

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 4 DECEMBER 2012

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, John McGinty, Andrew Miller and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Eric Lumsden, Myra MacPherson and Graham Stormont.

Apologies – Lynne McEwen, Appointed Representative.

Councillor McGinty and Graham Stormont gave their apologies as they anticipated having to leave the meeting early.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Borrowman declared a general non-financial interest in that his wife was a school teacher in West Lothian, however, he participated in consideration of all items of business.

Councillor Dodds declared a general non-financial interest in that his wife worked as a nursery nurse within West Lothian Council and his son worked as a teacher within West Lothian Council. He also declared a non-financial interest as a member of the Education Institute for Scotland, however, he participated in consideration of all items of business.

2. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of the meeting held on 20 November 2012 as being a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

The Head of Education (Development) confirmed that the information requested by Members relating to the Support for Physical Education Report on the percentage of pupils involved in the delivery of the PE targets had been circulated. A further update would be available in the near future confirming the number of schools meeting the target to deliver the two hours of PE a week.

3. SCHOOL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on the current arrangements for assessment of pupils in primary and secondary schools, which were under review in light of the Attainment Strategy.

The Performance and Customer Manager advised that pupil progress was measured through primary and secondary schools with a view to

maximising attainment and through the maximisation of attainment increasing the chance that each pupil would progress to a positive destination.

Primary school pupils were assessed by using the Progress in Mathematics and Progress in English standardised tests, which enabled schools to measure year on year progress and value added.

Secondary schools used Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), administered at S1 stage. This standardised assessment helped identify pupils' strengths, weaknesses and learning preferences providing accurate, reliable and objective assessment data which was essential to the shaping of an individual's learning. Student attainment at secondary level was assessed by performance in Scottish Qualification Authority Standard Grade, Higher and Advanced Higher Examinations.

During the course of the discussion the Panel requested information on how schools had been measuring against their predicted performance levels at Standard Grade, Higher Grade and Advanced Higher Grade. The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) advised that work was being carried out to assess secondary schools over the next few years. It was noted that an update report would be submitted to a meeting of the Education PDSP in early spring next year to allow comparisons to be made on predictions against performance levels.

In conclusion, it was reported that assessment activity was backed up by a robust process of tracking and monitoring in primary and secondary schools. In order to maximise the ability to track progress from primary to secondary level accurately a new testing framework which would be able to be applied at primary and the lower level of secondary was under investigation.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To agree that an update report would be submitted to the Education PDSP in early spring 2013.

4. S5/S6 CAMPUS UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on the work carried out to create a campus for S5 and S6 pupils in conjunction with the local college.

Jim Cameron, Head Teacher of St Margaret's Academy and Paul Durkin, Senior Phase Development Officer, provided a verbal update on the progress made within West Lothian Campus. It was noted that the aim was to ensure that all learners had the opportunity of a personalised senior phase entitlement. Pupils were able to access courses which best suited them by travelling between schools and West Lothian College studying a much wider variety of subjects, both academic and vocational.

Positive feedback received from pupils encouraged a significant move towards the principle of 'any place any time' learning contained in Building the Curriculum 3. Young people were more likely to move into a positive and sustainable post school destination if they stayed on past their first statutory leaving date. It was therefore essential to provide young people with a curriculum which encouraged them to stay on and take up their senior phase entitlement.

The numbers travelling had steadily increased since 2010 as follows:

- Session 2010/11 saw a 146% increase;
- Session 2011/12 increased a further 18%; and
- Session 2012/13 increased again by 6%.

There were 296 pupils travelling across the Campus at the time the report was written. The Campus e-prospectus was launched in March 2011 enabling learners in S5 and S6 in all 11 secondary schools and those supporting them to access details of learning opportunities available to them. This enabled pupils to progress through courses not available to them at their base school.

One of the major obstacles highlighted was arranging transport to ensure that all pupils accessing the campus moved safely and timely between schools and West Lothian College and back to their homes. Contracting work to local travel companies and First Bus had ensured that travel arrangements supported each learner's experience rather than become a barrier to it.

In conclusion, West Lothian Campus continued to be developed successfully and was well set to extend provision for S4-S6 pupils in session 2013-2014.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the verbal update from Jim Cameron, Head Teacher, St Margaret's Academy and Paul Durkin, Senior Phase Development Officer;
2. To recommend that a report be submitted to the Education PDSP in twelve months time to provide an update on developments within the Campus; and
3. To note that the Chair on behalf of the Panel, congratulated all staff involved for the excellent work carried out.

Councillor McGinty gave his apologies as he had to leave the meeting at this point and would not take part in consideration of further items of business on the agenda.

5. PROPOSALS TO COMMEMORATE THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES - FIRST WORLD WAR

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on the arrangements for the commemoration within schools of the outbreak of hostilities on 28 July 1914.

The report advised that schools made use of World War One as a curricular topic as a matter of routine and would make reference to the anniversary of the start of the conflict in school year 2014/15. Schools would develop and deliver their own resources and would have access to a range of resources shared through Education Scotland and other forums. Information was also contained in GLOW with materials produced in partnership with PoppyScotland on the meaning of remembrance.

Remembrance assemblies would be held in schools and participation by schools in community remembrance events would be carried out as a matter of routine. Additional activities linked to the outbreak of hostilities would be held which included a performance of 'The Scarf', a World War One themed play by West Calder High School. It was also anticipated that other events would occur, however, detailed planning for school year 2014/15 had not yet commenced.

