

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 24 OCTOBER 2005

REPORT ON: PROGRESS ON THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN EDUCATION

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 641-2005

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides the Education Committee with an update on progress in the National Priorities in Education.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i) note the contents of this report;
- ii) instruct the Director of Education that good practice identified in this report be circulated to staff and key stakeholders through Dundee Education News;

and

- iii) require the Director of Education to provide further reports on progress on National Priorities as appropriate.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Nil

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The National Priorities include a number of key measures which support Local Agenda 21.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Equality and inclusion are key themes of the national priorities.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 Since 2002 all Education Authorities have been required to include the National Priorities in their improvement plans and to report on progress in taking these forward.

The Five National Priorities for Scottish Education identified by the Scottish Executive are:

- Achievement and Attainment
- Framework for Learning
- Inclusion and Equality
- Values and Citizenship
- Learning for Life

6.2 This report indicates some of the key initiatives currently underway to take forward the National Priorities in Dundee City schools. This report is by no means exhaustive and further details of a number of other initiatives will be included in future reports.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The key achievements in this report reflect the substantial work which has been undertaken by the Education Department during 2003/2004 to improve its performance and its impact on the achievement of young people in Dundee City. The report reflects the commitment of the Education Department through its schools to ensure that pupils are supported to develop a wide range of skills and attitudes. The good progress which has been achieved in the National Priorities is in large part due to the commitment and hard work of staff across the Department.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head Teachers of city schools have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

ANNE WILSON
Director of Education

6 October 2005

AW/LW/AMcC

Update on Progress on the National Priorities in Education

Achievement and Attainment

National Priority *To raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including examination results.*
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Learning Together in Dundee (LTiD)

This is a key component in the Department Development Plan 2005 - 2008. The focus is on making a difference by enhancing what actually happens in classrooms. Teachers across the City are enthusiastic and motivated by this approach. A wide range of staff development opportunities have been offered in relation to LTiD and many of these have been oversubscribed. Two very successful LTiD conferences have been held and over 500 teachers have attended on each occasion. The LTiD file with guidance and good practice has been distributed to all Dundee teachers and to schools across Scotland.

Self-empowered learning

A key focus for the Department is a focus on the learning, which takes place in classrooms across the City. Learning Together in Dundee is supporting practitioners to reflect on and improve their practice. Self Empowered Learning is an element of The Learning Together in Dundee Programme. 90 primary teachers and 150 secondary teachers have been trained and a further tranche of modules is running this session.

Schools of Ambition

All schools had the opportunity to forward submissions for funding through the Schools of Ambition initiative. Braeview Academy is one of the 20 schools across Scotland to make a successful bid. Through work in this programme, it is hoped that Braeview Academy will become a confident school where pupils, parents and staff work together in partnership to build a learning community, equipping young people with the necessary skills to become leaders of the future.

Focus on Achievement

The awards ceremony gives public recognition to achievements in education and support services. It provides a clear mechanism for the department to gather and share good practice throughout the Education Service. The feedback from schools and individuals, verbally, by email and in letters and cards has been outstanding. There has also been much favourable comment made with regard to the sponsorship of specific awards by individual businesses. This year a large number of teachers, support staff, parents and pupils attended the event.

Sure Start

Sure Start delivers a range of initiatives to support the all round development, learning and well being of children from birth to five. The programme is co-ordinated by the Education Department and involves a range of partners from local authority departments, health and voluntary sector providers. A key focus is to provide enhanced support for young children whose life circumstances may compromise their learning and development. The Sure Start Early Intervention programmes are designed to improve young children's social, language and communication skills and to facilitate young children with complex additional support

needs accessing mainstream nursery places. Sixty children 2-5 are currently supported by Sure Start Early Intervention programmes.

Framework for Learning

National Priority 2 *To support and develop in the skills of teachers, the self-discipline of pupils and to enhance school environments so that they are conducive to teaching and learning.*

Continuing Professional Development

From October 2005, the CPD Directory for Education Department staff has been available in an on-line format. Since its launch over 1000 teachers have made use of the service to book staff development.

The Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) is a national qualification, which recognises the responsibilities, challenges, and rewards of leading a school and prepares aspiring Head Teachers for that role. 13 candidates from Dundee Schools have successfully gained the award and currently there are 14 candidates undertaking the SQH.

Four secondary schools in the City (Craigie HS, Grove Acad, Harris Acad, Menzieshill HS) are jointly developing an inservice for their Principal Teachers. In collaboration with the University Dundee the schools will bring together over 100 staff to look at leadership and improving achievement.

ECDL for staff

Members of education department staff are continuing to develop their ICT skills by working through modules within the European Computer Driving Licence. To date, 232 have completed ECDL, 165 are progressing through the course and 33 have gained the Advanced Certificate.

Kick-it Kick-off

This project, in partnership with Dundee Football Club, seeks to tackle deprivation, raise achievement and increase self-esteem of vulnerable pupils. The project has attracted a number of awards at local and national level.

Managing Disruptive Behaviour

A working group has been exploring ways of ensuring better support for teachers in managing low-level disruption in class. The Education Department is about to issue the group's findings, containing a series of recommendations for the authority, for schools and for individual members of staff. An important part of the strategy will be a commitment by the authority to offer meaningful and ongoing professional development activities for all staff. Managing disruptive behaviour through the use of more effective class management techniques is an integral part of the Learning Together in Dundee initiative.

The Department has also fully evaluated its policy for supporting children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and is now ready to issue a revised and updated version. Considerable time for development, consultation and training has been given to a revision of the Stages of Assessment and Intervention, which is the authority's key mechanism for identifying the nature and severity of a young person's additional support needs, and the appropriate means of supporting them. The Department has also used modern technology to devise a new format for Individualised Educational Programmes and has introduced this to representatives of all schools.

Inclusion and Equality

National Priority *To promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and to Gaelic and lesser used languages.*
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Race Equality

The Race Equality Policy has been revised to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and in particular with the specific duty to eliminate racist incidents and promote good relationships between persons of differing backgrounds. Initial screening to assess the impact of all education Department policies has been completed and on-line diversity training has been offered to all members of education staff who are based in Tayside House. Schools have been involved in Show Racism the Red Card and Anti-sectarianism work.

Health Promoting Schools

All schools have made significant progress in achieving accreditation as Health Promoting Schools. Mossgiel Primary School was the first school to attain a Gold award and Menzieshill High School was the first school in Dundee to achieve a Bronze award in the national SHAW (Scotland's Health at Work) award scheme.

All schools have been supported to take steps to improve the healthy lifestyle of pupils and staff. Initiatives include healthy tuck shops, keep fit for staff and Health Weeks in many schools.

Toothbrushing

The supported toothbrushing programme is in place for nurseries and for all primary1 pupils is in operation in all schools. It is hoped that by encouraging pupils to brush their teeth at school, the good habit will continue at home and as a result we will see a reduction in the number of pupils with tooth decay. To support this all nursery and primary pupils are being provided with home toothbrushing kits. The impact of the project will be evaluated by the Community Dental Department.

Walk to School

A School Travel Plan co-ordinator has been appointed. She has supported schools to participate in both national and local Walk to School Weeks. She has participated in a range of Health events in local schools and has facilitated a number of cycling projects in schools.

Fruit Initiative

The provision of the fruit makes a valuable contribution to promoting and encouraging healthy eating habits. The free fruit in schools initiative has enabled schools to provide a portion of fruit, 3 times a week to every pupil in primaries 1 and 2. It is hoped, that by targeting the youngest pupils, the eating of fruit is more likely to become habit forming and bring the greatest gain in the long term.

Eating for Health

An Eating for Health Assistant has been appointed to each primary school. They are engaged in a range of strategies to encourage pupils to eat a healthy diet and extend their knowledge about aspects of nutrition. Such activities can include involvement in healthy tucks shops,

encouragement to select healthy options at lunchtime, classroom lessons, nutritional games and supported toothbrushing.

