

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of meeting held at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 6 October 2022.**

**Present:**

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)	Councillor Gordon Wallace
Councillor Tony Buchanan	Dr Frank Angell (*)
Councillor Kate Campbell	Ms Fiona Gilchrist
Councillor Colm Merrick (*)	Ms Dorothy Graham
Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)	Mr Des Morris

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(\*) indicates remote attendance

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

Stuart Clark, Mearns Castle High School; and Anthony Hutcheson, St. Mark's Primary School.

**Apology:**

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader).

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**156.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**CARE INSPECTORATE REPORT ON JOINT INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF HARM IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE**

**157.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the excellent report by the Care Inspectorate on the Joint Inspection of children's services for children and young people at risk of harm in East Renfrewshire.

It was reported that a team led by the Care Inspectorate had inspected Services for Children and Young People in East Renfrewshire between March and July 2022. The team assessed and reported on 4 statements, focussing on Quality Indicator 2.1 which considered the extent to which children and young people felt valued, loved fulfilled and secure; felt listened to, understood and respected; experienced sincere human contact and enduring relationships; and got the best start in life.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) was heard further regarding the report, advising that East Renfrewshire's Children's Services Partnership was the first in the country to receive an evaluation of Excellent for Quality Indicator 2.1. A number of strengths were highlighted including that the partnership provided strong and effective leadership and shared a very strong vision for children and young people which had continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring appropriate supports reached the families who were most in need. She added that no notable gaps in services or any significant areas for improvement had been identified during the inspection and the inspection team was confident that Children's Services in East Renfrewshire had the capacity to build on achievements and strengthen service delivery. During the course of the inspection, engagement had taken place with a range of partners including, children and young people; parents and carers; staff working in a range of services; and staff participation in focus groups. The report showed that East Renfrewshire was achieving successful outcomes for children, young people and families.

Having heard members congratulate staff for the excellent report which had been achieved as a result of a high level of partnership working between the Education Department and Health and Social Care Partnership, the committee noted the report and associated comments.

## **IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH THE PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING**

**158.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of progress made by schools during 2021-22 in improving outcomes through the use of Pupil Equity Funding, and the interventions used and good practice developed by schools to improve excellence and equity, and achieve positive outcomes for all children and young people during 2021-22.

The report highlighted that the Scottish Attainment Challenge had been launched in 2015, establishing the Attainment Scotland Fund which included an allocation of additional funding paid directly to schools through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to help close the poverty related attainment gap. Funding was allocated to schools based on the number of pupils registered for free school meals. It was reported that an additional premium had been allocated by the Scottish Government in 2021-22 to support education recovery efforts for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and East Renfrewshire schools received a total allocation of £1.62 million. National guidance was provided annually by the Scottish Government, supported by local guidance from the Education Department, to help schools plan how to invest their PEF allocation. This guidance included a number of key principles including that the PEF must enable schools to deliver activities, interventions or resources which were clearly additional to those already planned; to involve parents, carers, children, young people and key stakeholders in the planning process; and that plans should be put in place at the outset to evaluate the impact of PEF funding. Summary performance results were provided and the outcomes for pupils were also summarised in appendix 2 to the report.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) was heard further regarding the report advising that, as part of the national scrutiny of local authority progress with the Scottish Attainment Challenge, officers worked with a link Education Scotland Attainment Advisor in June 2022 to evaluate the progress made in tackling education inequity from 2019-22. A number of key strengths were highlighted in East Renfrewshire including the impact of the

reading recovery programme on pupil engagement and attainment; improvement in attendance, pupil motivation, engagement, confidence and self-esteem; and an increase in collaborative working with other establishments, partners, parents and local businesses, amongst other things. She highlighted that head teachers had used PEF funding in a variety of different ways to support learners and almost all interventions were focused on mitigating the impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged learners. She added that the department would continue to self-evaluate its performance, share best practice across establishments and take the necessary steps to progress those areas identified for further improvement.

Thereafter, she introduced Anthony Hutcheson, Head Teacher, St. Mark's Primary School, and Stuart Clark, Head Teacher, Mearns Castle High School, to provide further information on the ways in which PEF funding had been distributed in their schools.

Mr Hutcheson advised that as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Mission, pupils had been tasked with understanding poverty as a global issue, but also in terms of how poverty could affect their local community. Pupils had taken part in lessons and activities during Challenge Poverty Week with discussions taking place in relation to foodbanks and assisting elderly residents and neighbours. Discussion had also taken place within families about poverty related barriers which included the sometimes prohibitive cost of school uniform/equipment, school activities, and after school clubs, amongst other things. Families were provided with information about a number of organisations who could provide support during the cost of living crisis, including Family First, Money Advice and Rights Team (MART), and Work East Ren. He advised that a main focus within the school community was to ensure that school provision met the needs of all learners including by supporting the wellbeing of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A nurture class had been established to provide targeted support to pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, and this expertise had been developed and shared across the school community to benefit all pupils. The school was currently seeking accreditation from the National Nurture Network UK. A Principal Teacher had been employed to ensure learning consistency across the school in relation to formative assessment and to provide additional support to class teachers. In conclusion, he referred to some of the positive outcomes which had been achieved as a result of PEF funding, including a significant increase in reading attainment from a cohort with the lowest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) average of the whole school.

