

Item 3.1 Minutes

Consultative Committee with Parents

Edinburgh, 15 May 2013

Present

Councillors Godzik (Convener), Dixon, Fullerton and Redpath
Diane Anderson, Parent Representative, Leith Academy
Jeanne Brady, Scottish Parent Teacher Council
Mary Brownlee, Parent Representative, Tynecastle High School
Willie French, Head Teacher, Parsons Green Primary School
Iain McGillivray, Parent Representative, Firrhill High School
Liz Power, Citywide Special Schools Group
Alex Ramage, Parent Representative, Prestonfield Primary School
Sarah Ross, Parent Representative, St Catherine's Primary School
Lorraine Spalding, Parent Representative, Blackhall Primary School
John Swinburne, Teacher Representative,
Rose White, Parent Representative,

Officers in Attendance

Gillian Tee, Director, Children and Families
Alistair Gaw, Head of Support to Children and Young People, Children and Families
Moyra Wilson, Senior Education Manager (Inclusion & Pupil/Parent Support)
Karen Prophet, Senior Education Manager (Quality and Curriculum), Children and Families
Kirsty Rosie, Acting Service Manager Special Schools & Specialist Provision, Children and Families
Gavin King, Committee Manager, Corporate Governance

1. Welcome

Councillor Godzik welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents of 19 March 2013 was approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- i) Item 6 Sub-Heading 5. West Neighbourhood Group – second bullet point – replace ‘late’ with ‘early’
- ii) Item 6 Sub-Heading 5. West Neighbourhood Group – third bullet point – replace ‘no’ with ‘insufficient’.

3. Committee Reports

Gillian Tee highlighted a series of items related to parents that would be considered on 21 May 2013 by the Education, Children and Families Committee.

The Vision for Schools report outlined the findings of the consultation on the vision. The feedback from parents on the rotation of headteachers had been taken note of. The Vision for Schools was an ongoing process and, if approved, parents would be able to feed in as key stakeholders. A further report on an implementation plan would be considered in October 2013.

The update report on the parental engagement strategy would also be considered with a final strategy being reported in October 2013. The report outlined the progress so far made at neighbourhood groups and the newly formatted CCWP.

The third report was the Review of Community Access to Schools. David Bruce had attended the previous meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents and presented on the work of the Review Group on Community Access to Schools. A further report would be presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2013.

Councillor Godzik thanked all parent groups for the contribution to the Vision for Schools and asked whether there were any questions on the three reports highlighted or any other reports on the Education, Children and Families Committee agenda.

Following a question on the future of Castlebrae High School, Gillian Tee explained that the report to be considered by the Committee included a range of strategies that aimed to strengthen the support arrangements for the school. It also suggested a voluntary refresh of teaching and senior management staff and the establishment of a working group. Councillor Fullerton added that this working group would meet throughout June and August and would include input from eight external experts (4 practitioners and 4 academics).

Decision

To note the information that would be provided to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 21 May 2013.

4. Communication – Web Pages

Moyra Wilson presented the work undertaken to support parental engagement on the web. A small group, including officers and parents, had explored the different types of information that would be useful for parents on a website. The need for a separate website, which linked into the Council website, was identified. The website would aim to be transparent, easy to use and parents were encouraged to feed in their ideas to ensure the website met the needs of parents.

The Convener explained that the website could be a fantastic resource for parents and invited questions from the Committee.

During discussion it was highlighted that any website would require sufficient resources to ensure it was up to date and relevant. It was suggested that the website should be proactive and an area where parents could exchange views and opinions.

Moyra Wilson confirmed that the use of social media was also being explored included twitter.

Decision

That the presentation slide would be provided to all members of the Consultative Committee with Parents.

(Reference – Supporting Parental Engagement on the Web slide, submitted.)

5. Neighbourhood Issues

In response to a question on the ICT support given to special schools, Alastair Gaw confirmed that this issue had arisen previously and additional support would be given.

Diane Anderson reported on the discussion at the North Neighbourhood Group as follows:

- Concern was raised by Flora Stevenson Primary School regarding the open playground. Although there was no aversion to the playground being open outside school hours, there had been complaints from neighbours regarding the noise. Noise deafening had been looked at and costs had been estimated at £1500. The parent council was now looking for support to cover these costs.
- The ICT refresh and the use of twitter was discussed at length.
- Discussion had focussed on school meals with concern raised in particular over there always being a dessert available. Concern was also raised on the portion sizes being uniform rather than proportionate for the child's age.

Gillian Tee stated that it was important for school facilities to be open to the wider public but that schools should not be disadvantaged because of it. This would be

considered as part of the CATS review. A report on school meals would be considered at the Education, Children and Families Committee in October 2013.

Alex Ramage reported on the discussion at the South Neighbourhood Group, highlighting the following:

- The creation of a database of parental skills had been raised.
- Concerns were raised on the continuing use of South Morningside Primary School as a polling place.
- A presentation had been given on the 'Growing Confidence' programme which had been very useful and appeared to be a good investment.

