

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
9 APRIL 2008**

**SUBJECT: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee's approval for a revision to the Authority Policy 'Planning and Quality Assurance – Section 1 A Quality Assurance Framework for Schools'
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (1) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to exercising the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee approves the revised and renamed 'Quality Improvement Framework for Schools' (Appendix 1).**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The current 'Quality Assurance Framework for Schools' was approved by Educational Services Committee on 6 October 2004 (paragraph 14 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 The impact of this policy has been acknowledged by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in the Inspection Report on the Education Functions of the Moray Council (INEA 2 – January 2008). The report stated that the authority was *'implementing a more robust approach to quality assurance'*.
- 3.3 The INEA 2 report also stated, in relation to the authority's quality assurance procedures, that *'these encouraging developments had not yet impacted sufficiently on the culture of self-evaluation within all schools and departments'*. Consequently, one of the main points for action arising from the report is to *'Improve approaches to self-evaluation within establishments (and across community learning and development) and ensure that head teachers and promoted staff take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating performance'*.
- 3.4 There is now a need to ensure that the quality assurance framework has a greater impact on improving pupils' experiences.
- 3.5 The current framework has effectively resulted in a 'one-size fits all' approach to school review and follow-up activity. Officers recognise the need to adopt a more proportionate approach to support and challenge with schools. Those

schools with a good track record in improving performance, learning and teaching and leadership do not require the same level of follow-up, during a school year, as those with poorer records.

- 3.6 Head teachers have indicated that they welcome the level of support and challenge offered by authority officers. However some would welcome more engagement with officers during the session. They have also indicated that the paperwork involved in school improvement planning has become too bureaucratic and this has the potential to deflect time away from a school's core business, namely learning and teaching.
- 3.7 In 2007 HMIE published a revised set of quality indicators which are now being used by the authority and schools to evaluate school performance. These quality indicators are also now used by HMIE in all school inspections.
- 3.8 In 2007 HMIE also published 'Planning for Excellence'. This document gives clear guidelines on planning for improvement and on HMIE's expectations that school improvement plans should move away from detailed action plans to more high level strategic plans outlining a school's 'direction of travel'.
- 3.9 Against this background a working group, comprising a Quality Improvement Officer, a secondary head teacher and two primary head teachers was established to draft a revised quality assurance framework for consultation. This was consulted on during December 2007 and January 2008 and some amendments were made in light of the comments received.
- 3.10 The revised framework has been renamed 'Quality Improvement Framework for Schools' to reflect the emphasis on continuous improvement in schools and place a stronger emphasis on the purposes of self-evaluation.
- 3.11 The revised framework is designed to address the following issues:
- Improve self-evaluation through a more directive policy statement;
  - Allow for a more proportionate approach to support and challenge by officers;
  - Meet the requirements of the new publications and guidelines from HMIE;
  - Reduce paperwork for schools, allowing school managers more time to monitor and evaluate school performance and manage their improvement agendas.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

This report relates to Activity 1 of Dimension 7 of the current Educational Services Improvement Plan, namely *'to improve systems for audit and improvement planning at school level'*.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

The revised policy framework will encompass relevant parts of the following legislation:

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000)

Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act (2006)

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

There are no financial, risk, staffing or property implications arising from this report.

**(d) Consultations**

1. Senior Officers within Educational Services have been consulted and support the recommendation.
2. Head teachers have been consulted and almost all support the recommendation.
3. Karen Wiles (Principal Solicitor) has been consulted and has indicated that there are no legal issues arising from this report.
4. The Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) has been consulted and some minor amendments were made to the framework in light of the comments received.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 The recommendation in this report seeks Committee's approval of the revised and renamed 'Quality Improvement Framework for Schools'.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Education & Social Services Committee/  
9 April 2008/Quality Improvement Framework for Schools