Mr Clark referred to the school's aim to achieve equity by focussing on pupil wellbeing. He provided a summary of the quality of attainment and advised that pupils from all SIMD profiles within the school were achieving more than pupils from the same background across the country. The attainment gap within the school was narrower than the national attainment gap and this trend had continued into 2022. As the attainment gap across the school in general had narrowed, this allowed the school to focus on individuals who had not performed well across all SIMD ranges due to poor attendance and lack of engagement. A pupil hub had been created through the Pupil Equity Fund to focus on targeted wellbeing support and pupils were offered opportunities to take part in the "Living Life to the Full" Programme which provided them with Cognitive Behaviour Therapies (CBT) to help them negotiate their way through life. S1 parents had also been offered access to the CBT programme to help them cope with stress, and a number of parents had already expressed an interest in taking part. In conclusion he referred to some of targeted supports which had been provided for pupils, including flexible drop-in sessions at the hub; S1 breakfast club; managing exam stress workshops; and the creation of S6 hub ambassadors. He added that the school would continue to be focus on relationship building; home visits; transport support and curriculum support for those families who need it, to ensure that all pupils could engage with the learning community.

Having heard members thank both head teachers for their positive presentations, the committee noted the report as a summary of the progress made by schools in improving outcomes through the Pupil Equity Funding during 2021-22.

## **REVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE RATE FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE FUNDED PROVISION**

**159.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval of an increase in the sustainable rate paid to all funded providers for the provision of funded early learning and childcare and the backdating of the new rate for all hours provided in session 2022/23.

The report explained that all three and four year old children, and eligible two year olds, had been able to access 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare provision in East Renfrewshire since August 2020, and explained that provision could be provided through public, private and voluntary organisations, known as funded providers. Funded providers received an hourly rate directly from the Council, known as the sustainable rate, and this rate had been in place following an independent review commissioned by the West Partnership in 2019. At that time, it had been agreed that the sustainable rate would be reviewed again for the 2022/23 session to ensure that it remained sustainable for both providers and the authority, but this had been delayed as a result of the pandemic and local government elections.

The Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change) was heard in further explanation of the report advising that a review had been commissioned by the Scottish Government earlier this year and collaboration had taken place with colleagues across the West Partnership to ensure that a consistent approach could be reached when considering a new sustainable rate. Following conclusion of the review it was proposed that the new rate would be set at £5.69 per hour, backdated to the start of the current session, and this would be reviewed annually.

The committee approved the increase in the sustainable rate paid to all funded providers for the provision of funded early learning and childcare and the backdating of the new rate for all hours provided in session 2022/23.

## **WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE - EVALUATION REPORT 2021-22**

**160.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education providing an evaluation of work undertaken by the West Partnership (Glasgow Region Education Improvement Collaborative) in 2021-22.

The report provided details of progress over the academic year 2021-22 towards achieving target outcomes and expected impacts as detailed in the West Partnership Improvement Plan 2021-22, advising that good progress had been made in relation to the three West Partnership workstreams, and providing strong examples of how the Partnership supported authorities to improve attainment and achievement for all, while closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The Director of Education provided further information highlighting that the report, which provided an overview of the West Partnership, included internal and external data, evaluation data from the 3 workstreams, and key messages from an independent evaluation of the West Partnership. He reported that the West Partnership outperformed national figures in a number of key measures including, literacy and numeracy; leavers' attainment at SCQF Levels 5 and 6; and school leaver destinations. The partnership also created opportunities for different

authorities to work together and share practice. For example in 2021-22 3,100 members of staff across the West Partnership area had participated in events; 40,000 learners had accessed West OS an online school resource that had been created; and 80% of colleagues reported improvements to their work environment following West Partnership events.

The committee noted the report.

### **WEST PARTNERSHIP IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-23**

**161.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education on the contents of the West Partnership's Improvement Plan 2022-23.

It was reported that Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) had been established nationally in 2017 to bring about improvement for all schools in Scotland, and East Renfrewshire was a member of the Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaborative, known as the West Partnership. The West Partnership Improvement Plan 2022-23 sets out the key areas for collaborative action to bring about improvement across the Glasgow City Region by enhancing local efforts to support and challenge schools to improve. A comprehensive range of engagements with key stakeholders had taken place and feedback from this together with recommendations from the Robert Owen Centre and consensus building conversations with workstream sponsors and members, programme participants and Education Scotland colleagues had all contributed to the 2022-23 Improvement Plan. The plan was considered and endorsed at the Glasgow City Region Education Committee on 22 September 2022 with a recommendation that each council area should approve the report through its own local governance arrangements.

The Director of Education highlighted key areas within the report, referring to the West Partnership's values, purpose, priorities, and drivers, and outlining the key activities and programmes for 2022-23. He confirmed that development opportunities were shared through social media channels; head teacher bulletins; and various education forums, and that the final plan would be forwarded to head teachers for distribution to colleagues in due course.

The committee approved the report.

CHAIR

