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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 March 2009</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education &amp; Social Care</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUC/22/09/IF</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>HMle report – Improving Scottish Education 2005 – 2008</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of a seminal HMle report on Scottish Education for the period 2005 – 2008.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report, 'Improving Scottish Education 2005 – 2008' covers a large number of educational sectors. It summarises HMle findings from inspections over the last 3 years in pre-schools, schools, colleges, educational psychological services, prison education, child protection, community learning development and education authorities. The report also comments on major cross-sectoral issues and improvements and developments since the first report on Improving Scottish Education.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that members approve the actions taken by the Education Department to respond to the launch of Improving Scottish Education 2005 – 2008 on 16 January 2009.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The report which is available in the library for members includes:

- A foreword by HM Senior Chief Inspector.
- A section which draw together inspection and review evidence from all sectors to provide an overview of the progress made in the areas highlighted as priorities for improvement in the first Improving Scottish Education report published in 2006.
- A section with eight summarising reports, seven of which focus on a sector of education, the eight covering child protection services.
- A section that evaluates the impact of local authorities on the quality of education in their respective areas.
- A final section indicating the way ahead and the focus of HMIE activities in the next few years.

4.2 The main issues for each sector of the service, in terms of strengths and areas for concern, are appended to this report. The highlights of the report, as indicated in the press, are as follows:

- There is a slump in the progress of pupils from the middle years of primary to the end of S2.
- Many pupils are not making the progress they should be from middle stages of primary until well into their secondary education.
- Difficulties of literacy and numeracy and an apparent reluctance or inability to engage with demanding areas of learning such as mathematics, science and modern languages can become entrenched between P6 and S2.
- Overall, education in Scotland is steadily improving and there is a good platform to make the kind of changes required to make it world class. The continuing strength of Scottish education provides a sound platform for the kind of significant improvement which the current economic environment in future prosperity demands.
- Early years emerges very well from the report. The report does highlight the generally superior performance of state run nurseries compared to those in the private and voluntary sector.
- The report indicates that children in our primary and secondary schools experience a broad curriculum which is generally in line with existing national guidance while maintaining a focus on established expectations relating to knowledge and skills, increasing numbers of schools are giving greater emphasis to broadening achievement and to preparing pupils for positive post-school destinations.
- More than one in three councils need Government supervision to protect educational standards. Most authorities were praised for improving service since the last inspection, but several were warned that considerable work remains to be done.

## **5.0 RESPONSE BY EDUCATION SERVICES**

5.1 The report has been discussed by the senior management team of Education Services and by the Quality Improvement Team. Many of the recommendations and directions set by the report will be assimilated by the Quality Improvement Team into their review and monitoring of schools and services within Inverclyde.

5.2 The report was part of the agendas of the meetings of headteachers of early years, primary and secondary headteachers in January when the strengths and weaknesses of the sectors were studied.

5.3 The implications for the Education Authority have been discussed at an extended team in preparation for the HMIE inspection of Inverclyde Council as part of the INEA2 inspection regime.

5.4 A seminar for all headteachers will be agreed in April/May 2009. The seminar will engender discussion in sectors on the issues identified.

**EMBARGOED – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST BEFORE 00:01 HOURS  
ON FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2009**

**Press Release  
16 January 2009**

### **HMIE PUBLISHES MAJOR REPORT ON SCOTTISH EDUCATION**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) has now published '*Improving Scottish Education 2005-2008*', a landmark document that reviews and comments on the provision of education in Scotland across most sectors over the last three years.

The report analyses all the sectors of education for which HMIE has inspection and review responsibilities: pre-school, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, and community learning and development. It also looks at the impact of local authorities on education provision, and reviews the state of multi-agency child protection arrangements across the country.

HMIE last carried out such a major review in 2006 when the first '*Improving Scottish Education*' report was published. Then, it was stated that 'the future will require a population with the confidence and skills to meet the changes posed by fast and far-reaching change'.

This newly published report looks at how well Scotland's education provision has met that challenge. Scotland's need for an education system through which the population as a whole can develop the kind of knowledge, skills and attributes that can help them thrive personally, socially and economically in the twenty-first century has provided the focus for '*Improving Scottish Education 2005 -2008*'.

