

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 21 May 2013

Vision for Schools

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Item number | 7.2 |
| Report number | |
| Wards | All |

Links

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Coalition pledges | P1 - P7 |
| Council outcomes | CO1 , CO2 , CO3 , CO6 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO3 |

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

John Heywood, Departmental Assistant to the Convener

E-mail: john.heywood.2@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 3294

Executive summary

Vision for Schools

Summary

This report details the findings from the wider consultation about the vision for schools carried out between January and March 2013, and the consultation with members of the Education, Children and Families Policy Development and Review Sub Committee on 25 April 2013. It provides information about the background to the vision, the response to the consultation, and outlines the main findings, including areas of agreement and concern.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Approve the vision;
2. Ask officers to report back in October 2013 with an implementation plan based on work in Appendix 2 and an analysis of current strengths and weaknesses.

Measures of success

The Vision for Schools is incorporated into the planning and practice of schools across the city.

Financial impact

There is no financial impact of this development.

Equalities impact

The findings and recommendations in this report should lead to greater equalities for children and young people attending, and staff working in, City of Edinburgh Schools by helping to identify where improvements can be made.

Sustainability impact

There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

Extensive consultation and engagement has been planned and taken place throughout the process of gathering the data for this report.

Background reading / external references

Vision for Schools

1. Background

1.1 On 9 October 2012, the Education, Children and Families Committee considered the draft Vision for Schools. Children and Families was commended on the work and asked to carry out wider consultation that was genuinely open-ended with parents, young people, teachers and other school/department staff, communities and elected members. This report presents the findings of this consultation to Committee.

2. Main report

2.1 A wide range of partner organisations and community groups were invited to comment on the draft Vision. In total, about 80 responses were received: 30 of these were from school-based groups, 6 from staff groups or partner agencies; 44 were returned via an online survey, Survey Monkey.

2.2 Consultees were asked to respond to four questions:

- What do you like about the vision?
- Is there anything missing or that you would like to change?
- What do you think should be the priorities for schools in the next five year?
- How do we turn the vision into reality?

2.3 The responses ran to more than 100 pages of qualitative feedback covering a wide range of points. Of those who responded to the online survey, 74% agreed that 'the content of the vision is about right'; 26% disagreed. 61% agreed that 'the vision will help to make a positive difference'; 32% disagreed. The summary that follows summarises the key and recurring themes.

2.4 In addition, the meeting of the Education, Children and Families Policy Development and Review Sub Committee on 4 February 2013 listened to contributions from a range of speakers. They commented on the vision and set out their own priorities for schools in the coming five years. The speakers were from: Education Scotland; Educational Institute in Scotland; Scottish Centre for

Public Policy; and the Chairs of the Nursery, Primary and Special School Head Teacher Executives. Their points have been incorporated into the themes below.

2.5 Several main themes emerge from an analysis of the feedback. There was widespread agreement on a number of points:

- The **importance of early years and early intervention** – respondents welcomed the inclusion of a ‘Best start in life’ heading and the general focus on early intervention although some felt that this needed to be highlighted more.
- The need to **consolidate Curriculum for Excellence** was highlighted in several responses, particularly from staff groups. Some felt that it needed support and time to develop and evolve. Some called for an ‘initiative-freeze’ to allow CfE to be embedded.
- The need to **improve ICT** in schools emerged as a strong theme, with calls for equipment and systems to be invested in and kept up to date.
- The **importance of parental engagement** was emphasised in many responses, with the need to communicate effectively with and engage all parents – including those who aren’t currently reached - as partners in learning. Pupil engagement was also mentioned in several responses, as was the importance of engaging with staff.
- The **importance of community engagement** was another key theme. Several respondents welcomed the commitment to place schools at the heart of their communities, commenting on the need to ensure that lets were affordable for community groups, that schools themselves are welcoming, that adult education and youth work are supported, hosted or provided by schools, that after hours provision is extended and that schools are seen as hubs for partnership working.
- The need to include more on **partnership working** was highlighted in several responses. Partnership and multi-agency working needs to be seen not just as something that can support schools to achieve their objectives, but as a genuinely collective approach where all agencies work together in the interests of getting it right for every child.
- Several respondents highlighted the need to **focus on wider achievement** in schools, with calls for academic and vocational equality, a broad and general education, and the need to profile and recognise wider achievement.

