

East Renfrewshire Council

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Introduction

The education functions of each local authority in Scotland were inspected between 2000 and 2005. A second cycle of inspections began in 2006 taking a proportionate approach using the findings of the original inspection and other information subsequently available. Section 9 of the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000* charges HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, to provide an external evaluation of the effectiveness of the local authority in its quality assurance of educational provision within the Council and of its support to schools in improving quality. Inspections are conducted within a published framework of quality indicators *Quality Management in Education 2*¹ (QMIE2) which embody the Government's policy on Best Value.

Each inspection is planned and implemented in partnership with Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission for Scotland. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the *Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000*. It provides services to the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland. Together they ensure that the Scottish Executive and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

¹ *Quality Management in Education 2* (HM Inspectorate of Education 2006) is a framework of self-evaluation for Local Authority Education Services.

1. The aims, nature and scope of the inspection

HMIE inspects the education functions of all 32 councils within Scotland as part of its commitment to inspect and report on the quality of education and to help secure improvement. HMIE reported on the first inspection of East Renfrewshire Council in February 2005. The inspection found that all quality indicators were in the very good category. In the period since the publication of this report HM Inspectors have worked with senior officers of the Council to monitor ongoing progress. The information provided from this process was supplemented with additional evidence from HMIE inspections. The follow-up inspection of adult learning in May 2006 indicated that the authority had made very good progress on all action points. The authority had gained recognition for *Charter Mark* in 2005 and achieved *Investors in People* recognition in 2006.

As a result of its high performance, the inspection took as its starting point the authority's own self-evaluation. Prior to the inspection, the authority submitted a systematic self-evaluation using the HMIE framework for self-evaluation *Quality Management in Education 2*. In order to judge the authority's capacity for further improvement, the inspection team focused on key quality indicators from this self-evaluation.

2. What are the challenges for the Council?

The Council recognised the need to maximise opportunities for young people to be involved in education, employment or training.

East Renfrewshire has a population of around 89,390 people. It is a compact Council with the tenth highest population density of all councils. The main centres of population are the towns of Barrhead and Neilston in the west and the areas of Newton Mearns, Giffnock, Clarkston, Thornliebank and Busby in the east. There are also a number of small villages including Uplawmoor and Eaglesham.

The Council continues to face challenges relating to increasing school rolls, particularly in secondary schools and the diversity of needs within its schools and communities. The rising population alongside the high level of placing requests has put a continuing pressure on provision of places in schools that are full to capacity.

East Renfrewshire is one of the least deprived local authorities in Scotland. However, certain areas within the Council face the challenges associated with unemployment, high crime levels, poor housing and health issues. A total of 1,500 people live in areas of East Renfrewshire that are within the ten percent most deprived areas in Scotland. A further 7,500 people reside in areas that are in the 11-25% most deprived nationally. The Lavern Valley area of East Renfrewshire, which includes Barrhead and Neilston was designated for Social Inclusion Policy funding.

East Renfrewshire has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Scotland, with significant Jewish and Muslim communities. The 2001 census figures and more recent records show that the proportion of citizens from minority ethnic communities is between two and three times the national average.

At the time of the inspection East Renfrewshire was led by a coalition of Labour and Liberal Democrat members who operated through a system of Cabinet government. The Cabinet was chaired by the Leader of the Council and included the Convener of the Education Committee. The Education Committee carried out policy-making and took decisions on school and some other education matters.

Plans for the regeneration of Barrhead include the building of a new campus to be operated in partnership with neighbouring colleges. This would assist the authority to meet its target that all young people leaving school in East Renfrewshire would be in education, training or secure employment by 2011.

3. Key features of attainment and achievement of learners

Over the five year period from 2002 to 2006, the authority had made significant improvement in most levels of attainment. In many cases the rates of improvement had been greater than in comparator authorities² and nationally. Attendance levels were consistently high and continued to be above the national average. The attendance rate for secondary schools was the highest of all authorities in Scotland.

Performance in 5-14 levels of attainment continued to be high and had improved overall. Improvements in reading in primary schools and mathematics in secondary schools had been particularly notable. Almost all pupils attained or exceeded appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics in primary schools. Most pupils reached these standards in writing. In secondary schools, most pupils attained or exceeded appropriate national levels in reading and mathematics. A majority attained appropriate levels in writing. In primary and secondary schools, an increasing proportion of pupils were achieving these levels of attainment earlier than might normally be expected.

