

**Children and Families  
Report for Consultative Committee with Parents  
May 2011**

This report provides a progress update on some of the recent achievements of the Department in meeting our outcomes for children and families in Edinburgh.

**Investors in People**

We are pleased that the Council has already achieved Investors in People accreditation for all services including schools. The Children and Families Department was recently reviewed on 91 criteria and positive evidence was found in 88 of these areas which is a significant achievement. The following areas were highlighted as key strengths:

- The Council is regarded as a good employer
- The Council has a clear purpose
- Staff felt that they had a voice in influencing change
- There is a strong approach to “putting the customer first”
- There is an impressive level of investment in learning and development
- There is a culture of continuous improvement
- Managers encourage a culture of inclusive working by involving people in the development of Service and Improvement Plans
- People believe in and share the Council’s core values
- There is a strong emphasis on learning and development through improved PRDs and CPD activities
- People are motivated to learn
- Managers share knowledge across the department and within their teams

In the forthcoming reassessment in the autumn we are aiming to progress to Silver accreditation. These areas for development were identified and work is now underway to action them:

- People could not give examples of how Council’s investment in people improved performance
- Recognising and celebrating learning and development achievements could be formalised
- Induction of new people and those new to a role requires reinforcement
- Involvement of staff in the identification of improvements to the way they are managed and developed could be improved

**Sickness Absence**

Sickness absence has continued to reduce throughout the Children and Families Department. Current data shows an improvement of 13.9% with sickness absence reducing from 4.26% to 3.67%.

## **Early Years**

We have piloted the post of senior nursery nurse in a number of establishments this year. An evaluation of the pilot is almost complete and this will make recommendations about next steps. Initial feedback indicates that this has been very positive and is in line with national developments around developing leadership capacity within the early years workforce.

We are committed to improving our services for 0-3 year olds. We are currently rolling out comprehensive training to staff to complement national guidance. Our services also have a key role in developing support to parents, supporting transition and being able to recognise any barriers to a child's development at an early stage

Our commitment to the Early Years Framework has ensured that we have maintained our play development staff and training is available to promote outdoor learning and play at home. There are some very good examples of practice in Edinburgh on the Learning and Teaching Scotland website. Liberton Nursery School is an excellent example of how the Forest School initiative can happen in the city.

The first cohort of practitioners who have undertaken the Froebel course have almost completed their first year. This has been an exciting initiative which has been positively received.

## **Special Schools**

There are a number of developments in our special schools this session:

1. Special Headteachers have taken part and planned continuing professional development (CPD) to build capacity within and across special schools: This has included:
  - Planning and running a workshop in building capacity for all managers in special schools.
  - A CPD session for all teaching staff in special schools entitled 'learning from one another' which took place in March 2011. A taster session of effective practice across all the schools was shared. Eighteen workshops were available and these included restorative practice, the MOVE programme, moving images, emotional literacy, Bloom's Taxonomy and managing sexualised behaviour.
2. A number of the special schools have been involved in using the 'learning round' approach as part of self evaluation. This has included working across a mainstream and special school, as well as a multi agency approach.
3. A working group across special schools is looking at the early years literacy and numeracy outcomes which will allow more consistent tracking of progress. This will be ready to be shared more widely next session.

4. A successful pilot of 'SAT NAV' technology to develop greater independence in self travel has been undertaken. This will be rolled out to other special schools and mainstream schools with secondary resources.
5. A number of special schools and services were winners and highly commended at the Children and Families' Achievement Awards 2010

### **Educational Attainment**

We are continuing to make good progress in improving educational attainment in Edinburgh schools. In every measure of attainment a higher percentage of pupils are achieving expected grades in national examinations than in 2007.

In Standard Grade, those achieving credit passes have not only significantly improved they have moved this Authority from 21<sup>st</sup> equal to 15<sup>th</sup> equal by comparison with the other 32 local authorities in Scotland.

The performance at Higher Grade in Edinburgh shows an even better performance. There has been an improvement in each measure since 2007, moving us into the top 10 of all Scottish local authorities.