Nurture Groups

As part of the Council programme of support for schools in relation to managing disruptive behaviour, a pilot to develop Nurture Groups and Nurturing Schools within mainstream nursery, primary and secondary sectors has been commissioned for session 05/06. Nurture groups are small group learning settings, which operate within the context of a supportive and inclusive school. Nurture groups and Nurturing schools enable the less emotionally and socially developed child to be sustained in a mainstream educational environment.

Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

A multi-agency implementation group chaired by the Education Department has been preparing for the commencement of this Act in November 2005. Staff in all mainstream and special schools, NHS Tayside, Social Work Department, Parent-to-Parent Tayside, and all branches of the Education Department have undertaken joint training exercises to help staff become familiar with the Act and its implications for developing practice in supporting learners, in particular, the shift from Records of Need to increased use of Individualised Educational Programmes and the new Co-ordinated Support Plans. Within the implementation group's training, consultation and communication strategy, information leaflets have been distributed to all school staff and to partner agencies and more will follow. Further joint training for staff and consultation with parents and young people are planned to ensure the change to the new system of providing for pupils with additional support needs runs as smoothly as possible. This work, enabled by the additional implementation funding made available by the Executive to the authority, has been further supported by the secondment of a Development Officer.

Accessibility Strategy

The multi-agency Accessibility Strategy Planning and Review Group has conducted a review of the current accessibility strategy and is preparing to draft its successor strategy. The group will further take on responsibility for supporting the department in fulfilling its duties under the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005. An access audit has been conducted by Property services and a programme of improvements to further reduce barriers to physical access to school buildings is underway. The work being carried out to implement the Additional Support for Learning Act will help to reduce barriers to learning experienced by children and young people stemming from the learning environment, family circumstances, medical need or disability, and social or emotional factors. The addition of the new resourced location in Eastern Primary School has enhanced the Department's ability to support children with significant additional support needs. The emerging nurture groups at the specialist provision in Mossgiel Primary School and in other mainstream settings will increase capacity to enable troubled children to access the mainstream curriculum in an inclusive education environment.

Supporting Pupils with Autism

Five centres which provide support for pupils on the autistic spectrum in mainstream schools and at Kingspark School have been successfully re-accredited by the National Autistic Society. A well-attended event for those involved in planning and delivering education for autistic youngsters was held in September 2005. Eight presentations were made to illustrate the breadth of programmes and projects in Dundee which support autistic children and young people from pre-school to post-school employment. In session 04/05, two highly successful series of autism seminars were delivered to staff from mainstream primary schools throughout the city as part of the ongoing programme of support and training for school staff. This exercise will be repeated during session 05-06. A similar set of seminars

for secondary school staff to be delivered in session 05/06 has been designed by experienced school staff and therapists as an integral component of the programme of support for secondary school staff working in mainstream settings. The development of an outreach programme in the secondary sector to provide advice and information to other teachers working in mainstream schools will mean that such a service will be available to staff in every school in the city. Parents now have a representative on the Autism Strategy Group.

Early Years Physical Activity

The Early Years Team in partnership with the Leisure and Arts Department Youth Sports Development Team delivers a wide range of services to promote parent's and young children's physical activity. This means that young children are able to access physical activities in nurseries, sports and community centres, playgroups and toddler groups and at home through specialist programmes supported by the Pre-School Home Visiting Service.

Values and Citizenship

National Priority 4 *To work with parents to teach pupils respect for self and one another and their interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society and teach them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.*

Consultation and Communication

The Consultation and Communication Strategy "Involved and Informed" was launched in 2004. Ongoing communication has taken place with Parent Consultative groups to consult on policy development. Pupil participation is a key element in our approach to developing citizenship.

