

Director's Report: September 2010

This report summarises some of the achievements of the Department over the last year, together with areas for development.

Shared Risk Assessment Report on the Council: March 2010

The Council has recently been scrutinised by inspection agencies. A number of strengths were highlighted in relation to Children and Families in this report. These included:

- Progress in maximising opportunities and learning for children
- Educational attainment is improving
- Both social work and child protection services have demonstrated improvements following critical inspection reports
- Absence rates are in line with comparator authorities
- Exclusion rates are better than other authorities
- Overall positive results in school inspections (34 pre-school, 11 primary, 4 secondary)
- Increase in young people walking to school and taking school meals

Satisfaction with Schools

Satisfaction with schools has improved significantly. In the annual neighbourhood survey, excluding "don't knows" the percentage of residents satisfied with schools improved from 2007-2009 as follows:

- Primary from 73% to 90%
- Secondary from 65% to 87%
- Nursery from 68% to 88%

Feedback from MORI survey of Children and Families staff

The following highlights emerged from the MORI survey:

- 80% of teachers felt very or fairly satisfied with their job
- 71% of respondents felt satisfied with their present job (compared with 62% across the Council)
- 70% of respondents felt that the department kept its staff either fully or fairly well informed (compared with 58% across the Council)

Sickness absence in the Department overall has improved by 8% from 4.62% in 2008/09 to 4.26% in 2009/10. Sickness absence amongst teaching staff has also improved from 7.8 working days lost per employee in 2008/9 to 7.4 days in 2009/10.

Early Years

A new Early Years Strategy and Action Plan based on the Early Years Framework were approved in March 2010 and progress is as follows:

A joint agency 0-3s framework is in place. 533 practitioners have attended training for birth to three.

Approximately 500 vulnerable children and families are supported intensively through Child and Families Centres. New centres are developing to provide a more integrated approach to education, childcare and support to parents, for example, Cowgate, Craigroyston, Moffat, Fort and Queensferry.

Edinburgh's joint agency Supporting Parents and Carers Framework is being implemented. Surestart projects have supported 2,140 parents and 3,447 children aged 0-3 years.

All local authority early years staff meet Scottish Social Service Council qualification requirements.

Two new early years posts have been created and are about to be piloted within the nursery schools and classes in order to improve career progression for early years staff. The posts are Early Years Worker and Senior Early Years Worker. The seven nursery classes that are piloting the Early Years Worker post are Forthview, Granton, Buckstone, Craigour Park, Kirkliston, Queensferry and Gylemuir. There will be two Senior Early Years posts piloted in Lochrin and Spinney Lane Nursery School.

Primary Schools

There have been significant improvements in attainment in primary schools. The percentage of pupils attaining expected levels at Primary 7 have improved from:

- 78.4% to 80.7% in reading
- 64.3% to 69% in writing
- 74% to 75% in maths

There is a reduction in class sizes in Primary 1-3 in positive action schools. However there is an increase in class sizes over 25. Full details will be available following the annual school census at the end of September.

Secondary Schools

Attainment at secondary school has improved in 2010, for average and above average attaining pupils. Since 2007/8

- % pupils achieving 1+ Advanced Higher (SCQF Level 7) improved from 14% to 18% and is 4 percentage points above the national average by the end of S6
- % pupils achieving 3+ Highers or equivalent (SCQF Level 6) improved from 32% to 36% and is 3 percentage points above the national average by the end of S6
- % pupils attaining 5+ Standard Grades or equivalent (SCQF Level 5 or above) improved from 48% to 52% and is 2 percentage points above the national average by the end of S6
- Attainment at S4 for pupils gaining 5 Standard Grades at Level 3 (Standard Grade 1 – 6) has increased from 89% to 90% but is still below the national average.

Special Schools

The range of provision in special schools and the range of specialist provision for pupils with additional support needs were highlighted as a strength in the Additional Support for Learning evaluation process. Very good specialist nursery provision has been developed at Braidburn and Oaklands. There has been a significant reduction in out-of-authority placements.

Additional Support Needs Services

The Hospital and Outreach Service was commended by HMIE for their commitment to all young people achieving success in education, the quality of relationships between staff and young people and the determination of the learners to achieve in spite of significant barriers.

Exclusions

An early intervention service of 36 staff has been established to provide support to children at risk of being looked after or excluded from school. Permanent exclusions from school have reduced significantly and are lower than the national average from:

- 13 to 5 at primary
- 37 to 20 at secondary
- 4 to 2 at special

Children Looked After

We have developed a Corporate Parenting Strategy for children looked after. We have strengthened our support for looked after children from a low base:

- All looked after children now have an allocated social worker
- The percentage of children leaving care achieving SCQF level 3 in English and Maths has improved from 38.9% to 47.2%.
- The number of children placed for adoption has increased from 31 to 43.

There was considerable improvement over the last year in inspection grades received by residential, fostering and adoption services. These services are inspected annually by the Care Commission. The number of settings grades good or better has improved from 50% to 81%.

