

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE on 25 MARCH 2013.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Stuart Borrowman, Tony Boyle (substituting for David Dodds), Dave King (substituting for John McGinty) and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Lynne McEwen, Graham Stormont and Alan Wright (substituting for Eric Lumsden); Senior People's Representative Elizabeth Hands.

Apologies – Councillors David Dodds, John McGinty and Andrew Miller; Appointed Representatives John Hendrie, Eric Lumsden and Myra MacPherson.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of the meeting held on 5 March 2013 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the Minute.

3. PRIVATE SESSION

The Panel considered that agenda item 6 – Woodmuir Primary School: HMI Report and agenda item 7 – Burnhouse Campus: HMI Report be taken in private (exempt under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973).

4. WOODMUIR PRIMARY SCHOOL: HMI REPORT

Woodmuir Primary School was inspected by HM Inspectors of Schools in November 2012. The school is a small denominational, rural school ranging from P1-P7 pupils. At the time of the inspection the role of the school was 27. The headteacher, who had a remit for two schools, had been in post for six years and the principal teacher had been in post for five years. The report and main findings (which had been circulated) were published on 22 January 2013.

The school had a number of particular strengths:

- The wide range of experiences provided by the school which enrich children's learning;
- Staff expertise and success in meeting individual children's learning needs, including strong partnership working;
- The dedication of staff in creating a positive culture of continuous

improvement under the strong leadership of the headteacher;

- The school's success in securing the active support of parents and the local community.

Woodmuir Primary School 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 report, HMI would make no further visits in connection with this inspection. The school would produce a progress report for parents in two years.

During the course of the discussion the headteacher advised that members of staff were delighted with the positive HMI report and would continue to improve the curriculum to help improve children's attainment.

The Parent Council representative stated that parents were happy with the positive report received from HM Inspectors of Schools, which was a true reflection of the school strengths and commitment of staff under the leadership of the headteacher. The children also had a great deal of input within the school curricular areas, which has led to them being more confident in their outlook. Staff members also kept parents informed and up to date and parents, children and staff were looking forward to the new build school being completed.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, commended staff on the positive report received from HM Inspectors of Schools.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To endorse the school's plan for improvement.

5. WEST LOTHIAN SECONDARY BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT SERVICE BURNHOUSE CAMPUS: HMI REPORT

Burnhouse School was inspected in November 2011. Following the inspection an intensive action plan to bring about necessary improvements was put in place. HMI continued to engage with the school and in December 2012 a return visit was carried out to evaluate progress made within the areas for improvement that had been identified in the November 2011 inspection.

Young people were now learning well, felt safe, valued and respected and were making progress across a range of curricular areas towards more suitable levels of National Qualification. The young people's needs were identified and reviewed through effective new arrangements and tasks and activities better matched their individual needs and interests.

The headteacher and her staff were able to support early and effective intervention to ensure that young people were maintained in their mainstream schools. A small number of pupils would continue to be fully

supported in the Burnhouse Campus in partnership and collaboration with their mainstream school. The Education Officer for the school would continue to work with the headteacher on the school improvement plan and would monitor and evaluate its progress over the next year at regular quality assurance visits.

Burnhouse Campus would be able to progress its work and bring about further improvement. HM Inspectors of Schools were confident that the school would be able to build on the very good progress achieved and would make no more visits following the continued inspection.

During the course of the discussion the headteacher advised that one of the key aspects for improvement was to provide early and effective intervention to retain children in their own school community and fully support them in their mainstream schools. It was also noted that working with partnership agencies to support young people and their families helped prepare individuals for adult life and develop skills for life and work. Opportunities were also available within the curriculum to access music, art, home economics, ICT and personal and social education.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, congratulated the headteacher on the excellent work carried out and acknowledged the significant progress made.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To acknowledge the significant progress made.

6. ON TRACK WITH LEARNING

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Schools with Education Support providing information on the introduction of software developed by Angus and North Lanarkshire Councils to West Lothian schools to support them in the challenges of tracking and monitoring pupil progress in learning.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised that the On Track with Learning system was developed by North Lanarkshire and Angus councils to support their schools in successfully tracking and monitoring progress in individual pupil learning through the Broad General Education (BGE). An electronic planning tool allowed teachers to take a more focussed approach to planning the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, which supported pupil involvement and enabled staff to share their planning with colleagues. Staff members could also share their methods of assessing and measuring success in pupils learning. Teacher plans could also be shared and worked on collaboratively, supporting curriculum continuity across stages of learning.

