

Item 4.1 - Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families Update

Update for Parent Council Neighbourhood Groups – February 2017

Introduction

Welcome back! I hope you all enjoyed some well deserved rest over the festive period and were able to spend some quality time with family and friends. It really surprised me what a fast year 2016 turned out to be and I'm sure this had much to do with the pace of life in our schools and change within the Council as we transform our services.

We faced an unprecedented challenge last year when 17 of our schools closed and it is great credit to parents, children and young people and our staff that I can reflect back and say we had a successful year. I remain very proud of the efforts shown by everyone to overcome these difficulties. The Independent Inquiry Report by John Cole on the school closures is due to be presented to Full Council on 9 February.

While we hope we do not encounter anything remotely similar in 2017, this year will bring new demands as budgets remain tight and we continue with our dialogue with the Scottish Government about how schools will be run in the future.

This year will also see a new Council administration with the Local Government Elections taking place on Thursday 4 May. So this will be my last update report within the term of the current Council.

Permanent recruitment to the post of Executive Director of Communities and Families is now underway and further details will follow as soon as an appointment is made.

Pupil Equity Fund

The Pupil Equity Fund will be distributed to schools from the 2017/18 financial year. It is a new £120 million scheme which will allow extra funding to be allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has committed this funding over the next five years as part of the overall £750m Attainment Scotland Fund. It must be used to support children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential.

Publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools will receive £1,200 for each pupil in Primary 1 to S3, or equivalent, who is eligible and registered for free school meals, as estimated by using data from the Healthy Living Survey. Funding for 2017/18 will be paid by the Scottish Government to Local Authorities by means of specific grant. The Grant will clearly indicate the amounts that should be allocated to each individual school, along with the terms and conditions for its use. It is expected the overall allocation for Edinburgh will be around £7.3m.

Head teachers will receive confirmation of allocation and national operational guidance to support the use of this funding by the end of January. A range of support will also be in place to assist with the use of this funding. This includes a new framework of practice examples published on Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub; work with the Education Endowment Foundation and a series of regional events to provide:

- direct access to research and advice and guidance on practice;
- an opportunity to hear from colleagues from across Scotland on their work to close the equity gap; and
- a chance for some early work on school planning for this funding.

A Governance Review of Scottish Education

Thanks to those who contributed to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Governance Review which closed on 6 January. The review was seeking your views on how education – from early years to secondary schools – is run to ensure it delivers excellence and equity for all children and young people.

Timescales for implementing the proposals from the Governance Review are not yet confirmed. The Scottish Government has already stated it will seek to make progress without legislative change where possible. A new Education Bill is due to be introduced in the second year of this Parliament and initial consultation on this is due to be held before the summer break. . Further updates will be made available as details emerge and we will keep this under review at future meetings with the Consultative Committee with Parents.

Early Years Provision

Edinburgh Early Years has been selected by the Scottish Government as one of the first three locations to trial an increase in the flexibility, quality and quantity of provision available, moving towards 1140 hours.

Edinburgh's proposal is to extend two nursery settings of Early Learning and Childcare provision within the city, with the establishment of a nature kindergarten. Children from Craigentenny and Ferryhill nursery classes will receive half of their entitlement within their nursery setting and half in a nature kindergarten setting, receiving Early Learning and Childcare from 8.30-3.30 daily from January to June 2017. A class from Craigentenny nursery attended the launch with Mark McDonald, Minister for Childcare and Early Years on 15 November 2016. For more information, [click here](#)

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2015/16

The data on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in schools was published by the Scottish Government on 13 December 2016. If you would like to access this information, [click here](#)

I also plan to have an initial Attainment Report presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee on 7 March. This will be available for prior discussion at the meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents on 2 March.

Primary School Open Days

Feedback from the Primary School Open Days has now been collated and evaluated and was overwhelmingly positive. It is clear parents and carers really value the opportunity to visit and learn about their local schools. My thanks go to the staff, pupils and parents for making this such a success.

Secondary Schools Pilot in Partnership with the VIKS Foundation

Vision in Kids (VIKS Foundation) is a Scottish charity set up by medics to encourage young people to consider careers in the health service. The charity is very keen to work directly with young people in our schools and a pilot programme has been set up to involve four secondary schools - Wester Hailes Education Centre, Leith Academy, Broughton High and St Augustine's.

The following initiatives are now planned:

1. The VIKS Award

Each pilot school will nominate one pupil (S1-S3) who has excellent attainment or achievements, but who has had to overcome adversity/difficulties to do so. The award will constitute a shield, which will be engraved with the pupil's name and will be kept in the school. Names of future winners will be added to the shield each year. The pupil winning the award will also receive a Certificate of Achievement from the VIKS Foundation and a prize of £25. This will be either a token or voucher – schools will decide with pupil input.