The precise date of the outbreak of hostilities was considered to be 28 July 1914, the date on which Austro-Hungary invaded Serbia following the assassination on 28 June 1914 of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. Schools would be unable to commemorate this date as it would fall within the school holiday period. It was anticipated that remembrance day events in November 2014 would form the focus of the commemoration.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2011/12

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive on the performance and quality of Education Services for school year 2011/12.

The Education and Cultural Services Standards and Quality Report for school year 2011/12 was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The report advised that the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 required education authorities to report on their improvement objectives. West Lothian Council fulfilled this requirement by publication and updating of the Single Outcome Agreement, Corporate Plan and Education Services Management Plan. The Act also required authorities to report on their success in meeting their improvement objectives. West Lothian Council fulfilled this requirement by the annual publication of the

Standards and Quality Report.

The Standards and Quality Report set out the achievements of the Education Services in terms of the Curriculum for Excellence entitlements and the next steps that Education Services would take in 2012/13. The report would be published electronically for use by schools, parent councils, parents, partners and other stakeholders.

During the course of the meeting the Panel raised their concerns about the difficulties pupils had been experiencing using GLOW support system. The Head of Education advised that this system had improved considerably over the past year. It was also hoped that the system would be migrated to a new improved platform which would enable all children to use this facility. Ongoing work would continue to develop GLOW to support cross campus learning. The Panel recommended that an update report be submitted to a meeting of the Education PDSP following the 2013 Easter holiday period to provide an update on progress made.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the appendix to the report;
2. To note that an update report would be submitted to the Education PDSP meeting following the 2013 Easter holiday period to provide an update on progress made.

Graham Stormont gave his apologies as he had to leave the meeting at this point and would not take part in consideration of further items of business on the agenda.

7. PARTNER PROVIDER EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing information on the support given to Pre-School Partner Providers to ensure continuing improvement in the quality of education.

The report advised that West Lothian Council was recognised nationally as providing high quality pre-school education. Pre-school provision in West Lothian comprised of early years centres, nursery classes and partner providers.

The report provided details on the education support for improvement advising that evidence of partner providers' performance was gathered by the Education Support Officer during regular quality assurance visits. Follow up support visits were carried out when required and annual review of the provision carried out. Areas for improvement identified during session 2011/2012 were:

- To ensure the effectiveness of planning and assessment;
- To ensure high quality activities and resources were provided that supported and challenged all children's learning;

- To ensure that all partner provider staff continued their professional development to meet the needs of high quality pre-school education provision; and
- To ensure the systematic and robust monitoring practice of pre-school provision.

In conclusion, it was noted that a range of education support was provided to pre-school partner providers in response to quality issues and to promote continued improvement and professional development. In most establishments the education support had impacted positively on the quality of pre-school provision and early level learning. Within the current contractual period 2010-2013 this had been evidenced in the council support visit reports and Care Inspectorate reports. Also within Education Scotland (Inspectorate of Education) reports for First Adventures Nursery and Careshare Nursery.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. PROGRESS AGAINST REVIEW ACTION PLAN PUMPHERSTON AND UPHALL STATION COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pumpherstion and Uphall Station Community Primary School was reviewed by an Education Development team in November 2011 as part of the annual review programme. At the time of the review the school role was 141 plus 40 children in the nursery.

The report advised that the particular strengths of the school were identified as:

- The positive and welcoming ethos permeating all areas of the school and nursery;
- The supportive and caring relationships among all staff and between staff and pupils;
- Hard working and committed support staff;
- Partnership with parents, community and other agencies;
- Willingness of staff to take on additional responsibilities to support wider achievement.

The evaluations for the school were identified in the report. The Education Officer advised that at the time of writing the report the improvement through self evaluation was evaluated as being weak, however, this had improved to being satisfactory.

Areas for improvement identified within the report were:

- To develop clear quality assurance procedures to take forward school improvements;
- To develop more consistent approaches to improving learning and teaching; and
- To increase the impact of leadership by strengthening teamwork at all levels.

The action plan attached as an appendix to the report was devised by the school to meet the identified improvements. It was decided that the school would benefit from continuous support to drive forward improvements and monitor progress.

In conclusion, the school had made satisfactory progress towards the implementation of the action plan in response to the Council review. The Education Officer would continue to work with the school on a regular basis and would support the new head teacher to drive forward the improvement agenda.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the progress made by the school to date;
2. To recommend that an update report be submitted to a meeting of the Education PDSP if any future concerns arose; and
3. To agree that Alison Watson would attend a meeting of the Parent Council to provide an update on the review report and the progress made and also provide feedback from the Education PDSP.

9. PROGRESS AGAINST HMI ACTION PLAN FOR BROXBURN ACADEMY

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing an update on the progress made by the school against the action plan arising from the HMI Report.

Broxburn Academy was inspected by HMI in January 2011. The particular strengths of the school were identified as:

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

The evaluations for Broxburn Academy were detailed in the report with

the areas for improvement being:

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

The action plan, attached as an appendix to the report, was devised by the school to meet the identified improvements. It was decided that the school would benefit from continuous support rather than the formal review in process. It was also noted that the school, working closely with the authority, made good progress in developing the areas for improvement.

In conclusion, the school continued to make good progress towards addressing the areas for improvement identified in the HMI Report. HMI would make a return visit later in the session and the action plan would be amended to take account of the results of that visit. The Panel recommended that an update report be submitted to the Education PDSP following the return visit by HMI.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the progress made by the school to date; and
2. To agree that there would be an update report submitted to the Education PDSP following the return visit by HMI.