Performance in National Qualifications continued to be strong with improvements being made in the targeted areas of Higher and Advanced Higher. The percentage of pupils who achieved Band A awards at Higher in S5 had increased. Across a wide range of measures the authority performed better than national and comparator authorities. In order to support pupils in their preparation for Higher and meet the needs of pupils more effectively, the authority had encouraged schools to use the relaxation of age and stage. This had led to a phased implementation of intermediate courses in S3 and S4. Programmes of vocational education had also been developed in conjunction with Cardonald, Reid Kerr, James Watt and Langside Colleges. In 2006, the majority of all presentations were at National Qualification level. During the period of transition to National Qualifications, there had been a decrease in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more awards at Levels 3, 4 and 5³ at the end of S4. By the end of S5, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more awards at Level 6 remained consistent and was well above the comparator and national average. By the

² The term 'comparator authorities' refers to the group of education authorities which are comparative to each other in terms of socio-economic and demographic factors.

³ Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels:

7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C

6: Higher at A-C

5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2

4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4

3: Access 3 cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6.

end of S6, the percentage of pupils who gained National Qualifications at Levels 5, 6 and 7 had improved over the last five years. There had been a particular increase in the percentage of pupils who had gained five or more awards at Level 6. Further work was required in ensuring all pupils were presented at the most appropriate level and achieve success, in particular at S4. The authority had taken steps to identify and share good practice and was continuing to engage with senior managers in schools to take appropriate action to improve assessment procedures in order to ensure that pupils were being presented for the most appropriate qualification.

Pupils in the authority's special school, Isobel Mair, achieved very well in National Qualifications. As a result, the school achieved the gold award for SQA 'centre of the year'. Senior pupils in secondary schools benefited from participating in supported study and school based tutorials within school. A number had also participated in study weekends which helped to prepare them for examinations.

An increasing proportion of pupils were entering higher education. In 2006, more than half of East Renfrewshire pupils took up places in higher education, the highest rate across all authorities in Scotland.

Inspections of East Renfrewshire schools since 2005 indicated an overall strong level of performance across pre-school and school sectors.

Nine nurseries had received integrated inspections from HMIE and the Care Commission. The majority of indicators, including *children's progress* and *meeting children's needs* were judged to be very good or good. Provision in private and voluntary partnership centres was not judged to be as high, although there had been a slight improvement over the previous two years. The authority had introduced effective support mechanisms to assist staff in improving provision.

In primary and special schools there was a consistently high level of performance. *Leadership* was judged to be excellent in almost all schools. In all schools inspected, there were examples of sector-leading practice. A number of other indicators including, the *structure of curriculum, pupils' learning experiences, climate and relationships, expectations and promoting achievement, partnerships with parents, the School Board and the community, pastoral care and equality and fairness*, were judged to be either excellent or very good. In the period since the previous inspection of the authority, one secondary school had been inspected. *Learning support* and *equality and fairness* were judged to be excellent and almost all other aspects of provision were judged to be either good or very good.

The authority provided very effective support to schools to improve the quality of learning and teaching and help to raise attainment.

The authority continued to build upon its outstanding work in the analysis and use of statistical information. In the pre-inspection survey, all headteachers agreed that the authority had assisted them in developing a systematic approach to self-evaluation. Benchmarking information was used very well at strategic and school level to assist staff in comparing their performance with other schools and departments. Staff in the Education Management Information Service (EMIS) had developed further the highly effective system to monitor pupils' progress in attainment and attendance. Quality improvement officers were continuously developing their skills in analysing performance information in order to provide

focused support and challenge to schools and subject departments. A wide range of assessment information was used across all sectors including pre-five establishments to assist staff in making appropriate intervention at the earliest stage. Schools used performance information well to identify and support individuals and groups of pupils to attain to their fullest potential. The authority also set local targets and monitored closely the performance of specific groups of pupils. This included the performance of boys, lower attaining pupils and black and ethnic minority pupils. Officers also gathered a wide range of qualitative information about the service through a range of thematic and standards and quality reviews. This information was used very effectively to target areas for improvement and recognise good practice.

Features of good practice: Education Management Information Service (EMIS)

With the introduction of National Qualifications into S3 and S4, EMIS had further developed its tools and methods for analysing its schools and departments. Staff in the unit provided senior management in all secondary schools with support and training to identify areas of strength and weaknesses to guide future planning. A key role of EMIS was to provide analyses and information about the provision of school places through staffing requirements and timetabling of the new 33 period school week.

