

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE – MAY 21ST 2001
REPORT ON: ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN STARTING PRIMARY ONE
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
REPORT NO: 312-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This Report provides information about a consultation exercise conducted with Head Teachers, Primary and Nursery School Boards and Parent Teacher Organisations and Parents about a reduction of the part time transition phase at the beginning of Primary One.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee notes and approves the contents of this Report and approves a reduction in the part time transition phase at the start of primary one from 6 weeks to 3 weeks in August 2001.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Nil

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This proposal would be implemented across all local authority nursery schools and classes.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 Members are referred to Committee Report No. 189- 2001, approved by the Education Committee on March 19th 2001. The Director of Education was remitted to conduct a consultation with Head Teachers and parents to gather views on a proposal to reduce the part time transition arrangements for children starting primary one.

7.0 CONSULTATION FINDINGS

7.1 The following is a summary of the key findings of the consultation which took place during April 2001.

7.2 Consultation with Nursery and Primary Head Teachers

7.3 A consultation exercise was carried out at a meeting of nursery and primary head teachers. 90% of Head Teachers consulted were in favour of a reduction in the part time phase.

7.4 Reasons given in support of a reduction were: (in order of priority)

- educational (fuller curriculum, potential for raised attainment)
- children already used to having a longer provision
- children may attend another provision in the pm anyway
- less pressured
- more opportunity for flexible curriculum planning to meet individual needs
- better use of existing provision
- parental convenience

7.5 Consultation with Chairpersons of Primary School Boards and PTAs

7.6 Consultation was conducted at a meeting of the Convener of Education, Vice Convener of Education, Director of Education and Senior Management Team with Chairpersons of Primary and Nursery School Boards and Parent Teacher Organisations

7.7 In general the views expressed were positive towards a reduction. Many expressed the view that, in their own experience, children expressed a desire to attend school for the whole day from the outset.

7.8 However there was acknowledgement that some children may only have had a part time nursery experience and therefore a reduced transition period would be useful. This would allow children to become used to a full time day before the October holidays, which was also seen as advantageous.

7.9 The continued need for effective nursery/ primary liaison and the need for greater continuity across the provision were emphasised.

7.10 Consultation with Parents

7.11 The Head Teachers of 5 nursery schools and 7 nursery classes, selected at random, conducted a consultation exercise with a total of 405 parents. 80% of parents consulted are in agreement that the part time phase should be reduced.

8.0 PROPOSAL

8.1 It was clear from the consultation with Head Teachers, School Board Chairs and parents themselves, that the majority saw benefits in retaining some part time arrangements for children as they begin school. However most are in agreement that this could be reduced.

8.2 It is therefore proposed to reduce the part time transition phase from 6 weeks to 3 weeks, for the forthcoming school year, starting in August 2001. The implications of this change will be fully evaluated by seeking the views of children, parents and teaching staff. A further Report will be brought forward to the Education Committee in April 2002 to seek approval for a longer term arrangement.

8.3 Parents who have enrolled their children to start school in August 2001 will be advised of the change to arrangements by a letter from the Director of Education.

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 This Report has been the subject of consultation with the Director of Support Services.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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.

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Director of Education

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Date