

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 13TH SEPTEMBER 2011.

Present – Councillors Andrew Miller (Chair), Ellen Glass, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Danny Logue and Greg McCarra; Mr John Hendrie and Mr David Mitchell (substituting for Mr Eric Lumsden).

Apologies – Councillor Jim Walker; Mrs Myra McPherson, Rev. W. Richard Houston; Mr Eric Lumsden.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

For the benefit of members of the panel, the Chair clarified that whilst HMI reports were available in the public domain, they were discussed in private at PDSP meetings as discussions could lead to information being divulged that otherwise should remain private.

2. MINUTE

The panel confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 30th August 2011.

Business arising from the minute was dealt with as follows:-

Item No. 5, Page 325 – Officers undertook to advise members of the panel later the same day as to when information relating to the oversubscription for Wraparound Care at Williamston Primary School would be available.

PRIVATE SESSION

The panel resolved that Items 3 - 5 undernoted be taken in private exempt under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. BROXBURN ACADEMY -

In January 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Broxburn Academy Nursery School. At the time of the inspection the roll was 910. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 8th March 2011.

The school had a number of particular strengths:-

- Polite and well-behaved young people who related well with staff.
- A supportive ethos and learning environment.
- The range of partnership working to support learning.
- The effectiveness of mentoring for newly qualified teachers.

The following areas of improvement had been agreed with the school and

education authority:-

- Raise standards of achievement and attainment.
- Raise teachers' expectations of young people's capacity to take responsibility and achieve.
- Further develop teacher' approaches to ensuring appropriate pace and challenge in lessons, to meet learners' needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation on improving learning, teaching and the curriculum.
- Increase the impact of leadership, by strengthening teamwork at all levels.

HM Inspectors would carry out a follow-through inspection visit within one year of the publication of the report and would report to parents on the extent to which the school had improved. Following that visit, HMI could continue to check the improvements the school had made. They could also carry out a second follow-through inspection within two years of the original inspection report. If a second follow-through inspection visit was necessary then it would result in another report to parents on the extent of improvement that the school had made.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the school's improvement plan. The Chair of the Parent Council spoke of their continued support for the Headteacher and the improvement plan.

Decisions

1. To note the contents of the report.
 2. That the outcome of the Education Service School Review be brought back to a future meeting of the panel.
 3. To note that the HMI follow-up report would be brought back to a future meeting of the panel.
4. HARRYSMUIR PRIMARY SCHOOL, LIVINGSTON -

In January 2011, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Harrysmuir Primary School, Livingston. At the time of the inspection the roll was 405. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 1st March 2011.

The school had a number of particular strengths:-

- Well mannered and respectful children.
- The leadership of the headteacher in taking forward school improvement.
- Staff willingness to share responsibility for and take leadership of

school improvement.

- The commitment of all staff to the care and welfare of every child.
- The school's effectiveness in working as a team and with partners to support children's learning.

The following areas of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority to continue to improve the quality of education:-

- Continue to develop a whole school programme for the development of literacy skills.
- Within the planned development of pupil profiles, develop further opportunities for children to contribute to the planning of their learning.

Harrysmuir Primary School had demonstrated that through robust self-evaluation, the school had a clear sense of direction and would be able to progress its work and bring about further improvement. As a result of the very good quality of education at the school, HMI would make no further visits in connection with the inspection. The school would produce a progress report for parents in 2 years.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the school's improvement plan.

Decisions -

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To endorse the school's improvement plan.
3. To commend the Headteacher, staff and children on the positive report.

5. PARKHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, WEST CALDER -

In November 2010, HM Inspectors of Schools had visited Parkhead Primary School, West Calder. At the time of the inspection the roll was 439, including 67 nursery pupils. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 25th January 2011.

The school had a number of particular strengths:-

- The learning experiences and achievements of children in the nursery class and at the early stages.
- The approaches to meeting the needs of all learners.
- Well-behaved, friendly children and their enthusiasm for learning.
- The strong commitment and sense of professional responsibility demonstrated by staff.

- The headteacher's leadership of improvement and change.

The following area of improvement had been agreed with the school and education authority to continue to improve the quality of education:-

- Continue to build on the recent improvements to the curriculum and raise children's achievements further.

The inspection team was able to rely on the school's robust self-evaluation, and as a result, it had been able to change its focus during the inspection to support further improvements within the school.

The inspectors noted that the school provided a very good quality of education and as a result, they would make no further visits in connection with the inspection. The education authority would inform parents about the schools progress as part of the authority's arrangements for reporting to parents on the quality of its school.

