

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 20th NOVEMBER 2006**

**REPORT ON: INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION FUNCTIONS OF DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**REPORT NO: 666-2006**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report presents the findings of the recent report by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) on the inspection of the Council's education functions (INEA 2). Copies of the INEA 2 report have been given to group secretaries and placed in the members' lounge.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Education Committee is recommended to:

- i. note that Dundee City Council has been the first local authority to undergo a full INEA 2 inspection, with a revised and developing process;
- ii. note the many examples of strength and good practice outlined by HMIE;
- iii. note that HMIE has recognised the determination of elected members and officers to raise attainment;
- iv. note the Action Plan (Appendix), established to address the four main points for action in the report, and deriving from the Education Department Development Plan and the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan;
- v. note the steps that the Directors of Education and Leisure & Communities will continue to take to achieve improvement in all areas of the education service; and
- vi. instruct the Director of Education, working with all partners, to continue to address each objective of the Action Plan to raise attainment, as agreed by the Best Value Review group.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no Sustainability Policy implications.

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The report recognises that the City Council, in delivering its education functions, is effective in addressing the needs of all those who, for whatever reason, require additional support.

## 6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 HMIE completed the first round of inspections of the education functions of local authorities between 2000 and 2005. The report on Dundee was made in May 2001, with a follow-up report on progress on the main action points two years later.
- 6.2 The second round of inspections began in the Spring of 2006, and Dundee was the first authority to be involved in a full INEA 2 inspection, with a revised process. Since the inspection was of the Council's education functions, the work of both the Education and Leisure & Communities (that part dealing with Community Learning and Development) Departments was scrutinised. The inspection also incorporated a pilot inspection of the Education Department's psychological services, the broad results of which are contained within the report.

## 7.0 MAIN FINDINGS OF REPORT

- 7.1 This report identifies a number of key strengths in the Council's discharge of its education functions:
- the provision of services to pre-school children and their families
  - the effectiveness of partnership working in the early years sector
  - the preparations, working with all partners, for the introduction and implementation of *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*
  - the positive impact of a number of neighbourhood projects and initiatives on learners and their families, for instance in the field of health promotion, in the context of the integrated community schools programme
  - the positive contribution made to communities, and to the lives of individuals and families, by the Leisure & Communities Department
  - the significant achievements of a very large number of children and young people, including some with additional support needs, in the arts and sport, most notably through the *Dundee Schools Music Theatre* and local youth sports work
  - the commitment to listen and respond to the views of children and young people, both in schools and in the wider community
- 7.2 A new element of the revised process has been the identification by HMIE of features of good practice, judged to be innovative and having impact on learners and teachers. HMIE will highlight these as examples of national note, and therefore worthy to be shared with all other education authorities in Scotland. This HMIE report draws attention to the following:
- i. the extensive work with other services and organisations to improve the experiences of young children and families, through initiatives such as the *Parents Services Initiative, Bookstart, Baby and Toddler Rhyme Time, Count Me In* and the *Dundee Healthy Living Initiative*
  - ii. the creation and implementation of an Arts Strategy, which is engaging a large number of pupils from pre-school to sixth year and is providing opportunities for increased self-esteem and success in performance-related activities
  - iii. the enhanced learning opportunities through effective use of information and communications technology, such as the good use of interactive whiteboards, the availability of the *European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)* to pupils in

- all secondary schools, and the continuing planned investment in ICT through the Refresh programme
- iv. the implementation of *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*, marked by good use of phasing arrangements, the extensive involvement of partners in other services, the provision of very good information to stakeholders, the agreed framework for the creation and maintenance of Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs), and the preparation for the introduction of Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs)
  - v. the use of imaginative and effective projects to promote personal and social development, such as the *Xplore* partnership and the *Peer Education* project run by the Leisure & Communities Department to engage with young people at risk of exclusion, and the *Save By The Bell* financial saving scheme and the *Dundee City of Discovery Picture Book Award*
  - vi. the use of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), promoted by Dundee Education Psychology Service to offer support to individual families and schools, and offered as an important staff development resource by several Council departments and other agencies; and culminating, in association with the University of Dundee, in the establishment of a joint VIG centre

7.3 In addition, there are numerous positive references throughout the report to areas of work, ways of working, and outcomes that are to be commended, of which a selection would include:

- the work with children and young people who suffer from autistic spectrum disorder
- the quality of pastoral care, and the sense of equality and fairness, in schools
- the wide range of health promoting and physical activities
- the increase in the proportion of pupils leaving school to enter further and higher education
- the successful work with pupils with additional support needs, evidenced in well-organised support bases and a well-devised staged intervention programme
- the positive commitment to dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- the high level of parental satisfaction with provision in their children's schools, and with the support of the educational psychology service
- the strengthening of the Education Department's quality improvement strategy through the extended review process
- the examples of very good partnership working found in a range of areas: early years; integrated community schooling; the arts and sport; the Leisure & Communities Department
- the clear focus on developing leadership at all levels, to which staff in schools have responded positively
- the contribution of the educational psychology service to the development of nurture groups in the city
- the acknowledgement and celebration of achievements of schools and individual staff

7.4 With regard to those areas identified by HMIE as a focus for improvement, the report confirms the Council's accepted view that attainment levels should be higher, and that appropriate steps are being taken (paragraphs 9.1-9.4 below).

7.5 While commending the degree of partnership working in all sectors in general, and the progress HMIE acknowledges has taken place in this area since the first local authority inspection, nevertheless the report encourages all staff in the Education

Department to be more aware of the opportunities and benefits to be derived from more intensive joint activity with all partners.

- 7.6 In the same way, HMIE is clear about the strong commitment being shown by Education managers to tackling the difficult question of unacceptable behaviour, and urges staff to continue to seek positive ways to deal with very challenging young people.

## **8.0 MAIN POINTS FOR ACTION**

- 8.1 HMIE has identified four main points for action following their inspection, which the Education and Leisure & Communities Departments will address through the ongoing work described in the Action Plan (Appendix), which cross-refers with both the Education Department Development Plan and the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan.

- i. building on the start made, provide more strategic drive in focusing approaches towards improving pupils' learning experiences, increasing motivation and reducing exclusions
- ii. strengthen the challenge to schools to improve performance, to make more effective use of statistical data and to develop creative approaches to meeting pupils' needs
- iii. extend partnership working at all levels
- iv. monitor and evaluate the actual impact of strategies designed to improve attainment and demonstrate their effectiveness through improved outcomes

## **9.0 THE WAY FORWARD**

- 9.1 HMIE have acknowledged the determination shown by elected members, senior officers and staff to raise attainment, most obviously indicated by the establishment of a Best Value Review with attainment as the focus. The Review group has now reported, as a result of which a detailed Action Plan to raise attainment was agreed in June 2006, and members have now received the first update.

- 9.2 *Learning Together in Dundee* is the major programme which will deliver improved attainment levels, through more effective interaction in the classroom between learners and teacher, which will in turn result in decreasing levels of disruption. The HMIE report acknowledges the clear strategic direction the programme provides, and the general welcome from staff it has received. HMIE also confirm that, while it is too early to identify tangible success in terms of improved attainment, they see clear signs that this flagship policy is beginning to impact on learners' experiences and improve the quality of their learning.

- 9.3 *Learning Together in Dundee* is also the overarching theme of the Education Department's Development Plan: 2005-08, expressed through three important themes: supporting and developing learning and teaching; supporting children and young people; and supporting and developing strategic, professional and resource management. The development plan seeks to address a new vision, *Achievement, Ethos, Partnership*, recognised by HMIE to be well promoted through established and revised aims.

- 9.4 Qualifications data for 2006 was not available at the time of the inspection, but the HMIE report is able to confirm that the pre-appeal data demonstrate improvements, generally of between 1% and 2% over the 2005 figures. HMIE believes that this

gives room for optimism that the strategies outlined above are beginning to have some impact.

- 9.5 In the area of partnership working, the report notes that both the Education and Leisure & Communities Departments were very influential in the formulation of the integrated children's services plan, *Plan for Dundee's Children*. It also anticipates that the successful re-establishment of Joint Action Teams (formerly School Referral Teams) will translate into successful outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in the city.
- 9.6 In these and other areas identified by HMIE for improvement, it is made clear that it is the responsibility of all staff to plan and deliver appropriate strategies. It is noted that the recent start to a re-structuring exercise in the Education Department, involving the appointment of key officers with sectoral responsibilities, has the potential to improve provision.

## **10.0 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 This report has been subject to consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Director of Leisure & Communities.

## **11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None

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Director of Education

13th November 2006

JC/DD

## The Education Functions of Dundee City Council

### Action Plan

This Action Plan derives from the current Education Department Development Plan (2005-08); and from the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan (2006).