However there is still work to be done to improve the attainment of some of our lowest achieving young people.

In primary schools there have been improvements to attainment. The percentage of P3, 4, 6 and 7 pupils attaining or exceeding the minimum 5-14 levels has increased between 2007 and 2010:

- Reading                      82% to 85%
- Writing                      75% to 79%
- Maths                        82% to 85%

### **Class Sizes**

Even with a challenging budget we have been able to increase the percentage of Primary 1 to Primary 3 classes of 18 or less in positive action schools significantly, from 16.17% in 2008/9 to 55.78% in 2009/10. We have also maintained class sizes of 20 in Secondary 1 and 2 for English and Maths.

### **Admissions**

The Primary 1 admissions process is well underway. We are pleased to report that all in-catchment requests were granted. As anticipated there has been an increase in out-of-catchment refusals following a reduction in class size limits from 30 to 25. Although there have been a significant number of initial refusals, experience tells us that the number of refusals will reduce before the start of the school year.

### **Learning Festival**

The Edinburgh Learning Festival 2011 is entitled 'Curriculum for Excellence: Our Future'. This event will celebrate and share all the good things that are happening from early years through to senior secondary. The education village will showcase good practice from all of our schools and partners.

Craigroyston Community High School will host the event which will be held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May for education practioners and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May for parents and carers.

### **GLOW**

GLOW is the world's first national intranet for education. It is a national learning and teaching initiative that will transform the way that education is delivered. The roll out to our schools is in the final phase. The cluster mentors have been working closely with staff to support the smooth introduction of this development.

### **A Listening Department**

Edinburgh's first Secondary Student Council Conference, which was organised by pupils - for pupils, was entitled "Developing the Pupil Voice", and held in Tynecastle High School. This successful event was a celebration of student councils and was attended by most secondary schools and also Braidburn School. Students attended workshops, most of which were delivered by young people. They participated in a panel discussion and heard presentations on Curriculum for Excellence, Youth Forums and GLOW. It is hoped that there can be similar events in the future and we can build on the experiences and voices of our pupils in school.

### **GIRFEC**

The Practice Development sessions (Getting it right for every child in practice) are being well received. It is encouraging that more and more establishments and teams are requesting bespoke sessions. Examples of good practice in partnership working to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and families are currently being collected as case studies.

The 'Team Around the Cluster' concept has been really welcomed by practitioners. We are collating this information to help to raise awareness of what services and resources are available already to support early intervention and improve outcomes. Next we will be looking across the city at support for parents and carers to build in more equitable access to activities and programmes, which increase the skills, knowledge, confidence and capacity of parents and carers in their role in bringing up children.

### **Gaelic Medium Education (GME)**

Projections of future demand for GME suggest that the recent growth in uptake will continue. The current GME unit at Tollcross Primary School is full, therefore consideration must be given to ways in which the expected future demand can be accommodated. In December 2010 Council approved a statutory consultation based on the two options; either to extend the current provision at Tollcross Primary School or to create a dedicated Gaelic school at Bonnington Primary School. The statutory consultation process was undertaken between January and March 2011. A significant number of responses were received which are currently being assessed to allow a final recommendations report to be presented to Council in June 2011 with a view to the implementation of a chosen option in August 2012.

Deleted: consultation based

Currently all GME primary pupils are guaranteed a secondary place at James Gillespie's High School and any growth in numbers at primary level will have a consequent impact on secondary education provision. James Gillespie's High School is expected to exceed capacity in 2016. In the report to Council in December 2010, the Children and Families Department proposed that a further statutory consultation be undertaken regarding the transfer of GME pupils to Tynecastle High School where there is greater capacity. Council asked that, in advance of undertaking any statutory consultation, a cross-party working group be established (also involving key stakeholders) to consider the implications of the proposal. Three meetings of the working group have been held at which the implications of the transfer have been considered and a report will be presented to Council in June regarding the proposed approach.

