

Executive Director of Communities and Families

Update for Parent Council Neighbourhood Groups

Item 4.1

September 2015

This report provides an update for parents and 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.

The last Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) on 14 May 2015 was another positive meeting. The two topics chosen by the parents to discuss were: Rising School Rolls and 1:1 Digital Learning.

In the first presentation Crawford McGhie, Asset Planning Manager described the huge amount of building work underway across the Children and Families Estate. This includes: 3 new secondary schools, 9 nurseries, 2 primary schools, 1 special school, 2 children's homes and 8 school extensions which were completed for the start of term. To view the full presentation, please click [here](#).

The second presentation by Dave McKee, Acting Quality Improvement Officer, described the number of 1:1 devices in our schools (e.g. iPads) and the positive impact this is having on teaching and learning. Work is being progressed on a strategy for 'Bring Your Own Device' which would enable pupils to bring computers in from home if they have them. This will only be considered once a full equalities impact assessment is carried out to ensure that there would be equity in provision if a policy like this was implemented.

Again I would like to thank Lindsay Law for her hugely valuable input as parent representative on both the CCwP and the Education Children and Families Committee for the past three years. I am delighted to welcome Alexander Ramage as the new Parent Representative.

1. Exam Update

Once again I am delighted about our positive exam results. The highlights of which are:-

- By the end of S4, 39% of the S4 roll achieved 5 qualifications at National 5 level which is an increase of over one percentage point from last year.
- By the end of S5, 58% of the S4 roll achieved 1 or more Highers – a 4 percentage point improvement on last year and a 16 percentage point improvement since 2009. (Across the city there were 6354 presentations for revised higher (pass rate A-C 77%) and 4693 for the new curriculum for Excellence Higher (pass rate 82%).)

- By the end of S6, 63% of the S4 roll achieved one or more Highers – a 2 percentage point (with rounding) increase on the previous year and a 15 percentage point improvement since 2009.
- A particular strength is the percentage increase in attainment across all measures when comparing the 2009 data with the 2015 results.
- A particular strength continues to be attainment of pupils by the end of S5 and S6 where the strong levels of attainment have either been maintained or improved at all levels.

Please note these are not final exam results as the appeals process is not yet complete.

2. Positive Destinations for School Leavers

This year's sustained positive destinations have increased again. Figures published by the Scottish Government show that the success rate of school leavers in Edinburgh achieving and sustaining a positive destination are at the highest rate ever. The figure is up 10 per cent since the Edinburgh Guarantee began three years ago and is now at 93.1 per cent up from 91.2 at the same time last year. We do not currently have the comparator data, but it is important to know the following:-

- The figures in 16 out of 23 secondary schools have increased from the Initial Report in September
- City wide increase in employment from 19.2% to 25.2% (617 to 805)
- City wide "unknown" has decreased from 20 down to 8 (0.35%)
- Largest increases in Positive Destinations – Craigmoynton 55 to 64 (up 13.1%) Firrhill 181 to 194 (up 6.8%) Forrester 75 to 79 (up 6.7%) Gracemount 89 to 95 (up 6.8%)
- Unemployed Seeking has dropped from 230 to 176 (7.2% to 5.5%)

3. Literacy

- You will have seen recent media coverage on an apparent drop in literacy levels across Scotland. I am pleased to report that this is not the case in Edinburgh.
- Our literacy strategy is having positive impact on literacy levels in Edinburgh. The national impact study on "Literacy and English and the impact of Curriculum for Excellence for pupils aged 3-15" highlighted Liberton High School and Hailesland Early Years Centre as national good practice.

- **Fast Track reading programme:** Once again we have had positive [press](#) coverage related to our Literacy comprehension programme being used in our Secondary schools. This highlighted the positive impact on the programme on literacy levels in secondary schools.

4. Budget

Children and Families once again delivered a balanced budget 2014/15. We ended the year with £10 under spend on a £380m budget! Our budget challenges continue and we have a further £15m savings to make in 2015/16. We are working on our savings proposals for 2016/17.

5. Transformation Change

You may be aware at the Full Council meeting on Thursday 25 June 2015 where the Council's Transformational Change programme was approved by Councillors. These proposals will help deliver services more effectively and locally tackle the savings of £107 million we need to make over the next five years. In the three most recent year's budgets, we have delivered almost £80 million of recurring savings across the Council, while seeking to protect front line service delivery.

6. Children and Families awards

This year I am delighted that we have had over 50 entries for the Children and Families achievement awards. The ceremony will be at the Assembly Rooms on September 28 2015, when the winners will be announced.

7. Play Day

Once again Edinburgh's historic Grassmarket was transformed into a giant children's play area on Wednesday 29 July 2015 to promote play in the city.

There were lots of family-friendly activities on offer including junk drumming, a mud kitchen, parachute games, magic potions, a giant sand pit, water play, and a cardboard city.

