

**Children and Families
Report for Consultative Committee with Parents
27 September 2011**

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

The Children and Families Department faced an £18million projected overspend in 2007. The Department has also had to find significant budget savings between 2007/08 and 2011/12. The Department has successfully addressed these budget challenges and the budget was balanced in 2009/10 and returned a small underspend in 2010/11.

Despite the budget challenges, outcomes for children and families have improved significantly since 2007:

- Educational attainment has improved
- Exclusions have reduced
- School attendance has improved
- Staff sickness absence has reduced
- Satisfaction with schools has improved

Achievements

Educational attainment has improved

This was another good year for exam success in Edinburgh schools. Attainment in secondary schools has improved in every single nationally published measure over the last four years. This summer attainment improved again. Attainment in Highers and Advanced Highers is now in the top quartile nationally. Attainment at standard grade is broadly in line with national.

	2006-08	2007-09	2008-10	2009-11	National (2009-11)
English and maths @ Level 3 or better	91.3	91.6	92.4	92.9	93.1
5+ @ Level 3 or better (Foundation)	89.0	89.4	90.0	90.7	91.7
5+ @ Level 4 or better (General)	76.6	77.3	78.1	79.5	79.4
5+ @ Level 5 or better (Credit)	48.2	49.0	50.2	52.8	50.3
1+ @ Level 6 or better (Higher)	44.5	45.7	47.1	50.3	46.7
3+ @ Level 6 or better (Higher)	32.1	33.2	34.6	37.2	33.0
5+ @ Level 6 or better (Higher)	21.8	22.4	23.7	25.7	22.1

Exclusions have reduced

There have been significant reductions in permanent exclusions for schools over the last three years (2007/8 to 2009/10):

primary	13 to 5
secondary	37 to 19
special	4 to 3

There have also been significant reductions in temporary exclusions:

primary	190 to 153
secondary	865 to 823
special	105 to 90

Edinburgh's exclusions 11 per 1000 at primary and 69 per 1000 at secondary are low in comparison with other authorities nationally. (12 per 1000 at primary and 82 per 1000 at secondary)

School attendance has improved

Good attendance is a major factor in positive life chances and outcomes of children. Where children have significant attendance problems this is often associated with poor attainment, leaving school early, not going on to a positive destination after school.

Attendance in secondary schools in Edinburgh has improved from 90.7% to 91.1% and is in line with other authorities nationally at 91.3%.

Attendance at primary level is stable at 94.8% and is in line with other authorities nationally at 94.9%.

Continuing to improve school attendance and taking a more assertive approach to persistent non attendees, including tackling the issue of holidays in term times and, is a priority for the Council.

Staff sickness absence has reduced

Sickness absence in Children and Families is low in comparison with other authorities and is reducing further. Sickness absence improved from 4.62% in 2009 to 4.26% in 2010 to 3.67% in 2011.

Satisfaction with schools has improved

We are proud of the quality of our schools in Edinburgh. Community satisfaction with schools has improved significantly since 2007:

Primary from 73% to 80%
Secondary from 65% to 80%
Nursery from 68% to 79%
(This question was not asked for Special Schools)

Priorities for Future Improvement

Positive Destinations

In 2010 only 82.5% of young people who left school went on to a positive destination in education, employment or training. This meant that 538 young people who left school in 2010 did not.

The Council is determined to tackle this problem and has received support from a wide range of partners including, universities, colleges, NHS, employers, voluntary sector, Skills Development Scotland. The Council has initiated the Edinburgh Guarantee – a determination to ensure that every school leaver in Edinburgh has a positive destination.

Significant efforts are being made to find young people jobs, college places, and training opportunities. By February 2011 this figure had improved to 83%.

For school leavers in 2011 a range of new programmes are being put in place:

- the council will offer training programmes for 80 young people and apprenticeship programmes for a further 50 young people
- Royal Bank of Scotland is working with other companies to offer internships (6 month work placement and training) for 100 young people
- Colleges will offer places for an additional 30 young people
- Skills Development Scotland will provide funding for modern apprenticeships
- Edinburgh employers have been asked to help with this by providing jobs and work experience placements.

We are determined to make progress with this and to ensure that all young people who leave school in Edinburgh have a positive destination at university, college, in a job, apprenticeship or training programme.

Looked After Children

There are around 1400 looked after children in Edinburgh. The Council is responsible for the welfare and wellbeing of these children.

431 of these are looked after at home and 928 of these are looked after away from home in, for example, fostercare (511) or residential accommodation (87).

These children have usually had difficult life experiences before being looked after. Their physical and emotional health and educational attainment generally compares poorly with other children. This is why we need to do all we can as a Council to address their needs and improve their life chances.

School Estate

Ensuring that children, families and staff have a good physical environment in which to learn and work is important to us.

By 2011 20% of primary schools, 57% of secondary schools and 58% of special schools will be new or refurbished. By 2015 two-thirds secondary school pupils will be in new or refurbished schools.

Work is underway or planned to build new high schools for Portobello, Boroughmuir and James Gillespie's.

£5.98m is being invested in building improvements in Children and Families properties in 2011/12.

Sport and PE

The Government is committed to ensuring that all pupils have 2 hours sport and physical education a week at school. We have made good progress with this. The percentage of schools reaching the target of 2 hours of quality PE per pupil per week has increased:

Primary	from 23% (2009/10) to 62% (2010/11)
Secondary	from 22% (2009/10) to 43% (2010/11)
Special	from 54% (2009/10) to 67% (2010/11)

The Active Schools programme runs very successfully in Edinburgh and receives £2.3m SportsScotland funding.

Swimming: The percentage of P7 school children achieving Level C5 competency has risen from 55% in 2009/10 to 61% in 2010/11.

1740 secondary school age pupils participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. 974 P6-S2 pupils participated in the new 'Junior Award Scheme Scotland' pilot (2010/11) and to date 2690 have signed up for its first full year (2011/12).

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