

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

21 NOVEMBER 2000

**BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW:
PRE-FIVES EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT**

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Education Committee of progress being made in relation to the Pre-fives Education Best Value Service Improvement Plan.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (a) notes the terms of this report
- (b) notes the significant progress made to date in implementing the Best Value Service Improvement Plan, as detailed in the Appendix to this report

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee on 24 August 1999 when the Committee approved the contents of the Pre-Fives Best Value Service Review and accompanying Service Improvement Plan (Article 2(D) refers). While the Best Value report indicated a clear consensus among staff and users about the delivery in Angus of an efficient and effective pre-school education service, possible improvements were highlighted in relation to the following areas:

- provision of places
- education and care
- integration of nursery classes within primary schools
- transition between nursery and primary 1
- communication with/involvement of parents
- staff development
- support for rural provision
- quality assurance in respect of Council provision
- quality assurance in respect of provision managed by partner providers
- administration of partner provision

3 Improvement Plan: Overview of Progress to date

3.1 The following observations provide a summary of the very considerable progress which has been made to date in implementing the improvement plan approved on 24 August 1999:

- the June 2000 target for ante-pre-school children was exceeded
- universal provision for four year olds is in place
- it is anticipated that the 2002 target for universal provision for ante-pre-school children will be achieved
- efforts are continuing to establish pre-school Gaelic provision
- there has been a significant increase in the number of partnerships established with other providers; the total number of partnerships achieved by the Council in respect of pre-school provision is 54 compared with 10 in session 1998-99

- following extensive consultation with teaching staff and their representatives, it is anticipated that an Angus-wide transition document will be implemented in all Angus primary schools to support the transition of pupils from pre-school to primary 1
- the rural peripatetic nursery service has been extended to support 14 rural nursery classes; this service is delivered by four nursery teachers
- a rural support base has been established in Friockheim Resource Centre; this base is open to nursery staff, teaching and non-teaching, for one twilight session per week and is being well used
- excellent progress has been made in supporting Head Teachers and nursery staff in the use of pre-school performance indicators; this work is being supported by the Council's pre-school and early intervention teams
- effective procedures to monitor the quality of pre-school partner provision have been set in place; these procedures are designed to ensure that the pre-school service delivered by partner providers complies with the terms of rigorous service level agreements which have now been agreed with all partner providers
- a major quality assurance development relates to an arrangement to determine financial support to partners on the basis of (a) the nature and level of support required (b) the quality of service being delivered to pre-school children in partner facilities

4 STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS, ETC. ACT 2000: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PROVISION

- 4.1 Consideration is currently being given to the implications of sections 32-39 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools, etc Act 2000 which relate to pre-school children.
- 4.2 The main implication for the pre-school service arising from these sections relates to the **power** (but not the duty) of an Education Authority to make transport arrangements in relation to "those children as the Authority thinks fit". The commencement order in relation to this power takes effect in 2002 and possible options for the use of this power in Angus will be the subject of a report to the Education Committee at a later date.

5 CONCLUSION

The development of the pre-school service in Angus would appear to be well served by the focus provided within the Best Value Service Improvement Plan. The summary given above and in the detailed report attached as the Appendix indicate significant progress in relation to the quality and quantity of pre-school provision in Angus.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

In accordance with the standing orders of the Council, this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance.

JIM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

NOTE: 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.