More detailed information is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

In the pre-inspection survey of headteachers, almost all agreed that the authority made a positive difference to improving the quality of learning and teaching. Conferences, headteachers' meetings, showcase events and the authority's excellent intranet were used effectively to share and disseminate good practice across schools.

The authority had embraced the philosophy of *Curriculum for Excellence*⁴ and had taken steps to implement key targets. Staff in schools had placed a strong emphasis on building on prior learning and developing consistent approaches to learning and teaching across sectors. Well-planned cross-sector working had improved curriculum development and pupils' progress in learning from 3-18. Initiatives which were having a positive impact included the introduction of French to all children from their pre-school year through to secondary stages, the development of a common language for learning in mathematics and the development of writing from nursery to secondary school. Schools had also made very good progress in taking forward the national *Assessment is for Learning*⁵ programme. In primary schools inspected, pupils demonstrated an understanding of their targets for learning and were increasingly involved in self-evaluation and peer assessment. They were motivated by more active approaches to learning, for example through science and had benefited from increased opportunities to develop their skills in information and communications technology (ICT). In almost all schools inspected over a two year period, ICT had been identified as a strength. The introduction of a 33 period week in secondary schools in session 2006/2007 had assisted the delivery of two hours physical education for all pupils and provided an opportunity for

⁴ The *Curriculum for Excellence* programme outlines the purposes and principles of the curriculum 3-18 to provide a framework within which improvement to Scottish education can and should be made.

⁵ *Assessment is for Learning* (AifL) is a Scottish Executive Education Department development programme which outlines key principles which connect assessment with learning and teaching.

vocational education within the curriculum. The authority had plans to evaluate the impact of the new curriculum structures over the next session.

Features of good practice: Cluster working

Cluster working across the authority was characterised by an action research approach aimed at improving pupils' learning experiences. Staff at all levels across the sectors were involved in working groups to take forward developments. Cross sector visits of staff to observe learning and teaching assisted in developing consistent approaches. Social subjects, literacy, numeracy and improving science education had been the focus for improvement in each cluster.

More detailed information is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

Schools had made very good progress in developing pupils' entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge. Pupils were used to working collaboratively and taking on specific roles within teams. The development of the authority's Enterprise Awards scheme had been recognised as a national exemplar of good practice by *Determined to Succeed*⁶. Senior pupils from secondary schools had participated in an innovative programme of 'mini-trials'. In undertaking the various roles within a courtroom setting, they had developed their awareness of audience, their communication and public speaking skills and had gained an insight into law. Pupils in secondary schools had also participated in a Debating Outreach Programme which helped to raise their self-esteem and self-confidence. In primary and secondary schools, pupils responded enthusiastically to the Director's Dialogue which gave them direct access to the Director of Education through the intranet.

All East Renfrewshire schools, including nurseries, had a pupil council. Pre-inspection surveys of schools indicated that pupils felt that they had good opportunities to be involved in decision-making. They were able to provide examples of how their involvement had impacted on improving aspects of the school. Primary schools had provided *sci-fun* activities which focused on developing positive and responsible attitudes to science. The *Fire-Reach* project run jointly by East Renfrewshire's Community Services and Strathclyde Fire Service had impacted positively on pupils. An evaluation of the project carried out by the authority indicated that it had helped to change perceptions and develop responsible attitudes of young people in secondary schools towards their own safety and that of others. Across sectors pupils benefited from well-considered approaches to developing the personal and social skills of pupils. Peer mediation and mentoring schemes operated successfully in primary and secondary schools and helped pupils to develop a sense of responsibility towards others.

All secondary schools and a majority of primary schools had won at least one gold award for citizenship from the authority. Pupils developed their understanding of issues relating to global citizenship, such as Fairtrade, through the curriculum and also through raising funds for a range of charities. Across the authority, they had been involved in a coordinated approach to raising funds for building a school in Sierra Leone.

⁶ *Determined to Succeed*-Scottish Executive, 2002.

The authority made very effective use of multi-agency working to enhance the life chances of vulnerable learners.

The authority had provided schools with additional staff and training programmes to assist in delivering the authority's vision of *Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for all*. All secondary and almost all primary schools had achieved a *Dyslexia Friendly School's Award* and all schools had an autistic spectrum disorders adviser. The authority's special school was the only Scottish school to gain a British Educational Communication and Technology Agency (BECTA) award for its excellence in using ICT to deliver the curriculum.

