

MINUTE
of
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting, held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on Thursday 12 June 2025.

Present:

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)	Ms Fiona Gilchrist
Councillor Kate Campbell	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)	Mr Des Morris
Councillor Colm Merrick	Ms Evelyn Yedd
Councillor Gordon Wallace*	

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(*) indicates remote attendance

Attending:

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); Rosamund Coyle-Bennet, Quality Improvement Officer; Joe McCaig, Head Of Education Services (Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Change); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); John Burke, Democratic Services Officer and Bethany Mitchell, Assistant Democratic Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Nicola MacGlashan, Head Teacher, Williamwood High School.

Apologies:

Councillors Tony Buchanan, Danny Devlin and Owen O'Donnell.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1226. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT ON WILLIAMWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

1227. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the report produced by Education Scotland following its inspection of Williamwood High School. A copy of the inspection report accompanied the report.

The inspection had been carried out by Education Scotland in February 2025. It had covered key aspects of the work of the school and had identified particular strengths and areas for improvement using the short model of the Education Scotland six-point scale and self-evaluation framework.

In assessing the indicators of quality in the school, Education Scotland found one aspect of the work to be very good: learning, teaching and assessment, and the other, raising attainment and achievement to be excellent.

The report highlighted particular strengths identified by the inspection team: in particular: the highly motivated young people who were determined to achieve well; positive relationships across the school which supported a constructive and purposeful culture of learning, the Head Teacher, senior leaders and staff worked very successfully with young people to develop a high quality and well-structured framework of key principles in learning; teaching and assessment; the extensive range of activities and programs which supported and developed wider achievements; and a culture where all young people were encouraged to succeed and flourished.

The inspection team also identified one area for improvement: to continue to build on highly effective planning in learning, teaching and assessment. This would include further development of approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and improving attainment and achievement in the Communication and Support Service.

Members congratulated the Head Teacher on the report and commended the commitment of all of the school's pupils and staff.

The Committee then heard the Head Teacher, who shared that she was proud of the numerous references throughout the report that highlighted how articulate, confident and driven the young people were for themselves and each other. She took the opportunity to thank all involved including the staff, young people, Committee, elected members and Education Department for their support and dedication to the school.

Having heard members commend the report, the Committee agreed to approve the action plan to address the agreed areas for improvement in the Communication Support Service.

SPOTLIGHT ON EARLY YEARS TRACKING TOOL

1228. The Head of Service (Quality Improvement and Performance) invited the Quality Improvement Officer to present the spotlight presentation on the Early Years Tracking Tool and asked the Committee to consider as part of the context the presentation given on 14 November 2024 (Page 1013, Item 1038 refers).

The Quality Improvement Officer highlighted the work undertaken on the improvement of how education track and monitor children's progress through the Early Years Tracking Tool. Development began in 2017, locally and nationally, across early years settings to improve the approach to tracking and monitoring to provide added value to children's development and learning.

In collaboration with senior leaders and members of the Education Psychology service, a tracking tool had been developed which was linked to the curriculum for excellence and also took account of children's development milestones for all ages in a range of established skills.

A demonstration of the Early Years Tracking Tool was included in the presentation which was given to the Committee in advance for review.

After testing was concluded, the rollout of the dashboard functionality would begin in Early Years establishments with support given to the Head Teachers, senior leaders and staff.

Members commended the work of all involved in developing the tool and particularly the focus on getting it right for every child.

In discussion, members were also advised on the positive response nationally to the tool and on how parents could engage with the information within the tool.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ANNUAL REPORT

1229. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising on the approaches taken to develop Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) services. The report outlined the steps taken to improve the quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability of provision and experiences for young children.

The report contained a summary of the key information on the provision in East Renfrewshire, with full details provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

In discussion, members were provided further information on Council provision for the 0-2 age group, the ongoing improvement programme in some education settings and the impact of deferrals on primary provision.

Having heard members commend the report, the Committee:-

- (a) noted the continued progress of the delivery of 1140 hours Early Learning and Childcare; and
- (b) agreed the proposed sustainable rate for funded providers and consented to back date payments to 1 April 2025.

EDUCATION SCOTLAND REPORT ON EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL'S EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S APPROACHES TO SUPPORT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

1230. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the report by Education Scotland on the Education's Department approach to support school improvement.

In June 2024, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education announced a national thematic inspection of local authorities in Scotland. The focus of this thematic inspection was how local authorities support schools to improve. The four key themes which were in focus as part of the inspection were outlined in the report.

In September 2024, two of His Majesty's Inspectors and an Associate Assessor from another local authority spent 4 days in East Renfrewshire analysing documentation and speaking to a range of stakeholders including: school staff, school leaders, quality improvement team, education leadership team, parents and Education Committee members.

