



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

TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2020
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON

Committee Members Present:

Councillor S Akhtar (Convener)
Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor A Forrest
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor C Hoy
Councillor S Kempson
Councillor P McLennan
Councillor J Williamson
Rev. G Sheridan

Council Officials Present:

Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)
Mr R Parker, Service Manager – Education (Strategy and Operations)
Ms L Brown, Chief Operating Officer – Education
Ms P Gray, Communications Adviser
Ms P Smith, Principal Officer (Information and Research)
Mr C Murray, Business Support Officer – Education

Clerk:

Ms B Crichton, Committees Officer

Apologies:

Councillor J Findlay
Councillor N Gilbert
Councillor W Innes
Ms E Malcolm

Declarations of Interest:

None

**1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON
19 NOVEMBER 2019 FOR APPROVAL**

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting on 19 November 2019 were approved.

Sederunt: Councillor Williamson joined the meeting.

2. FURTHER INSPECTION OF KNOX ACADEMY BY EDUCATION SCOTLAND

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to inform the Committee of the results of the further inspection of Knox Academy by Education Scotland.

The Convener announced that, due to an emergency meeting to address the ongoing situation with Covid-19 having been called directly after this meeting, the meeting would proceed in the assumption that Members were familiar with all papers. She would still welcome any essential questioning and comment from Committee Members at each item.

The Convener thanked Susan Cook for her leadership at Knox Academy, and said that it was important to ensure that the school continued on its positive trajectory.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. note the content of the Education Scotland report;
- ii. note the progress made by the school since the original inspection of November 2016 and congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on the good practice identified in the letter to parents; and
- iii. note that Education Scotland expressed confidence in the school's capacity to continue to improve and would make no more visits in connection with the original inspection of 2016. As a result, the Education Service were asked to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

3. EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF SANDERSON'S WYND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to report to Committee on the outcomes of the Education Scotland inspection of Sanderson's Wynd Primary School and Nursery Class.

The Convener enquired what support would be put in place for the school. Lesley Brown, Chief Operating Officer for Education, stated that Quality Improvement Officers were engaging heavily with Sanderson's Wynd Primary School and working with Education Scotland to support the school. The school would be reviewed regularly by the Education Service to ensure an appropriate rate of progress.

Councillor Dugdale offered her congratulations to the school for the report, highlighting comments made about Head Teacher Lynsey Blair's work to foster a school community where children were valued, respected, and included. She felt that attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics, an area for improvement identified in the report, would be aided by the calm and purposeful learning environment teachers were helping to create. The Convener also welcomed the report and offered congratulations to Mrs Blair on the inclusive environment that had been fostered under her leadership.

Councillor Goodfellow raised that it would be useful in the future to have a breakdown of the evaluation matrix used by Education Scotland, particularly where a nursery was attached to the primary school. Ms Brown said she was happy to provide this information for future reports.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. note the content of the Education Scotland letter;
- ii. note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Primary School and Nursery Class;
- iii. note the content of the Summary of Inspection Findings for the Nursery Class; and
- iv. note that Education Scotland were confident that the school had the capacity to continue to improve and so would make no further visits in connection with this inspection.

4. RESERVING PLACES IN SCHOOLS FOR CATCHMENT PUPILS WHO MOVE INTO THE CATCHMENT AREA DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) seeking the Committee's approval for reserving places for incoming catchment pupils at East Lothian Schools, as detailed at paragraph 2.1 of the report.

Councillor Forrest questioned why Pinkie Primary School had five places reserved for catchment pupils, whereas Musselburgh Burgh Primary School had only two places reserved for catchment pupils. Calum Murray, Business Support Officer – Education, explained that this was due to the housebuilding taking place in the Pinkie catchment area.

Councillor Hoy raised issues the residents of his ward were experiencing with the catchment for Letham Mains Primary School, and questioned how long it would be before a review of the catchment area, specifically in Haddington, would take place. He noted the importance of children being able to walk and cycle to school at a time when East Lothian Council had recently declared a Climate Change Emergency. Richard Parker, Service Manager – Education (Strategy & Operations) advised of a Learning Estate Review that had been approved in which Letham Mains Primary School would be considered alongside all other schools. He noted that the school was being built to accommodate the needs of that community under the catchment as it currently stood. Ms Brown advised that the Learning Estate Review would consider a wide range of information related to the estate and requirements going forward. Councillor Williamson also raised that residents in his ward had been in touch about catchment area issues in Musselburgh and to ask whether particular properties would be included in future catchment area reviews.

