

Director of Children and Families
Update for Parent Council Neighbourhood Groups
May 2015

Item 4.1

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.

I was delighted at full Council in March that the good work of Children and Families was publicly recognised by the Council Leader who highlighted the positive Education Scotland report on Education Services in Edinburgh. Andrew Burns thanked all staff in Children and Families and particularly those in schools for their hard work and commitment which is delivering good and improving education services.

Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP)

The last meeting was on 26 February 2015. The first presentation was on [Educational Attainment](#) which I am pleased to say has improved year on year since 2007 and is now better than national and comparators on most measures. The presentation also described the new way of monitoring educational attainment nationally through a tool called Insight. Parents asked if they could have a copy of this helpful presentation including data on their own school's performance and this was agreed. The second presentation related to Facilities Management. Peter Watton, Acting Head of Corporate Property gave a helpful presentation and responded to parents questions. He clarified that condition surveys had been completed for the whole school estate and extra capital and revenue funding has been allocated to take this forward. He explained the financial challenge but emphasised that the budget would always be there to ensure that health and safety issues are addressed as a priority.

The Budget

As we start another financial year I can report that we delivered a balanced budget for 2014-2015. For 2015/16 we have another £14m savings to find in Children and Families but I am pleased to say that school budgets have been protected from any further reductions.

Vision for Schools

This [report](#) describes the good progress which has been made in implementing our Vision for Schools. Educational attainment has improved, there is strong commitment meeting the needs of vulnerable children and children's wider achievements are highly valued.

The following areas are identified as priorities for development:

- Moving our schools from good to great
- Continuing and sustaining improvements in education attainment
- Continuing to strengthen support for children with additional support needs
- Continuing to improve early years
- Continuing to develop and upgrade the school estate

Education, Children and Families Committee on 3 March 2015 - A summary of all the reports is available [here](#). The next Education, Children and Families Committee on 19 May 2015 will be available from [Committee Papers Online](#) on 13 May 2015.

Sub Committee on Standards in schools – 9 March 2015

The recent Sub Committee on Standards chaired by the Convener Paul Godzik was able to celebrate two very positive School Inspection reports from [Kirkliston Primary School](#) and [Craigroyston Community High School](#). There was also a positive report on the Craigroyston Learning Community. A report on the ongoing work of [Total Craigroyston](#)

also went to Committee on 3 March 2015 and was highly praised for its innovative work which is already improving outcomes for children and families.

Third Party Working Group - 4 February 2015

For the future we want to rethink how we award grants so they are more closely linked to our priorities and our Commissioning Plan. We are re-designing our approach in partnership with the voluntary sector and there have been several engagement events. The feedback will be shared with the organisations and will help to formulate a report to Children and Families Committee in May 2015.

Sports Hubs and Active Schools

At the Committee in March a report on the success of the school-based community sports hubs was shared. We currently have sports hubs in Forrester's/St Augustine's, Broughton and The Royal High School. They are supported financially by SportsScotland who acknowledge Edinburgh's good practice and want to invest further a further £90,000 over the next four years in a bid to expand the successful approach to other high schools and neighbourhoods in the city. Currently these are hoped to include Liberton High School and Leith Academy. There is also a proposal to develop an area-based sports hub in Kirkliston and South Queensferry, through a joint partnership approach with Edinburgh Leisure, which may involve Queensferry High School and the local feeder primaries. I will keep you updated on the progress of these.

Our active schools programme is also hugely successful. Over 13,000 young people are accessing 57 different sports involving 1071 volunteers associated with 211 local community sports clubs.

Placing in Schools

All letters of acceptance or refusal for outwith catchment requests were sent out to Parents/Carers on Friday 13 March 2015 which is almost a month ahead of what we usually do and 7 weeks ahead of our statutory deadline. Appeals are now under way a few weeks earlier than previous years.

Work starts on new primary school buildings

Construction work has started on the next wave of additional classrooms as the City of Edinburgh Council continues to tackle the issue of rising rolls in primary schools. The Council will provide 24 new class spaces, being delivered in conjunction with partners Hub South East Scotland Ltd and Morrison Construction, for the start of the 2015/16 school session.

The primary schools where the new class spaces will be provided are: Clermiston (4 classes), Flora Stevenson (3), Gilmerton (4), James Gillespie's (4), Pentland (3), Ratho (4) and Wardie (2).

