

Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	17 March 2009
Report By:	Corporate Director Education and Social Care	Report No:	EDUC/23/09/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712824
Subject:	The Role of the Quality Improvement Team		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide committee members with information about the role of the Quality Improvement Team. Elected members had asked for this information as part of the budget process.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides information about the key role of the Quality Improvement Team in ensuring that as an authority we are meeting our legislative requirements, in particular those associated with the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000. We are also supporting schools to meet their obligations under the Act.
- 2.2 The report highlights the support and challenge role which underpins the work of the Quality Improvement Team.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report is provided to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee for information purposes.

Albert Henderson
Head of Schools

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL EDUCATION SERVICES
THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Background

Education Services is fully committed to providing a high quality education service which will enable all children and young people to achieve their full potential and prepare them for challenges of the future.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools (etc) Act 2000 placed legislative duties on local authorities **and** schools to ensure improvement in the quality of school education. The Quality Improvement Team has a key role to play in ensuring that as an authority we are meeting our legislative requirements and that we are supporting schools to meet theirs. This will involve Quality Improvement Managers and Quality Improvement Officers encompassing the support and challenge role when engaging with schools to ensure the delivery of the highest quality learning experiences for Inverclyde's children and young people. This should ultimately impact positively on pupil achievement and attainment.

The Quality Improvement Team presently consists of 2 Quality Improvement Managers and 9 Quality Improvement Officers. The work of the Quality Improvement Team is driven by legislative requirements, the Service Plan (which reflects both Corporate and Directorate Plans, and the Single Outcome Agreement), National Priorities for Education, and national initiatives such as Curriculum for Excellence, and More Choices More Chances.

Quality Improvement Officers' remits include:

- Curriculum support
- Staff support
- Pupil support
- Parental support
- Challenge

Support

Support can be provided in a variety of ways, for example the implementation of new local or national initiatives, policies etc will require a degree of central support such as the provision of in-service training and clear guidelines. Support may also be required in handling matters relating to staff or parental issues. Pastoral support will also be available to schools from individual Quality Improvement Officers and will include activities such as:

- Support with school planning process including the monitoring of the implementation of annual school plans
- Support with the monitoring of attainment results
- Support through all phases of inspection by HMIE
- Support in producing an action plan to address any action points identified from the school review process or HMIE inspection

With this support role, which focuses on continuous improvement, comes challenge.

Challenge

To challenge schools to improve and to challenge effectively, Quality Improvement Officers need to know at what point on the 'Journey to Excellence' the school is at. This will involve the use of evidence to determine a starting point. Evidence will be gathered through:

- Looking at practice
- Reading documentation e.g. policies, reports
- Listening e.g. to Head Teachers, staff, pupils and parents

Challenging schools to improve can be undertaken in a variety of settings, for example:

- School review visits
- Bi-annual Quality Visits
- Meetings
- Workshops and seminars (where thinking is challenged)

Since the support and challenge role underpins the work of the Quality Improvement Team, Quality Improvement Officers are required to:

- analyse and use performance data to challenge schools to improve
- have a thorough knowledge of local and national priorities and associated school targets
- promote strategies to address areas where performance should be improved and monitor progress of such strategies
- to display a thorough knowledge HMIE's self-evaluation toolkits – How good is our school? (Version 3) and The Child at the Centre 2
- be skilled in effective questioning
- be able to identify and disseminate good practice

Challenge identifies areas for improvement. These results, where necessary, in the provision of support for schools to make the difference required. It is important to remember that challenge can also lead to the identification and dissemination of good practice.

Conclusion

“The most effective authorities are able to balance the levels of support and challenge provided to schools in an effective partnership with Head Teachers and their Senior Management Team.”

[Improving Scottish Education: Effectiveness of Education Authorities]

“The challenge for education authorities is to know their schools and centres well ... They will have to judge when to intervene to support establishments in improving the quality of learning and supporting individual learners.”

[The Journey to Excellence – Part 4)

The support and challenge role of the Quality Improvement Team is not only crucial to ensuring that we are meeting our legislative requirements, it is also central to raising achievement in line with national priorities for education, enabling Inverclyde Council to satisfy HMIE's criteria on performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