During the discussion, the Headteacher provided an overview of the school's improvement plan.

Decisions -

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To endorse the school's improvement plan.
3. To commend the Headteacher, staff and children on the positive report.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

The panel considered a report by the Head of Planning & Economic Development (copies of which had been circulated) which provided an update on the implementation of the development plan.

The panel recalled that when it had considered a report on the Strategy for School Consultations August 2011-February 2012 in June 2011, members had requested an update on the progress of the development plan, prior to the report being forwarded to the Education Executive.

The report provided the panel with full details and the latest information on:-

- The planned replacement of the Edinburgh & Lothian Structure Plan with a Strategic Development Plan.
- The decline of house building within the three Core Development Areas in West Lothian and an overview of variety of planning applications that had been received within each of the three areas.
- The impact the lack of infrastructure, including education infrastructure, was having on CDA and the measures that were being put in place by the council and the Government to encourage development.

The report concluded that the key to delivering an increase in new house completions was to address infrastructure constraints. The council was already providing assistance to delivering housing land, where appropriate, for example through review of school catchments and provision of school extensions. Further measures, along similar lines, to assist the house building industry, would continue to be explored and delivered, in so far as the resources of the council allow.

During the discussion, it was suggested that when the Strategy for Schools Consultation report was referred to the Education Executive it should include reference to having been considered by the PDSP. It was also suggested that officers should advise potential developers to give consideration to further consultation with the community of Winchburgh in relation to the development of the CDA.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. SCHOOL REVIEW PROGRAMME SESSION 2011/12 -

The panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) (copies of which had been circulated) bringing attention to the school review programme for Session 2011/12 and providing an update on the issues identified through the school review programme in Session 2010/11.

The report explained that the council had a statutory obligation to monitor the quality of educational provision in its schools and to ensure high quality learning and teaching, leadership and management with a focus on continuous improvement. The report described the variety of methods used to carry out evaluations and the factors which were taken into account when constructing the annual School Review Programme.

The findings of the 2010/11 programme had demonstrated that staff were committed to improving their school through collegiate working and that in all schools, there was evidence of good progress towards the implementation of a Curriculum for Excellence. The areas and schools which would be focussed on during the 2011/12 review were detailed in the report.

During the discussion, it was suggested that officers should consider including a Parent Council representative on the School Review Team.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. SQA RESULTS 2011 – PRE-APPEAL -

The panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Quality

Assurance) (copies of which had been circulated) which outlined the performance of West Lothian pupils in SQA examinations diet 2011. Information in the report was based on the 2011 pre-appeal data.

The panel noted information on overall performance in S4 and S5, as well as other improvements which had all contributed to the continued overall improvement in SQA examinations.

Members heard that a further report would be presented to the panel following conclusion of appeals. Officers would also provide progress reports on the further development of master classes for maths and English.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. PARTNER PROVIDER PERFORMANCE – SCHOOL SESSION 2010-2011 -

The panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) (copies of which had been circulated) which provided information on education services examination of partner provider performance during 2010-11.

The report summarised the key strengths and areas for improvement which had been identified from education service support visits to the following 11 partner providers: Big Bird, Bright Horizons, Careshare, Crofthead Hickory House Playgroup, Donaldsons, First Adventures, First Class, Newyearfield Farm Playgroup, Rainbow, Wee Gems Livingston Ltd and Wee Gems Ltd. Information on the support provided to the partners in relation to recommendations made was also fully detailed in the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. PUPIL CONSULTATION 2010/11

The panel considered a report by the Depute Chief Executive (copies of which had been circulated) advising of the outcome of consultation meetings held with pupils in school year 2010/11.

Consultation meetings had been held with groups of P7, S4, S5 and S6 pupils during 2010/11 as set out in the Education Services Engagement and Involvement Strategy. The consultations had been timed to capture the views of pupils as they left primary and secondary education. The S5 Christmas leavers' consultation which had been due to take place in December 2010 had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather. Based on the success of the consultation meetings held with leavers from special schools last year, consultation with pupils from Cedarbank, Ogilvie and Pinewood schools had also taken place.

The report provided full and detailed information on each of the

consultation meetings that had been held during the year and the views which had been expressed by pupils at those meeting. The results of each meeting were fed back to Headteachers to ensure that issues raised were dealt with in each school. Issues raised may also lead to service redesign and policy change in the future.

Decisions

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To note that officers would review the careers advice service that was being provided across schools.