Pupils with additional support needs from secondary schools in East Renfrewshire joined pupils from the authority's special school for a residential and outdoor experience. Each pupil from the special school was partnered with a senior pupil from S5 or S6 who had volunteered to be a buddy for them over the weekend. The programme provided opportunities and personal challenges to all of the young people who participated.

The authority has developed a number of successful approaches to supporting lower attaining pupils and those who needed additional support to help them access education, employment or training. The proportion of pupils leaving secondary schools for destinations in higher or further education, employment or training, averaged 93% over the three year period to 2006. The percentage of young people who were not in education, employment or training was less than half the national average and had decreased by 13% over a two year period. In the first year of presentations in the authority's vocational education programme, 82 young people were presented for awards in partnership with further education colleges.

A number of initiatives had been piloted and staff trained to deliver programmes which were aimed at improving pupils' behaviour. This included a programme developed by the Educational Psychology Service to promote pupils' emotional wellbeing and resilience. Successful initiatives were characterised by a team approach and multi-agency working. The appointment of campus police officers in three secondary schools had helped to prevent youth crime and improve school and community links. Further initiatives in the secondary sector have included the introduction of school-based social workers in five schools, social justice managers in three schools and behaviour managers in three schools. Social justice managers and school-based social workers initiated transition programmes for hard to reach young people who were transferring from primary to secondary schools. These posts had contributed to finding alternatives to exclusion and engaging pupils who may be vulnerable. In primary and secondary schools, levels of exclusion were below the national average and that of comparator authorities. In secondary schools, there had been a particularly notable reduction. While exclusions levels in primary schools continued to be low, overall, there had been an increase over the same period. Senior officers in the authority had identified this trend and had plans to further reduce exclusions in primary.

Features of good practice: Holiday programme

As part of the drive to reduce the effects of poverty the authority operates a holiday activity programme which successfully targets those pupils living in the most deprived areas of the Council. The innovative multi-agency programme provides pupils with healthy snacks and meals, sports, cultural and arts activities. In addition to improving the health and wellbeing of the children and young people who participated, there was a marked reduction of 40% in vandalism reported during the same period of the previous year.

More detailed information is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

The authority placed a strong emphasis on meeting the health needs of children and young people. Almost all schools and nurseries had gained a health promoting schools award. Health coordinators played a significant role in building the capacity of teaching staff to promote health, and youth counsellors assisted and supported those young people affected by mental health issues.

Features of good practice: Counselling service

In partnership with Renfrewshire Association of Mental Health, the authority has provided a counselling service to support vulnerable pupils in secondary schools, and a pilot initiative in four primary schools. As a result of this work the authority has worked in a multi-agency approach to produce *Suicide and Self-harm* guidelines for schools. The initiative has assisted staff in schools and partner agencies to develop further the capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families.

More detailed information is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

All pupils had access to high quality music, arts and sporting activities during the school day and outwith school hours. The authority had supplemented the funding from *sportscotland* to appoint seven Active Sports Coordinators to work in the pre-five and primary sectors. Pupils now benefited from increased time in physical education and a wide range of sporting activities that took place outwith school hours.

The work of active schools coordinators had complemented the physical education programme and impacted very positively on the physical development and skills of children and young people across all sectors. Over the two year period, a high proportion of pupils participated in sports festivals. A variety of accredited and non-accredited courses were offered in community learning and development (CLD) programmes including, National Qualifications in communications and numeracy, European Computer Driving Licence and St. Andrew's Ambulance First Aid training. Young people had successfully gained a number of awards including The Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze and Silver awards, coaching and youth achievement.

Features of good practice: Youth Festival

East Renfrewshire's first Youth Festival was held in October 2006 to create opportunities for young people to recognise and celebrate their achievements. Planned by a multi-agency group, the festival ran for a month and presented a wide range of activities, such as band nights, dance programme, master classes in drama, photography workshops and *Pulse FM*, a local radio station that broadcasted across East Renfrewshire during the Festival. The festival culminated in an *Oscar style* awards night in Barrhead Sport Centre where 40 awards were presented to individuals and groups.

