

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 4 February 2016.**

**Present:**

Councillor Elaine Green (Chair)	Councillor Gordon McCaskill
Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)	Councillor Mary Montague
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Charlie Gilbert	Reverend Thomas Boyle
Councillor Alan Lafferty	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Ian McAlpine	Mr Alan Munro

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:**

Stuart Maxwell, Head Teacher, Eastwood High School.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair), Danny Devlin, Jim Swift and Vincent Waters.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**1889.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT ON EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**

**1890.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the report by Education Scotland following their inspection of Eastwood High School. A copy of the inspection report accompanied the report.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) was heard relative to the report in the course of which he explained that in assessing the quality indicators in the school Education Scotland had found four aspects of the work to be very good and one indicator was judged to be good. Key strengths were highlighted, including articulate, well-mannered young people who were eager to learn and proud of their school; very high and improving levels of attainment in the senior phase; effective partnership working with staff in Community Learning and Development; and Senior leaders and staff who “go the extra mile” to support young people to achieve. Two areas for improvement were highlighted indicating that the Department and the school should ensure a coherent curriculum which delivered improved progression in the broad general education, extended learning activities and greater use of interdisciplinary learning; and continued improvements to learning and teaching with a consistent focus on high quality questioning and feedback which supported young people to be active, independent learners. An action plan to address these agreed areas for improvement had been drawn up and the Quality Improvement Service (QIS) would work closely with the school to support its implementation. The QIS would revisit the school within 18 months to review the impact of the improvement plan in addressing the areas highlighted for improvement and to provide a progress report to parents.

Members of the committee congratulated all those associated with this very good report which reflected well on staff, pupils, and the wider community, explaining that the school was at the very heart of the local community.

Mr Maxwell, Head Teacher, explained that everyone connected with the school was delighted with the report; that this report represented the start point for future achievement; thanked the committee for its support and positive comments; and commended the hard work of staff, pupils, parents, the wider community, the Education Department Directorate and the QIS.

Having heard Councillor Green, on behalf of the committee, express thanks for an very good report and ask Mr Maxwell to convey this to everyone involved in the school community, the committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the content of the Education Scotland report on Eastwood High School; and
- (b) approve the school's action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement.

## **STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2014 – 2015**

**1891.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the proposed content of the Education Department's 2014/15 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 plan 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 2014/15 school session and their impact on stakeholders.

It was proposed to issue a summary report to all parents with children attending East Renfrewshire schools with copies of the full report going to parents of all pre-school children and being available in all libraries, education, sports and cultural centres and on the Council's website.

Reference was made to the establishment of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure (ERCL) in July 2015 and it was reported that the ERCL Business Plan, which would take account of ERCL's self-evaluation, would be submitted to the Council for approval as part of the budget-setting process.

Responding to comments from Members regarding numeracy scores and Campus Police, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) reported that the use of average raw scores in numeracy, and other areas, made the figures more transparent and although improvements had been made to the numeracy figures further improvements continued to be sought. The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) advised that a meeting was scheduled to take place with representatives from Police Scotland to discuss the role of Campus Police and it was hoped that this initiative would continue, albeit with a reduced resource.

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

- (a) approve the 2014/15 Standards and Quality Report; and
- (b) authorise the Director of Education to take the necessary steps to produce and issue copies of the full report and a summary leaflet for parents as outlined.

## **LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016-2019**

**1892.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the Education Department's draft Local Improvement Plan 2016-2019.

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.

Referring to the National Improvement Framework, and the Council's response to the draft framework which was noted by the committee in November 2015, the Director of Education advised that the Framework had now been finalised and published by the Scottish Government last month, but that an element of the National Improvement Framework had been delayed, i.e. that pertaining to the introduction of standardised assessments. The Director of Education indicated that a further report would be issued to the Education Committee in June 2016 providing the department's response to this national initiative. She

advised that the framework would provide some benefits for East Renfrewshire, such as benchmarking attainment in the years of the broad general education, but that further details on the national standardised assessments would be required.

The committee agreed to approve the draft Local Improvement Plan 2016-2019.

## **REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND PUPIL SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**1893.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing information on the review of structures for management and pupil support teaching staff in primary and secondary schools, and the proposed new models' implementation.

The report explained that the current structures for management and pupil support teaching staff in East Renfrewshire schools had been in place for over 10 years. Due to considerable changes over that period including interaction with families, communities and the wider set of services responsible for the welfare of children and young people; a focus on developing employability skills; sustaining positive destinations post school; and digital learning and teaching, amongst other things, it was agreed that two working groups would be established to look at the existing structures for management and pupil support teaching staff in primary and secondary schools and assess their fitness for purpose.

The remit and composition of the working groups were provided and reference was made to the recommendations made by the working groups which included, closer integration of pupil support, learning support and behaviour support; and liaison between schools in the secondary sector and with educational partners to offer curricular pathways that catered for the needs of all young people. It was also reported that there were disparities between schools in the allocation and organisation of pupil support structures to help meet local needs within the existing structures. Further information was provided on the proposed new models emphasising that management and pupil support structures should provide the resources to support all children and young people whilst specifically addressing the inequity that existed. It was recognised that all schools and all pupils were different and that, in addition to providing resources to pupils with additional support needs, which were often easier to identify, other barriers to learning included gender differences; levels of deprivation/affluence; and ethnicity, and that resource was also required to tackle these areas. It was anticipated that the new models would more fairly allocate existing resource to better support and help meet the potential of all pupils.

It was also recognised that an increasing number of non-educational issues/tasks required to be undertaken by school managers, including information security, finance, HR, property and health and safety issues, and it was proposed that a post of business manager be established to provide head teachers and school managers with a higher level of business administrative support allowing them to focus more on core educational matters. It was anticipated that implementation of the new models would be taken forward at the commencement of school session 2016/17, where possible.

Responding to comments from members regarding funding for attainment in poverty, the effect of the changes on staff and the role of the business manager, the Director of Education advised that, although East Renfrewshire Council was not entitled to funding for attainment in poverty at the present time, research on links between areas of poverty and educational attainment was expected to be carried out with a Professor from Strathclyde University and further information on this would be provided in due course. She advised that

the review was not being carried out to generate financial savings or budget cuts, but would lead to a reallocation of existing resources in order to improve educational outcomes. It was clarified that the changes would be carried out in a managed way to ensure that continuous improvement within education was not jeopardised and the business manager would be there to support head teachers and senior managers to focus on leading learning and teaching. The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) confirmed that the department would continue to investigate ways to widen employability opportunities for young people through links with local businesses, other employers and colleges/universities.

The committee agreed to:-

- (a) note the approach taken to align the structures for management and pupil support teaching staff in primary and secondary schools in line with the department's vision; and
- (b) request that the Director of Education proceeds with implementing the proposed new arrangements where possible for the commencement of school session 2016/17 recognising that it could take a few years for full implementation to take effect.

CHAIR

