

Committee Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 31 January 2012

Elected Members Present:- Councillors MacLaren (Convener), Godzik, Johnstone, McIvor and Rose

Parent/School Members Present:- Raymond Simpson (Teacher Representative), Hugh Brown (Gylemuir Primary School), Jayne Scott (Tollcross Primary School), Lindsay Law (Broughton Primary School), Alex Ramage (Prestonfield Primary School), Jeana Brady (Bruntsfield Primary School), Andrea Henderson (Boroughmuir High School), Christine Wallis (Leith Academy), Arlene Mooney (Special Schools Headteacher), Alison Baine (Broughton High School), Amanda Vickery (Cramond Primary School), Lesley Broadwood (Bonaly Primary School), Lesley Gibson-Eaglesham (Liberton Primary School Cluster), Robert Baltzer (Gracemount Primary School), Mary Brownlee (Tynecastle High School), Peigi Macarthur (Portobello High School/Secondary Head Teachers).

In Attendance:- Gillian Tee (Director of Children and Families), Diana Dodd, Maria Plant, Gibby Greechan, Graham Douglas, Alistair Gaw and Mike Rosendale (Children and Families Department) and Carmel Riley (Committee Services)

Apologies:- Rosie Wilson (Children and Families Department), Tina Woolnough (Parent Representative), Willie French (Parsons Green Primary School), Karen Traill (Liberton High School/South Neighbourhood Secondary Schools), Eileen Prior (Scottish Parent Council), Julie-Anne Sime (Tollcross Primary School), Andrea Bracher (Kaimes Special School), Donald Craigie (Dean Park Primary School), Susan Edwards (Victoria Primary School), Ian McGillivray (Firrhill Secondary School)

1 Minute of Meeting

Decision

The minute of meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 27 September 2011 was approved as a correct record.

2 Matters Arising from Minute

Secondary Management Structures (Item 2)

Decision

To note that the report on Secondary Management Structures would be submitted to the March 2012 meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee and thereafter to the Consultative Committee with Parents.

3 Update by Convener and Director

A progress update was provided on some of the achievements of the Department of Children and Families in meeting their outcomes for children and families in Edinburgh. The report covered the following areas:

- Investors in People Gold Status
- Improvements in Positive Destinations for School Leavers
- Budget/Budget Youth Summit
- New James Gillespies High School
- New Seaview Centre
- Opening of Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre
- Boroughmuir High School Update
- Achievement Report

Gillian Tee highlighted some of the areas covered in the report including the City of Edinburgh Council being the first Scottish authority to receive Investor in People gold status, the significant progress in positive destination figures for school leavers and the new school building developments.

(Reference – report by the Convener and Director of Children and Families, submitted)

4 School Attendance

Maria Plant, Inclusion Co-ordinator, highlighted the Council initiatives to improve school attendance. She detailed the 5 support pathways used by schools to promote school attendance, ie action by the Head Teacher/Pupil Support Staff, referral to the Education Welfare Officer, multi-agency assessment, referral to the Area Attendance Advisory Group and referral to the Reporter, and advised that 9% of schoolchildren were on this ladder at some time. She gave statistics which compared the experience in Edinburgh to national statistics and explained that a difference had been made to the figures by monitoring and tracking and by the role of the Education Welfare Service. Two new developments - Support and Challenge school visits and Operation Disenchant – had also helped.

Gibby Greechan, Education Welfare Officer, explained that Operation Disenchant was based on an initiative from around 15 years previously. During November and December 2011, Education Welfare Officers and the Police had approached children not at school. The Department, liaising with the Health and Social Care Department, intended to extend this initiative, targeting specific areas and identifying households where children congregated.

In answer to questions, Mr Greechan confirmed:

- In relation to repeat truancing, there were repeat offenders and the Department followed through each case.
- In relation to proactively identifying children at risk of truancing, the Department worked with a number of agencies to identify problems and look at solutions. The Department was looking at how the community, including local businesses, could help.

(Reference – handout, tabled)

5 Behaviour Support/Improving Relationships

Maria Plant described the Council's work on Behaviour Support and Improving Relationships. She described the policies underpinning the strategy and stressed that exclusion was the absolute last resort. She described the various approaches used by schools, including:

- Restorative approaches – encouraging youngsters to take responsibility for their actions. 150 staff were currently taking part in a training for trainers programme for this initiative.
- Young persons planning meetings – to plan how best to support a young person.
- Creating Confident Kids – a thematic approach, eg “Starting School”, “I don't have any friends”, developed by Edinburgh schools.
- Solution Focused Approaches – a framework used to move youngsters beyond the problem to provide a solution.

Maria gave two case studies which exhibited good practice. Firstly a whole school approach – Lorne Primary School had encouraged pupils to be active in their own learning with pupils given key roles. This approach had been recognised in the Good Practice Guidelines from HMIE. Secondly an individual pupil approach - she gave an example where a school had used a particular approach to help a young person settle into school.

Councillor MacLaren advised that Edinburgh now had one of the lowest exclusion rates with very few permanent exclusions.

(Reference – handout, tabled)

6 Bullying

Diana Dodd, Principal Officer Equalities, gave a presentation entitled Preventing and Responding to Bullying in CEC Schools. She clarified the definition of bullying, the triggers and hooks as cited by pupils, the monitoring of incidents and the departmental and school strategies for dealing with the issue. She tabled a handout which detailed examples of anti-bullying practices in Edinburgh schools.

In answer to questions, Dianna Dodd explained:

- Schools were able to deal with incidents of bullying which happened on the way to school, at school and on the way home from school. Outwith these times it was more difficult for schools to take action.
- The department did audit what schools currently did in relation to bullying but more work was needed.
- In order to build confidence and resilience to enable children to report or intervene in incidents of bullying, schools were encouraged to report back to the children involved and their classmates that something had been done about each incident which had been reported.
- It was important to teach children the impact of their actions which made it easier to deal with these issues.
- Cyber bullying had become a big problem and schools were encouraged to keep parents up-to-date on these issues.
- There was currently no matching of statistics on bullying and attendance.
- Research on reporting/recording of incidents showed some under-reporting.

(Reference – powerpoint presentation and handout on Examples of Anti-Bullying Practices in Edinburgh Schools, submitted)

7 National Parent Forum – Update

Nothing to report in the absence of Tina Woolnough.

8 Dates of Next Meetings

7 March 2012 – PC Chairs/CCWP Members (Drummond Community High School)

24 April 2012 – CCWP Members (City Chambers)

5 June 2012 – meeting to be rescheduled because this day was now the Diamond Jubilee holiday