More detailed information is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

In response to the national Youth Music Initiative, the authority employed specialist music teachers to ensure that all pupils in P3 and P4 received music lessons. The Saturday morning music programmes held in Williamwood High School attracted over 800 children and young people and had encouraged a high level of parental involvement. Pupils benefited from working with professional musicians. They had participated with staff in a highly successful musical performance at the Royal Concert Hall. School refurbishments in secondary schools and new builds had also provided high quality facilities for the performing arts. A programme of drama for 5-18 year olds had been delivered by the East Renfrewshire Youth Theatre. All P4 to P6 pupils benefited from a regular programme of dance from specialist staff.

Activities such as the *Mus-e* programme, instrumental tuition in primary schools and storytelling helped pupils to develop a wide range of performing skills and had resulted in positive outcomes for the wider community including the establishment of a community choir.

Features of good practice: *Mus-e* programme

The *Mus-e* programme is part of the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, with a network of programmes around Europe. Carlibar Primary School is the first school in the UK to be involved in the initiative. Artists worked with every class to examine how arts could impact on the new building. The outcomes of the programme can be seen around the school, for example, in stained glass window, clock and storyboard. The programme was funded by Future Learning and Teaching (FLaT).

More detailed information is available at www.hmie.gov.uk.

Following the previous inspection of the authority, adult learning and literacy was integrated into the education department.

The number of adults participating in adult literacy and learning programmes continued to show signs of improvement. In 2006, there were 1,172 participants of school age and 1,284 aged over school age who had participated in CLD programmes. Adult learning programmes offered a range of opportunities and included courses delivered by library and information services staff. Youth services provided programmes to vulnerable school pupils including *Prince's Trust xl*, introduction of the *Young Scot* card and *Postponing Parenthood* programmes. These programmes assisted young people to develop confidence, core skills and knowledge. Young people who had participated in the *Postponing Parenthood*

programme received a bronze youth achievement award which could also be used for the *Duke of Edinburgh's Community Award*.

4. What impact had the authority had in meeting the needs of other stakeholders?

The authority demonstrated an outstanding commitment to engaging with parents. This included promoting their participation in decision-making, involvement in their children's learning and opportunities for their own learning through adult literacy, family learning and adult learning programmes.

The views of parents were represented through active School Boards in all schools, parent teacher associations and the establishment of parent forums. There were specific forums for black and minority parents and parents of children with additional support needs. Staff at all levels, including CLD staff, support staff and those from other agencies engaged effectively with parents and saw this as an important aspect of their work. As a result, parents were well informed about educational developments with many playing an active role in the life of their school and in their children's learning. Staff with responsibility for the delivery of cultural and sports programmes had successfully encouraged parents to become effective contributors. This included assisting with Saturday morning music sessions, coaching young people in sports and making a positive contribution to the storytelling festival and theatre visits.

Principal teachers of inclusion and social inclusion managers had established very good relationships with parents of children with additional support needs and those experiencing difficulties. The adult learning and family learning team engaged effectively with parents through programmes which led to parents developing their confidence and skills. They provided materials to all parents of P1 pupils to assist them in the development of literacy. Parents' skills in story reading and telling were enhanced through participation in *Story Buses* in the nurseries. Parents were able to work with school staff to support their children's learning and this had helped their children to make very good progress in the development of early literacy skills. Family learning programmes had a range of positive impacts which included the development of parents' confidence and self-esteem and parents becoming more involved in their child's education. As a result, there had been a rise in attendance at parent information sessions and other school events. Participation in family learning in many cases also led to parents progressing to other adult learning opportunities. The authority had carried out very effective consultation with parents on the *Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006* and the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (ASL)*. Staff had produced a clear and detailed handbook to assist parents and schools in implementing this legislation.

In addition to parents' forums, the authority consulted with and received feedback from parents regularly through focus groups and surveys. The EMIS system was used effectively to collate and analyse parental views including HMIE pre-inspection questionnaires. This evidence showed high levels of satisfaction among parents regarding education provision. Partnership with parents, the School Board and the community was judged to be either excellent or very good in schools inspected.

5. How well is the authority led?

Elected members, the Chief Executive and senior officers demonstrated a common purpose, encapsulated by the Council's broad aim of Making a Difference for East Renfrewshire. The Council's Corporate Strategy and Regeneration Plan made clear their commitment to improving the lives of those living in less advantaged areas through a focus on equality, inclusion and social justice. The authority had developed a very clear and appropriate vision, set of values and aims which were well understood and shared by staff at all levels.

