

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

25 APRIL 2000

**“STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCOTTISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS 1994-97 : ENGLISH” –
A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS**

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to seek the Education Committee's approval of proposals to take forward in Angus schools the recommendations made by HM Inspectors in the English "Standards and Quality" Report.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) notes the terms of this report
- (ii) notes and approves the detailed proposals for action outlined in the attached report of an Angus Working Group which comprised teachers of English, teachers of Modern Languages and school librarians.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 "Standards and Quality in Scottish Secondary Schools 1994-97: English" was published by HM Inspectors in March 1999.
- 2.2 The report, while recognising that much good work occurs in English departments across Scotland, makes clear that there is "much room for improvement in key aspects of this major area of the curriculum". Detailed recommendations for improvement are outlined in the report and are considered in detail in Section 2 of the Angus Working Group's report (see Appendix).
- 2.3 Perhaps **the** major recommendation made by HM Inspectors is the **need to improve the quality and quantity of writing undertaken by pupils in S1/S2**. The urgency with which the Inspectorate views the importance of improving this aspect of learning and teaching is reflected in the publication in December 1999 of a further report "Improving Writing 5-14". The Angus Working Group has taken account of this report in its deliberations and detailed proposals in respect of Writing are outlined in Section 5.3 of its report (see Appendix). These proposals include further development of the recently produced Angus resource pack "The Write Process" – this is a programme of study designed to improve the development of 5-14 Writing skills.
- 2.4 The proposals for action in response to the deficiencies identified by HM Inspectors have also taken account of a plan of action provided in the report of national seminars published jointly by HMI and the University of Strathclyde in March 2000. These seminars were set up to address the key recommendations made by HMI to improve the Standards and Quality of Learning and Teaching in English.
- 2.5 In taking forward the Council's own action proposals, Head Teachers and Secondary Teachers of English will be encouraged to take into account:
 - the emerging national strategy to support learning and teaching in English
 - the existing range of sound advice and guidance in relation to 5-14 and Standard Grade English as well as major national staff development materials currently in preparation
 - the experience to date in implementing Higher Still English
 - the need to promote "continuous writing" skills across the curriculum in S1/S2

- the action plan approved by the Education Committee in October 1999 (Article 4 of the minute of that meeting refers) in response to the Modern Languages Standards and Quality report by HM Inspectors
- the common ground and common concerns that exist between English teachers and teachers of Modern Languages
- the pilot project in one Angus cluster to promote an effective means of English and Modern Language teachers co-operating in the teaching of “knowledge about language”
- the support which school libraries and school librarians can provide in promoting literacy skills

3 CONCLUSION

The Education Committee is asked to approve the attached proposals of the English Working Group and to note that these are likely to make a significant contribution to ensuring that Angus Secondary Schools respond positively and purposefully to the recommendations for improvement in the teaching and learning of English made by HM Inspectors.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5 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.

Appendix