### **Secondary School Management Changes**

The following proposals were agreed in the budget to rationalise our management and business support arrangements:

- Review of promoted posts in schools
- Review of business support in secondary schools
- Review of janitorial support in non-PPP schools

Head Teachers are fully engaged in the implementation process and their engagement has helped to shape the proposals that are being taken forward in each area. Jack Hamilton Head Teacher at Boroughmuir High School has been seconded to support the development of these plans with schools.

### **New Portobello High School**

Planning Permission for the project to deliver a new Portobello High School was granted by the Development Management Sub Committee in February. The design development and construction procurement processes have continued and it is anticipated that tender documentation will be issued to a short-list of bidders in May. The construction of the new school is expected to start later this year with a projected completion date of January 2014.

### **New James Gillespie's High School**

The initial designs were shared with Architecture and Design Scotland and were positively received having been described as 'potentially exemplary'. The first stage of the pre-planning consultation process is now underway with a series of formal public and stakeholder meetings. The design development process will continue, taking into consideration feedback from the first stage of the consultation process, prior to sharing the final designs with the local community in June in advance of submitting the planning application in July.

### **New Boroughmuir High School**

In December 2010 the Scottish Government confirmed that the replacement of Boroughmuir High School would be supported under the School Building Programme. An Investment Steering Group has been established. Costing

information is being updated and an assessment undertaken of any available alternative site options for a new build. The existing feasibility study information is being updated to review any planning and technical constraints on the existing building and site and to establish the possible uses of the internal spaces therein.

Once all available options have been considered a report will be taken to Council regarding the recommended way forward for the project and the associated funding implications.

### **Seaview Respite Centre**

The project to deliver a replacement Seaview Respite Centre is now well underway. Extensive consultation and engagement has been undertaken with the staff from the centre and, just as important, the children who stay there, to inform the ongoing design development process. We hope to finalise the initial designs within the next month with a view to submitting a planning application later this year. Our current programme would see the new facility opening in the middle of 2013.

### **New Royston Wardieburn Community Centre**

The project to provide a replacement Royston / Wardieburn Community Centre is progressing very well and remains on track to open later this year.

### **Gate 55**

Gate 55, on the site of the former Westburn Primary School, was officially opened recently. This facility is the result of a partnership between the City of Edinburgh Council and Stevenson College, to create a centre for learning, education and training that will focus on the needs of local residents. Gate 55 serves the entire local community, combining some of the Council's learning and development services and the Community Development department of Stevenson College Edinburgh, which have been relocated to create a single community hub and resource centre.

### **Reviews**

We have been involved in contributing to a number of national reviews. The McCormac Review is looking at the 2001 agreement which followed the McCrone Report into teachers' pay and conditions. It is examining a range of issues including whether the agreement is suited to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. We have also contributed to the Christie Commission which was established to develop recommendations for the future delivery of public services. The report which aims to provide a roadmap for future reform will be published in June 2011.

### **Positive Destinations**

Reducing youth unemployment and securing positive destinations for young people in Edinburgh is a top priority for us. The number of young people moving into positive destinations is 82.5%, which is below the national average of 86.8%. We have met with local colleagues, the business

community, voluntary sector providers and the Scottish Government to enlist their support. We have also discussed what more the Council could do itself to increase our support for school leavers.

### **Financial Out-turn 2010/11**

The Children and Families department faced an £18m projected overspend in 2007/08. The Department has successfully addressed these budget challenges, achieving a balanced budget in 2009/10 and, despite the very challenging financial climate, is also projecting a balanced budget for the 2010/11 financial year.

### **Priorities for Future Improvement**

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:

- Improving support in early years so that problems are identified and addressed early
- Improving educational outcomes for the lowest achieving 20% of pupils
- Improving literacy
- Improving school attendance
- Improving children's health outcomes with a particular focus on meeting the 2 hours sport and PE target
- Increasing the number of young people in positive destinations
- Tackling youth crime and reducing anti social behaviour
- Improving outcomes and life chances for looked after children
- Continuing to improve outcomes for children in need of protection

**Gillian Tee**  
**Director of Children and Families**

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**Convener of Education, Children and Families**

**5 May 2011**