

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 20th DECEMBER 2004

**REPORT ON: SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES
PROVISION OF EDUCATION OUTWITH MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 838-2004

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report examines the provision of education outwith mainstream schools for young persons with severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The report seeks Committee approval for the creation of an additional facility and the consequent re-configuration of the existing offsite centres.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i. note the contents of this report;
- ii. approve the establishment of a therapeutic Resourced Location at Mossgiel primary school for young primary-aged children;
- iii. approve the re-configuration of the existing offsite centres in Dundee, to bring about an increase in capacity at S3 and S4 stages;
- iv. instruct the Director of Education to keep the level of offsite provision under review, in the overall context of the policy for supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; and
- v. remit to the Assistant Chief Executive (Management) to take proposals to the Personnel Committee to establish the support posts outlined in paragraph 7.1 below.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Full costs are detailed in the appendix to this report. The cost of the staffing complement (£105,951) for the proposed facility at Mossgiel primary school, as well as ongoing costs of supplies and services (£1,000), can be met from the Education Department's revenue budget. A start-up budget for the facility of £1000 will be met from National Priorities Action Fund monies.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 These proposals will ensure that barriers to learning are removed from an increasing group of very vulnerable, troubled and troublesome young persons, and give them full access to education provision within the city.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report will improve equality of access to educational opportunities for all children, including those whose additional support needs stem from their behavioural difficulties, and also those whose education is prone to being disrupted by the continuing presence of these extremely challenging young persons.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Education Committee noted and approved the results of the evaluation of the arrangements for supporting young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and also the interim proposals to address areas of concern – report no. 239-2004, 15th March 2004.
- 6.2 One area of continuing concern has been arrangements for young people displaying the most severe behavioural difficulties, which can lead to frequent class disruption and recurrent periods of exclusion of the perpetrators. They may be referred to the department's multi-agency Options Group, which decides on the basis of all the information presented if the young person's education should be provided outwith the mainstream school. The Options Group will take this decision only in the most extreme cases, and where it is in both the child's and the school's best interests. The Options Group will also have to be satisfied that all steps have been taken in school to support the child. Nevertheless, during session 2003-04 the Education Department identified a need to make more places available in offsite provision, especially for pupils in S3 and S4.
- 6.3 The department has also become increasingly concerned that there is a small number of very young children, often identified as early as the pre-school years, who show by their actions that they are unable to understand or accept the boundaries of normal primary school life. They will usually be open cases to Educational Psychology and/or Social Work services, and may raise concerns of a Child Protection nature. Some of these children are currently placed in Castlepark offsite centre but their needs are more than behavioural. They require first and foremost care and nurturing, before they are able to overcome their emotional difficulties and make progress in mainstream classes.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 The department proposes to provide a therapeutic Resourced Location in Mossgiel primary school for the young children referred to in para. 6.3 above. 16 places will be created in total, in a facility staffed by 2 teachers, 1 nursery nurse and 1 Classroom Assistant (SEN). Crucially, regular access to Educational Psychology, to the department's Music Therapist, and to a Play Therapist provided by the Health authorities, will be built into the provision. Staff from the Home School Support Service will work with the Resourced Location, since the establishment of good relations with parents and carers will be vital to the success of any child's programme.
- 7.2 The concept of the Resourced Location within a mainstream school is well-established in Dundee's Education Department, and is highly regarded by external observers such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate. There are currently: 1 such location

in the pre-school sector; 99 in primary; and 3 in secondary. They cater for a full range of disabilities and disorders – hearing and visual impairment, developmental delay, autism, physical disability, etc.

- 7.3 Each Resourced Location is seen as part of its mainstream school, but an appropriate balance is struck between including children in mainstream activities where possible and making specific and separate provision to cater for their needs. The proposed location at Mossgiel will be no different. The children will have their own dedicated accommodation and staff, and each child will have an Individualised Educational Programme, through which progress will be regularly monitored.
- 7.4 As a direct consequence of the creation of the Mossgiel facility, the department can also propose a re-configuration of the existing offsite centres. Castlepark (currently for primary-aged children only) would accept children from P6 to S2, and both Balerno (currently for S1 and S2) and Connect 5 would take S3 and S4 pupils. In effect, therefore, the capacity for S3 and S4 will be doubled.
- 7.5 It will continue to be important to stress the intention to re-integrate children who have been placed in offsite centres back into mainstream school if and when it is deemed appropriate, and to do that via a structured and supported re-integration programme. The success of this will ultimately depend on mainstream schools retaining responsibility for these youngsters and a commitment to them, and working in close partnership with offsite centres.

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).

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

9th December 2004

JC/DD

SUMMARY OF FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Proposed Therapeutic Resourced Location at Mossgiel Primary School

Staffing (including costs)

2 FTE Assistant Teachers	£71,104
1 FTE Nursery Nurse	£19,674
1 FTE Classroom Assistant (SEN)	£15,173
Supplies & Services	£1000
TOTAL	£106,951