

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

22 May 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Standards and Quality Report 2005-2008
Incorporating National Priorities Progress Report – 2006/07

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee, Parent Councils and other stakeholders with an overview of the progress which Highland schools are making in improving the Standards and Quality of Education Provision. It relates primarily to school session 2006/07 within the context of the three year Service Plan 2005/08 now nearing completion.

It is based on the structure of the National Priorities for Education framework and identifies points for future action. The report also refers to the work of Community Learning and Leisure teams.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Education Act 2000, places on the Education Authority a statutory responsibility to provide education which realises the potential of all pupils and which requires Authorities to challenge and support educational establishments to improve the quality of education provision.

Headteachers and other establishment managers have a delegated responsibility to discharge this statutory responsibility for pupils. They are challenged and supported in this process by the Quality Improvement Team who have a key responsibility in collaboration with all managers to discharge the statutory duty in order to continuously improve the quality of service provision.

1.2 The five National Priorities for Education provide a framework for reporting against the improvement themes in the current ECS Service Plan. These improvement themes are:-

- Achievement for All
- Participation and Inclusion
- Health and Wellbeing
- Infrastructure and Resources
- Performance Management

1.3 The establishment of the National Priorities in Education in 2000 and the ongoing agenda of Ambitious Excellent Schools has widened the focus from consideration of standards of literacy and numeracy and performance in external examinations.

There is now a wider range of pupil achievement which schools are required to consider. The authority has established ***Achievement and Transition*** as two key delivery themes in implementing and developing a Curriculum for Excellence.

- 1.4 The development priorities within the Service Plan 2005/08 set out the current agenda for schools and establishments to build continuous improvement. These developments are supported through a number of key policies which include Flexibility in the Curriculum, Additional Support Needs, Learning and Teaching Policy established within the overall framework of Ambitious Excellent Schools and a Curriculum for Excellence. In addition a number of key developments including Assessment is for Learning, Determined to Succeed, the Leadership Development Programme and More Choices, More Chances support the improvement agenda.

2 The Report

- 2.1 The Authority is provided annually with an update on improvement against the framework of the National Priorities. The attached report details both qualitative and quantitative information on the work of the service during school session 2006/07 and relates this to the three year Service Plan for 2005/08 now reaching completion.
- 2.2 Ensuring improvement is at the heart of the Council's provision in schools and in the work of the Education, Culture and Sport Service. This report details the wide range of activities ongoing in Highland and the overall positive performance across the range of National Priorities in our schools. Areas for further development are also identified.

In our effort to build for continuous improvement, the following strengths are noted. Developments for action for schools and the authority over the next 12 months are also identified and have been communicated to schools for the period 2008 to 2011 and are directly linked to the Programme for Administration.

Issues of Success

- ◆ The continuing commitment of all ECS service staff and the management and leadership of staff across the service to the delivery of education provision in Highland
- ◆ Continuing improvements in 5 to 14 levels of attainment in mathematics in primary schools which equals performance with our comparator authorities
- ◆ Further improvement in attainment in secondary schools which now compares very favourably with comparator authorities and national standards
- ◆ The status of Health Promoting Schools achieved by all schools in Highland in 2006 which has created a foundation on which all schools are now building to achieve ECOSCHOOL status by 2011
- ◆ The increasing number of schools registering and achieving ECO School status
- ◆ Notable successes by a number of individual schools in a wide range of activities including national and international success in enterprise, sporting

and cultural activities across both the primary and secondary sectors

- ◆ Individual awards to a number of Education, Culture and Sport Staff.

Issues for Improvement

- ◆ Further improvement of attainment in reading and writing in all schools through the literacy project supported by effective tracking and monitoring of individual pupil performance
- ◆ Continue to develop flexibility and relevance in the curriculum including new vocational courses in order to maximise attainment of all pupils and in particular, further improve the attainment of looked after and accommodated children.
- ◆ Review and improve attendance levels in some secondary schools within the context of More Choices, More Chances developments
- ◆ Further develop quality assurance procedures in order to support and challenge the performance of a number of schools through improved self-evaluation by schools
- ◆ Further develop English as an Additional Language services in schools and in the community
- ◆ Further develop Gaelic education through the establishment of the first purpose built Gaelic Primary School in Scotland and through the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan in collaboration with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Scottish Government
- ◆ Continue the implementation and development of Ambitious Excellent Schools through:
 - De-cluttering of the 5 to 14 Curriculum
 - The extension of **Skills for Work** courses and other vocational courses in secondary schools and colleges
 - Increasing the number of schools registering and achieving Eco-school status
 - Further development leading to full implementation of a **Curriculum for Excellence** in due course

2.3 Schools and the authority will continue to focus on these areas for development through self evaluation, the development planning process and quality assurance procedures.

2.4 The standards achieved in Highland schools are the result of the collaborative work by pupils, staff and support of parents. In addition, the work of members of the Quality Improvement Team, Early Years Team, Support for Learning Team and Psychological Services ensures the Authority discharges its responsibility in challenging and supporting schools to build for improvement. In addition staff

working in the community in Community Learning, Culture and Sport enable our pupils and young people to access services and achieve in activities in the informal curriculum.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that members:-

- a) note and comment on the Standards and Quality Report
- b) agree the action proposed to seek further improvement in the key identified areas of the report
- c) agree copies of the Standards and Quality Report are distributed to Parent Councils, schools and libraries and placed on the council's website for information.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

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Date: 14 May 2008

Background Papers: Standards and Quality Report 2002/05 - Education Committee, January 2006