

ANGUS COUNCIL  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
22 JANUARY 2002

“EARLY INTERVENTION: 1998-2000”: REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS  
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of the Education Committee (i) the main findings of the most recent progress report by HM Inspectors on the national Early Intervention programme (ii) the progress to date recorded within the Angus Early Intervention Project.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1.1** It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (a) notes the terms of this report
- (b) notes in the attached Angus Progress Report the effective strategies highlighted in the report by HM Inspectors and in a related report, “Early Intervention in Literacy and Numeracy: Key Issues from the National Evaluation of the Programme” produced by the University of Edinburgh and KPMG
- (c) notes in the attached report the considerable progress made within the Angus Early Intervention Project both in relation to raising pupil attainment and in relation to implementing features of effective learning and teaching in P1-P3 described in these national reports.

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1** “Early Intervention: 1998-2000” was published by HM Inspectors on 8 May 2001. This report is the second major progress report on the achievements to date of the National Early Intervention Programme. The first report published in 1999 identified good practice with regard to approaches designed to raise standards of literacy. The second report is a broader report and has a particular focus on progress being made in relation to improvements in the learning and teaching of Mathematics in P1-P3.

**2.2** In addition to the May 2001 progress report by Her Majesty’s Inspectors, a separate evaluation commissioned by the Scottish Executive and undertaken by the University of Edinburgh and KPMG was published as Interchange 71 in September 2001.

**2.3** There is ample common ground between both reports. Both highlight extensive features of effective practice in the early years. Pleasingly, many of the strategies highlighted in the reports as being effective in raising pupil attainment are actively promoted within the Angus Early Intervention Project. These strategies which are summarised in the following paragraph are described in detail in Section 2.1 of the attached report which details progress being made in the Early Intervention Project in Angus.

**2.4** The main features of effective practice in Angus which are relevant to the findings in the national reports include:

- continuity in pupils learning from pre-school to primary
- employment of support teachers and appointment of Early Intervention Assistants (all qualified nursery nurses) to support learning and teaching in the early stages

- employment of staff to support home-school links
- provision of centre-based as well as school-based professional development for early learning staff, teaching and non-teaching alike
- arrangements to ensure effective use of assessment data in determining next steps for pupils and teachers alike
- development of a wide range of strategies to build on good practice in the early stages in the middle and senior stages of the primary school – it should be noted that this is a major development focus within the Angus Early Intervention Project
- current and future commitments as described in detail in section 4 of the attached report.

2.5 The report by HM Inspectors and Interchange 71 indicate that the considerable attention which has been given to the promotion of Early Intervention strategies has resulted nationally in improved pupil Attainment in P1-P3. There is ample evidence to suggest that this is the case in Angus schools. Generally increased performance in Reading, Writing and Mathematics by pupils in Early Intervention **focus schools** is summarised in figures 1 and 2 of section 3 of the attached report; figure 3 shows an increasing percentage of pupils in P3 across the whole authority attaining level A or above in national tests for Reading, Writing and Mathematics. The very significant increase in Attainment in Writing is particularly noteworthy.

### 3 CONCLUSION

3.1 The Education Committee is asked to note the extremely satisfactory contribution which the Early Intervention Project is making to raising pupil attainment in P1-P3. The Project Team and Angus Head Teachers are very familiar with the strategies being promoted by HM Inspectors, and are committed to build on good practice to date. It is anticipated that current and future strategies described in the attached report will consolidate and indeed build on the good practice which has been achieved in the early stages of primary school since the inception in 1997 of the Early Intervention Programme and related Angus Early Intervention Project.

### 4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

### 5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications arising directly from this report.

### 6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

JIM ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

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.

NL/AR

### **Angus Council Early Intervention Project: January 2002 Progress Report – Issues arising from national evaluation reports published in 2001**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The Early Intervention Programme was launched in Scotland in June 1997. The programme was 'aimed directly at raising standards of literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy skills in primary years 1 and 2' (SOEID, 1998).
- 1.2 In 1999 HM Inspectors published Early Intervention: 1997 – 98 which reported on the inspection of early intervention in 40 primary schools throughout Scotland. This report identified much good practice with regard to approaches aimed at raising standards of literacy.

