



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

**TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar (Convener)
Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor N Gilbert
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor W Innes
Councillor S Kempson
Councillor K Mackie
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor B Small
Councillor J Williamson
Ms G Gillan
Ms E Malcolm

Council Officials Present:

Ms F Robertson, Head of Education
Ms M Prior, Enhanced Support Officer
Ms L Humphrys, Development Officer
Ms P Smith, Principal Officer, Information and Research
Ms V McIntyre, Principal Officer (Business Unit)
Mr R Parker, Service Manager, Strategy and Operations
Ms C Booth, Communications Officer
Mr C Gerrie, Head Teacher, Musselburgh Grammar School
Ms S Ingham, Head Teacher, Knox Academy

Clerk:

Ms S Birrell, Committees Assistant (Temp)

Apologies:

Mr S Bunyan
Ms T Sharp

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. INSIGHT NATIONAL BENCHMARKING MEASURES TO 2016

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to inform the Committee of trends in attainment and achievement of school leavers in East Lothian using the 'National Benchmarking Measures' from Insight.

Fiona Robertson, Head of Education, spoke to the report, advising that the data represented a five year sample which had been collected between 2012 and 2017, and reflected the most up to date information collected from 2015/16 school leavers. She drew the Committee's attention to improvements in attainment, adding that improvements could be made in literacy and numeracy attainment at SCQF levels 5 and 6, and in closing the attainment gap. In order to best consider next steps regarding the attainment gap, the information would be looked at in more detail and included in the authority and school improvement plans. A lead officer had been appointed to take this work further. A focus would continue on ensuring that young people were offered a wide range of opportunities, and achieved at the highest level possible for them. She would continue to support early intervention. She concluded by mentioning that the implementation of the new Curriculum Frameworks, which would begin in August 2017, would lead to further improvements in attainment.

In response to a question from Councillor Small, Ms Robertson asserted that the Head Teachers of all six secondary schools in East Lothian met regularly for professional dialogue. Mr Gerrie, Head Teacher, Musselburgh Grammar School added that best practice was shared regularly, Ms Ingham, Head Teacher, Knox Academy pointed out that her colleagues often offered a fresh perspective as the skill set of each Head Teacher in East Lothian was different.

In response to a question from Councillor Mackie, Ms Robertson briefed the Committee on a review of provision for children with Additional Support Needs, which had been overseen by an external consultant. A number of working groups were looking closely at current arrangements for supporting those with ASN across all schools, and a conference had been planned for support staff, to allow them to give better support to children with Additional Support Needs. She reiterated her aim to increase the range of qualifications and courses available across secondary schools.

Councillor McLennan asked if the results of the external review on Additional Support Needs could be brought to a future meeting of the Education Committee.

Councillor Forrest asked about recognition of wider achievements in schools. Ms Robertson commented that there were some out-of-school achievements that could be recorded using the Insight tool, but several were not included as the organisations concerned would need to have robust systems in order to be included in the data collected by Insight. However, wider successes were celebrated throughout schools in East Lothian in other ways, for example, a sports award event had been held in Ross High School recently for this purpose. She also drew the Committee's attention to the S3 profile, which would include all of a pupil's successes, and confirmed that a working group had been set up to look at improving the S3 profile to the benefit of all pupils.

Councillor Mackie asked about the attainment of Looked After Children. Ms Robertson disclosed that the numbers of Looked After Children in East Lothian were so small that each child would be looked at on a case by case basis. Intervention was planned at an early stage, and the Education service had been working closely

with Who Cares? Scotland to deliver an awareness programme to children, Head Teachers and school staff.

In response to questions from Councillor McLennan, Ms Robertson emphasised that data collected from P1 children was still considered experimental and National Quality Assurance and Moderation Officers had been appointed. The impact of family circumstances on children's readiness to learn would be supported at school level, via new data sets such as ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and ACORN measures which could allow for early intervention when other factors were impacting on children's ability to learn.

In response to a question from Councillor Small, Ms Robertson explained that this data would not be used to inform Head Teacher appraisals, which were based on self evaluation of QI Leadership of Change, How Good is Our School, and feedback from Quality Improvement Officers.

Councillor McLennan thanked Ms Robertson for her report and the responses to the questions raised by members.