Senior staff regularly reinforced the authority's goals of *Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All*. They placed a particularly high importance on improving levels of attainment in the school sector in order to improve young people's life chances. This ambition was communicated effectively to all staff and reinforced through extensive and detailed analysis of attainment data and rigorous discussions between schools and quality improvement officers. The authority had an ambition for all young people leaving an East Renfrewshire school to continue in education, training or to secure employment by 2011. The authority also highly valued wider achievement and integrated this fully within its culture. Staff took very good account of the interests and experiences of learners outwith school, and had made initial steps to include this information within their management information system. The authority communicated its priorities very effectively through a range of means including a *Pledge Card*, which listed the key priorities for 2006 to 2009 and related objectives for the coming year. These cards were issued to all staff, parent representatives and senior pupils. Senior staff continually strived for excellence but in so doing ensured that local managers, including headteachers, were given the flexibility to be innovative and creative. This empowering approach was welcomed by staff, and had resulted in many highly effective initiatives, which were shared across the authority. The Director and his senior team were highly visible in the authority and were responsive to learners and staff needs. Staff demonstrated a sense of pride in their work and that of the authority.

Elected members provided strong political leadership and demonstrated a clear commitment to the Council's values and aims. Working with the Chief Executive, they consistently provided clear strategic direction to the education functions of the Council and promoted partnership working within, between and beyond council service departments. The authority had developed a clear and rigorous local improvement plan for education as a part of its integrated children's services plan. Targets were focused on outcomes and used a range of key systems and measures to demonstrate progress including examination data, benchmarking, external and internal quality assurance reports and contributions from authority-wide working groups. Resources were allocated transparently to support the priorities of the Council. Additional funding from the Scottish Executive was immediately communicated and made available to local staff. The authority had invested heavily in the school estate and was continually striving to improve its learning venues. The education authority's risk register had been used as an example of good practice for other service departments.

The education authority had a culture of developing people through participation, empowerment and involvement of staff at all levels. The Director demonstrated excellent relationships with staff, pupils and parents. He chaired influential pupil council meetings and had instigated an online Director's Dialogue where children and young people could ask him

questions. Heads of Service worked closely together and had clear remits and responsibilities. The Adult Learning Manager had recently been given responsibility for managing family learning provision in addition to adult learning and literacy. Community capacity building and youth services were located within the community resources department and were managed by a Head of Service. Close links had been established between CLD and schools. All senior staff were considered highly effective and were respected. The authority had a high quality leadership development programme which successfully encouraged all staff to make suggestions for improvement. Senior managers in all schools had participated in peer shadowing and the authority had paid careful attention to succession planning. School cluster groups were an important focus for partnership working. They were empowered to develop innovative and creative solutions to their local issues. They effectively promoted coherence between different learning activities across sectors, and were a focus for sharing good practice through, for example, teacher exchanges between nursery, primary and secondary schools to observe learning and teaching approaches. Partnership working was embedded in the practice of staff. The ethos of integrated community schools had been developed in all schools in the authority through school-based social workers in each cluster, youth counsellors in each secondary and health coordinators acting as evaluators in thematic reviews. Highly effective partnerships with health agencies and further education colleges were having a significant impact on the health and learning of learners. Throughout the authority, staff shared an ethos of teamwork and collegiality. Staff sought innovative ways of working together to benefit pupils. Staff from CLD demonstrated a strong commitment to working in partnership with other services and agencies including the voluntary sector. This led to the delivery of a diverse range of opportunities for young people, adults and local communities.

Senior managers set challenging performance targets for the service which were shaped by an informed awareness of current educational thinking. Feedback and self-evaluation were embedded into the authority's work. There was a focus on continually improving outcomes for young people through inclusive practices and high standards of learning and teaching. Staff at all levels demonstrated a high degree of commitment to identifying areas for improvement. Self-evaluation informed by evidence was an ongoing aspect of the culture and practice and involved pupils as well as staff. Senior managers routinely used the results of self-evaluation exercises to consider new methods of service delivery. They encouraged staff to contribute suggestions and supported innovation. Examples of excellence and innovative practice were celebrated widely. The well-focused approach to taking forward key priorities and improvements since the last inspection had led to very clear targets and implementation strategies for a wide range of successful initiatives.

