

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 30 March 2017.

Present:

Councillor Elaine Green (Chair)	Councillor Gordon McCaskill
Councillor Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair)	Councillor Mary Montague
Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Alan Lafferty	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Ian McAlpine	Mr Des Morris

Councillor Green in the Chair

Attending:

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

Also attending:

Ben Cohen and Courtney, Busby Primary School; Mareesa Cassidy and Connie Edgar, St. Ninian’s High School; Noah Duncan, St. Mark’s Primary School; Charlotte Goodenough, St. John’s Primary School; Dominic Gorman, St. Thomas’ Primary School; Carmen Cassidy, St. Luke’s High School; Robyn Elder, Hassan Khalil, Taylor Phillips, Carla Reid, and Callum Storrie, Barrhead High School.

Apologies:

Councillors Jim Swift and Vincent Waters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2447. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS – PRESENTATIONS FROM PUPILS FROM BUSBY PRIMARY SCHOOL, BARRHEAD HIGH SCHOOL, ST. NINIAN’S HIGH SCHOOL AND THE ST. LUKE’S CLUSTER

2448. Under reference to the Minute of the Meeting of 2 February 2017 (Page 2203, Item 2370 refers), when a presentation was given on Performance in East Renfrewshire’s Schools in the Broad General Education, in the course of which pupils’ personal achievements were referred to, Councillor Green introduced pupils from Busby Primary School, Barrhead High School, St. Ninian’s High School and the St. Luke’s Cluster who gave presentations on their personal achievements.

Pupils provided information on their involvement in the John Muir Award, Dynamic Youth Award, Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Programme, NASA Space School, Pope Francis Faith Award, Caritas Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. They reported that their confidence had increased due to their involvement in these awards and schemes which had benefitted their school and personal lives.

Having heard Councillor Green, on behalf of the committee, thank the pupils for sharing their excellent experiences, the committee noted the presentations.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT ON SPRINGHILL AND AUCHENBACK PRIMARY SCHOOL

2449. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the report by Education Scotland following their inspection of Springhill and Auchenback Primary School. A copy of the inspection report accompanied the report.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) explained that in assessing the quality indicators in the school, Education Scotland had found three aspects of the work to be satisfactory and one indicator had been judged to be good. Key strengths were highlighted, including staff maintaining a strong caring ethos across the school during a period of instability; strong, positive relationships between staff and children resulting in children being happy and feeling safe in school; and staff providing a range of experiences to improve children’s wellbeing and provide a variety of out of school learning and opportunities for all children to participate in school life. Three areas for improvement were identified and an action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement had been drawn up. The Quality Improvement Service (QIS) would work closely with the school and leadership team to support its implementation.

Education Scotland would make no further reports in connection with the inspection of Springhill and Auchenback Primary School. The QIS would however revisit the school within 12 months to review the impact of the school’s action plan in addressing the areas highlighted for improvement and to provide a progress report to parents and elected members.

Having heard the Director of Education advise that a report on a new name for the school would be submitted in due course, the committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the content of the Education Scotland report on Springhill and Auchenback Primary School;
- (b) to approve the school’s action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement; and

- (c) that the Director of Education submit a report on the school's progress to the committee in March 2018.

CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE CONSULTATIVE PROPOSAL: FUTURE NON-DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN NEW MEARNS SOUTH AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW NON-DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS AT MAIDENHILL: FROM SESSION 2019-20 AND BEYOND

2450. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 17 November 2016 (Page 2109, Item 2267 refers), when it was agreed that the Director of Education would report on the results of the consultation in March 2017, the committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the results of the consultation exercise on the proposal about the future of non-denominational primary school provision in Newton Mearns south and the establishment of a new non-denominational primary school and nursery class at Maidenhill to take effect from school session 2019-2020 and seeking approval of the resulting recommendations. The consultation report was appended to the report.

