

ANGUS COUNCIL

ITEM No.

8

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

25 APRIL 2000

EXTENSION OF PRE-FIVES EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report details proposals for the further extension of pre-fives educational provision in session 2000/2001.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee notes and approves the contents of this report.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Proposals for the planned expansion of pre-school educational facilities during sessions 1999 - 2000 were considered by the Education Committee on 8 June 1999 (agenda item 18 refers). All of the developments proposed in that report (575/99) and the earlier associated report (425/99) considered by the Education Committee on 20 April 1999 (agenda item 9 refers) have been implemented.
- 2.2 In the light of the government's commitment to the provision of universal high quality, part-time, pre-school educational facilities there is a continuing requirement to develop further the existing network of pre-school educational centres across Angus. The targets set for the Council are to provide sufficient places for all children whose parents wish them to have places in their pre-school year by December 1999 and similarly for all children in their ante-pre-school year by 2002.
- 2.3 There has been a considerable expansion of pre-school educational provision in all areas of Angus during the course of the last three school sessions. The number of Council-run nursery locations has grown from 18 in August 1996 to 44 at present providing 1650 potential places. In addition to this Council-run provision, partnership arrangements (49 to date), have been established with private and voluntary providers of pre-school education to secure places for 558 children in the current school session.
- 2.4 In 1999/2000 the Council has received a direct grant of £1175 from the Scottish Executive in respect of each fully-loaded place (5x 2½ hour sessions of education). This figure rises to £1200 from 1 April 2000 in respect of children deemed eligible for funding but it should be noted that, at present, a number of slightly older children in receipt of pre-school educational provision do not qualify for financial support. The cost of educating these "deferred entry" pupils falls to be borne by the Council. Children who are aged 4½ in August 2000 are eligible to start school or nursery in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 although they are not actually **required** to attend school until the entry date following their 5th birthday. However, the view taken by the Scottish Executive is that as these children are old enough to start school they are ineligible for funding - irrespective of the fact that their parents might

not have exercised their entitlement to secure pre-school education as a matter of personal choice. There are currently 171 children in this "deferred entry" category which means that education is being provided for these children by the Council without any financial support from the Scottish Executive. This unsatisfactory situation which has been the subject of correspondence with the Scottish Executive remains problematic. The most recent letter from The Early Education and Childcare Division of SEED confirms that the cost of provision for this pupil cohort remains a burden for individual Councils.

2.5 Nursery education is currently provided in the following primary schools: Airlie, Andover, Arbirlot, Birkhill, Borrowfield, Carlogie, Carmyllie, Chapelpark, Cortachy, (Craigie - only until June 2000), Edzell, Ferryden, Friockheim, Glenisla, Grange, Hayshead, Inverarity, Inverbrothock, Inverkeilor, Kinloch, Kirkriggs, Ladyloan, Langlands, Letham, Lintrathen, Lochside, Mattocks, Monikie, Muirfield, Murroes, Newbigging, Newtyle, Northmuir, Seaview, Southesk, Southmuir, Stracathro, St Thomas, Tannadice, Tealing, Timmergreens, Warddykes and Wellbrae. Pre-school education is also provided in Townhead Nursery School which, along with Muirfield Primary, provides an enhanced and specialised setting for pre-school pupils with special educational needs.

2.6 Partnership arrangements for the provision of pre-school education have been agreed with the following 35 private and voluntary providers in Angus: Abacus Day Nursery, Abbey Playgroup, Angus College Nursery, Bambinos Nursery, Blairs Cottage Nursery, Bonnie Bonnets Nursery, Borrowfield Playgroup, Brechin Pre-School Group, Charleston Playgroup, Condor Playgroup, Edzell Pre-School Playgroup, Ferryden Playgroup, Friockheim and Kinnell Playgroup, Grange Playgroup, Hansel and Gretal Playgroup, Hillside Playgroup, Inverbrothock Playgroup, Letham Playgroup, Mothergoose Playgroup, Muirfield Playgroup, Muirhead and District Playgroup, New Friends Nursery, Newtyle and Eassie Playgroup, Panmure Playgroup, Peter Pan Playgroup, Rainbows Nursery, Rompers Nursery, St Andrews Playgroup, St Rules Playgroup, Sunshine Playgroup, Tarfside Pre-School Group, Ticktocks Nursery, Tumble Tots Playgroup, West Kirk Cherubs Playgroup and Wonderland Nursery.

In addition to these local partner providers agreements have also been made with 14 providers outwith Angus, namely:

Lathallan Nursery Class - Aberdeenshire.

Balgillo Nursery, Happy Days Nursery, Langlea Nursery, Little Butterflies Nursery, Nursery Rhymes Nursery, Oranges and Lemons Nursery, Teddy Bears Club, University of Dundee Nursery and Wonderland Nursery - Dundee.

Almondbank and Pitcairngreen Playgroup, Butterstone Nursery, Netherton Montessori Nursery and Perth College Nursery - Perth and Kinross.

All of these partnership arrangements have been developed over the last 2 years. Prior to August 1998 there were no joint working agreements or commissioned places for pre-school education in Angus.

2.7 New provision is planned to open in Glamis Primary School, Liff Primary School and Rosemount Primary School in session 2000 - 01.

2.8 Negotiations are presently under way with voluntary providers of pre-school education in Arbroath, Forfar and Monifieth and, subject to the necessary regulatory checks being completed, it is anticipated that the availability of suitable places will be further increased in August 2000. Additional partnership arrangements are presently being negotiated with centres in Aberdeenshire and Dundee.

- 2.9 In addition to the grant funding from the Scottish Executive for each fully loaded place (i.e. one 2½ hour session per day, 5 days per week) two further elements of funding will be provided in financial year 2000-01. These additional funds are to assist the Council to provide support in 2 specific areas:

(1) Development fund for expansion of provision for 3 year olds.

An allocation of £289,212 has been made to enable the Council and its partners to expand the number of places available for children in the ante-pre-school year.

(2) Rural supplement

An allocation of £344,230 has been made to - cover capital costs, subsidise the higher running costs incurred in rural areas. invest in staff training, and support quality provision by partner providers.

Both of these financial allocations are provisional at present and will be revised in the light of actual enrolments in the new session.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 In order to maintain the significant expansion in pre-fives education and to realise the targets set for the Council by the Scottish Executive the following developments are proposed:

- New pre-fives provision to be established in Glamis, Liff and Rosemount Primary Schools in August 2000, and the recruitment of additional part-time nursery nurses and teacher to staff these planned developments, in accordance with previously agreed staffing levels
- Continuation of the process of developing partnership arrangements with private and voluntary providers of pre-school education, and review of the level of payments made to partner providers - in line with the conclusions of the Best Value Service Review of Pre-Fives Education completed in 1999 (Education Committee 24 August 1999, Agenda Item 4(d))
- Secondment of teacher working as Quality Assurance Officer (Pre-Fives Support Teacher) to be extended until June 2001
- Renewal of the existing Service Level Agreement with the Scottish Pre-school Play Association to provide support and quality assurance measures for the voluntary sector
- Extension of the existing rural nursery class teacher support network
- The establishment on a pilot basis of education and care provision in two rural locations
- A review of all primary schools without pre-fives provision to determine priorities for future development.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Provision for the proposals outlined above - together with the grant income from the Scottish Executive - has been included in the Education Department's 2000/2001 Revenue Budget. Any variation in the expected costs or funding will be met from within the overall Education Department budget.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive and the Directors of Property, Finance, Law and Administration and Social Work have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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.