The Director played a very strong and focused role in leading the authority's commitment to continuously improve performance. He sustained an optimistic outlook about the potential of the Education Service to achieve success and make a difference to the life chances of children, young people and adult learners. He had appropriately encouraged staff to focus on evaluating the impact and outcomes of their work on the quality of pupils' learning and attainment. Staff demonstrated a belief in their ability to make a difference. They had promoted the development of learners' capacities in line with *Curriculum for Excellence*. The authority constantly explored ways in which to develop more capacity for improvement. Heads of establishments acted as a collective collaborative group in support of the authority's vision, values and aims and worked constructively with senior managers thereby increasing

capacity for improvement. Problem-solving was carried out in a resourceful, creative and innovative way that focused on solutions.

6. What is the Council's capacity for improvement?

East Renfrewshire promoted a culture of self-evaluation and continually took action to improve further the quality of education across the service. As a result, the authority had a very high capacity for continued improvement.

The authority had continued to build upon the strengths identified in the previous report of 2005 and had demonstrated further improvement across a wide range of outcomes. Systems were in place to sustain continuous improvement through rigorous challenge and support. As a result of excellent leadership and self-evaluation, the authority was very well placed to continue to deliver its commitment to *Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All*.

Key Strengths

- The Council's vision for high and improving standards in education and the impact of the authority's work on raising attainment and achievement.
- The outstanding leadership of the Director of Education, which was complemented by effective teamwork and distributed leadership across the authority.
- The impact of the authority's inclusive approaches and the effectiveness of integrated working, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups of learners including those with additional support needs.
- The wide range of approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the authority, including the analysis and use of statistical information to focus support and challenge to schools.
- Promotion of continuity and progression in pupil's learning from 3-18 through the work of the school cluster groups.
- Pupils' wider achievements in citizenship, sports and cultural initiatives.
- Provision and support for using ICT in establishments and the impact of these developments on enhancing pupils' learning.

Areas for continued improvement

In order to create more appropriate pathways as pupils progressed to the next stage in education, employment and training, the authority had set a challenging target of implementing National Qualifications in almost all courses during 2007. There was a need to continue to improve assessment in secondary schools in order to ensure that all pupils were presented at the most appropriate level and achieve success.

What happens next?

As a result of the very high level of performance achieved by the authority, confirmed by this inspection, HM Inspectors will make no further reports in connection with this inspection. The District Inspector will continue to monitor progress as part of her regular work with the authority and will discuss further areas for continued improvement.

Annette Bruton
HM Chief Inspector
Directorate 5
June 2007

Appendix 1

Quality Indicators

Quality Indicator	Evaluation
Improvement in performance	Excellent
Impact on learners	Excellent
Impact on parents/carers and families	Excellent
Vision, values and aims	Excellent
Leadership and direction	Excellent
Developing people and partnerships	Excellent
Leadership of change and improvement	Excellent

Note

The quality scale used in inspections is indicated below. Further details are provided on the inside cover of this report.

Old level	New level	Description
Very good	Excellent	Outstanding, sector leading
	Very good	Major strengths
Good	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Fair	Weak	Important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

Appendix 2

Performance information

Attendance

Table A.1: Percentage Attendance

Primary:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	96.5	96.2	96.2
CA Average	96.2	95.8	95.7
National	95.3	95.0	95.0
Secondary:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	93.9	93.6	93.9
CA Average	92.0	91.6	92.0
National	90.2	90.1	90.5

Staying on Rate

Table A.2: Percentage of pupils staying on to S5 (Post Christmas)

	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	85.2	83.8	84.8
CA Average	67.3	67.3	67.1
National	64.2	64.1	63.8

Pupil Destinations

Table A.3: Percentage of pupils entering each destination

Higher Education:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	46	54	51
CA Average	36	38	35
National	29	31	30
Further Education:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	12	13	16
CA Average	20	18	22
National	21	21	23
Training:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	1	3	4
CA Average	3	3	2
National	5	5	5
Employment:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	22	21	22
CA Average	25	27	29
National	25	27	26

Unemployed and seeking employment or training:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	8	5	4
CA Average	11	9	9
National	13	10	11
Unemployed and not seeking employment or training:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	4	2	2
CA Average	3	2	2
National	3	3	2
Destination unknown:	2004	2005	2006
East Renfrewshire	8	1	1
CA Average	3	3	1
National	4	3	2

Exclusions

Table A.4: Total number of exclusions and exclusions per 1,000 population

Primary:	2004		2005		2006	
	Total	Per 1,000	Total	Per 1,000	Total	Per 1,000
East Renfrewshire	10	1	23	3	48	6
CA Average		7		8		9
National	4,478	11	5,319	13	5,779	15
Secondary:	2004		2005		2006	
	Total	Per 1,000	Total	Per 1,000	Total	Per 1,000
East Renfrewshire	212	28	188	25	144	19
CA Average		58		65		71
National	33,465	105	35,513	112	36,136	115

