

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE9 JUNE 2016Report by Director of EducationMANAGEMENT REVIEW OF NEILSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND
MADRAS FAMILY CENTRE**PURPOSE**

1. To inform elected members of the need and intention to introduce a joint management team for Neilston Primary School and Madras Family Centre

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Elected members are asked to note:

- a) the Director of Education's intention to place the management of Madras Family Centre and Neilston Primary School under the leadership of a Joint Headship Management Team; and,
- b) that this arrangement will be specific to Neilston Primary and Madras Family Centre.

BACKGROUND

3. Members will be aware of the paper considered and approved by Council in June 2014, *Influencing the Future of East Renfrewshire*, which outlined areas where the Council would wish to seek greater powers or resources. Key Area 4 in that paper outlined the need for investment in both Neilston and St. Thomas' primary schools (both condition rating C) and the possibility of examining the feasibility of a shared campus, even with the local library and swimming pool.

4. Omitted from the paper at the time was Madras Family Centre and given its proximity to Neilston Primary and the need to continue to expand pre-five provision, in the context of the Scottish Government's intentions to provide 30 hours per week for all 3 and 4 year olds and some 2 year old children, it would be apposite to consider the nursery as part of any future improvement to the school estate in the village.

5. Madras Family Centre is situated next to Neilston Primary School. It serves the catchment areas for both Neilston and Uplawmoor for 3 and 4 year old children and some 2 year olds and is open 50 weeks of the year.

6. There is at present a national concern regarding the recruitment and appointment of suitably qualified and experienced primary head teachers. The Education Department recently advertised three Head Teacher posts on a national basis, St. Thomas', Our Lady of the Missions Primary School and Carlibar Primary School. The Department was successful in attracting only one internal applicant for each post. No external applications were received.

7. As a result of this national issue, many councils have taken the decision to have one management team leading and managing more than one establishment, known as Joint Headship Management Teams. In many cases this has been due to budget pressures, rurality and / or a lack of suitable applications from appropriately experienced and qualified candidates.

8. There is also a shortage of suitably qualified and experienced nursery head teachers. Members will be aware that East Renfrewshire Council continues to maintain GTCS registered teachers in its early learning and childcare establishments, but a number of neighbouring councils, including East Renfrewshire, have reduced the number of teachers working in the preschool sector and as such the opportunities to recruit suitably experienced candidates for prefive head teacher posts have dramatically reduced. A recent example of this is Hazeldene Family Centre, which was advertised three times until a successful appointment could be made.

9. The Head Teacher of Neilston Primary School has submitted her intention to retire at the end of the academic session 2015/16.

10. The Head Teacher of Madras Family Centre is presently on secondment to Arthurlie Family Centre and there is an acting Head Teacher in place.

REPORT

11. East Renfrewshire Council is committed to delivering Public Service excellence with a key principle being the provision of a quality education for all. The leadership of our educational establishments is essential in ensuring the delivery of a quality experience for pupils, parents and carers alike.

12. This report gives a summary of the rationale behind the decision to place Madras Family Centre and Neilston Primary School within a joint headship management team structure and the benefits to be gained.

Benefits

Staffing

13. The consolidation of management responsibility for the two establishments will make the post of Head Teacher of Neilston Primary School and Madras Family Centre a more attractive prospect for potential candidates both in terms of the enhanced remit and the increased remuneration package.

14. This proposal will also enable the introduction of a Principal Teacher post within the joint headship management team with specific responsibility for Early Years provision across the two schools. This structure would maintain a nursery teaching post which would enable the joint headship management team to release more teaching time in the family centre, given that a Principal Teacher post has 0.2FTE management time rather than a Head Teacher post which has 1.0 FTE.

15. As indicated above if the Council could attract resources for a shared campus for the school estate in Neilston, the move to a single joint headship management team leading Madras Family Centre and Neilston Primary School would begin this process of resource

alignment thus looking to secure the future feasibility of the non-denominational and early years provision in the area.

16. Over the past few years it has proved increasingly difficult to recruit supply teaching staff to prefive establishments, especially stand-alone centres and Madras Family Centre in particular. Putting the management of resources, including staffing, under the leadership of a joint headship management team, will allow it to allocate resources across 3 – 12 and will also allow teaching staff to work in different sectors, enhancing their skills and understanding of how children learn and develop including through play.

Learning Experiences

17. One aim of *Curriculum for Excellence* is to secure continuity and progression from three to eighteen years. The Early Level is intended to outline the experiences and outcomes for almost all children from nursery to the end of Primary 1 i.e. three to six years.

18. The leadership of staff in the family centre to deliver a curriculum as a continuum of learning 3 – 6 years would enhance the experiences of all children in their preschool and early primary years, regardless of the primary school they will transfer to and would lead to enhanced transition arrangements between preschool and primary with improved experiences of both children and parents.

Parental Engagement

19. Single management of Early Years through the prefive and primary setting can encourage and support the establishment and continuation of key departmental initiatives such as Family Friendly Approaches.

20. An over-arching management from Early Years through Primary can ensure an effective implementation of the department's Parental Engagement Strategy, which will align the Parenting and Parental Involvement strategies. This would support a joint headship management team to enhance communication and collaboration with parents and other services, thus ensuring partnership working for the benefit of the children and community of Neilston.

21. All of the above would ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children.

Operational Arrangements

22. On retirement of the Head Teacher of Neilston Primary School, the Director of Education proposes to appoint a new Head Teacher with overall management responsibility for both Neilston Primary School and Madras Family Centre.

23. The existing Head Teacher of Madras Family Centre will be redeployed to a suitable alternative Head Teacher position within East Renfrewshire Council which would be commensurate with her existing post.

24. The acting Head Teacher of Madras Family Centre will revert back to her substantive position.

CONSULTATION

25. Discussions have been held with the Chair of the Parent Council of Neilston Primary School and a parent representative of Madras Family Centre informing them of the intentions of the Director of Education.
26. Trade Union representatives have been informed.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

27. There are no financial or efficiency implications related to this paper.

CONCLUSION

28. As outlined in the report the consolidation of the leadership structure for Madras Family Centre and Neilston Primary School to a joint headship management team will facilitate the initiation of sustainable change, which benefits children, young people and their families, staff and partners within the Neilston area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. Elected members are asked to note:
- a) the Director of Education's intention to place the management of Madras Family Centre and Neilston Primary School under the leadership of a Joint Headship Management Team; and,
 - b) that this arrangement will be specific to Neilston Primary and Madras Family Centre.

Mhairi Shaw
Director of Education
June 2016

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Background papers

1. Report to Council: June 2014: Influencing the Future of East Renfrewshire