Councillor Innes welcomed the report, and congratulated Ms Robertson on improvements across the board. He thanked all the staff in schools across East Lothian, and welcomed the lack of complacency with regard to improving attainment and closing the attainment gap.

The Convener thanked Ms Ingham, Mr Gerrie, and Ms Robertson for their briefing on the INSIGHT tool that had taken place prior to the meeting, and asked them to take back to all staff the Committee's thanks for the hard work and dedication that had given rise to these excellent results. She noted that the items on the rest of today's agenda would help children to achieve to the very best of their potential.

Decision

The Committee agreed to consider and note the report.

2. 2016/17 STUDENT EVALUATION OF EXPERIENCE (SEE) SURVEY

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to inform the Committee of the results of the 2016/17 Student Evaluation of Experience (SEE) Survey held in November to December 2016 and authority-level trends for the last five years.

Ms Robertson spoke to the report, relating that it had been prepared to inform the Committee of the results of a SEE (Student Evaluation of Experience) Survey 2016/17, which would inform both the development planning process and service planning. Two thousand one hundred and five P6 and S2 pupils had completed the survey which was grouped under SHANARRI indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included). She highlighted some of the figures within the report and outlined next steps, such as the sharing of data with Head Teachers, and new policies such as the Anti-Bullying Policy. S4 pupils would be surveyed at a later date.

In response to a question from Councillor Goodfellow, Ms Robertson reported that East Lothian was the only Local Authority in Scotland who was using the SEE, and as part of the National Improvement Framework Health and Wellbeing Survey they

had been asked to engage with the Scottish Government regarding their use of the survey. East Lothian would be well placed to meet the requirements of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, which placed a duty on all Education Services to collect the views of children and young people. Responding to a further question from Councillor Goodfellow, she stated that the data could be used by individual schools regarding their SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) profile, but this information could not be extrapolated at an East Lothian level.

Councillor Findlay asked why children were surveyed in P6 and S2. Ms Robertson suggested that these year groups had been chosen as they represented the penultimate year of the primary phase, and the penultimate year before the commencement of the senior phase.

Councillor Mackie asked if this survey was sent home for children to complete with their parents, and whether the survey was compulsory. Ms Ingham advised that the survey was completed in class time, and although not compulsory, Ms Robertson stressed that completion was encouraged by school staff, as schools had to demonstrate that their improvement plan was informed by the views of children and young people.

Councillor Williamson asked about the percentage of children who had reported that they did not feel safe in school. Ms Robertson indicated that this information would be looked at in more detail, via circle time in Primary Schools and PSE (Personal and Social Education) in Secondary Schools, and with support from outside agencies and partners. She insisted that there was no complacency with regards to this result. A new Health and Wellbeing Curriculum would be put in place in August 2017 which should allow children more opportunities to discuss and resolve issues.

In response to a question from Councillor Small, Ms Robertson summarised that the Education Service were never comfortable with their results, but that she hoped the Committee would discuss how to maintain continuous improvement and celebrate the successes that had been noted. The initial focus would be on areas where young people had outlined in the survey that they required further support.

Councillor Goodfellow congratulated Ms Robertson and all school staff on the results of the survey, adding that schools were good at mitigating against the dangers of the internet with regards to children's safety.

The Convener thanked Ms Robertson and Ms Smith for their report, which would be taken forward at a school, cluster, and Local Authority level, as well as in conjunction with Community Planning partners.

Decision

The Committee agreed to consider and note the results of the 2016/17 SEE Survey and authority-level trends for the last five years.

3. RESPECT FOR ALL – EAST LOTHIAN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR EDUCATION & EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SETTINGS

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to approve the 'Respect for All – Anti-Bullying Policy' and to make the Committee aware of the actions proposed in the Policy to take forward anti-bullying

approaches in East Lothian Council Schools and Early Learning and Childcare Settings.

Ms Prior spoke to the report, outlining the background to the policy, which had made reference to the Equality Act 2010 in terms of prejudiced based behaviours. Work on the Policy had been supported by respectme, Scotland's National anti-bullying service. She outlined the rigorous consultation process which had resulted in four hundred responses from parents and 200 from members of school staff.