During the session 1999 – 2000, a small team of inspectors inspected provision for early intervention on mathematics in 24 schools across 17 authorities. The findings of this were reported in **“Early Intervention 1998 – 2000” published on 08 May 2001 (HMIE)**.

- 1.3 As well as the evaluation of early intervention being conducted by HM Inspectors of schools, the Scottish Executive commissioned Moray House, University of Edinburgh, and KPMG to carry out a national research evaluation of early intervention. This evaluation was undertaken between February 1998 and June 2000. The findings of this evaluation were reported in summary form in **“Interchange 71: Early Intervention in literacy and Numeracy”, published in September 2001 (SEED)**.

## **2 The implementation in Angus of nationally recommended strategies**

- 2.1 From the Angus Early Intervention Project's perspective the national evaluation reports make interesting and encouraging reading. Many of the strategies highlighted as being most effective in raising attainment are features of the Angus Project. These include:
  - improving continuity in children's learning from pre-school to primary (uniform transition record within Angus)
  - appointment of support personnel, (EI Team comprising 1 EDO, 2 Staff Tutors, 6 Support Teachers, 1 Community Education Worker and 0.3 fte Educational Psychologist)
  - appointment of nursery nurses to support early intervention in the early stages (Early Intervention Assistants 30 fte)
  - staff appointed to develop home-school links (2 fte) August 2000 – June 2002
  - provision of staff development in early literacy, numeracy and classroom management and practice
  - extension of staff training to P3 and in some cases P4 teachers

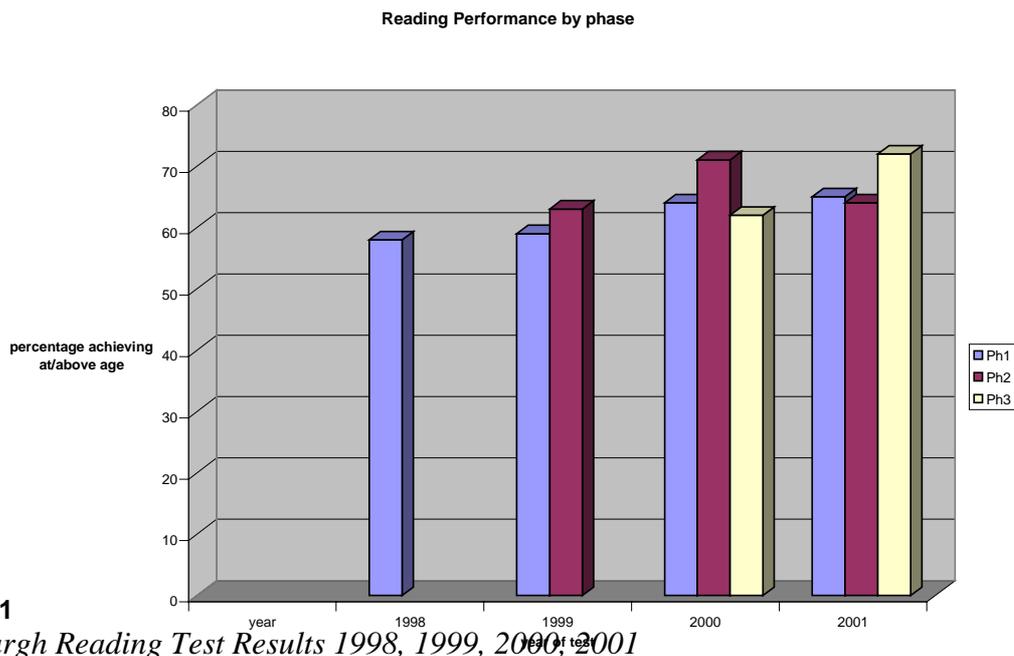
- provision of school based staff development to supplement/complement centre-based activities ('coaching in context')
  - provision of learning and teaching guidelines or programmes of study to schools ('Teaching Children to Read', EI Team June 1998 and Authority Programmes of Study)
  - appropriate emphasis on direct interactive teaching (mental maths strategies and literacy development through games approach)
  - effective teamwork where staff working together with the children in nursery – P3 are involved in regular discussions and exchanges of information
  - provision of workshops for parents to enable them to better support their children's learning in literacy and numeracy
  - organised system of parental helpers in classrooms affording parents an opportunity to observe teaching in action therefore promoting their confidence in supporting learning at home
  - provision of 'story sacks' for parents and children to use together
  - reference to early intervention in school development plans
  - tracking of pupils' attainment and progress through the attainment levels using course assessment, standardised tests and National tests
  - use of attainment data in identifying next steps in pupils' learning
  - arrangements for monitoring and evaluating Authority projects internally and externally
- Early Intervention Phase 1 Evaluation Report June 1998, (C Milne) and Pupil Attainment Phase One 1997 – 2000, (A Duncan)