ANGUS COUNCIL PRE-FIVES EDUCATION
SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ASPECT	ACTION	TIMESCALE	COMMENT (August 1999)	UPDATE
Provision of Places	Take steps to meet national targets of universal provision for 3 year olds and 4 year olds	August 2002	June 2000 target of 60% for 3 year olds likely to be exceeded	1999-2000: Target surpassed. 69% 3 year olds secured a place in pre-five provision. 341 in LA centres and 512 in the private and voluntary sector. Universal provision for 4 year olds. 2000-2001: Targeting 80% of the 3 year old population.
	Extend partnership provision to meet expansion of service	Ongoing	40 partnerships in all established in August 1999	1999-2000: 35 partnership arrangements established in Angus, 1 in Aberdeenshire, 14 in Dundee and 4 in Perth & Kinross
	Establish pre-school Gaelic provision	August 2000	Current session's publicity campaign will be revised in light of future decisions about Gaelic unit catchment area	2000-2001: 37 partnership arrangements established in Angus. Due to changes in SEED guidance cross boundary partnership arrangements are no longer necessary. 1999-2000: Too few children registered to make provision viable.
Education and Care	Investigate the possibility of "extended year" / "extended day" education and care arrangements	February 2000	Investigation to be undertaken and recommendations made by Angus Childcare Partnership	2000-2001: Meeting with the playleader and parents using Gaelic playgroup to determine best way forward. 1999-2000: Surveyed LA staff to determine level of interest in servicing provision - poor response. Extended care provision serviced through partnership arrangements with the private sector.
ASPECT	ACTION	TIMESCALE	COMMENT (August 1999)	UPDATE

<p>Integration of Nursery Classes within Primary Schools</p>	<p>Develop Best Practice guidelines to ensure that nursery provision and management is an integral feature of primary school management</p>	<p>March 2000</p>	<p>2000-2001: Trying to ensure a mixed economy of provision in all burghs (Monifieth and Carnoustie presently have no full day private provision). Look at innovative ways of providing extended care in rural areas eg. through childminding arrangements.</p> <p>1999-2000: Members of staff from the Pre-five sector, EI team and EDS met to draw up guidance. Still in draft form.</p> <p>2000-2001: Find appropriate ways of disseminating information.</p>
<p>Transition between Nursery and Primary 1</p>	<p>Develop Angus Council support materials for assessment, recording and reporting</p>	<p>April 1999</p>	<p>1999-2000: Electronic version of profile developed and being accessed by several centres.</p>
<p>Communication With / Involvement of Parents</p>	<p>Adopt Scottish Executive Pre-School → Primary 1 Transition Record</p>	<p>June 2000</p>	<p>1999-2000: Meetings held with JCC and EDAG to discuss the adoption of the record.</p> <p>2000-2001: Materials will have to be reviewed if the Angus format is adopted. Programme of staff development essential.</p>
<p>ASPECT</p>	<p>ACTION</p>	<p>TIMESCALE</p>	<p>1999-2000: LSG set up to produce "Good Practice Guidance for Working with Parents" - draft stage. Calendar produced offering information to parents. Some nursery classes invited staff from EI team to support them in providing workshops for parents.</p> <p>UPDATE</p> <p>2000-2001: Early Years Seminars organised to promote partnership with parents. (LA,</p>

