

Update for Parent Council Neighbourhood Groups

February 2015

This report provides an update for parents/carers in relation to Children's Services in Edinburgh. We have also included feedback from the Neighbourhood Parent Forums and a progress update on matters arising.

Consultative Committee with Parents

The last Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) took place on 4 December 2014. Karen Prophet, Senior Education Manager (Schools) outlined developments in Edinburgh in relation to Curriculum for Excellence and the Senior Phase. The focus is on a Senior Phase Curriculum which prepares young people for the world of work. A recent development has been the offer of HNC courses in schools in partnership with Edinburgh College. A key measure of success will be continuing to increase the number of people who leave school into positive destinations.

Consortium arrangements across secondary schools enable young people to access the wider curriculum across the city in other schools. This is now extending beyond Higher and Advanced Higher to those pupils accessing the new qualifications including National 5.

Grace Vickers, Quality Improvement Manager (Secondary) led a [presentation on Modern Foreign Languages](#) outlining how Edinburgh is delivering the Government Policy on 1+2 Modern Foreign Languages including a highly valued training model. This is now being rolled out across the city. The aim is to increase the number of pupils taking qualifications.

The next CCwP meeting will focus on property issues and school meals.

Budget

The budget engagement process ended on 19 December 2014. I am very grateful to you all for your contribution to this process which will feed into the Council's budget meeting process on 12 February 2015. I am pleased to report that the intention is still to protect school budgets from any significant further reductions.

Best Practice - Child Protection Report

I would encourage you to read the [National Report on the Effectiveness of Child Protection Arrangements across Scotland \(November 2014\)](#). Edinburgh is highlighted in the report as providing good child protection services. Three areas are identified as particularly good practice for national dissemination, including the Speak Up Speak Out campaign to raise public awareness; the Keeping it Safe booklets designed by children in Edinburgh with experience of Child Protection process and also the Electronic Inter-Agency Referral discussion, a tripartite process for responding to, and managing all Child and Adult Protection concerns.

Education Scotland Feedback about Education Services in Edinburgh

Education Scotland's Annual Report on Education Services in Edinburgh was very positive. It commended:

- Effective political and managerial leadership
- The clear vision and priorities for the service
- Implementation of Curriculum for Excellence
- Improvements in attainment and positive destinations
- The welcome decision to protect education from budget cuts
- Significant investment in the school estate
- The well developed literacy strategy
- The commitment to wider achievement

Areas for development were:

- Moving schools from 'good' to 'great'
- Continuing and sustaining improvements in attainment
- Performance across primary schools is still variable though there is effective support and challenge from the authority

Further information will be provided at the neighbourhood and CCwP meetings.

Education Scotland Inspections

Three recent inspections have been published. They are [Sighthill Primary School](#), [Kirkliston Primary School](#) and [Craigroyston Community High School](#). These were all positive reports. I am delighted that Kirkliston received an excellent grade in '*Improvements through Self-Evaluation*'. The nursery also received an excellent grade for '*meeting learners' needs*'. Craigroyston Community High School received a 'very good' for *Curriculum* with very positive comments about the way the school has developed a curriculum which meets the needs of all young people and prepares them for leaving school. The school was recently visited by Angela Constance, Cabinet Secretary because of the nationally recognised good practice in the school.

These reports will all be scrutinised and progress looked at the next Sub Committee for Standards on 3 March 2015.

Good Practice in ICT shared at the Scottish Parliament

We were asked by the Scottish Government to provide a school that was making excellent use of ICT. The school chosen was Tynecastle High School and pupils presented to the Cabinet Secretary on how they use ICT in the classroom especially their use of one to one devices. They also attended the Scottish Parliament on 10 December 2014. This was well received and I would encourage those who are interested to visit Tynecastle High School to see the good practice in this area.

Community Access to schools (CATS) Member/Officer Working Group

Community Access to Schools is now being managed on a neighbourhood basis with five community hubs created in Leith Academy, Forrester, Liberton, Currie and Drummond High Schools. A new online booking system has been introduced for adult education classes and this will be extended to all school lets in the future. A new consistent citywide charging structure is also being introduced across the city and a report highlighting the changes and new charges was reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 3 February 2015.

For helpful information on using our schools please use the links below:

- Hiring school facilities; information that was on the [Council website](#) about letting/hiring school facilities has been updated and clarifies existing arrangements. A new section called '*Hire school facilities*' has been added to the front page of the [Schools section](#). A Google search will also take you to this page using search terms like; *hiring school facilities Edinburgh*, or *let school facilities Edinburgh*.
- A Community Access to Schools update report was issued to Secondary Headteachers' Executive on 3 December 2014.
- Consultation/information events for current users of school facilities have been organised. Invites are being distributed by Community Access to Schools coordinators in each of the Neighbourhood areas.
- The Community Access to Schools Frequently Asked Questions have been sent to all Parent Council Chairs

Free School Meals

As you are aware, the Scottish Government fully funded their commitment for every child in P1-P3 to have a free school meal from January 2015. Edinburgh received 18% of the national funding which was £4.5 million. This is particularly good news for Cramond, East Craig's, Sciennes and Towerbank who will receive either new gyms or additional space for dining provision.

Raising Attainment at Wester Hailes Education Centre

Alan Milburn MP, Chair of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, visited Wester Hailes Education Centre as an example of good practice in raising attainment for children living in an area of high social deprivation. There was also a feature on the BBC, which praised the school on its improvements.