In overall terms, HMIE found that, across all sectors, Scottish education continues to demonstrate the strengths highlighted in the original report and that, since then, further aspects of the system have moved to positions of strength. However, while Scottish education in general is showing steady improvement, a number of significant and longstanding problems remain and the need for further and faster improvement has grown in response to the changing context within which education operates in an increasingly competitive world.

The report records many strengths:

- Early education continues to be strong overall.
- Primary and secondary schools are offering a broad curriculum, generally in line with existing national guidelines.

- While maintaining a focus on established expectations in knowledge and skills, more schools are giving emphasis to broadening achievement.
- The strengths in the education system reflect the professional commitment and competence of teachers, lecturers and support staff.
- Leadership is improving in schools, colleges and centres.
- Scotland's colleges are providing relevant and accessible programmes which enable learners to develop an increasing range of essential and vocational skills that meet the needs of individuals and employers.
- Many young people and adult learners benefit from good community learning and development opportunities.
- Through single outcome agreements, local authorities have increased flexibility for decision-making at local level.
- Many local authorities have been successful in promoting effective partnership working.

The continuing challenges include:

- The need to ensure a consistently high standard of general education as an expectation for all young people.
- As part of that general education, developing both intellectual depth and personal attributes in our young people and addressing with greater determination the need to raise standards across the board, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science.
- Improving progression in learning, especially across transitions and across all sectors.
- Providing better support for the substantial numbers of children and young people from vulnerable groups and disadvantaged circumstances who do not sufficiently develop their personal capacities or achieve qualifications.
- Maintaining a strong focus on preparing young people for positive destinations when they leave school.
- In residential special schools, extending productive links with similar centres, with education authorities and through sharing good practice.
- The need for colleges to achieve consistently high quality learning, teaching and outcomes for learners.
- The need for self-evaluation to be embraced by all staff as the basis for improvement.
- The need to rethink approaches to professional development and to build leadership capacity at all levels.
- The need to maximise the impact of partnership working across services to ensure the needs of every individual child are met in an integrated way.
- The need for many pre-school staff to access further training and qualifications to develop their understanding of children's learning.
- Giving priority to how best to promote diversity, equality and fairness.
- Reducing the significant variance across Scotland in the effectiveness of child protection practice.



This in-depth report draws together inspection and review evidence from all sectors over the last three years. There are also summarising chapters on each sector of education, as well as on child protection services and the impact of local authorities on the quality of education they are providing.

The report also includes a section which looks forward and identifies a range of issues which will need to be addressed in order to achieve the high aspirations of improvement for Scotland's learners. This section makes recommendations under five headings: Achievement, Curriculum, Learning and Teaching, Vision and Leadership, Partnerships and Professional freedom and responsibility.

The issues and priorities outlined in this section include:

- Recognising that achievement and attainment are not alternatives – both are the outcome of a rich and challenging educational experience, particularly as part of general education for all.
- Ensuring challenge and progression in learning through imaginative, well-judged teaching, leading to the achievement of high levels of understanding and skill.
- Engaging all members of staff purposefully in personal and professional development and encouraging them to play their part in leading learning and curriculum innovation.
- Recognising that individuals, establishments and services cannot, on their own, deliver what is required for successful learning in today's demanding context.

The world's current economic challenges add urgency to these recommendations and, speaking about this aspect, Graham Donaldson, HM Senior Chief Inspector, says, 'higher standards of general education will be essential in taking us out of recession and beyond. The continuing strength of Scottish education provides a sound platform for the kind of significant improvement which the current economic environment and future prosperity demand. But there is a real danger that the world will pass Scotland by, giving renewed urgency to improving learning for all our young people and adult learners'.

Speaking about the report more generally, Graham Donaldson says, 'this is one of the most significant pieces of work we have published in recent times and we are determined that it will make a significant and positive contribution to improvement throughout Scotland's education system. It identifies a range of vital strengths on which Scottish education can build. It also makes very clear the areas where further significant improvement is needed, particularly in late primary and early secondary education. I believe that the report should be seen as encouraging, not because of what it says about where we are but because of what it tells us about where we can get to. We urge everyone involved in education to take note of its findings and reflect on how it can help them in their own professional improvement'.