

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
23 JANUARY 2001

NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN EDUCATION
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report draws attention to national priorities in education which were the subject of a draft order laid in the Scottish Parliament on 6 November 2000.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (a) notes the terms of this report
- (b) notes and welcomes the statement of broad national priorities in education listed in the draft order (Appendix 1)
- (c) notes the advice provided in the accompanying note from the Scottish Executive (Appendix 2)
- (d) notes possible misgivings in relation to the date by which Authority improvement plans should be published

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The "national priorities" draft order and related executive note are the outcomes of responses to "Improving Our Schools", a consultation paper issued in March 2000 by the Scottish Executive.
- 2.2 Angus Council's response was approved by the Education Committee at its meeting on 22 August 2000 (Article 9 refers).
- 2.3 That response welcomed the proposal in the consultation paper to develop a simple framework of national priorities expressed as:
 - key outcomes
 - key inputs
 - (priority) action areas
- 2.4 The now published priorities provide a statement of five key outcomes for particular focus and attention by schools and education authorities over the next three to five years.
- 2.5 Pleasingly, the priorities are expressed in terms of outcomes without prescriptive reference to the means by which these should be achieved. Properly, that is seen to be a matter for local determination by schools and authorities in the light of local needs and resources.
- 2.6 It is rightly expected that the Council's education service (improvement) plan and schools' development plans will show how the 5 priority outcomes will be achieved in these areas.

3 THE FIVE NATIONAL PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The five priority outcomes for school education in Scotland take account of the new duty on Education Authorities to ensure the provision of an appropriately holistic education for **all** pupils. This duty is laid out in section 2(i) of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 in the following terms:

“it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to **the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or the young person to their fullest potential**”

3.2 The priorities – which therefore reflect the importance of academic achievement **and** the development of a range of foundation and life skills – are:

(1) Achievement and Attainment – defined thus:

“to raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including examination results”

(2) Framework for Learning – defined thus:

“to support and develop the skills of teachers, the self-discipline of pupils and to enhance school environments so that they are conducive to teaching and learning”

(3) Inclusion and Equality – defined thus:

“to promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education, with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and to Gaelic and other lesser used languages”

(4) Values and Citizenship – defined thus:

“to work with parents to teach pupils respect for self and one another and their interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society and to teach them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society”

(5) Learning for Life – defined thus:

“to equip pupils with the foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society and to encourage creativity and ambition”

4 PUBLICATION OF EDUCATION AUTHORITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

4.1 Education service planning and school development planning arrangements are well established in Angus.

4.2 It is anticipated that current procedures will with little amendment enable the Council and its schools to address effectively the improvement agenda which underpins the statement of the five national priorities.

4.3 It is intended that current work to prepare the 2001-2002 Education Service Plan will take full account of the 5 national priorities

4.4 Members will be aware that service planning and school development planning arrangements operate on a June-June cycle.

4.5 In terms of Section 5(i) of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, Ministers are required to consult on the date in 2001 by which the first annual statement of improvement objectives shall be published. In view of current Angus procedures it is to be hoped that the fixed annual date to be set for all authorities following consultation will fall in the period June/July/August. I have already advised the Scottish Executive informally that dates outwith this period would have implications for procedures which are well embedded and which are seen to be effective. It would be my intention to recommend that this perspective be the basis of a formal response to the Ministerial consultation exercise once carried out.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights 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.

Appendices

NL/AR