

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 15 SEPTEMBER 2003

REPORT ON: FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION REPORT: INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 613-2003

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report informs members of the Education Committee of the contents of the joint follow-up report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in partnership with the Accounts Commission into the Education Functions of Dundee City Council. Copies of the full report have been issued to all elected members.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee congratulate all members of Education Department staff on the achievement of such a positive report for the city, and that the Director of Education be instructed to ensure that the Committee's congratulations are communicated to all staff.

2.2 It is recommended that the Director of Education be instructed to continue the development of the Education Department in accordance with the Education Department Development Plan 2002-05 and continue to provide regular feedback on progress to this Committee.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 Dundee City Council was inspected by HMIE in early 2001, with the report published in May 2001. In keeping with the inspection schedule, HMIE inspectors and Accounts Commission personnel returned to Dundee in May this year to check on the progress Dundee had made in the past two years.

The report published in 2001 rated Dundee City Council as “very good” or “good” in all areas. Two areas were found to be “very good” (the highest rating). Dundee City was the first Council to achieve this rating. The other nine areas were found to be “good”. No areas were found to be “fair” or “unsatisfactory”. The report also identified areas for future development.

The follow-up report focuses upon progress made since the first inspection.

7.0 CURRENT SITUATION

7.1 HMIE state that “progress on the main points for action had been very good” and that “after two years, considerable progress had been made. It was evident that the Department had responded very positively to the initial inspection report and had taken forward the main points for action with determination.”

In the area of improving pupil attainment, HMIE found that very good progress had been made. They acknowledge that the authority’s approach has had “a considerable measure of success over the last two years”. The authority’s Improving Pupil Achievement (IPA) good practice manual is seen to have encouraged the sharing of good practice between schools and has had “clear benefits to pupils.

In the area of provision for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) HMIE find that the review of provision for pupils with SEBD had “improved significantly” the overall quality of the service. They also found that a good start had been made to improving performance monitoring at off-site centres.

In the area of communication and consultation very good progress has also been made. Key within this is the Department’s strategy document “Involved and Informed”. HMIE acknowledge the commitment to consultation shown throughout the progress of the PPP project for the city, and through the newly established Parent Consultative Group. They also acknowledge the positive impact of the advice and conciliation service offering advice and support to parents. HMIE find that “The Authority’s commitment to taking account of the views of stakeholders and willingness to adjust plans or procedures if appropriate, had made a positive impact on the quality of service provided”

Improvements in resource and financial management were “very good”. HMIE found that over the last two years improvements “had significantly enhanced processes and procedures.” The development of the department’s intranet site, improvements in property maintenance arrangements and increased financial information for Head Teachers were seen as positive developments. All support staff are now included in the staff development and review process. The Department will continue to monitor and improve arrangements in this area.

In the area of performance monitoring progress was also found to be “very good”. HMIE found that “comprehensive mechanisms for performance monitoring were now in place at authority, school, departmental and stage level.” The range and quality of information available to schools had been improved. This now allows schools to more effectively review their own progress and benchmark this against the performance of similar schools locally and nationwide. This in turn allowed schools to set realistic improvement targets for the future.

The report concludes that “As a result of the considerable progress made by the authority, HMIE will make no further visits in connection with this inspection.”

8.0 PROPOSAL

- 8.1** It is proposed that the Education Committee congratulate all members of Education Department staff on the achievement of such a positive report for the city, and that the Director of Education be instructed to ensure that the Committee's congratulations are communicated to all staff.
- 8.2** It is proposed that the Director of Education be instructed to continue the development of the Education Department in accordance with the Education Department Development Plan 2002-05 and continue to provide regular feedback on progress to this Committee.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1** This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive and Depute Chief Executive (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.

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

29 August 2003