



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2012
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar (Convener)
Councillor S Brown
Councillor J Caldwell
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor D Grant
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor W Innes
Councillor M Libberton
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor M Veitch
Mrs M Goldsmith

Other Councillors Attending:

Councillor D Berry

Council Officials Present:

Mr D Ledingham, Executive Director (Services for People)
Ms F Currie, Committees Assistant

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart, Committees Assistant

Apologies:

Councillor F McAllister
Councillor P McLennan

Declarations of Interest:

None

Opening the meeting, the Convener commented on the success of East Lothian's first Learning Festival which had taken place in the Brunton Theatre on 7 September 2012. She stated that it had been a privilege for both she and Councillor Margaret Libberton to attend.

Councillor Forrest also congratulated Pinkie Primary School on their recent success at Musselburgh Horticultural Show. They had entered produce in several categories, winning 1st prize in the soft fruits section, 2nd prize in the jam section and 3rd prize with their apples. He commented that this was a credit to the whole school and a considerable achievement, as they had competed in some sections against adults.

1. HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENTS

The Executive Director (Services for People), had submitted a report to inform the Committee of Head Teacher appointments made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

He announced three new Head Teacher Appointments; Sarah Ingham at Knox Academy, Janette Gordon at Innerwick Primary School and Caitriona Kavanagh at Whitecraig Primary School. He described all three candidates as outstanding and was pleased to report that all were East Lothian internal candidates.

The Convener congratulated the candidates on their success, stating that the new appointees were of a very high calibre and had demonstrated a high level of commitment to young people in East Lothian.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the Head Teacher appointments.

2. PROBATIONER TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Executive Director (Services for People) had submitted a report to demonstrate how East Lothian Council was committed to ensuring the highest quality of support to Probationer Teachers allocated to the authority. The Directorate wished to ensure that Probationers became high quality, sought after teachers, who secured employment at the end of their Induction year. Information regarding Employment Status of Probationers was shown in Appendix 1 to the report.

Mr Ledingham commended the excellent work of Anne Kirkpatrick who managed the programme, stating that the feedback from probationer teachers on the support they had received was first class. He also pointed out the considerable work done by schools to support probationers. As a result, a number of teachers who had come through this programme were now in senior promoted posts and he was pleased to report that there were twenty in the new management cohort. He considered that this was remarkable progress.

Councillor MacKenzie, referring to the figures in Appendix A, was disappointed at the low percentage of male teachers and believed it was important to attract more male teachers into the profession. He also stated that he had been very impressed by the collaborating, sharing and mentoring ethos demonstrated at the recent Learning

Festival, enabling teaching professionals to share good practice and to take it back to their schools and cluster areas.

Councillor Caldwell sought further information on the number of permanent and temporary contracts offered to probationers securing jobs in East Lothian and the Executive Director outlined the Council's policy on employment contracts for teachers.

Councillor Berry noted that almost all probationers entering the Induction Scheme achieved full registration which reflected well on East Lothian.

Councillor Goodfellow welcomed the report and described the recommendations as excellent, serving to make East Lothian one of the most desirable places to live and teach.

Decision

The Committee noted:

- i. The robust Probationer Programme in place should continue to be updated on an annual basis to take into account changes in the curriculum and also include any relevant recommendations as a result of the Donaldson review which sets out the findings of the review of Teacher Education in Scotland.
- ii. As part of the ongoing training programme the authority should continue to invest in training experienced teachers to carry out the role of Probationer Supporter in our schools.
- iii. In East Lothian we should continue to provide our Probationers with a high quality teaching experience with a view to this being the building block for them moving on to a solid teaching career in either East Lothian or another Local Authority.
- iv. Probationers should continue to be equipped with the necessary tools required to enable them to be best placed to secure teaching posts at the end of their Probationary year.

3. EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT: ASSESSING CHILDREN'S 'READINESS TO LEARN'.

The Executive Director had submitted a report to inform the Committee of the results from the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a tool for assessing children's readiness to learn on entry to Primary one. The report also informed the Committee of the value of the Early Development Instrument for integrated children's services planning.

Mr Ledingham was delighted to report that the EDI would form the central plank in the Council's Education policy over the next five years as part of the Support from the Start initiative. He explained that, presently, there was little data on the impact early years work would have in 10 to 15 years time. However the EDI, developed in Canada, had provided a measurement of children's pre-school development. The Instrument was administered by Primary 1 teachers who completed a questionnaire on each child (anonymised) and the results provided information for groups of children and entire communities on their readiness to learn in the school

environment. One important aspect of the survey was that it did not focus on lower socio-economic groups but recognised that people not deprived can also be developmentally vulnerable. It also identified strengths as well as gaps in programmes and services. The Council now had data for 6 Wards and this information was being shared with Community Planning partners to ensure a strategic response to the EDI.

Responding to a question on resource implications for a bi-annual implementation of the EDI survey, Mr Ledingham replied that funding would be met by the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy based at Edinburgh University. The only additional costs to the Council were expected to be related to training the teachers to conduct the survey.

Councillor MacKenzie suggested that the Council could invite Susan Deacon, the author of *Joining the Dots – A Better Start for Scotland's Children* to a future Education Committee to share the results of the EDI.

Councillor Berry described the report as inspiring and welcomed the fact that the EDI surveyed all strata of society and not only vulnerable groups.

The Convener stressed that it was important the EDI survey was carried out in two years' time to inform future strategy.

Decision

The Committee:

- i. Noted the results from the Early Development Instrument (EDI) would be a significant asset in engaging communities in preparing preschool children for learning, and for services to better plan a more integrated approach to children's early development;
- ii. Noted the results for East Lothian were comparable with other international surveys of children's readiness to learn using EDI;
- iii. Noted that although the majority of children entering Primary one had the skills needed for successful learning, there was a significant variation in children's 'readiness to learn' across the county; and
- iv. Approved bi-annual implementation of the EDI survey and to instruct officers to prepare for re-surveying P1 children using the Early Development Instrument in 2014/15.

4. EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL PLACING APPEALS 2012

The Executive Director (Support Services) had submitted a report to inform the Committee of the outcome of East Lothian Council Placing Appeals in 2012.

He advised that the Education Appeals Committee had heard Appeals against the refusal of Placing Requests by the Education Authority on 31 May, 6, 7 and 8 June 2012. The Committee considered 29 Appeals and agreed to uphold the Education Authority's decision in respect of 28 Appeals and to overturn the Education Authority's decision in respect of 1 Appeal.

Decision

The Committee noted the outcome of East Lothian Council Placing Appeals.

Signed

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Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Convener of the Education Committee