

## ITEM 4

### **Children and Families Report for Consultative Committee with Parents April 2012**

This report provides a progress update on some of the achievements of the Department in meeting our outcomes for children and families in Edinburgh.

#### **Committee Business**

In March the Education, Children and Families Committee received progress reports on a wide range of areas. The following summaries provide an overview of the developments:

##### Getting Set for the Games

A great deal of activity has taken place in schools as a way to engage pupils in the Olympic Games. A DVD has been created entitled, 'Getting Set for the Games', which features children from Broomhouse and St. Joseph's Primary Schools discussing the Olympic values of excellence, friendship, respect, courage, determination, inspiration and equality as they relate to their own lives and experiences.

##### Literacy Strategy

It is a top priority for us that all children leave school with good literacy skills. The Integrated Literacy Strategy is based on the vision and principles of the National Literacy Action Plan and outlines a range of targeted interventions. These are mainly aimed at children and young people, including early years, but also highlight strategies to improve literacy for adults.

##### School Exclusion and Attendance

We continue to develop strategies to improve school attendance and reduce the need for exclusion from school. Exclusions in Edinburgh are lower than the national average and reducing with a wide range of support in place to meet the requirements of children with additional support needs. Attendance is stable and in line with national statistics.

##### Residential Outdoor Centres

Benmore and Lagganlia are the Council's two residential outdoor centres. Measures are being introduced to encourage more children from disadvantage areas to be able benefit from staying at them. We are pleased that 60 schools used the centres in 2011 and that bookings in 2012 have increased with more schools choosing to enjoy these experiences.

## Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People in Craigroyston

There have been significant developments by the Edinburgh Partnership to develop a multi-agency approach in the Craigroyston cluster to tackle the complex needs of families in the area and improve life chances and outcomes for children and young people there. 'Total Craigroyston' will aim to tackle four key areas: children at risk of poor attainment and achievement; children with poor attendance or risk of exclusion; reducing youth offending; improving health outcomes.

## Paolozzi Prize for Art

Progress has been achieved towards awarding Edinburgh's first Paolozzi Prize for Art. The prize is for 5th and 6th year pupils studying art and design, and will be in three categories: talent and creativity; overcoming barriers; new directions. The aim is for this to be a prestigious award for artistically talented young people. Committee requested that, if successful, the Prize could be opened up to all Edinburgh schools in the future. It is also possible that Richard Demarco and Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop could become involved with the project.

## Corporate Parenting Action Plan

A new Corporate Parenting Action Plan was launched in March, to offer greater support to children and young people who are cared for by the Council.

The plan has been developed in discussion with a number of Council departments and partner agencies to ensure that Looked After Children have access to the same opportunities as others throughout Edinburgh.

The Council as a whole has a responsibility to act as the corporate parent of the young people in its care, by providing them with the support and assistance usually associated with good parents. This could range from helping them to find suitable employment or training, to making sure they don't miss out on treats such as concert tickets that other children in the city enjoy.

## Engagement of Children, Young People and Parents in the Development of Services

Meaningful engagement with our stakeholders is important for us in order to ensure that views inform and influence our service improvements. We aspire to be a listening organisation which is evidenced through the range of activities which we use including pupil surveys, Scottish Youth Parliament, Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum and Consultative Committee with Parents. Survey information shows that service users are generally very positive about the services offered; and, feedback identifies strengths and areas for improvement. We will continue to incorporate the views, ideas and comments into our future planning and developments.

Full reports on any of the above can be found at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol).

## **Celebrating Creativity**

A number of exciting events have taken place recently to celebrate the creativity of our children and young people.

### From Studio to Stage

The 'From Studio to Stage' event, saw 165 pupils from 10 Edinburgh schools performing dance, drama, music and poetry. They were gathered to showcase and celebrate their achievements and successes in the performing arts. The hugely appreciative audience enjoyed almost two hours of talented and creative young people sharing their skills.

The pieces performed were varied, ranging from eleven S3 drama standard grade pupils from Wester Hailes Education Centre performing a dance/drama of the Seven Deadly Sins to music by Pink Floyd, to eighteen P3 pupils from St. Francis Primary performing Fantastic Mr Fox.

Such a successful evening is testimony to the hard work and effort the pupils and their teachers put in. It was an excellent chance for schools to see what each other are doing in the performing arts, as well as sharing their own work.

### Creative Learning at the annual Student Council Conference

The annual Student Council Conference took Creative Learning as the theme for 2012 held in the National Museum of Scotland. The programme was ambitious and exciting. Over 70 young people from 14 secondary schools and George Heriot's engaged in workshops, participated in sessions, discussed creative learning and enjoyed input from a range of creative practitioners.

All of this was ably planned and organised by student councillors from Wester Hailes Education Centre, Boroughmuir, St. Augustine's and Craigmount, with support from Arts and Learning and Youth Strategy and Planning teams.

## **Effective Partnership Working**

### Police Officers in Schools

The pilot project linking police officers directly to secondary schools has proved so successful that it is being expanded to cover all 23 of our secondary schools. Feedback from schools and the police has been overwhelmingly positive. The School Link Officers (SLOs) are not only a visual presence but work closely with staff to address issues before they escalate. They also assist education welfare officers in tackling truancy.

A two stage expansion in Spring 2012 will see a doubling of existing officer numbers in support of the Force's prevention strategy. The SLOs will work in partnership with schools to:

- Provide a highly visible presence in all of Edinburgh's secondary schools
- Deliver inputs and promote diversionary and preventative work
- Tackle the impact of negative behaviours through early intervention with key stakeholders
- Tackle truancy and exclusions in partnership with key stakeholders
- Patrol the wider community in support of local priorities
- Promote and support the use of Restorative Justices/Practices
- Develop and maintain community partnerships, and support community wellbeing.

This is an excellent example of partnership with the Police and the Council.

### **Investing in our Estate**

Despite the challenging financial times we find ourselves in, real progress has been made with three of our five 'Wave 3' schools. The Wave 3 schools were identified as being those in the greatest need of replacement.

Both James Gillespie's High School and Boroughmuir High School will receive funding from the Scottish Schools for the Future Programme. Planning permission was granted earlier this year for the new James Gillespie's High School and to replace the gym and nursery at the neighbouring James Gillespie's Primary School. A timetable is currently being determined with construction work expected to commence in summer 2013.

Consultation on the replacement or refurbishment of the existing Boroughmuir High School took place earlier this year and a decision on which option to take forward will be taken by Council in June. A design team will also be appointed in June.

Unfortunately, due to the ongoing legal action, construction of the new Portobello High School has been delayed. Last August, a local action group initiated a petition through the Court challenging the Council's legal right to use the proposed school site at Portobello Park for the new school. Although this petition was successfully defended, an appeal was lodged. The appeal will be heard on 23 and 24 May 2012 although the actual judgment may not follow for some time thereafter. A contractor to build the new school has been identified. The Council remains confident in its legal position and that the work to progress the school will be able to commence once the appeal has been concluded.

In addition to the three major capital projects taking place, a number of smaller construction projects are due to start later this year. Construction work for the new Seaview residential respite will commence in May on the former Lismore Primary School site in Bingham and is due to be complete in May 2013. Over the summer extension work will also start at Corstorphine

and Towerbank Primary Schools to create alternative accommodation at both schools for the start of the 2013/14 school session.

**Gillian Tee**  
**Director of Children and Families**

**Cllr Marilynne MacLaren**  
**Convener of Education, Children and Families**

**April 2012**