In addition South Morningside Primary School will have a temporary annexe created for P1 and P2 pupils at the former Deanbank Resource Centre and extra internal space will be provided at both Brunstfield and Liberton Primary Schools.

Eight primary schools have already been identified by the City of Edinburgh Council as potentially having accommodation issues for August 2016 due to rising rolls - Balgreen, East Craigs, Ferryhill, Fox Covert, Granton, Roseburn, St Mary's RC (Leith) and Towerbank Primary Schools. Discussions have already started with the school communities to consider the best options if additional accommodation is needed.

Towerbank Catchment Review

Committee were asked to approve that a statutory consultation be undertaken regarding proposals to alter catchment boundaries between Towerbank Primary School and the neighbouring primary schools. Officers have just completed an informal consultation with the affected schools to establish if there are any other feasible and more preferable alternative options for alterations to catchment boundaries which would still achieve the required outcome

There will be no impact on children currently at Towerbank however we want to reassure all their parents and those at neighbouring schools that we will listen to their views and take them on board when it comes to making a decision on the final proposals for the public consultation.

The dates for the Public meetings have been arranged as follows:

Towerbank Primary - Thursday 21 May 6.30-8.30

Bruntstane Primary - Monday 25 May 6-8.00

Duddingston Primary - Monday 1 June 6.30-8.30

The Royal High Primary - Wednesday 3 June 6.30-8.30

A further report on the outcomes of the statutory consultation will be submitted to a future Council meeting for consideration.

Defibrillators in all Secondary schools

We are pleased to say that, in consultation with the Scottish Ambulance Service and as part of a Council wide approach, we have made a commitment to install defibrillators in all of our secondary schools. Some of these have already been provided through the

generosity and fundraising efforts of parents and the wider public. The rest will be provided by the Council. I will keep you updated on this initiative.

Safer Internet Day

Our third successful Safer Internet Day was held on the 10th February 2015. This event was organised by the Council and Edinburgh's Child Protection Committee partnership. Safer Internet Day 2015 is celebrated globally and this year's slogan was '*Let's create a better internet together*'. Coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre the celebration sees hundreds of organisations get involved to help promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people. Our event was well attended by a wide range of professionals, as always the [winners from our schools](#) were the highlight of the day.

Early Years

These are exciting and challenging times for early years as we strive to meet the needs of children and families. The introduction of additional hours of early learning and childcare for children has been welcomed by families across Edinburgh. Further engagement with parents will take place next session to ensure more flexible approaches can be considered as we move forward. Plans for new nursery provision across the city are well under way and will provide further opportunities for us to support our eligible 2 year olds and provide more flexible arrangements for parents.

Teacher Numbers

You may have seen recent media coverage relating to the number of teachers employed in Scotland's school and the Scottish Government asking local authorities to commit to maintaining teacher numbers for 2015 at the same level as last year. We have confirmed that our overall teacher numbers will not reduce, particularly as we are currently facing

increased rolls in the primary sector. By maintaining teacher numbers we will access some additional funding from the Scottish Government.

Study Guides for the New National Qualifications

Tina Woolnough the Edinburgh representative on the National Parent Forum of Scotland and co-creator of the Curriculum for Excellence in a Nutshell guides for parents has asked me to distribute the new Nutshell guides. These were well received two years ago when the new nationals were first being introduced. I hope you find these equally helpful.

Please find below the links to the National Parent Forum's Revision in a Nutshell guides for the new Highers (20 subjects) and updated Revision guides for National 5s (20 subjects).

These revision guides contain direct links to SQA specimen question papers, exemplar question papers plus past question papers, where appropriate. They are designed as digital resources and work well with ipads or other tablets.

The guides advise learners to check with their teachers to make sure that material is relevant. The guides are primarily intended to provide the SQA direct links by subject in one place, and to give some additional revision opportunities (if relevant) which are web-links to school pages or to the websites of subject-relevant organisations.

- [20 Revision Guides for the new Higher qualifications](#)
- [20 Updated Revision Guides for the National 5 Qualifications](#)

The following may also be of interest to you.

- Assessment in the Senior Phase in a Nutshell, this is a [summary](#) of the types of assessment in the new National Qualifications
- [Learning Pathways in a Nutshell](#) for the Senior Phase and beyond

- The National Parent Forum of Scotland's [publications guide](#)

Any feedback or comments would be much appreciated please contact

kristina.woolnough@gmail.com

I want to thank Tina for all her hard work and commitment in developing these. I know they will be appreciated.