The First Minister visits Castleview Primary

Nicola Sturgeon visited Castleview Primary School as one of her first school visits as First Minister. She spoke to pupils, parents and teachers about the work being done in the school to improve literacy. She was given a virtual tour of Craigmillar Castle by a group of young tour guides wearing authentic costumes from the time of Mary, Queen of Scots, before taking part in some Scottish Country dancing as part of a PE

lesson. She then joined the P2 pupils at their Christmas party! The First Minister said:

“It was fantastic to see the pupils here really enjoying themselves and celebrating the work they have done over the year to improve literacy standards. At Castleview Primary, excellent work is already being done to improve reading and it was good to see how much confidence the children had from the projects they have been involved in. That’s down to the great work of the staff here and the involvement of parents and the community.”

During the visit Ms Sturgeon announced the launch of a new campaign to improve literacy and numeracy in schools. The Read Write Count campaign is aimed at youngsters in the first three years of primary school and will help ensure ‘no child is left behind’.

If you have not done the Craigmillar Castle tour yet, you are missing out! It is really informative and the children are great and knowledgeable guides.

Partnership working with the Festival City Theatres Trust

I was delighted to attend, along with over 700 pupils from all our special schools, the first ever ‘relaxed performance’ of the King’s panto ‘Aladdin’. The sheer excitement and joy on the faces of all the children and young people in the audience was a very special moment in my career. The Relaxed performance was specifically designed to welcome children and young people with complex additional support needs. A relaxed attitude to noise and movement in the auditorium and some small changes made to the light, sound and special effects ensured everyone enjoyed the unique opportunity to experience a cultural event which they ordinarily would find difficult to attend. The generosity of Forth 1 ‘Cash for Kids’ was greatly appreciated and contributed to a very special event in the history of Edinburgh’s special schools.

I am also very grateful to the Festival City Theatres Trust, which runs the Festival and King’s Theatres, for once again supporting our Corporate Parenting action plan by gifting 500 tickets to our looked after children and their kinship carers to enjoy a show during panto season.

Making a Difference – Special Schools Joint Conference

All Special Schools in Edinburgh came together to share good practice and learn from each other at the 2015 Making a Difference conference on 23 January 2015. This annual conference continues to receive positive feedback from staff.

Every school offered a workshop on an area of particular expertise that they felt would also benefit staff from other schools. These included:

Redhall School – How to become a ‘rights respecting’ school

Rowanfield School – Relax Kids workshop to give young people strategies to better manage their emotions and behaviour

Gorgie Mills School – Restorative Practice – an introduction

Braidburn School – Confident Parenting – empowering parents of youngsters with additional support needs to confidently manage their child's needs (in collaboration with CAMHS)

Teen Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme)

Parents of teenagers will be able to benefit from an increase in the availability of Teen Triple P groups across the city. Over the last few months, seventeen professionals successfully completed the facilitator training and accreditation to join the multi agency team of facilitators who deliver Teen Triple P groups in Edinburgh.

Teen Triple P supports parents and carers of pre teen and teenagers aged from 11-16 years. Groups run over 9-12 weeks and can help parents cope positively with some of the common issues associated with raising a teenager. Sessions allow parents to explore ways they can build a stronger relationship with their teenager, reduce conflict, manage problem behaviours and help their teen stay safe.

Teen Triple P groups run in community venues such as schools, community centres and libraries. There will be groups available in each area of the city throughout the year. There are also specific groups planned for kinship carers and dads/ stepdads. Details of upcoming groups can be found on www.joininedinburgh.org.

Food for Life Catering Mark Bronze Award in ALL Edinburgh Schools

The Soil Association's Food for Life Catering Mark Bronze award offers an independent guarantee of fresher, more seasonal menus which are free from trans-fats and better for animal welfare. The standards underpinning the award relate to some of Scotland's most pressing food issues including health and wellbeing, the economy and the environment.

School catering services across all of Edinburgh's Council-run schools have been working to achieve the Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark award which was awarded in January 2015. It is a Scottish first; no other Local Authority in Scotland has achieved the Catering Mark across all Primary and Secondary schools. Edinburgh has also achieved the award in Special schools.

In addition to the Catering Mark Award, a growing number of Edinburgh schools are involved in the Food for Life Scotland education framework helping to promote a whole-school approach, connecting the food served in schools with food-related learning in classrooms. This will help Edinburgh's young people better understand the impact food has on our health, economy and environment.

Education Children and Families Committee, 3 March

Paper for the next Education, Children and Families Committee on 3 March 2015 will be available from [Committee Papers Online](#) on 25 February 2015.

Pride in our People 2014

Congratulations to all the individuals and teams from Children and Families who were shortlisted for the Pride in our People Staff Awards in November 2014. I know competition was very tough so it was great to see so many of our staff recognised in this way.

Our winners were:

- Team of the year: Active Schools team
- Forward Thinking: Scott Dunbar and the team who developed the Contact Guidelines for parents
- Apprentice of the Year: Cameron Wood
- Leader of the Year: Sheila Paton, Head Teacher Wester Hailes Education Centre

And congratulations to all those who were shortlisted:

- Customer First: Parental Engagement group
- Honest and Transparent: Asset Planning team
- Improving Value: Balance of Care team
- Team of the Year: Portobello Park Private Bill team

Improving School Websites - Update

We have updated our guidance for school websites. All of our schools are receiving reports regarding their school websites to ensure compliance with legislation and that basic information is in place to help parents.

We hope that this will improve your experience of school websites and give a strong first impression to others looking at our schools. We would welcome any feedback.

Dates of Future CCwP meetings – Session 2015

Thursday 14 May 2015 (6.30-8.30pm)

Gillian Tee
Director of Children and Families
19 February 2015