2.2 The HMIE report and Interchange Number 71 acknowledge that the Early Intervention Programme has been successful in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy in the early stages of primary. Assessment data from local evaluations and from external evaluations provide clear evidence of this rise in standards.

### 3 Improved Pupil Attainment: Angus Data

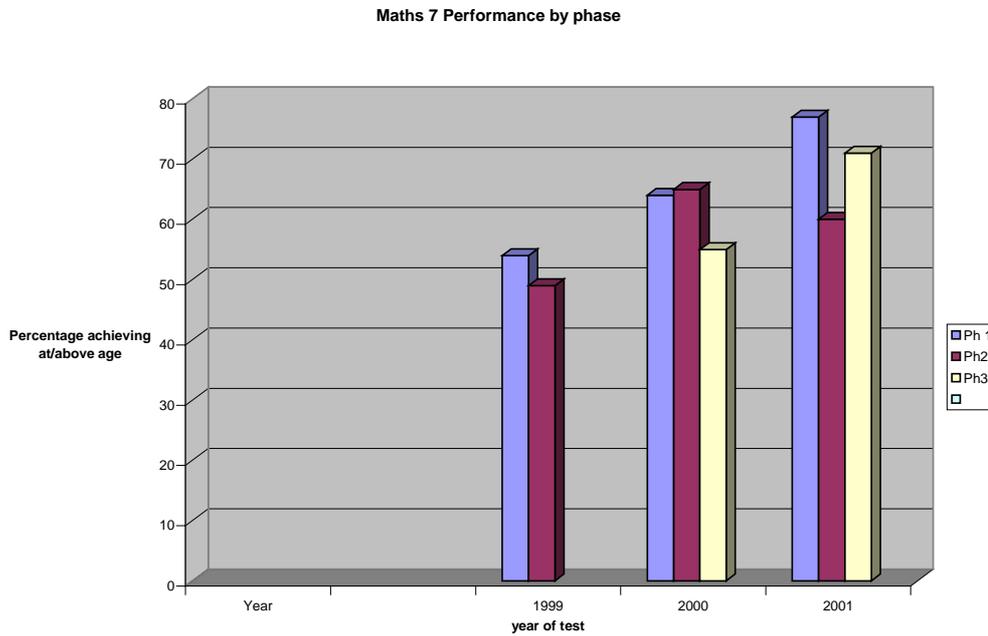
The Angus project data and evaluation reports reflect the national findings:

3.1 Figure 1, shows the generally increasing percentage of pupils achieving at or above their age on the Edinburgh Reading Test in P3 – focus schools.



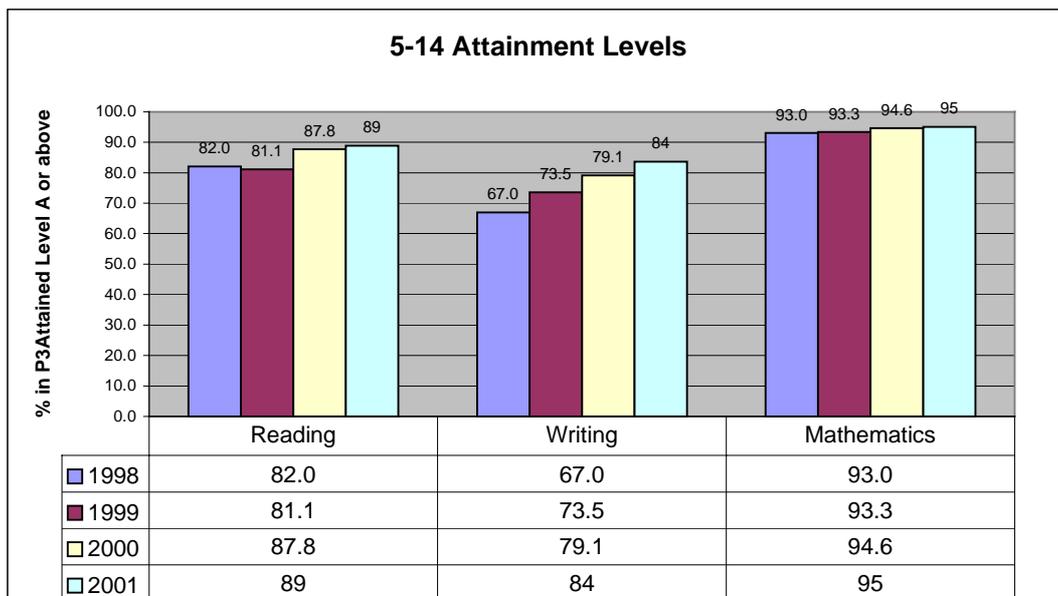
**Figure 1**  
*Edinburgh Reading Test Results 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001*