A short report was published and shared in March 2025 (Appendix 1) along with the national report detailing a summary of the position across all 32 local authorities. The report recognised

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the commitment to professional learning within the Education Department and identified leading practice that was worth sharing nationally.

Along with the Quality Improvement Team, the Head of Service (Performance and Quality Improvement) will address the areas shared in Paragraph 13 above and align with operational action plans linked to the Local Improvement Plan 2025 – 2028.

THERE WAS AN ADJOURNMENT AT 10:55AM.

THE COMMITTEE RECONVENED AT 11AM.

Having heard members commend the report, the Committee noted the report.

WEST PARTNERSHIP REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE: LESSONS FROM 2017 - 2025

1231. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education to inform members of the key actions undertaken by the West Partnership (Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaborative) between 2017 and 2025, their impact and the lessons learned for future regional collaboration.

The Committee noted the progress of the West Partnership Improvement Plan in September 2024 (Page 946, Item 957 refers). Following the Cabinet Secretary's announcement to cease funding for regional improvement collaboratives in March 2025, a new collaborative framework has been agreed by the West Partnership.

This report summarised evidence from two key papers which noted actions undertaken by the West Partnership from 2017 through to 2025. It highlighted the impact and lessons learned for future regional collaboration.

In discussion, members commended the efforts of the Director of Education and the West Partnership for finding a way to continue the benefits of the collaborative approach without central funding. An update was also provided on the work to establish the new Centre for Excellence in Teaching and how it would integrate into the existing systems.

Having heard members comment on the report, the Committee noted the report.

REPORT ON UPDATED APPROACH ON GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

1232. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education to update members on the refresh of national GIRFEC guidance and subsequent update of East Renfrewshire Council's GIRFEC Manual, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and creation of Getting it Right for Every Child Information Sharing Guidance, attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

The report outlined key changes that had been made to both documents as a result of changes to national guidance in those areas and those were summarised in the report.

In discussion, members commended the report, in particular, the importance of updated guidance for staff on gender based violence and the use of mobile devices in schools, with consultation to take place with parents, carers, school staff, children and young people on a number of subjects, including the use of mobile devices in schools. The results of that consultation would be presented to the Committee when available.

Having heard members comment on the report, the Committee agreed to :-

- (a) note the refreshed national GIRFEC guidance; and
- (b) noted the updated East Renfrewshire GIRFEC Manual attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and GIRFEC Information Sharing Guidance attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

THE CLOSURE OF GLEN FAMILY CENTRE AND FUTURE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AGED 0-3 YEARS RESIDING IN THE EAST OF THE AUTHORITY FOR SCHOOL SESSION 2026/27 AND BEYOND

1233. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval to undertake a statutory education consultation on the proposal to rationalise the education estate by closing Glen Family Centre and introducing 0 to 3 year old services, (currently provided at Glen Family Centre), to Glenwood Family Centre before the commencement of the 2026-27 academic year.

Almost all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings across East Renfrewshire Council delivered services from the age of 3 until the commencement of primary education with a small number providing services for children aged 2 to 3 years. Glen Family Centre was one of two settings to provide services for ages across 0 to 3 years. Along with other local authorities, the Council had a statutory requirement to meet the demand of local residents with due regard to efficient use of resources and best value approaches.

A formal consultation proposal was attached as Appendix 1 regarding the proposed movement of those services to the nearby Glenwood Family Centre. The further implications of the proposals were set out within that document.

Given that the legislative timescale of the consultation did not align with Council's admission processing timeline, it was proposed that the Committee meeting planned for 13 November 2025 be rescheduled to 18 December 2025 to consider the director's report on the proposal.

Councillor Wallace recognised the difficulty of closing education establishments. Any potential saving for benefit of the department is welcomed and given the condition of Glen Family Centre, a short distance move to Glenwood Family Centre makes sense. He encouraged families to get involved in the consultation. He asked regarding Paragraph 13 in Appendix 1, how many families with children under 2 reside in the catchment and would they be required to move to another establishment when turning 3?

The Education Senior Manager advised that, of those children currently attending Glen, approximately 40% resided within the Giffnock and Thornliebank communities, with around 35% residing within Newton Mearns. This demonstrated that a significant portion of those attending were travelling to the centre from Newton Mearns to access provision. This data would inform future service provision across the authority.

In discussion, members received further information on the demand for the services detailed in the report and expressed support for the consultation process, urging all stakeholders to respond.

Having heard members comment on the report, the Committee agreed:

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- (a) to approve that the Director of Education proceeds with a consultation on the proposal to rationalise the education estate by closing Glen Family Centre and introducing 0 to 3 year old services (currently provided at Glen Family Centre) to Glenwood Family Centre before the commencement of the 2026-27 academic year; and
- (b) to instruct the Director of Education to report on the consultation at a re-arranged Education Committee on 18 December 2025 (rearranged from 13 November 2025).

CHAIR