Wider Achievement

99% of our schools are participating in the Eco Schools programme. 616 young people achieved Duke of Edinburgh awards in 2009/10, 217 more than in 2008/09 and 3 times more than in 2007/08. All primary and secondary schools were accredited as Health Promoting with only 1 nursery school and 1 special school not accredited as at the end of session. The Active Schools programme continues to run successfully and we are pleased to confirm that funding has been agreed for the next four years.

Walking to school

The percentage of pupils walking to school has increased from 51.5% in 2008 to 54.9% in 2009. The percentage of pupils cycling to school has increased from 3.3% to 3.6% in the same time period.

School Meals

We continue to promote school meals to ensure uptake in every school is maximised. In the first ten months of 2009/10 the overall uptake of school meals showed an improvement in all sectors compared with the same period in 2008/09 as illustrated in the following table.

	2008/09 (10 months)	2009/10 (10 months)
Stand-alone Nurseries	25.5%	26.5%
Primary Schools	31.1%	33.1%
Secondary Schools	14.1%	15.3%
Special Schools	62.6%	69.1%
Overall uptake percentage	24.3%	25.9%

Child Protection

The latest inspection of child protection services was published in January 2010. The report recognised the significant improvements which had been made, following a critical inspection report in 2007. The report concluded that the inspectors were confident that the necessary improvements would be made and that no further visits would be necessary. A new multi-agency Child Protection improvement plan has been developed to continue with the improvements identified.

Budget

The Children and Families department has achieved a balanced budget for the first time in many years. Schools received their 2010/11 budget statements in April and their 2009/10 carry-forward statements in June.

Around 60 Parent Council Chairs met to engage in a dialogue on budget priorities. Using an interactive process called collaborative problem solving, groups came together to produce lists of suggested budget reductions or changes to service delivery, which were prioritised and the results shared with the meeting. The results will be shared with all parent councils in the city and will be used to inform our budget deliberations as we move forward.

Curriculum for Excellence

Edinburgh is well placed to implement Curriculum for Excellence with all schools having developed Curriculum Plans for August 2010.

In consultation with stakeholders we have identified 5 priorities for 2010/11. These are:

- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment
- Curriculum, with a focus on evaluation and future planning
- Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing
- GLOW

Getting it Right for Every Child

Good progress is being made in implementing Getting It Right for Every Child in Edinburgh. There is a high level joint agency commitment. A joint agency approach to meeting children's needs earlier and more effectively has been agreed including:

- simplified referral pathways
- common assessment
- single child's plan
- role of lead professional

GIRFEC is being introduced on a phased basis through neighbourhood partnerships with full implementation by August 2011. 1337 staff have participated in training. Early feedback is positive about improved joint agency work and impact on outcomes for children.

Growing Confidence Programme

Growing Confidence offers a programme of support and training to schools to promote positive mental health and emotional well-being amongst staff, pupils and families. One initiative to help us understand our position was the implementation of an online questionnaire. Around 3,000 primary school pupils highlighted pupil's views on themselves, their peers, the school ethos and culture.

New Schools

The second phase of primary school rationalisation was completed with Council approving the closure of a further four primary schools which will ultimately realise annual revenue savings of £1.1m per annum.

The final six schools within the PPP2 programme were successfully delivered and opened on time. Those are Broughton HS, Craigroyston CHS, Tynecastle HS, Holyrood RC HS, St Augustine's RC HS and Forrester HS.

The project to deliver the new Portobello High School remains on budget and on schedule; the planning application is expected to be submitted in September 2010. Funding of approximately £20m was secured from the Scottish Government under the Schools Building Programme to deliver the new James Gillespies High School. The approach to educational design for both new schools in the context of the new Curriculum for Excellence is being seen as very innovative.

Awards

Staff in Children and Families have achieved a number of national awards:

Customer Service Excellence The Government Standard	Queensferry Community High	Winner
Enterprise in Education Award (Scottish Parliament)	Neil McLennan, Head of History at Tynecastle High School	Winner
Scottish Care Accolades - Partnership Working, Early Years and Young People's Services	Prepare Team	Winner

Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care Awards - Innovative Partnership Award	Health Promoting Units Scheme	Winner
Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care Awards - Residential Worker of the Year	Joanne Thomson, Moredun YPC	Commended
UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award	Dean Park Primary School	Winner
Young Scot "Unsung Hero"	Stacey Herriott, senior pupil, Braidburn Special School	Winner
COSLA Awards 2010 - Service Innovation and Improvement	Youth Offending Service	Short Leet
Butler Trusts Annual Awards	Working with Men Project	Winner
National Training Awards	Growing Confidence	Finalist

Areas for further Development

We are committed to making good progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence, the Early Years Strategy, Getting It Right For Every Child and More Choices, More Chances. These will enable us to improve in the following priority areas:

1. Improving support in early years so that problems are identified and addressed early
2. Improving educational outcomes for the lowest achieving 20% of pupils
3. Improving children's health outcomes with a particular focus on healthy weight, emotional & mental health & drug and alcohol misuse
4. Increasing the number of young people in positive destinations
5. Tackling youth crime and reducing anti social behaviour
6. Improving outcomes and life chances for looked after children
7. Continuing to improve outcomes for children in need of protection

Gillian Tee
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21 September 2010