Main Point for Action	Proposed Actions
<p><b>Building on the start made, provide more strategic drive in focusing approaches towards improving pupils' learning experiences, increasing motivation and reducing exclusions.</b></p>	<p>As indicated in the Department Development Plan and the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revise the departmental Quality Improvement Strategy, including a new Improving Pupil Achievement and Attainment (IPAA) strategy and structure;</li> <li>• support schools in implementing planned '<i>Learning Together in Dundee</i>' (LTiD) strategies to create positive environments for learning and teaching, through a team of school-based staff led by a LTiD Co-ordinator;</li> <li>• establish a working group, with representatives from a range of pre-school and early primary school settings, to support the development and delivery of new guidance on implementing LTiD within early years settings, and to support effective transition from nursery to primary;</li> <li>• work with all staff, through the LTiD initiative, to develop strategies to improve pupil-teacher interaction and classroom management, and thereby reduce the level of low-level disruption in classrooms;</li> <li>• implement the measures proposed in the guidelines document '<i>Managing Disruptive Behaviour</i>', including an ongoing evaluation of the recently reviewed '<i>Guidelines on Exclusion</i>';</li> <li>• review pupils' learning experiences in the context of '<i>A Curriculum For Excellence</i>' and '<i>Determined To Succeed</i>';</li> <li>• continue to develop and implement an ICT strategy, making the most innovative and effective use of ICT in the classroom to enhance the learning experience;</li> <li>• continue to develop more appropriate curriculum opportunities for young people through the expansion of pre-vocational training and the use of curriculum flexibility, and thereby impact on young people at risk of ending up not in education, employment or training (NEET);</li> <li>• continue to take steps to develop and implement guidance to schools on measures which can be taken to reduce the current curriculum in order to free time to focus on improving learning and teaching; and</li> <li>• continue to identify and celebrate diverse achievements.</li> </ul>

Main Point for Action	Proposed Actions
<p><b>Strengthen the challenge to schools to improve performance, to make more effective use of statistical data and to develop creative approaches to meeting pupils' needs.</b></p>	<p>As indicated in the Department Development Plan and the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to develop effective leadership, through continuing programmes targeted at senior and middle management in schools, and, through the LTiD programme, at all teachers in all schools;</li> <li>• continue to develop and implement an MIS strategy, centred around the introduction of a new management information system, and including the development of baseline assessment leading to more effective monitoring and tracking procedures;</li> <li>• ensure early assessment of pupil needs and appropriate intervention strategies to support them;</li> <li>• further develop benchmarking strategies to ensure that an ongoing process of benchmarking is in place with comparator councils; and establish links between Dundee schools and similar, but better performing, schools in other Education Authorities to identify good practice; and</li> <li>• review and update our School Review procedures in all sectors, comprising dedicated attainment reviews, annual reviews and extended reviews.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitor and evaluate the actual impact of strategies designed to improve attainment and demonstrate their effectiveness through improved outcomes</b></p>	<p>As indicated in the Department Development Plan and the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to develop the IPAA strategy, to include a newly established audit group, monitoring all aspects of departmental performance, with due emphasis on attainment; and</li> <li>• continue to work with the University of Dundee, and other Further and Higher Education institutions, to develop the research base to support and evaluate improvement strategies</li> </ul>

Main Point for Action	Proposed Actions
<p><b>Extend partnership working at all levels</b></p>	<p>As indicated in the Department Development Plan and the Best Value Review on Attainment Action Plan, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consolidate the Integrated Community Schools programme, in partnership with all relevant departments and agencies, through the ongoing development of Cluster Support Teams in all educational clusters;</li> <li>• continue to develop the partnership with other Council departments and external agencies, through Joint Action Teams in all secondary schools and early years/primary clusters, to promote multi-agency support for vulnerable children and young people;</li> <li>• pilot a co-located model of integrated children's services in three clusters;</li> <li>• in co-operation with parents, continue to support and develop their role in order to increase their capacity to contribute to their child's education, and achieve this through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the provision of information sessions</li> <li>➤ research of national strategies and initiatives on parental involvement</li> <li>➤ the development of a toolkit of good practice for parents in co-operation with parents</li> <li>➤ the production of a series of parent support leaflets which highlight the real difference parents can, and do, make to their children's learning</li> <li>➤ the delivery of a continuous personal development package for school staff in parental involvement and support;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ensure all our staff are aware of, and adhere to, departmental and multi-agency child protection guidelines;</li> <li>• listen to the voices of all stakeholders - young people, parents/carers and staff - and involve them in decision-making;</li> <li>• continue to work with partners to develop active sports programmes, arts and cultural activities, and the health promoting school, to enhance the health and well-being of young people; and</li> <li>• continue to identify opportunities to bring practitioners with a national and international reputation to Dundee to inform the practice in its schools.</li> </ul>