2. Group Work Place Visit for S1-S3 pupils to the Western General Hospital

Pupils will visit the training ward which is used for training doctors and nurses at the Western General Hospital. They will meet a range of professionals in health care roles and carry out some practical exercises on dummies. This will be targeted to those pupils who express an interest in finding out more about careers in the health service.

3. Nursing - One Day Visit Offer

Discussions are taking place with the VIKS Foundation about how this can be arranged. It will be aimed at those in the pilot schools who would like to find out more about nursing as a future career.

4. Bespoke Work Placements for Senior Pupils

VIKS are very keen to support pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds to consider a career in the health service – i.e. doctor, nurse, physio, radiographer etc. They are keen to assist with placements and help to access to mentoring if possible.

Forrester High School

On Thursday 12 January, Tam Baillie, Children and Young People's Rights Commissioner visited Forrester High School to present them with their Rights Respecting School Level 1 Award. Tam also saw the recent campaign video created by staff and pupils about the need to do more for lone child refugees. This video was created as part of UNICEF's Outright campaign, and will be featured in UNICEF publicity about the campaign. After the assembly, Tam had the chance to speak to some staff about the journey to fully embed children's rights across the curriculum as the school strives towards the RRS Level 2.

Proposals to close Panmure St Ann's School

There is a public consultation running from 10 January to 27 February 2017 on the proposed closure of Panmure St Ann's Special School. The Council is consulting on proposals to close the school at the end of June 2017.

You can visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/panmureconsultation for details of the proposals and to download related documents.

A public meeting will be held at Waverley Court (Room C.47), 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG on Monday 6 February from 6.00-8.00pm.

New Primary School for South-East Edinburgh

The period of consultation for a new primary school in South-East Edinburgh started on Monday 16 January. The statutory consultation is taking place due to the significant new housing development proposed within the area because of the Local Development Plan (LDP). This is the first consultation for a new school as a result of the LDP as school roll projections show that pupils from the new housing will lead to accommodation pressures by 2020.

A site within the 'Broomhills' housing development site to the south of Frogston Road East and between Burdiehouse Road and Broomhills Road has been identified for the new school. The consultation paper outlines the proposed catchment area for the new school, which if implemented, will lead to changes to the current catchment areas of: Gracemount Primary School, Gilmerton Primary School, Liberton Primary School, Gracemount High School and Liberton High School.

As part of the consultation, there will be two public meetings. The first is at Gilmerton Primary School on 31 January from 6.30pm - 8.30pm followed by Gracemount Primary School on 9 February from 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Prestonfield Primary

Prestonfield Primary School has secured a third partnership for paired reading with 18 volunteers from the People's Postcode Lottery mentoring P4 and P5 pupils on a weekly basis. This is in addition to the highly effective partnerships already established for paired reading with volunteers from Scottish Widows and CMS who support learners in P6 and P7.

Relaxed Panto

I was delighted to join all special schools at a Relaxed Panto at the Kings Theatre on the 12 January. This was the third year of the event and it was great to see the enjoyment the children gain from the experience. The production has been modified so that pupils with sensory needs, or those that like to move around, can do so. Grateful thanks go to Radio Forth's Cash for Kids and all those who helped make it such a special day.

Debating Championship

Well done to Craigmount High School's debating team who recently participated in the Scottish round of the Oxford Schools competition in Dundee. Despite solid performances from all six Craigmount debaters, it was the home team, Dundee High who progressed to the finals. Craigmount finished as highest ranked state school in Scotland and had the youngest participant with an S3 pupil.

Ministerial Visit

Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, visited Currie Community High School on Thursday 19 January. Currie has made a positive contribution to Learning for Sustainability, STEM, Eco and Fair Trade programmes, which were highlighted to Ms Cunningham by pupils and staff during her visit. Met by senior pupils upon arrival, Ms Cunningham made her way into the Learning Resource Centre where pupils had created stalls and displays of their work. The pupils were clearly proud of their work and delighted to share their thinking.

Sky Sports Living for Sport Programme

The purpose of the Sky Sports Living for Sport programme at Wester Hailes Education Centre is to support, inspire and encourage young people with their current studies and future goals. The programme being offered, alongside the support of Sky Sports Living for Sport and Keith Cook, Olympic Gold Medal winner, will include testimonies of an individual who has overcome adversity to then succeed

within their chosen path. The day will consist of various workshops where young people will gain practical experience, developing their physical, cognitive and social skills. A main focus will be the different opportunities the Sports Industry offers and equipping our young people with a variety of skills to take forward in learning, life and work.

Alistair Gaw

Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families

February 2017