It was reported that a total of 37 responses had been received through the general consultation and overall 59% of these responses agreed with the proposal. The views in favour of the proposal related to the need to cope with residential development and to ensure sufficiency of places for children. It was also commented that a new school would ease the pressure on existing schools. The concerns and issues raised by the respondents who disagreed with the proposal were mostly of an individual nature or by very few respondents. These concerns included provision of safe walking/cycling routes, roads infrastructure, and siblings attending different schools.

A consultation of children and young people in the affected schools was also undertaken and 55% supported the proposal. Education Scotland also submitted a report in relation to the proposal noting that mostly positive responses had been received. Both documents were appended to the report.

In response to questions, the Director of Education clarified that the new school would be associated with Mearns Castle High School and there was no intention to send children from Newton Mearns, or from Neilston as had been widely reported, to Barrhead to attend school. The Head of Education Services (School Performance and Provision) further clarified that due process had been followed in terms of the consultation process, but representations had been made by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) to relax the consultation process in certain circumstances in future. She added that an analysis of housing development had been undertaken to determine what type of school would be required and it was thereafter agreed that the available land would accommodate a 2-stream school with nursery provision.

Having heard Members commend the Director and her staff for their organisation of the consultation process, the committee agreed that:-

- (a) a new 2-stream non-denominational primary school and 120 FTE place nursery class be established in the Maidenhill development named Maidenhill Primary School and Nursery Class and in so doing undertake design consultation and due planning process;

- (b) the current delineated catchment areas of Kirkhill and Mearns primary schools be amended into three delineated catchment areas one for the new Maidenhill Primary, a revised one for Kirkhill Primary and a revised one for Mearns Primary as shown in Appendix 6 of the Consultation report. Children living in the newly defined catchment areas for the new Maidenhill Primary, enrolled by the end of June 2019 and attending Kirkhill Primary or Mearns Primary would have the option of transferring to the new Maidenhill Primary or remaining where they were. Once the new Maidenhill Primary was open in August 2019, any new P1 registration and pupils moving into its delineated catchment area would attend the new Maidenhill Primary for session 2019-20 onwards;
- (c) the new Maidenhill Primary be associated with Mearns Castle High School for secondary education in addition to the existing four primary schools, namely Calderwood Lodge, Eaglesham, Kirkhill and part of Mearns Primary delineated catchment area; and
- (d) consultation be carried out with the appropriate union(s) to agree appropriate staffing for the new Maidenhill Primary school and Nursery Class in advance of the new school's opening, noting that the appointment of a head teacher and senior staff would be taken forward as appropriate.

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE ASSESSMENT

2451. The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the outcome of the most recent Customer Service Excellence assessment for the Education Department.

The report explained that the assessment had been conducted in two stages, the first being a review of the self-assessment submission and the second involving a review of the actual service delivered in schools by focusing on family centred approaches and support for probationer teachers. The second stage included interviews with family first workers, parents, teachers, head teachers, and partners.

The report recognised the department's sustained commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified thirteen areas of "Compliance Plus" described as *"behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar to others"*. These included very high levels of customer insight used effectively to develop services; commitment to putting customers at the heart of service delivery; staff awareness of customers' needs and preferences; and analysis of customer feedback.

Three areas of improvement were identified including greater use of e-learning to support probationer teachers, and consideration of a more robust system to support lone workers.

Following brief discussion the committee:-

- (a) noted the continuing high standard of the award in recognition of the department's high quality services; and
- (b) approved the approach to ensuring the department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

VALEDICTORY REMARKS

2452. Councillor O’Kane, noting that this was the final meeting of the committee prior to the forthcoming elections, expressed his thanks to his elected, faith and trade union colleagues for their hard work over the past 5 years. He gave special mention to Councillor Green, who was retiring as an elected member in May, praising her role as Convener and previously Vice Convener of Education.

In response, Councillor Green expressed her thanks to the Director and her senior management team for their hard work and commitment during her time as Convener and Vice Convener and hoped that the education committee would continue to have the same unity of purpose going forward. On behalf of the non-elected members of the committee, Dr Angell thanked the elected members and officers for treating them with full respect.

CHAIR