This was the 15th year that the event has been held and every year gets bigger and more fun! Thousands of people, both young and old, have come along to join in activities on offer.

Playday is the national day for play. On Playday thousands of children and their families get out to play at hundreds of community events across the UK.

As well as a celebration of children's right to play, Playday is a campaign that highlights the importance of play in children's lives. It's all about learning for life and showing that play is fun not just for the child but for adults as well.

8. **Edinburgh Early Learning and Childcare Academy -The Flagship for Early Years Training.**

The Edinburgh Early Learning and Childcare Academy (EELCA) was launched in August 2014 as part of our Early Years Strategy aim **“To develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce to deliver a high quality Early Years Service.”** and meet the requirement of national policy from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, to *“raise the quality and status of the workforce”*. Our first group of EELCA modern apprentice and trainee early years practitioners are now approaching the end of the first year of their two year course towards achieving an SVQ level 3 qualification in Social Services for Children and Young People. The fifteen early years practitioner trainees and eleven modern apprentices are based in local authority nursery classes, nursery schools and early years centres. The early years practitioner trainees receive input from our EELCA training team, Tracey Shaw, Lynn Mc Nair and Jane Whinnet and their assessor Amanda Godsell. The modern apprentices are receiving their training at Edinburgh College. We are working closely with the assessment team at the college to ensure quality training experiences. We are in the process of training new assessors to join the EELCA training team, which will allow us to further develop the programme to meet the future needs of the workforce.

9. **Mentors in Violence Prevention**

I was pleased to attend the first annual Mentors in Violence Prevention award ceremony. We heard from young mentors from Portobello, Craigroyston and Holyrood about the impact this work is having on their schools and also in developing them as leaders. The event was jointly hosted with Police Scotland.

10. **Integrated Children’s Service Board**

I am pleased to report on the first meeting of our new Children’s Service Board held jointly with Health, Police and the Voluntary Sector. We agreed that our first. We agreed that our first priority is look at how we improve support for children with mental health difficulties.

11. **Career Academies Scotland**

The excellent work in Edinburgh of the Career Academies in Scotland was celebrated at an event in April. Career Academies UK is re-launching later this month as Career Ready and more information can be found on their new [Career Ready website](#) which is now live.

Career Academies have been provided in Edinburgh’s secondary schools since 2012. This year we have had 22 secondary schools taking part. The remaining school will be coming on board in the next school session. All 23 secondary schools will be involved. This means that each school will have at least 5 businesses linked to them over a two-year period.

12. **Portobello topping out for the new high school**

This is a key stage for the Portobello building project and the topping out was a special day for everyone who has been involved in the project over many years. Although there is still some way to go, after many years of looking at the images for the school it was very satisfying to see the building rising from the ground and becoming reality. The school will officially open in the Autumn 2016.

13. National Review of Early Years Workforce

Our Early Years Senior Education Manager Aileen McLean has been invited to participate as a member of the National Review of the Early Years Workforce. I thought you might appreciate, as I do so, sight of this paragraph within it. Prof Imran Siraj led the review and was very complimentary about our early years centres when she visited them. "The City of Edinburgh Council is one example of the best early learning focuses within Scotland. This is based on the professional development they provide for early years staff, much of which follows the Froebel model. This model is child centred with a play-based pedagogy, and is underpinned by a knowledge and understanding of child development which supports assessment, evaluation and planning."

14. Parenting Programmes doing well in Edinburgh

Support for parents is important to us. The Parent and Carer Support Team coordinates the delivery of a number of [parenting programmes](#), as well as offering advice and training to staff.

The programmes on offer range from adult and infant activity sessions to practical courses that support families with teenagers. All of the courses put parents in the driving seat, helping them to find solutions to potential problems before they arise. Practitioners delivering courses include those with child development, adult education and family support backgrounds, as well as educational psychologists and specialists in mental health. Read more on Bright Futures Blog [Putting Parents in the driving seat](#).

If you work with children and parents/carers you think might be interested, please contact [Pat Southall](#) on 0131 469 3417.

15. Psychology of Parenting Project (PoPP) Update

PoPP is aimed at improving the availability of high quality evidence-based parenting programmes for families with young children (3 and 4 year olds) who have elevated levels of behaviour problems. Edinburgh is successfully delivering PoPP in North and clusters within South and South West. Practitioners from a range of services have been identified and facilitator training for the two programmes, the Incredible Years® and Group Triple P is now underway to rollout PoPP across the rest of the city. You can read about this on the Psychology of Parenting Project [website](#)

More information on this is available from Pat Southall on 469 3417
pat.southall@edinburgh.gov.uk

16. New Head Teacher of ASL Service appointed

I am delighted that Kirsty Rosie has now taken up her post as the Head Teacher of the Additional Support for Learning Service in May. Kirsty was formerly Head Teacher of Prospect Bank School.

