the Review and call for evidence, and encouraged to formally submit responses thereto.

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on various issues arising from the report, including the number of staff participating in the review and the views expressed on Chartered Teaching.

The Education Executive (a) approved the draft response detailed in Appendix 1 to the report as North Ayrshire Council's response to the Review of Teacher Employment in Scotland; and (b) agreed that a follow-up report be submitted for consideration once the agreed recommendations from the Review have been published.

5. Springside Primary School and Nursery Class: HMIE Report

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the HMIE Report on Springside Primary School and Nursery Class, Springside.

Springside Primary School and Nursery Class were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in January 2011 as part of a national sample of primary education. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages.

HM Inspectors evaluated pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of the school and nursery class, the environment for learning and the school's processes for self-evaluation. The examined the pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils and staff. Members of the inspection team met the chairperson of the parent council, representatives of local partners and a group of parents.

The report by HMIE Inspectors was published on 15 March 2011 and identified the following key strengths: -

- Children who are proud of their achievements and school;
- Children's enthusiasm for, and strong progress in reading;

- The nurturing approaches of staff to the care and welfare of the children, and
- Leadership of the headteacher and principal teacher in building a community of teachers who are active in improving the school.

The following areas for improvement have been agreed between HMIE, the school and the education authority: -

- Improve approaches to meeting children's learning needs in the nursery;
- Develop further children's learning planning across the school to show more clearly their strengths and what aspects they can continue to improve, and
- Continue to build on the approaches to self-evaluation to track and monitor children progress and achievements.

In consultation with the designated quality improvement officer and staff, the headteacher has put in place plans to incorporate the recommendations of the HMIE report 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 procedures, HMIE will make no further visits following this inspection. The school's progress will be reported to parents through the normal school and local authority processes.

Mrs M. Shedden, the headteacher of the school was in attendance and answered questions in relation to the following: -

- Creative and investigative play relative to the nursery class;
- The use of supply teachers;
- the unique challenges faced by the school and nursery class, and
- The level of parental support.

The Education Executive noted the steps taken to address the key points for action, and that in terms of follow-through, HMIE will make no further visits given the high level of confidence in the school to make the necessary improvements.

6. Teaching Scotland's Future: Report on a Review of Teacher Education in Scotland

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on developments in North Ayrshire with regard to a pilot teaching hub in the Irvine Royal cluster.

The Donaldson Report, *Teaching Scotland's Future*, was published in January 2011 and submits far reaching recommendations for the recruitment, training and on going professional development of the teaching workforce, including: -

- Higher competency standards for entry into teacher training;
- Broader degrees which combine in-depth academic study in areas beyond education in addition to rigorous professional development in teaching methodology;
- Training to include greater partnership between local authorities and initial teacher education establishments in the development of teachers;
- The development of teaching schools or hubs which would be centres for professional development;
- Teacher training to be more reflective and based on the learning rounds model similar to medical training, and
- Ongoing competency and skills development throughout a teachers career.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning accepted the majority of the 50 proposals and has commissioned a group jointly chaired by the Association of Directors for Scotland (ADES) and the Scottish Teacher Education Committee (STEC) to develop an implementation plan by September 2011.

Since 1984, Initial Teacher Education qualifications in Scotland have been delivered through degree level studies, followed by a one year post graduate course. Students are allocated to schools on the basis of one or two students at any one time for a block of 2 to 8 weeks. The concept of teaching hubs, based on the Learning Rounds model, has the potential to strengthen partnerships between universities and schools, with the hubs as models of outstanding practice in school improvement and teacher education.

The report indicated that Glasgow University has piloted a teaching hub in Glasgow West around the Hillhead cluster and is keen to extend the pilot to an additional local authority. Discussions have been undertaken with a view to having the additional hub based in the Irvine Royal cluster to include the Academy, the cluster primaries and denominational schools within the cluster. This would involve the University placing 30 students and their academic staff in the cluster to develop their teaching practice in a longer term and more systematic way than the current short placements allow. Appendix 1 to the report provided background information on the concept of "hub teaching schools".

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on a number of issues including publicity once negotiations on the initiative have been finalised, the sustainability of the initiative, issues in relation to Continuing Professional Development for teachers and the outcomes for pupils.

The Education Executive (a) noted the report and (b) agreed to receive an evaluation report in August 2012.

7. Member Officer Raising Attainment Working Group

Submitted report by the Corporate Director (Education and Skills) on the work of the Raising Attainment Working Group.

A Member/Officer Raising Attainment Working Group, consisting of the Leader of the Council, the Education Portfolio holder, North Ayrshire Council's representative on the COSLA Education Children and Young People Executive, representatives from primary and secondary schools, psychological services, the quality improvement service and community development, was established in 2008. The focus for the work of the Group is attainment and achievement in secondary schools, and an exploration of the factors affecting these aims.

A wide range of strategies have been put in place to improve attainment and achievement including: -

- Better tracking and monitoring of pupil progress;
- Visits to schools by the Corporate Director, Head of Service and Quality Improvement Service to monitor prelim results and discuss SQA and National Qualification results;
- Greater support and challenge within schools and subject areas;
- Improving the quality of learning and teaching;
- Good practice visits to other authorities;
- Personal support for pupils;
- More rigorous assessment procedures, and
- Strategies to improve post school destinations.

The report proposed that the Education Executive notes the progress to date, and that the Member/Officer group is committed to pursuing improvements in attainment, achievement and positive post school destinations.

The Education Executive sought, and received, clarification on a number of issues, including parental involvement and learning rounds. Reference was made to a recent presentation to COSLA on these issues by the Chief Executive of the Improvement Service for Scottish Local Government, and to the possibility of expanding the membership of the current Group. Consideration was also given to regular submission of the minutes of the Working Group to future meetings of the Education Executive.

The Education Executive (a) noted the progress made by the Member/Officer Working Group in raising standards of attainment and achievement, and (b) agreed (i) that C. Mair, Chief Executive of the Improvement Service for Scottish Local Government, be invited to present to a future meeting of the Council his presentation on raising attainment, (ii) that the membership of the Raising Attainment Member/Officer Working Group be expanded, and (iii) that the Minutes of the Group be submitted to the Education Executive at regular intervals.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.