Councillor McLennan asked how progress on the Anti-Bullying Policy would be reported to the Committee. Ms Prior responded that via the SEEMIS (Education's Management Information System) tool, Head Teachers would be able to monitor incidences of bullying within schools, and that Fraser Parkinson, Principal Inclusion and Equality Officer, would be responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of the overall policy across East Lothian. In response to further questions from Councillor McLennan, Ms Robertson agreed that a report could be brought back to Committee in a year's time, and that external agencies such as LGBT Scotland and Nil by Mouth would be involved via the Health and Wellbeing curriculum. She confirmed that training would be provided. The policy had been designed for implementation but would not remain static.

Councillor Williamson apologised to the Committee, announcing that he could have declared an interest as the Chair of Anti-Bullying East Lothian. He asked for further information about training. Ms Prior confirmed that training would be ongoing. At least two members of staff in every school had been trained on the policy.

In response to a question from Councillor Forrest, Ms Prior advised that 130 parents had attended a training session regarding the policy.

Councillor Dugdale asked whether there were plans to develop the language used around gender identity within the policy. Ms Prior asserted that all schools were very aware of this issue, and agreed that language around gender identity was changing all the time.

In response to a question from the Convenor, Ms Prior assured the Committee that the policy would be regularly reviewed.

Ms Gillan asked questions around training, specifically whether the time set aside for this would be included within teacher's Working Time Agreements. Ms Robertson confirmed this would be the case. In response to further questions from Ms Gillan, Ms Robertson advised that as the time line had been shifted for School Improvement Plans it would be possible to include aspects of this policy within School Improvement Plans for the school session 2017/18. The inclusion of the policy in the PRD (Professional Review and Development) Meeting would not be mandatory but recommended. The form in the Appendix that could be filled in by hand had been included so that support staff could update the SEEMIS system via a handwritten form if required.

Councillor Williamson asked whether there would be leaflets produced to underpin the policy. Ms Prior responded that there were excellent resources available which had been created by respectme Scotland, particularly a series of videos, which were effective for children of a wide range of ages.

Regarding earlier comments made by Councillor Dugdale, the Convener recommended that amendments should be made to the definition of transgender within the policy.

Ms Gillan remarked that the policy represented a good piece of work and welcomed this application of a consistent approach.

Councillor Small congratulated Ms Prior on the policy and noted his interest in seeing a follow up report in a year's time.

The Convener remarked that the inclusion of 1600 people in the consultation exercise meant that this was the right policy for East Lothian, and would send a clear message that bullying would not be tolerated.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the content of the Policy and specifically the protocol for reporting, recording, investigating and resolving incidents of bullying behaviour.

Sederunt: Mr Gerrie and Ms Ingham left the meeting.

4. DRAFT PLAY POLICY 2017-2020

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to ask the Committee to approve and adopt the Draft Play Policy 2017-2020 and to share the outcome of East Lothian Play Policy Development: Consultation and Engagement 2016.

Ms Humphrys spoke to the report, outlining that it was the first play policy for East Lothian. With regards to the consultation exercise, she told the Committee that changes had been made to the design of consultation, to ensure better engagement from young people. Responses had consistently been in support of outdoor play and outdoor spaces, and many requests for better provision for children with Additional Support Needs. She drew the Committee's attention to the short video that had been emailed to all Members, and gave specific examples of loose parts play and how it had ended vandalism in a school playground. She thanked East Lothian Play Association and Play Scotland for their assistance in developing the policy.

Councillor Kempson noted her concerns about new housing estates in East Lothian and whether the small play areas included in these plans were sufficient for wide games such as football. Ms Humphrys agreed that the concept of useful spaces to play, and not just small playgrounds which could actually limit use, should be looked into in more detail.

In response to a question from Councillor Gilbert, Ms Humphrys commented that all age groups were represented in the play policy, including adults.

In response to a question from Councillor Small, Ms Humphrys emphasised that the opinions of the children would be utilised to ensure that the work of the policy reached parents and community groups, citing an example of a group that had already become involved in their local area.

The Convener thanked the membership of the short-term working group that had been set up to develop the policy, remarking that it represented a significant policy development for East Lothian.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:-

- (i) approve the Play Policy;
- (ii) support and agree the priority statements set out under the three principles in the Draft Play Policy 2017-202;
- (iii) ask the Education Department to prepare an Action Plan to implement the Draft Play Policy 2017-202;
- (iv) note the implications for cross departmental working within the Council; and
- (v) note the contents of the Have Your Say on Play Draft Summary Report: East Lothian Play Policy Development: Consultation and Engagement 2016.