3.2 Figure 2, shows the generally increasing percentage of pupils achieving at or above their age on the Mathematics 7 test in P3 - focus schools



**Figure 2**  
Primary 3 Mathematics 7 Test Results 1999, 2000, 2001

3.3 Figure 3, shows the generally increasing percentage of pupils in P3, across the whole Authority who have attained level A or above in the National Tests for Reading, Writing and Mathematics.



**Figure 3**  
Primary 3 Reading, writing and mathematics National Test Results 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001

Some other strategies highlighted in the national reports as being most effective in raising attainment and which merit further attention in some Angus schools include:

- staff attendance at Early Intervention centre-based courses
- the provision of context-based learning
- the provision of opportunities for learning through role play and interactive games
- effective teamwork with time allocated for consultation among EI team member, EI assistant, class teachers and members of senior management team regarding lesson planning and recording pupils progress
- setting of high expectations with increased pace and challenge in pupils' learning
- appropriate use of National Tests to ensure that testing is not delayed (i.e. avoiding mass testing in the summer term to confirm levels for end of session reports when many children could and should have been tested sooner)

#### **4 Building on good practice in P1-P3: Current and future commitments in Angus**

The Angus Early Intervention Team has already begun to address one of the major issues addressed in both reports i.e. **“how early intervention approaches can be continued through the middle and later stages of primary school to ensure continuity in learning and teaching and the maintenance of momentum gained during the early stages”** (HMI, 2001) Listed below are some of the strategies which have been and are to be implemented:

##### **Session 2000 –2001**

- All head teachers submitted a pro forma indicating how they would endeavour to ensure that gains made through Early Intervention in the early years were sustained beyond P3. These submissions were used as a basis for discussion between team members and their assigned head teachers. Follow up meetings, which allow the monitoring of progress are ongoing.
- Individual team member meetings with head teacher and EI nominated manager where the recommendations noted in the Authority's Early Intervention Phase One Evaluation Report were the focus of discussion.
- The latter was also addressed by the Advisers 0 – 14 when reviewing, with head teachers, school developments plans.
- Provision of team led centre-based Staff Development on literacy and numeracy for P3 and P4 staff (attendance expected).
- Team members and EI Assistants working with groups of children alongside P3 staff (coaching in context).
- Team member consultation time with P1-3 and Support for Learning staff, Early Intervention Assistant and Management team.

##### **Session 2001 –2002**

- Team members in their assigned schools continue to support staff in implementing Early Intervention strategies in P4 – P7 through discussions at planned consultation time and by, for some, working with identified groups of children in P4 alongside the P4 teacher.
- Team led centre-based staff development on literacy and numeracy for P4-P7 staff and “Modelling Ways of Assisting with Reading” for Primary School Assistants as well as continuing the ongoing programme for P1 – P3 staff as intimated in the Staff Development Calendar 2001 – 2002.
- Our two Primary Advisers will continue to support the work of the EI Team and the development of the project in their links schools.

- Presentation, led by EDO – EI, to all Primary head teachers, on recent publications (May 2001 HMI Report and September 2001 Interchange), progress to date and next steps which need to be considered in light of the recommendations highlighted in the reports.