Parental Involvement

The Consultation and Communication strategy, launched in 2004, outlines the importance, which the Department puts on openness, responsibility, and honesty. A number of events have been organised to give parents an opportunity to gather information and voice opinions. These include Open Voice, consultation evenings, curricular evenings to support parents' in their involvement with their child's education and meetings organised for PTA and School Board Chairs. The Advice and Conciliation Officer works hard to ensure that concerns raised by parents are addressed.

Pupil Participation

All schools have established effective and inclusive Pupil Councils. These together with the City Wide Pupil Council continue to provide an excellent forum for listening to the voices of young people. The CWPC organised a Pupil Conference for P6 - S6. Part of the conference took the form of an Open Voice event, which allowed young people to offer solutions and ideas to improve the learning experience

Staff Consultation

Staff opinions and considerations are sought through consultation groups, school review meetings and staff surveys.

Eco-schools

All schools in DCC are registered and are working towards accreditation. Much of the work is cross-referenced with Health Promoting Schools

Learning for Life

National Priority To equip pupils with the foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society and to encourage creativity and ambition.
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Arts and Cultural Activities

The organisation and management of arts and Culture within education Services have provided opportunities to promote achievement and attainment through cultural activities within and outwith schools. Some notable developments have impacted very positively on pupils' experiences and have promoted very good partnerships.

Cultural Co-ordinator Programme

The Dundee City Council Education department approach is based on the intention of animating the whole curriculum with cultural activities. Working with professional, pupils, and parents across Dundee City, the Cultural Co-ordinators have devised a complex programme of creative learning opportunities that impact across the school, the curriculum, and the wider community. Since 2002 art-in-schools, initiatives have been enjoyed by every school in DCC with over 5000 pupils having access to innovative and creative activity. The Scottish Executive has announced that there will be a continuation of funding for two years beyond 2006.

Youth Music Initiative

Four choirs and twenty guitar groups have been successfully established throughout the city with high levels of enthusiasm and regular numbers attending. A consultation exercise with pupils and parents showed that the children had developed not only in their abilities but also in broader educational aspects such as confidence and self-esteem.

Wild West (Writing) - A Literary Link Project

This project, which encompasses music and literacy, was created by Paul Rissman. It is currently being piloted in four primary schools. The literacy units provide tasks and activities linked to reading and writing and are particularly suited to extending the children's experience of the Writers Craft. Following the pilot and evaluation, a roll out programme will be established.

Music Technology

An SEN Music Technology project is being developed in Kingspark, which focuses on sound engineering and creative music making using digital technology and ICT. The project will make use of ultrasonic sensors that will detect at a distance the direction, speed and distance of body movement and translate it into electronic music.

Dundee Schools Music Theatre

Dundee Schools Music Theatre continues to expand and develop. There are now three distinct groups, Junior, Senior, and Post Development. The confidence and self-esteem instilled in the young people whilst taking part in productions is apparent whenever they appear in public. In addition, they learn skills through working together as part of a team to achieve a common goal will undoubtedly serve them well in later life. A further project, "Step in Time" which involves pre-school children is under development. It is aimed at children in

the year prior to their entry into P1 and is designed to enhance their awareness of rhythm, movement and other related concepts.

Sports Development

The Active Schools programme was fully established in August 2004, with the appointment of an Active Schools Manager and eight full time School Co-ordinators (Primary) and fourteen ASC (Secondary). The co-ordinators work in partnership with the N2 Sports team. The programme has been received favourably and many schools have commented on improved behaviour and co-operation in the playgrounds. Activities that have involved the ASC's include girls football, rugby, yogabugs, basketball, aerothons, health weeks, athletics, Walkwise, cycle training, Active Advent and Scottish Country Dance.

Enterprise

The publication of Determined to Succeed provided the outline for Enterprise in Education. A wide range of activities is supported both nationally and at local authority level by dedicated staff. Activities include Continuing Professional Development for teachers, science based activities for primary pupils and Enterprise challenges for secondary schools.

Pupil success in ECDL

This is the first year in which the European Computer Driving Licence has been available for pupils in all Dundee secondary schools. It has been a great success across the city with pupils in our schools achieving certification in record time.