<p>Private and Voluntary sector staff). Support materials for use in cluster groups will be developed during In-Service days 2 and 3.</p> <p>1999-2000: Pre-school Fair held Feb 1999. Programme offered key note addresses, workshops, displays, stalls, activities for children, coffees and a crèche. Attendance disappointing but positive feedback received from contributors and participants.</p> <p>1999-2000: Programme of In-Service delivered through the In-Service Calendar. Staff invited to opt in to courses of their choice.</p> <p>2000-2001: All nursery staff had the opportunity to identify topics for the staff development calendar. Mix of attendance expected and attendance optional.</p> <p>1999-2000: Newsletter issued each term. Used as the vehicle for informing staff about courses and the best practice initiative.</p> <p>2000-2001: Ongoing</p> <p>1999-2000: Comprehensive staff development programme based on the need to support centres through HM Inspectors.</p> <p>2000-2001: Comprehensive staff development programme based on action points identified in "Sunshine Reports".</p> <p>UPDATE</p>	<p>Early Intervention and Pre-fives teams to lead this</p>	<p>April 2000</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>TIMESCALE</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Organise a 2 day "Pre-school" Fair to promote and explain Angus Pre-fives Services</p> <p>Deliver more in-service programmes in smaller "needs-based" groups</p> <p>Ensure more effective communication to all staff about access to award-bearing courses</p> <p>Develop and deliver responsive staff development programmes to private and voluntary partner providers</p> <p>ACTION</p> <p>Ensure that all staff are informed about national pre-school quality initiatives, eg.</p>	<p>ASPECT</p> <p>Staff Development [Council and Partner Provision]</p>
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<p>Supporting Rural Provision</p>	<p>National Early Years Best Practice Network</p> <p>Develop a peripatetic nursery teacher support service</p> <p>Establish and develop a support base for rural staff</p>	<p>December 1999</p> <p>December 1999</p>	<p>Pre-fives central staff to initiate and sustain</p>	<p>1999-2000: Peripatetic nursery support teacher service working successfully. Two full time staff appointed.</p> <p>2000-2001: Extending service by 0.6. Vacancy advertised.</p> <p>1999-2000: Support base established in Carmyllie Primary School. Appreciated by staff. Used well.</p> <p>2000-2001: Currently located in Friockheim Resource Base. Develop range of resources and provide opportunities for networking and support for rural staff.</p> <p>Angus hoping to host rural seminar in March 2001. Opportunities for rural authorities to meet, discuss common issues / concerns and to share good practice.</p>
<p>Quality Assurance - Council Provision</p> <p>ASPECT</p>	<p>Support Head Teachers and Nursery staff in (i) the use of performance indicators to monitor provision</p> <p>and (ii) the production of Standards and Quality Reports</p>	<p>June 2000</p> <p>TIMESCALE</p>	<p>Pre-school and Early Intervention staff to undertake this task</p> <p>COMMENT (August 1999)</p>	<p>1999-2000: Support offered through the Staff Development Calendar - no uptake. New guidance - "The Child at the Centre" - issued May.-</p> <p>UPDATE</p> <p>2000-2001: Programme of support in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support given by pre-five staff to schools being inspected • Head Teachers' Meeting - awareness raising - member of SEED / HMI? • In-Service days 2 and 3 - half day

<p>programme for all nursery staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November - In-Service for all private and voluntary sector staff. • Follow-up sessions in the new year through cluster support groups / twilight sessions. • Link advisers to ensure that indicators are being used to inform development planning procedures and to produce Standards - and Quality Reports. 				<p>1999-2000: Groups working to SLA. Termly visits undertaken by support staff - verbal /written feedback given.</p> <p>SPPA fieldworkers involved in developing review procedures in all voluntary groups.</p> <p>2000-2001: SLA reviewed. More rigorous procedures in place for quality assurance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written report issued after each visit by support staff. • All establishments given individual help and support to produce development plans. • Each group will be asked to write an annual report based on identified priorities - detailing progress to date.
<p>Quality Assurance - Partner Providers</p>	<p>Develop a more formal and more rigorous framework for Service Level Arrangements</p> <p>Monitor and support the implementation of Service Level Agreements</p>	<p>August 1999</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Completed</p>	
<p>ASPECT</p>	<p>Involve representatives of partner providers in a Pre-fives Steering Group</p>	<p>TIMESCALE</p> <p>December 1999</p>	<p>COMMENT (August 1999)</p> <p>This involvement will help to address relevant staff assurance and administration issues</p>	<p>UPDATE</p> <p>1999-2000: Pre-Five Group established. Membership - EDO (Pre-Fives), Pre-five Support Teacher, 2 SPPA fieldworkers, R and I Officer and Childcare Partnership Development Officer. Main functions: to ensure (1) effective communication between agencies (2) groups receive complementary and supportive services.</p>

Administration of Partner Provision	Revise financial procedures to ensure prompt payment of invoices raised	August 1999	Completed	1999-2000: Financial procedures revised. Training offered to all committees.
(Administration Continued)	In the light of the findings of this report, review the arrangements made to fund partner provision	December 1999		1999-2000: Funding arrangements reviewed. No changes made. 2000-2001: £5 increase in funding to simplify invoicing procedures. Exploring the possibility of operating a graded system of funding based on the support required by partners and on the quality of the service being delivered