

**ANGUS COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 11 AUGUST 2015**

SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE IN ANGUS SCHOOLS

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

This report summarises the support to Angus schools during academic session 2014/15. The adapted use of Supported School Reviews is outlined as a key support and challenge mechanism to validate individual school and department self-evaluation as part of our continued drive to improve standards and raise achievement.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Endorse the support and challenge work undertaken during school session 2014/15
- (ii) Approve the proposals set out in Section 5 of this report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 During each school session there is a series of extended quality assurance and support visits to schools in Angus. These visits are known as Supported School Reviews (SSR). The focus of the SSR visit is to seek answers to three key questions. Underpinning these questions are quality indicators from the key documents: The Child at the Centre, How Good is Our School (third edition), and How Well are We Improving the Lives of Children and Young People. These are summarised in the following table:

How well do children learn and achieve?	QI 1.1 – Improvements in Performance QI 2.1 – Learners Experiences
How well does the school support children to develop and learn?	QI 5.1 – The Curriculum QI 5.3 – Meeting Learning Needs
How does the school improve the quality of its work?	QI 5.9 – Improvement through Self-evaluation

Through the use of these quality indicators, the SSR team evaluates the quality of the school's work and provides information on how the school can continue to improve.

3.2 SSR teams are led by a Quality Improvement Officer (QIO). During session 2014/15 planned changes to the QIO team have ensured increased rigour to SSR processes. This has largely

been achieved by supporting QIOs to focus on sector specific issues. The team now consists of two QIOs who focus on the primary sector and two QIOs whose main role is the support and challenge of secondary schools. The two Service Managers (Schools and Learning) maintain an overview of all the SSR processes and join the SSR team for aspects of each SSR. In each secondary school SSR each review team consists of a Service Manager, Quality Improvement Officers, one Head Teacher from an associated primary school, one peer Depute Head Teacher and one Depute Head Teacher from the school being reviewed. In primary schools the team consists of a Service Manager, Quality Improvement Officers, Schools and Learning Support Officers, a peer Head Teacher, an Additional Support Needs colleague and an Early Years colleague. Involving different practitioners in each review ensures that peer support networks are built and quality assurance capacity is developed throughout the system. Education Scotland's Area Lead Officer for Angus has also joined the internal review team in a primary school and secondary school and has provided feedback on the quality of our approach.

- 3.3 Prior to the SSR, the Head Teacher and school leadership team are asked to complete a self-evaluation paper examining 'How well young people learn and achieve'; 'How well the school supports young people to develop and learn' and 'How well the school improves the quality of its work'. SSRs typically last between two and three days and the programme for the visit is agreed with the Head Teacher. The SSR begins with a presentation by the Head Teacher based on their self-evaluation paper. A review of pertinent documentation and data, a schedule of learning visits, and a variety of focus groups and meetings with children, parents and staff are conducted. Where possible the Service Manager and/or Quality Improvement Officer also attend a meeting of the Parent Council.
- 3.4 In secondary schools learning visits involve one team member following the learning journey of one previously identified young person. Young people are selected using the following criteria:
- S1 - a young person who was a high achiever in P7
 - S2 - a young person who has an Individualised Educational Plan and attends mainstream classes
 - S3 - a young person who achieved a below average midYIS (standardised assessment) score in S1
 - S4 - a young person who has target grades suggesting that they should achieve 5 qualifications at National 5, however current working grades show that they are not on track
 - S5 - a young person who is on course to achieve 5 Highers.
- 3.5 Secondary thematic reviews for mathematics were scheduled for all schools between June 2014 and June 2015. The reviews were conducted over two days. Each review team consisted of Quality Improvement Officers, one peer Principal Teacher from within the school being reviewed and one Mathematics Principal Teacher from another school. Prior to the review, the Principal Teacher completed a self-evaluation paper examining 'How well young people learn and achieve'; 'How well the faculty supports young people to develop and learn' and 'How well the faculty improves the quality of its work'.
- 3.6 Key improvements have been made to the SSR process during the course of this session. Prior to January 2015, primary school SSRs did not subscribe evaluative levels to each of the core quality indicators. During this session, this was changed to ensure levels were provided. In primary schools, the levels and comments contained in the feedback report are now subject to greater scrutiny to ensure they match to levels ascribed. The Service Manager Schools and Learning with responsibility for primary schools attends both the scoping meeting and the oral feedback session. Prior to the feedback session she scrutinises the feedback report and challenges the lead QIO through professional dialogue to ensure all positives noted and priorities for discussion have been evidenced and that this evidence supports the evaluation levels agreed. This has enabled more transparent and honest dialogue with Head Teachers around areas of weakness. An individual nursery report is now also completed with greater detail for the nursery staff and the Head Teacher to ensure improved levels of scrutiny for pre-school.
- 3.7 Every school who has a full SSR receives a follow-through visit after one year to assess progress made against key actions identified in the initial review.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 During session 2014/15 16 full primary school SSRs were carried out. SSRs have taken place in:

Friockheim	Cortachy	Colliston	Borrowfield
Warddykes	Lochside	Woodlands	Langlands
Birkhill	Southesk	Inverkeilor	Grange
Aberlemno	Inverbrothock	Strathmore	Ferryden

Evaluation grades were assigned in 9 of these schools as follows:

Quality Indicator	Weak	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good
1.1 Improvements in Performance	2	3	1	3
2.1 Learners' Experiences	0	4	1	4
5.1 The Curriculum	3	2	2	2
5.3 Meeting Learning Needs	0	4	2	3
5.9 Improvement through Self-Evaluation	3	1	3	2

- 4.2 During session 2014/15, 8 follow-through primary school SSRs were carried out as follows:

Eassie	Inverarity	Murroes	Strathmartine
Glamis	Mattocks	St. Margaret's	Tealing

The level of progress with identified action points was assessed to be good in 6 of these schools, unsatisfactory in one and very good in one. Where progress against the identified actions points is noted as good or better, no further planned visits in relation to the particular Supported School Review takes place. Where progress is less than good, focused and intensive engagement with the school and scrutiny of its work continues. This high level of support and challenge remains until there is confidence in the school's capacity to continue to improve.

- 4.3 In all schools visited it was observed that positive relationships had been established between staff, children and parents and children were confident and enthusiastic about their learning. In most schools there was an increased focus upon improving attainment. There was also a focus on celebrating wider achievements through whole school events and sharing successes with the wider school community. Schools have been asked to look at tracking and monitoring wider achievements to ensure all children have opportunities to contribute.
- 4.4 Supported visits to primary schools have highlighted highly effective examples of partnership working between schools and their wider communities. These partnerships are allowing children to develop skills for learning, life and work. One example of this was noted in Inverkeilor Primary School where a flourishing partnership with David Wise-Mann and his London Offshore Consultancy business has been established. This partnership has supported work on Engineering for Sustainability and provided a rich real life context for the children to learn and apply their skills.
- 4.5 In most primary schools visited it was recognised that there was a need to continue to improve approaches to the curriculum and self-evaluation. Additionally, primary schools need to continue to focus on increasing the pace and challenge in learning through developing approaches to planning for progression and strengthening arrangements to assess, track and monitor children's progress.
- 4.6 Three secondary schools participated in full SSRs during session 2014/15: Brechin High School, Forfar Academy and Carnoustie High School. Following each SSR, work was undertaken with the school's leadership team to identify an action plan to ensure further improvements were prioritised. Seven secondary schools have also benefited from a thematic review of the mathematics faculty, with the eight review scheduled for early in session 2015/16. Each mathematics department has drawn up an improvement plan in

response to the findings of the thematic review. This has informed the scope of our ongoing development work in numeracy led by the Schools and Learning Support Officer (Sciences, Technologies, Engineering & Mathematics).

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Full supported school reviews will be undertaken in the following primary schools during session 2015/16:

Hayshead	Timmergreens	Burnside	Airlie
St Thomas	Andover	Monikie	Newtyle
Ladyloan	Edzell	Newbigging	Southmuir
Muirfield	Stracathro,	Letham	Rosemount

- 5.2 Full supported school reviews will be undertaken in the following secondary schools during session 2015/16:

Monifieth High School	Arbroath High School	Montrose Academy
Arbroath Academy	Webster's High School	

- 5.3 All secondary schools will participate in a focused SSR of their Broad General Education provision. This will include aspects of cross-cluster working.
- 5.4 Full consideration will be given to providing evaluative levels to quality indicators in all SSRs.
- 5.5 The rigour and robustness of the supported school review processes will continue to improve during session 2015/16. Focused training will be provided in August 2015 for all members of SSR teams. This will focus on evidence based assessment and evaluation. The nursery class reports will be shared with the Service Manager Early Years to improve moderation of quality and expectations. The Service Manager Quality will become more involved with the SSR process and have responsibility for moderation of feedback and levels.
- 5.6 Angus Schools' Support and Challenge Guidelines will be developed in collaboration with school staff to outline processes and practice for ensuring continual improvement.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: Support and Challenge in Angus Schools Policy