Schools which have been recognised nationally

It is always good to see the work of Edinburgh's schools recognised nationally.

In the Times Educational Supplement Scotland on the 6 March 2015 we had two significant features. The first relates to the partnership work between with the Scottish Parent Teacher Council and **Sciennes Primary school**. The aim of this [pilot project](#) is to strengthen the involvement of parents in the curriculum aspects of the school.

The second feature is the sector-leading work on our **Modern Languages 1+2** strategy. There was a particular focus on our success in German teaching in Edinburgh. You can read more about this [here](#).

Castlebrae Community High School

I was really pleased to hear about the work between the Edinburgh International Festival and Castlebrae Community High School to create a three year arts residency. From *Castlebrae with Love* is a film and music project which will be shown in the Hub on 15 August 2015

Craigroyston Community High School

The Times Educational Supplement Scotland on 6 April 2015 ran a three page article on Craigroyston Community High School which highlighted as demonstrating national best practice for the way it has improved its senior phase and its

vocational courses to encourage as many pupils as possible to stay on and learn at school. This exemplifies the Wood Commission report which was trying to ensure that all pupils get opportunities to develop skills to be ready for work. You can read the article [here](#).

A warm farewell to Rosie Wilson

Rosie Wilson, Service Manager for Special Schools and Specialist Provision will be leaving the Council in May. Rosie has been an excellent senior manager and a wonderful colleague. Her work over the past 5 years has made a real difference to our services not only our special schools and specialist provision in particular but to our wider objectives to give all children the best start in life.

Paralympics Experience Event at Forrester and St Augustine's High Schools

Children and young people from our schools were invited to attend a Paralympic Experience Event on 13 March. The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games had the largest Parasport element in Commonwealth Games history. This event aims to build on this legacy and raise the awareness of disability sport across the East of Scotland.

The Paralympics Experience Event is designed to allow young people to experience a range of Parasports delivered by some of the best clubs and coaches available in Scotland. The Paralympics Experience is about providing a range of opportunities for young people with a physical, visual or hearing impairment to try new and exciting sports and learn more about the pathways that are available in the region. Furthermore, the event will highlight the opportunities for young people with disabilities to achieve at the highest level and hopefully inspire them to become our stars of the future.

Kaimes Unsung Stories – an animated ceilidh

Unsung stories is an expressive arts project which has been ongoing for the last two years and involved many past and present learners from Kaimes School. It tracks the history of migration to Scotland through personal real life stories and investigation into the past.

The Filmhouse held the premier of their nine short animated films about a wide range of people who have chosen to come from outside Edinburgh to settle here.

Pupils have also created 12 murals which tell the story of migration to Scotland over the centuries to the present day. Some of these panels have been on display in Holyrood at the Scottish Parliament.

To read more about the project and view the short stories visit Kaimes School website here. <http://kaimesschool.com/art/unsung-stories-an-animated-ceilidh/>

Rowanfield Special School unveil revamped library

Pupils and teachers from Rowanfield Special School unveiled a revamped library by hosting a mini book festival, headlined by acclaimed children's author John Fardell.

The school was selected as one of two winners of Library Energiser, an initiative launched by the ScottishPower Foundation, in its role as sponsor of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, offering schools in Edinburgh, the Lothians and Glasgow the chance to win a £2000 library makeover.

Council unveils Self Directed Support

You can now view a short video explaining the new way of delivering social support in Edinburgh on youtube <https://www.youtube.com/user/EdinburghCouncil/videos>

The lively two-minute animation spells out key information on [Self-Directed Support \(SDS\)](#) – the new way for Scotland’s councils to help people of all ages to live independently at home and become more involved in the community.

The new measures came into effect in April 2014 and have been described as the biggest change in local authority provision of social care since 1990s. SDS gives people much more choice and control about the way they are supported than ever before

For more information call 0131 200 2327 or email cf.socialcaredirect@edinburgh.gov.uk

Dates of Future CCwP meetings – Session 2015

14 May 2015, European Room, City Chambers, 6.30-8.30pm

1 October 2015, European Room, City Chambers, 6.30-8.30pm

3 December 2015, European Room, City Chamber, 6.30-8.30pm

Gillian Tee
Director of Children and Families
May 2015