17. Games @ the Hub

On Tuesday 9 June 2015, Active Schools hosted the third Games @ the Hub event at Forrester/St Augustine's High School. All 88 primary schools were invited and 54 schools. 1100 P6 pupils attended the largest sports day of the year! Pupils took part in a skills based session at the beginning of the day and progressed into a competitive tournament in the afternoon. Each school was asked to bring mixed teams of 10 to take part in 2 of the 11 sports which included hockey, netball, rugby, volleyball, athletics, football, cricket, judo, basketball, swimming and badminton. Over 100 volunteers, sports development officers, local clubs, national governing bodies and local coaches helped on the day. The date for next year's event was announced yesterday and will be Tuesday 24 May 2016.

18. ICT

A new [ICT contract](#), approved last week, is set to transform our services and save a minimum of £45m over the next seven years. It will also deliver an estimated £46m worth of essential services at no extra cost.

Our preferred bidder – CGI – is one of the largest independent suppliers in the world and bring vast experience of transforming ICT services and accelerating channel shift, which will be hugely important in supporting our objectives for change.

Our schools will benefit greatly with bandwidth in secondary schools set to increase by up to 50 times, and primary schools by up to 100 times. The contract will also create over 200 jobs locally, plus over 60 new modern apprentice opportunities.

19. Our achievements since May

Scottish Education Awards

Congratulations to Dalry Primary School for winning the Scottish Education Awards!

We are proud to announce that we had five finalists in the Scottish Education Awards! Congratulations to them all:

- Gracemount Primary School - Learning Through Technology Award
- Michele Price, Colinton Primary School - Educational Supporter of the Year

- Stenhouse Primary School - Gaelic Education Award
- Drummond Community High School – Creativity
- Dalry Primary School – Creativity

Scottish Schools of Co-operation Charter Mark Award event

The Scottish Schools of Co-operation Charter Mark Award event was held in the City Chambers. Pupils from participating schools attended this to receive their plaques from our Convener of Education, Councillor Paul Godzik.

The City of Edinburgh Council is at the vanguard of the schools of co-operation movement, as the first co-operative authority in Scotland. Schools gaining Level 1 were:

- Craigmount High School – Fairtrade Events
- Gorgie Mills School – Sharing co-operative values
- Tollcross Primary School – Fundraising
- Ferryhill Primary School – Developing a learning cluster
- St Catherine’s RC Primary School – Enterprise projects
- St Francis RC Primary School – Health and wellbeing
- Hermitage Park Primary School – Fundraising
- Blackhall Primary School – Pupil committee
- Granton Primary School – Self-help and responsibility

Oaklands Award Winners

On 1 May 2015, three senior pupils from Oakland’s School were in London to attend an awards ceremony at the Telegraph Headquarters and collect their prize for winning the best group category in the 15-19 age group in the National Enterprise Competition, the Tenner Challenge. You can read about this on our [brightfutures](#) blog.

The Convener’s Challenge

On 5 June, pupils from secondary schools across Edinburgh worked in teams as they pedalled, paddled and plotted their way across the city as they competed to win the Convener’s Challenge! Twelve schools took part in the inaugural activity challenge, but there could only be one winner and it was Tynecastle High School! For more details see our [brightfutures](#) blog.

SportScotland

A new award from SportScotland has been given to two of our schools Firrhill High School and St Joseph's RC Primary School. They each receive the prestigious GOLD status. This award recognises the impressive increase the physical education and sports opportunities available to the young people in schools across Scotland.

Evening News Awards

I had the great pleasure of attending the Evening News Local Hero Awards last week. Congratulations must go to everyone who was nominated for the awards. Pilrig Park School won the School of the Year category with Liberton and Craigroyston High Schools being joint runners-up. Juliet McCann was runner-up for Teacher of the Year for her work as Principal Teacher at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. I was especially pleased to see two of our foster carers recognised – Sharon Duncan won the Carer of the Year category and Nicola Hogg was a finalist.

Paolozzi Awards

This was another fabulous ceremony with outstanding young people being awarded prizes for their art work. Every year I am more and more impressed by the high quality of the art work produced. The overall winner was Casey Black, S6 at Holy Rood. Well done to all award winners and their art teachers! Full details of all the winners will be available soon on brightfutures.

Adult Learners Achievement Awards

I was delighted to attend the Adult Learners Achievement Awards in May at the City Chambers. It was a great opportunity to hear about the work taking place across the city to support adult learners and the positive impact on individuals. This year the Outstanding Achievement Award went to Kindling the Flame (The Outlook Project) where students looked at 'what adult education means to me' through art, drama and creative writing courses culminating in an exhibition as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival. The group developed a Manifesto for Adult Learning which was launched during the exhibition and also presented it, along with the students' experiences at the cross party group on adult learning at the Scottish Parliament earlier this year. Congratulations must go to everyone recognised at the awards and thanks to all our staff who support adult learners throughout the year. To see a list of all the winners click [here](#).

Gillian Tee
Executive Director of Communities and Families
August 2015