

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE) COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE , on 13 SEPTEMBER 2016.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), David Dodds, Alexander Davidson, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Carl John, Sarah King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan and Andrew Miller; Appointed Representatives Myra Macpherson, Margaret Russell and Lynne McEwen

Apologies – Councillors Tony Boyle, Dave King and George Paul and Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the Minute of its meeting held on 28 June 2016. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT: WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL

Prior to consideration of the Education Scotland Report the committee agreed to go into Private Session whilst the Depute Chief Executive made a brief statement in relation to recent changes of senior management at the school.

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the action plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the Education Scotland report published on 10 May 2016. The Education Scotland report, Education Scotland Quality Indicators and the School Improvement Plan were attached as appendices to the report.

The inspection found the following key strengths at the school:-

- The willingness of young people in senior stages to take on leadership and citizenship roles;
- Improvements in attainment at Higher level by S5 and S6;
- The school's approaches, working with its associated primary schools, to promoting young people's skills in numeracy and mathematics; and
- The quality of community and partnership working

The Education Scotland report continued to advise that a continuous improvement plan had been agreed with staff and West Lothian Council

on how it might continue to improve the school with the following actions agreed :-

- ❖ Improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school;
- ❖ Continue to improve the curriculum, in particular young people's experiences from S1 to S3; and
- ❖ Improve the approaches to meeting the learning needs of all young people, in particular those with social, emotional and behavioural needs.

The acting Head Teacher, Lisa Grubb, advised committee that following the inspection a number of actions had been carried out which had led to improvements and included the creation of four hubs for pupils with varying degrees of behavioural needs, the updating of the school behaviour policy, training for staff on handling challenging behaviour, restructuring of the Pupil Council and the development of a Skills Development Programme for pupils.

Staff would also continue to work with the community and the Parent Council to improve the curriculum and welcomed support from West Lothian Council to implement the actions agreed with Education Scotland.

There then followed a number of questions from the committee in relation to the new purpose built high school. The Head of Education explained that the design of the build was very visionary and would take all the varying pupil needs into account and that a series of meetings were now being undertaken with staff to start preparing for the transition.

It was also confirmed that as part of the new build the space known as the "undercroft" would be maintained so that pupils continued to have access to a range of vocational skills such as mechanics and construction.

The report concluded that as a result of the inspection the school required additional support and more time to make the necessary improvements. However the acting Head Teacher along with the support of the Parent Council and West Lothian Council would continue to build capacity for improvement and had clearly demonstrated their commitment to getting on with the job. Education Scotland would continue to monitor progress and would carry out a further inspection within one year of the publication of the report

And finally the Depute Chief Executive provided the committee with an overview of how the issues at the school had been first identified by West Lothian Council and the actions and interventions that had taken place since in supporting the school and its staff.

It was recommended that committee note the contents of the report and endorse the school's plan for improvement.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the update from the acting Head Teacher;
2. To record a note of appreciation to the acting Head Teacher and her staff for continuing to make every effort to tackle the identified improvements at the school; and
3. To note the update with regards to the new replacement West Calder High School.

4. EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT: LOW PORT PRIMARY SCHOOL UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Development) providing details of the improvement plan to address the areas identified in the Education Scotland report published on 30 August 2016. The Education Scotland report and the School Improvement Plan were attached as appendices to the report.

The committee was advised that Low Port Primary School had been inspected in January 2013 and had been supported by Education Scotland and the Local Authority to meet the recommendations in the original and subsequent reports. Recently the school had been visited again by Education Scotland.

Under the leadership of the Head Teacher the school had continued to build on the progress made up to March 2015 when a joint authority/Education Scotland validated self-evaluation had taken place. The Head Teacher supported by the principal teacher had demonstrated very effective leadership which has had a positive impact for learners in the school.

The Head Teacher, Jane Livingston, supported by the Chair of the Parent Council, Jeremy Fuller, advised committee of the positive working relationships at the school and that stability within the management team has had a great effect at the school with children having a more positive attitude to learning and being more engaged in their learning.

The Chair thanked the Head Teacher and the Chair of the Parent Council for their presentation noting that the position in which the school found itself today was much more positive than last time.

The report concluded that as a result of the progress made by the school no further visits were required by Education Scotland.

It was recommended that the committee note the contents of the report and that Education Scotland would make no further visits in connection with the inspection of January 2013.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update from the Head Teacher.

5. WORKPLAN

The committee noted the contents of the workplan (copies of which had been circulated). The committee then heard the Depute Chief Executive advise that Education Scotland inspection reports were not included on the workplan as it was not known when they would be carrying out the inspections. However they would be slotted in as and when reports were due to be published and brought before the committee.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the workplan; and
2. To note the update by the Depute Chief Executive in relation to Education Scotland inspection reports.