

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 15<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2004**

**REPORT ON: SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**REPORT NO: 239-2004**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This Report gives elected members information about the evaluation of the policy document 'Supporting Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties', and outlines the steps to be taken in preparing a revised policy.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to note:

- i. this interim report on the evaluation of the Education Department's policy for supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- ii. the way in which the Education Department intends to progress this matter.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The cost of seconding two senior members of the teaching staff to conduct the evaluation exercise was met from the National Priorities Action Fund. There are no other financial implications arising from this report

## **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 These proposals are designed to ensure that all young persons have the same entitlement to an effective educational service, through the provision of a positive learning and teaching environment.

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This Report reinforces the Council's support for the concept of social inclusion, and will ensure equality of access to educational opportunity for all pupils.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND**

6.1 At its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2001 the Education Committee approved the policy document 'Supporting Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties'. In so doing the Education Committee instructed the Director of Education to conduct a full evaluation of its effectiveness. This full evaluation was conducted between April and June 2003, and was undertaken by a primary Head Teacher and a secondary Depute Head Teacher, both seconded for the purpose.

- 6.2 Just as the original policy document provided a comprehensive strategy and set of operational guidelines for this difficult and complex area of work, so the evaluation exercise was thorough in considering all aspects of behaviour management. The report makes a number of recommendations in specific areas of policy: the Stages of Assessment and Intervention which describe challenging behaviour and suggest strategies for managing it; specialist support within school available from Support for Learning staff; support from agencies outwith the school such as Dundee Educational Psychology Service; the Options Group, considering alternative provision for disaffected and/or disruptive young persons; the use of offsite centres for young persons unable to sustain a place in mainstream school; staff development; and resources.
- 6.3 The evaluation was conducted through semi-structured interviews with a wide range of parties; visits to 11 nursery, 29 primary, 9 secondary and 1 special schools; and meetings with Head Teachers and managers responsible for behaviour management. A questionnaire was also issued to all staff in schools, including support staff, which elicited 337 responses.
- 6.4 Interviews with individual members of staff and small groups have suggested that there is a broad understanding and acceptance of the direction the department is taking, and of the processes in place to support the strategy. However the evaluation has also clearly indicated areas which remain of concern to some staff: addressing these issues will strengthen a revised policy for supporting children with SEBD. The specific areas are:
- clarification of some procedures and provision of exemplar case studies;
  - the need for staff training, available to and directed at all staff in schools;
  - the dissemination and sharing of good practice; and
  - consideration of the need for additional resources.

## **7.0 PROPOSALS**

- 7.1 In response to the evaluation exercise a working group has been established, comprising representatives from Support for Learning central staff, from promoted and non-promoted teaching staff in all sectors, and from the support services. The teaching unions have been invited to join the group. The group's initial task has been to draw up a comprehensive action plan to deliver a revised policy document and operational guidelines.
- 7.2 The size of the task facing the group cannot be under-estimated, yet the aim is to have new guidelines available for consultation by the beginning of session 2004-05. A progress report will be issued before the end of this session.
- 7.3 Behaviour management in schools is one of the most important issues facing the Education Department. The working group considering the results of the evaluation has therefore been set up as a standing group to monitor the effectiveness of the policy after it has been approved, to support schools and teachers in this area, and to have oversight of the Department's strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 This Report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Depute Chief Executive (Finance).

8.2 All elected members have had an opportunity to attend a briefing on the SEBD evaluation. The religious representatives on the Education Committee have also been briefed, as have the teacher unions.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

ANNE WILSON  
Director of Education

8<sup>th</sup> March 2004

JC/DD