The Convener explained that a polling place review was currently being undertaken and the use of South Morningside Primary School would be explored.

Lorraine Spaulding and Mary Bronwlee reported on the discussion at the West Neighbourhood Group as follows:

- There was the perception that there was not a uniform approach being followed on the ICT refresh.
- Concern was raised on the use of primary schools as polling stations. There did not seem to be a uniform approach and there was a need for more information on this for parents.
- The approach to children learning a musical instrument was also discussed. The eligibility appeared to be based on aptitude, excluding those children who had great enthusiasm. Again there did not appear to be a uniform approach throughout schools.
- It was highlighted that it would be helpful for parents to have further information on composite classes.
- There were parking issues at St Augustine's School and the school bus was not able to park. Moyra Wilson stated that this was being looked at and should be addressed in the near future.
- Concern was raised over the high number of catchment pupils who do not take their place in August. This means non-catchment pupils are unable to take up their place and by August have often chosen to go to a different school.

Councillor Godzik stated that pupils going to non-catchment schools was an ongoing issue and it was the Council's policy that parents were encouraged to choose their catchment school. For those affected, each school would always strive to provide a mini induction for children who were not involved in the main induction day.

It was explained that there was advice given to head teachers on composite classes and this information could be shared. Parents whose children had previously been a part of composite classes were also often very willing to discuss their positive experiences with other parents.

Decision

- 1) That an update on ICT support to special schools would be provided to a future meeting.

- 2) That the advice on composite schools be circulated to parent groups.

6. Literacy

Karen Prophet, Children and Families, gave a presentation on improving literacy outcomes for young people. The following points were highlighted:

- It was an integrated literacy strategy with the involvement of a range of partners.
- The strategy must meet the needs of all learners.
- A Literacy Strategy Group had been established to oversee and bring cohesion and to provide clear leadership and guidance
- There were four workstreams - Early Years Literacy Strategy, 3-18 Literacy Strategy, ASL Literacy Strategy and Community Learning and Development (CLD).
- Targeted interventions took place at ages 0-15 to provide additional support and opportunities to overcome barriers.
- Up, Up and Away programme was established for ages 0-5 in partnership with Queen Margaret University.
- Literacy Rich Edinburgh phonics reading programme was launched in September 2011 to all P1 teachers and early years support staff in all schools. P2/3 would be launched in 2013/14.
- In P5-7 the Fresh Start programme was in place, which looks at the reading age of the pupil and in some cases had improved the reading age of a pupil by two years within six months. Twenty schools had been targeted with a further 28 schools in 2013/14.
- In secondary schools the lowest attaining 20% were targeted for intervention.
- There was SRA Corrective Reading in all secondary schools.
- Progress had been good in primary schools and in S3/4, very good in S5/S6 and satisfactory in S1/S2.
- CLD had worked with 1541 adult learners in 2011/12.

Following questions from the Committee, the following was highlighted:

- Special Schools were measured separately.
- Training for the Fresh Start programme was comprehensive, with all P1 teachers being trained for two half days followed by recall sessions. For those delivering the programme, training had been more intensive.
- There was confidence that the early identification of additional needs was in place including dyslexia and dyscalculia.
- For those pupils who did not necessarily suffer from dyscalculia but needed additional support with maths, there was an early intervention numeracy programme.

Decision

That the presentation would be circulated to all attendees.

7. Report from the National Parent Forum Representative

Decision

That the update from the National Parent Forum representative be circulated to all members.

8. Report from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council Representative

Jeanne Brady gave an update from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council for May 2013, the following was highlighted:

- A recent anti-bullying survey had been very successful with 900-1000 people taking part.
- The next issue of Backchat would be issued in the week commencing 27 May 2013.
- A funding application for a two year project to work with parent groups and minority ethnic communities had been successful. Pilot schools were being sought to take part in the project.
- Children in Scotland had won a two year contract to research participation levels and barriers, and develop strategies around the involvement of parents of children with additional support needs.
- A position statement on the independence referendum and 16-17 year olds voting had been prepared and was circulated to members.

Decision

To note the update.

9. Future Agenda Items

Decision

To agree the following as future agenda items:

- i) ICT
- ii) School Meals
- iii) Sport and Physical Education

10. AOCB

Alex Ramage enquired over the situation with supply teachers in the city and whether there were sufficient numbers. Councillor Godzik explained that this was

a national issue and had this week been discussed at COSLA. Gillian Tee added that this was also being looked at locally to see if arrangements could be improved. Willie French stated that there had been a large pool of supply teachers in Edinburgh and for a number of reasons this pool had reduced significantly.

Diane Anderson enquired whether a member of the North Edinburgh Group could shadow her at upcoming meetings. This would help the transition of new members into the CCWP. It was agreed that this would be a good development and help encourage participation.

Decision

To agree that members of the CCWP could bring shadow members to assist in the transition of new members.