The report advised that the On Track with Learning system was being piloted in some West Lothian schools with a view to making it available to all schools by August 2013.

The Panel then noted a presentation by Laura Travers, Teacher and Margaret Johns, Headteacher, St Joseph's Primary School on the use of the On Track with Learning system. An overview on how to plan lessons using the system was provided as well as how to analyse the outcomes.

Planning and assessment using the new curriculum was built into the On Track with Learning tool with teachers able to record assessment by traffic lighting and writing comments. The headteacher advised that the system was very efficient and easy to use.

In conclusion, the On Track with Learning tool provided a solution to the challenge of supporting schools with the enhanced expectations for tracking and monitoring pupil progress in learning through the Broad General Education. It also supported planning for curriculum continuity.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and the presentation carried out.

7. SQA RESULTS 2012 POST-APPEAL

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) providing information relating to the post-appeal performance of West Lothian pupils in SQA examinations in 2012.

The report recalled that the Panel had previously considered pre-appeal SQA results. Post appeal results had now been published and an analysis of the performance for S4 Standard Grades and S5 Higher Grades for the period 2008-2012 were detailed in the report. Further performance details were attached as appendices to the report, which included a school by school breakdown.

The Head of Schools with Education Support advised that the overall performance in SQA examinations in West Lothian continued to show improvement, which was the result of a performance driven culture which focused on attainment and quality assurance visits to each school.

The Panel noted the concerns raised by Councillor Borrowman that the report did not reflect the fact that pupils in West Lothian had a lower pass rate in Higher grades than comparative schools in Scotland.

The Head of Schools with Education Support stated that ongoing work would continue to be carried out to address performance issues, where appropriate.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

Graham Stormont left the meeting at this point and was therefore unable to participate in consideration of the remaining items of business.

8. SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS RESULTS 2011/2012

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Area Services providing details of the School leaver Destination Results (SLDR) for 2011/12 based on the School Leavers' Destinations Review carried out by Skills Development Scotland in September 2012. Appendices to the report provided details of the SLDR 2011-12 by local authority, initial destinations by school and an analysis for the period.

The Community Regeneration Manager advised that in 2011/12, 89.8% of West Lothian's school leavers progressed into positive destinations, an increase of 0.8% on the 2010/11 level. This was the highest ever level of positive destinations for West Lothian. Out of 32 local authorities, West Lothian was joint 18th in relation to comparator authorities in Scotland. More Choices More Chances key workers provided support in schools which was found to be beneficial. It was also noted that development of the partnership with West Lothian College in the joint delivery of Higher National units and courses within the West Lothian Campus was ongoing.

In conclusion, a full analysis of West Lothian's positive results was carried out which demonstrated that the key strategies put in place over the past four years were proving to be effective and successful in targeting key groups of young people in West Lothian.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE YEAR 11 PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services providing an update on the progress of the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Year 11 application to Creative Scotland, who grant the funding for YMI.

The Community Arts Co-ordinator advised that the Community Arts service would deliver and manage the 2013/2014 YMI programme. The programme would run from August 2013 to June 2014 and would include fourteen projects plus investment in management, promotion and evaluation.

West Lothian's allocation of YMI funding was £250,000. The outline cost for each project was detailed in the report. All contracts were advertised through Quick Quote with a response date for quotes from suppliers of 28 February 2013. Contracts for the delivery of the projects detailed in the application would be awarded following confirmation of funding. The projects outlined in the YMI application would be extremely beneficial to the young people who would participate, providing them with opportunities to work closely with professional musicians, creating performance opportunities and developing their listening, creative and critical thinking

skills. They would also develop increased self confidence and self esteem as well as providing an enjoyable experience for the young people.

In conclusion, the 2013/2014 YMI programme would make a significant contribution to enabling the participants to embrace the principles and capacities of Curriculum for Excellence through a high quality programme of music making activities.

During the course of the discussion the Chair, on behalf of the Panel, wished to congratulate pupils who had participated in the project and who were involved in high level performances previously carried out.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To agree to forward the report to a suitable meeting of the Education Executive for approval.