The Convener thanked officers for the report. She highlighted the importance of having spaces available for incoming families to be able to take up a place at their local catchment school, and spoke about some of the factors officers considered when

deciding how many places would be required to be kept in reserve. She advised that Members would be kept up to date on issues raised after the completion of the Learning Estate Review.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

- i. hold in reserve places for incoming catchment pupils for session 2020/21 for primary and secondary schools, as outlined in the report; and
- ii. delegate any increase or decrease in reserved places to the Head of Education, in consultation with the Convener.

5. ROLL CAPPING IN EAST LOTHIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS – SESSION 2020/21

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) seeking the Committee's approval for the S1-S4 intake levels for secondary schools for Session 2020/21.

Decision

The Committee agreed:

- i. to maximum intake levels in S1-S4 for session 2020/21 as outlined in the report; and
- ii. to delegate any changes to the maximum intake level in S1-S4 to the Head of Education in consultation with the Education Convener.

6. SOUTH EAST IMPORVEMENT COLLABORATIVE UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to provide the Committee with an update on the work of the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) including the SEIC Improvement Plan, last updated September 2019.

Officers responded to questions from Members. In response to questions from Councillor Goodfellow, Ms Brown advised that all financing of SEIC came directly from the Scottish Government and Education Scotland, and no funding was contributed by the local authorities involved. She also advised that most other local authorities had a representative on the National Parent Forum, but this was not the case in East Lothian Council. However, East Lothian Council regularly updated its Parent Council Chairs to encourage parental engagement, and last October some parents attended a workshop with Bev Skirrow, Principal Officer for Parental Engagement.

Responding to a question from Councillor Forrest, Ms Brown advised that the oversight groups had allowed for the creation of networks of secondary subject teachers; this had a very positive impact and was something that East Lothian Council had not

previously had the capacity to do. A Quality Improvement Officer was also assigned to lead the development of the Secondary network, which had also been very positive. She commented that work with the SEIC had been very valuable to East Lothian.

Councillor Forrest questioned whether work by the SEIC had assisted East Lothian Council in closing the attainment gap. Ms Brown answered that it was too soon to see any impact on attainment. She advised that Education Scotland had assigned East Lothian a full-time attainment advisor, who was engaging heavily with data and how schools were using Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) money. Ms Brown felt that whilst it was too soon to notice an impact on the attainment gap, but that there was positive work already being seen.

Responding to a further question from Councillor Forrest, Ms Brown advised that one of the universities was undertaking an independent review of the national impact of the Improvement Collaboratives, including setting up meetings with stakeholders. The collated report would be sent to the Scottish Government to inform next steps, and would likely be presented to the Education Committee at a future meeting.

Councillor Dugdale enquired about funding beyond August 2020. Ms Brown advised that it was likely to be later in the summer term before funding would be confirmed, but felt confident that funding would be granted to enable the SEIC to take work streams forward.

Councillor Goodfellow commented on the appointment of sixteen members of staff as subject leads across East Lothian; he agreed that these appointments would lead to increased attainment and welcomed this development.

The Convener commented that the SEIC had added value to schools and helped East Lothian Council's schools have a clear direction of travel. She noted the importance of funding continuing beyond 2020 to allow the positive work of the SEIC to continue. She highlighted that East Lothian Council, even as a small authority, played a significant role in the SEIC, which was evidence of the calibre of East Lothian's staff.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note:

- i. the priority areas for improvement being taken forward in partnership with members of the SEIC; and
- ii. the progress made towards improving professional collaboration and school empowerment across the SEIC.

7. HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENT

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) informing the Committee of the appointment of Stewart Brown as Head Teacher at Athelstaneford Primary School, as made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

The Convener offered her congratulations to Mr Brown.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the Head Teacher appointment.

Signed

Councillor Shamin Akhtar
Convener of the Education Committee