SQA Attainment

Table A.5: Results in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications

<u>Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels:</u>
Level 7: Advanced Higher at A-C/CSYS at A-C
Level 6: Higher at A-C
Level 5: Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2
Level 4: Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4
Level 3: Access 3 Cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6

Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by the end of S4

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
English at Level 3 or better					
East Renfrewshire	98.4	98.3	96.5	96.2	92.4
CA Average	96.3	96.2	96.1	96.1	96.6
National	93.4	93.7	93.7	93.6	94.0

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Mathematics at Level 3 or better					
East Renfrewshire	98.5	97.5	95.5	92.5	87.5
CA Average	95.7	95.9	95.6	95.4	96.2
National	92.6	92.6	92.5	92.1	92.9

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 3 or better					
East Renfrewshire	98.3	97.1	96.0	96.8	95.5
CA Average	94.0	93.5	93.4	93.1	93.9
National	90.8	90.7	90.8	90.2	90.7

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 4 or better					
East Renfrewshire	92.9	92.4	89.0	90.6	87.0
CA Average	83.9	82.3	82.6	82.6	83.4
National	76.7	76.4	76.6	76.1	76.8

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 5 or better					
East Renfrewshire	59.9	61.6	57.6	58.8	54.0
CA Average	42.3	41.1	41.1	42.3	42.4
National	33.9	34.0	34.6	34.2	34.8

Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by the end of S5

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
3 + at Level 6 or better					
East Renfrewshire	43.3	43.7	46.5	43.4	42.6
CA Average	28.7	29.4	29.1	27.9	27.4
National	22.8	22.6	22.7	22.7	21.7

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 6 or better					
East Renfrewshire	23.2	25.1	24.8	23.2	24.3
CA Average	12.3	13.1	13.0	13.1	12.7
National	9.3	9.6	9.4	9.9	9.7

Percentage of relevant S4 roll achieving by the end of S6

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
English and Mathematics at Level 3 or better					
East Renfrewshire	98.0	96.5	98.0	97.5	97.0
CA Average	95.4	95.2	95.3	95.3	94.9
National	92.3	92.3	91.6	91.8	91.7

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 3 or better					
East Renfrewshire	97.5	96.3	98.5	97.5	97.2
CA Average	93.8	93.8	94.6	94.0	94.1
National	90.9	91.1	91.3	91.2	91.4

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 4 or better					
East Renfrewshire	92.0	91.2	94.1	93.3	91.1
CA Average	83.6	84.1	85.1	83.8	84.4
National	77.9	78.6	78.6	78.4	78.5

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 5 or better					
East Renfrewshire	67.7	69.0	71.7	72.5	71.0
CA Average	52.2	54.4	55.3	54.1	54.2
National	45.7	46.9	47.2	47.1	47.6

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1 + at Level 6 or better					
East Renfrewshire	64.1	67.3	68.1	68.0	65.3
CA Average	49.1	50.1	50.6	49.4	48.8
National	43.7	43.6	43.5	43.1	43.0

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
3 + at Level 6 or better					
East Renfrewshire	50.2	51.4	53.1	54.8	51.5
CA Average	36.8	37.0	37.8	36.7	35.5
National	31.0	30.7	30.6	30.1	30.0

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
5 + at Level 6 or better					
East Renfrewshire	34.0	37.1	39.0	40.3	37.3
CA Average	24.9	24.6	25.4	25.2	24.4
National	19.7	19.6	19.6	19.4	19.7

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1 + at Level 7 or better					
East Renfrewshire	20.3	21.7	24.1	21.8	24.1
CA Average	15.8	16.4	17.4	17.2	16.1
National	11.6	11.9	12.3	12.1	12.5

Notes:

- (1) CA Average denotes comparator authority average
- (2) Comparator Authorities for East Renfrewshire include:

Comparators	Rating	
East Dunbartonshire	****	'Very Close'
East Lothian	****	'Very Close'
Stirling	***	'Close'
Aberdeenshire	***	'Close'
Midlothian	***	'Close'

- (3) Caution should be exercised when making comparisons with comparator authority averages if there are a number of authorities that are not extremely or very close.

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