

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 1 February 2018.

Present:

Councillor Paul O’Kane (Chair)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Colm Merrick (Vice Chair)	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Mr Des Morris
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

Attending:

Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Mark Ratter, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager; and Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Ms Jannette Black, Headteacher, Hillview Primary School.

Apologies:

Councillors Tony Buchanan (Leader) and Jim Swift; and Ms Dorothy Graham.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

297. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

PROGRESS OF HILLVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ADDRESSING AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FROM EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT

298. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 30 March 2017 (Page 2282, Item 2449 refers), when it was agreed that the Director of Education submit a report on the school’s progress to the committee in March 2018, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of progress made in Hillview Primary School (formerly known as Springhill and Auchenback Primary School) in addressing the recommendations contained in the report by Education Scotland published in February 2017.

The report referred to areas of improvement which had been outlined by Education Scotland and agreed with the school and Education Department. An action plan for improvement had subsequently been developed and the Quality Improvement Team had worked closely with the school to implement this.

The interim progress report outlined a number of key strengths within the school, highlighting that parents were very positive about the ethos of the school and had embraced the new identity of Hillview Primary. The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) reported that the school had made a promising start in meeting the recommendations from the Education Scotland report and would continue to work with the Quality Improvement Team to further address the recommendations. This work would form the basis of the school's Improvement Plan for sessions 2017/18 and 2018/19.

In response to comments and questions from Members, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) reported that leadership within the school was a key element of the improvement process and all staff had embraced the changes which had been introduced. Referring to comments made about the possibility of using the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to tackle mental health issues in schools, the Director of Education advised that each school could decide what their PEF allocation would be used for and further information regarding this would be submitted to the Education Committee in due course. The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) added that child mental health issues were tackled through the Children's Services Plan and children's health and wellbeing was also discussed at meetings of the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Group which included officers from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). The Director of Education highlighted that many teachers had undertaken training in Mental Health First Aid to assist pupils with mental health issues within schools.

Ms Black, Head Teacher, explained that everyone connected with the school was pleased with the report which recognised the achievements which had already been made and commended the hard work of staff, pupils, parents, the wider community, the Education Department Directorate, and the Quality Improvement Team. She also thanked the Barrhead Cluster Head Teachers for their support and advice. She stated that the school had gone through a challenging period during the amalgamation but was pleased about the many improvements which had been made during the previous two and a half years and welcomed the appointment of a new Depute Head Teacher who was proving to be an excellent addition to the leadership team.

Having heard Councillor O'Kane, on behalf of the committee, congratulate all those associated with the improvements which had been made, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the contents of the Education Scotland follow-through report on Hillview Primary School; and,
- (b) invite the Director of Education to carry out a further follow-through review of Hillview Primary School within 12 months and bring the resulting report to Education Committee in June 2019.

STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2016/17

299. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the proposed content of the Education Department's 2016/17 Standards and Quality Report, a copy of which accompanied the report.

Having set out the legislative obligations on local authorities to produce and publish annually a Local Improvement Plan which detailed how schools and services would continuously improve, and based on this prepare a Standards and Quality Report detailing how improvements in provision had been sought and achieved, the report outlined the progress made by the Education Department and its schools and services in taking forward the improvement agenda set out in the Local Improvement Plan.

The report explained that the department had undertaken a self-evaluation exercise which had informed the draft report and helped outline the steps to be included in the Local Improvement Plan which was the subject of a separate report to the committee. The draft Standards and Quality Report highlighted the very good and excellent standards achieved by the department, its schools and services, including details of some of the activities which had been undertaken during the 2016/17 school session and their impact on stakeholders. Following feedback, the format of the report had been designed to provide a concise, visual and high level summary of progress made with the Local Improvement Plan.

It was proposed to issue the report electronically to all parents with children attending East Renfrewshire schools or Early Learning and Childcare centres and it would be available to view online or download from the Council's website. A limited number of published copies would be available in all libraries, education, sports and cultural centres, and Council buildings.

Having heard a number of Members commend the Education Department on an excellent report, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) approve the 2016/17 Standards and Quality Report; and
- (b) authorise the Director of Education to take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the report for parents.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2018-2021

300. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the Education Department's Local Improvement Plan 2018-2021.

The report explained that the plan was designed to give an indication of the department's key areas for improvement over the next three years and was updated annually to take account of changing priorities. Areas of improvement were outlined and priorities would be developed through self-evaluation and information gathered through external evaluations and the implementation of the plan.

In response to comments from Members, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) advised that Parent Councils were currently part of the legislative framework and parents would continue to be encouraged to make decisions within schools through these bodies. However, there was also a need to improve support for all parents to allow them to support their child's learning and the Parental Engagement Strategy would provide guidance on this. In response to comments about the recruitment and retention of head teachers, the Director of Education referred to the difficulties encountered across Scotland and the need to look at ways to deal with this both nationally and locally. She advised that various programmes to encourage development had been introduced, including the Aspiring Leaders Programme, and the introduction of shadowing and mentoring programmes for future leaders had been discussed at the Glasgow Regional Education Improvement Collaborative (the West Partnership) which had recently been established. She added that

Trade Unions were also working closely with local authorities to produce and support future leaders.

The committee agreed to approve the Local Improvement Plan 2018-2021.

GLASGOW CITY REGIONAL EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE INITIAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

301. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of the Council of 13 September 2017 (Page 125, Item 136 refers), when the involvement of the Council in the governance structure approved by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet which would ensure local democratic accountability for education functions whilst maximising the benefits of collaboration was approved, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the initial Improvement Plan of the Glasgow City Regional Education Improvement Collaborative (locally known as the West Partnership).

It had been agreed that the eight partner authorities would work with the West Partnership to develop the first annual regional plan and there would be a clear focus on maintaining local democratic accountability and developing a regional plan which would complement Local Improvement Plans. Regular meetings had taken place to develop the first Regional Improvement Plan and Terms of Reference and the appointment of a Convener of the Regional Education Committee had been agreed at the first meeting of the Elected Member group. Links between the Local and Regional Improvement Plan were also highlighted.

Following comments from members, Councillor O’Kane highlighted that members of the Partnership had expressed a willingness to collaborate and share best practice across the region while making a strong case for each local authority’s views to be heard during the Education (Scotland) Bill consultation.

The committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the initial Improvement Plan of the West Partnership and its relationship to the Council’s Education Local Improvement Plan; and
- (b) instruct the Director of Education to bring regular reports on its progress and impact to future meetings.

EARLY YEARS PUPIL EQUITY FUND REVIEW

302. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing progress on the implementation of the Early Years Pupil Equity Fund.

The report explained that funding had been allocated by the Scottish Government to every primary, secondary and special school in 2017/18 with an expectation that the funding would be used to address the poverty related attainment gap. Although this funding did not directly benefit the Early Years sector, funding from the Council had been combined to support the prevention and early intervention agenda in 2017/18.

The report outlined steps which had been taken to implement East Renfrewshire’s Early Years Pupil Equity Fund including formation of an Early Years Literacy Team; development of the Reaching Out Project; and officer secondments to the roles of Early Years Physical Education Officer and Parental Engagement Officer.

Having heard officers highlight that an element of outdoor learning was extremely beneficial at all stages of a child's education from early years to secondary, the committee agreed to note the report.

CHAIR