Sederunt: Councillor Innes and Ms Prior left the meeting during item 5.

5. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to ask the Committee to approve the Draft East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2017/2020 together with the abbreviated document – Draft East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2017/2020 Summary Document for Parents.

Ms Robertson apologised for the late arrival of an amended Strategy which had been distributed just before the meeting and emailed to Members, and welcomed Saddah Aziz, who was attending the meeting in his capacity as the representative of the National Parent Forum.

Ms McIntyre spoke to the report, welcoming Nicky Neighbour who was also attending the meeting as she had been part of the working group that had collated the strategy. She outlined that alongside the strategy was a short document which contained an abbreviated version intended for parents. She highlighted various parts of the report and Strategy, including the fact that it had arisen as part of the requirements placed on East Lothian Council and the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Schools would maintain a welcoming environment, and communication with parents would take place in a variety of ways. Parents would also have meaningful involvement with School Improvement Plans. She spoke about the importance of family learning, adding that support provided for Parent Councils would continue.

Councillor McLennan asked how the success of the Strategy would be measured and reported. Ms Robertson responded that a report would be prepared regarding the impact of the Strategy, as part of the National Framework. In response to a further question from Councillor McLennan, Ms Robertson emphasised that there would be several opportunities for external partners to become involved with the strategy, such as Community Learning Development groups.

Councillor McLennan asked about hard to reach parents. Ms Robertson explained that workshops would be run in schools and good practice would be shared between

school staff, describing some of the initiatives that were already in use in East Lothian. She added that various mechanisms, such as using pupils to welcome parents into the school and allowing them to run training sessions themselves, could encourage parents with anxiety around the school environment to engage in the life of the school. Ms McIntyre pointed out that welcoming siblings to Parent Consultations could help parents with work/life balance problems to engage with the school on those occasions. She added that data would be collected on a school, cluster and Authority level, and used to share best practice.

In response to questions from Councillor Mackie, Ms Robertson maintained that parental engagement should be seen as partnership working which could feed into the life of the school and a key part of the National Improvement Framework. She recommended that Local Area Partnerships should become involved at cluster level, by approaching Head Teachers to talk about prioritising their commitments, confirming that representatives would be attending Area Partnership meetings to talk about the Strategy.

Ms Gillan asked about the involvement of parents in School Improvement Plans, Ms Robertson confirmed that the actual mechanisms for this would be tailored to the community and that schools would use their local knowledge to decide how best to reach parents. A working group would be established to look at reporting on the Strategy after Scottish Government advice was received, and would include school staff, children, and young people.

Ms Gillan commented on the Health & Safety aspect of opening schools to members of the public and added that anything that occurred in a school should add value to the children's learning.

Councillor Small thanked Ms McIntyre for her report and noted his interest for the follow up report in a year's time, observing that children who maximised their own attainment often did so because their parents were involved in the life of the school.

Councillor McLennan echoed Councillor Small's comments, thanking those involved for prioritising parental involvement.

The Convener extended her thanks to everyone who had been involved in the collation of the Strategy, stating that it was hugely significant to involve parents at all levels of schooling. The Strategy would take forward a drive to improve engagement and participation. She thanked Ms McIntyre for her ongoing help and assistance to all Parent Councils in East Lothian.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:-

- (i) approve and adopt the Draft East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2017/2020. A copy of the Strategy would be provided to all schools in East Lothian and to East Lothian's Partner Providers – Ear note the appointments; and
- (ii) approve and adopt the Draft East Lothian Council Parental Engagement Strategy 2017/2020 Summary Document for Parents. A copy of the Summary Document would be provided to all parents/carers within East Lothian, and also to Schools, Partner Providers – Early Learning and

Childcare Settings, Libraries, Health Centres and all Area Offices. The Strategy would also be available on East Lothian Council's website.

6. HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENT

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to inform the Committee of a Head Teacher appointment made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

Ms Robertson spoke to the report, outlining the recent appointment

The Convener congratulated Ms Pearce on her return to the East Lothian Education Service.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note a recent Head Teacher appointment.

Signed

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Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Convener of the Education Committee