2.6 There were also a number of areas of concern. These were:

- **Budget** – the concern that is expressed most often in relation to achieving the vision concerns the overall budget situation. Respondents wondered how the vision could be realised in the context of budget constraints. Some thought many of the ideas outlined would require new money and others feared cutbacks in other areas to achieve ideas set out in the vision.
- **How the vision will translate into practice** – many respondents welcomed the overall scope and direction of the vision but wondered about what effect it will have in practice. Many respondents mention the need for action plans and success criteria to show how the vision will be implemented and what success will look like.
- The idea of **rotating head teachers** so that they serve no longer than five to seven years generated a significant response. Whilst some respondents felt this was a good idea and worth exploring, more felt that it would be problematic, both in terms of practical implementation and in terms of the benefits that it might bring against the difficulties it might create in terms of continuity and in terms of parental involvement in selecting senior school staff. Others felt the opportunity (but not the requirement) should be extended to other school staff.
- Some welcomed the idea of increasing the use of **para professionals** although some expressed caution that this might lead to a ‘dumbing down’ of the educational experience for pupils with less well-qualified staff taking classes.
- The focus on the **lowest achieving 20%** of pupils was supported by some respondents but more were concerned that this should not be at the expense of other pupils and that the focus should be on supporting all pupils to achieve their potential. The needs of high achieving pupils should not be overlooked.
- Whilst the commitment to strengthen support for **pupils with additional support needs** was welcomed by many, there were some concerns again that this should not be at the expense of other pupils.

2.7 Additionally, a number of other points were raised that respondents considered should be included in the vision. These were:

- There was support for including a heading on **healthy children and young people**, including physical and mental health. Several

responses highlighted the importance of physical and sports education and outdoor learning in general.

- Many respondents emphasised the importance of developing **links with further and higher education institutions** and of developing better **links with employers, businesses and industry**.
- The need to **improve the school estate** was highlighted in several responses, with references to the current state of some buildings, overcrowding and the condition of playgrounds.
- Some respondents welcomed the idea of **improving initial training** for teachers so that failing students are not allowed to progress to probation. Others raised the need to address the issue of 'failing teachers'.

2.8 Finally, a number of comments were offered in relation to the presentation of the draft vision. These were:

- **Language issues** - The phrase 'para professional', as well as the inclusion of a number of other specialised terms such as Total Place and several acronyms and abbreviations was seen by many as unhelpful. There was a suggestion to include a glossary of terms.
- Some responses highlighted a **lack of consistency** in the document – some sections are high level, whereas some are much more detailed and specific. Some people felt that it was unclear who the intended audience was for the vision.
- Whilst many respondents welcomed the **overall tone, direction and approach** of the vision, some felt that it was vague and woolly. Some expressed the view that there was a lack of radical thinking.
- Some people felt that the vision is too wide-ranging with too many priorities.

2.9 The meeting of the Education, Children and Families Policy Development and Review Sub Committee on 25 April considered the findings outlined above and offered its own comments on the Vision document. Members were asked to consider the four consultation questions:

- 1 What do you like about the Vision?
2. Is there anything missing or that you would like to change?
- 3 What do you think should be the priorities for schools for the next five years?
- 4 How do we turn the Vision into reality?

The feedback from the three small groups that discussed the questions was:

Question 1:

- The Vision was welcomed as a template for future work of the Committee.
- The Vision was seen as a good communication tool between the Council and stakeholders.
- Whilst the Vision document is comprehensive, it perhaps required more detail in some areas.
- The rotation of head teachers and of other staff should be seen as a development opportunity rather than a mandatory requirement.

Question 2:

- A framework/action plan should be provided with key benchmarks backed up by various workstreams.
- A greater understanding of the work/roles of head teachers was required, and opportunities for exploring good practice should be explored.
- There should be a greater focus on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes for children.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on developing healthy young people through healthy eating and physical activity. A separate heading should be added to reflect this.
- The Department needs to consider how it gets the best teachers to where they are most needed, and how it makes some schools more attractive environments in which to learn.

Question 3

- Improvements to the school estate and ICT systems and equipment
- Greater equality and the closure of the gap between schools in poorer areas and those in other parts of the city.
- Improved focus on early years and parental engagement.
- Early intervention and support should continue throughout the entire school programme.
- Redressing the balance between paperwork and face-to-face teaching.
- Become a more attractive option than independent schools in Edinburgh.

Question 4

- Involve all stakeholders to take the Vision forward.
- Provide a more unified school management style
- Focus on the quality of teaching and learning
- The Council needs to be aspirational and set a clear picture for the future.
- Put more emphasis on qualitative measures.

The complete comments from each small group are contained in Appendix 4.

The plenary that followed the small group feedback asked the Sub Committee to consider the question: What are the key messages to contribute towards the Vision for schools?

The key points put forward were:

- Make sure that the focus is on the needs of children.
- Focus on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Further highlight the key issue of healthy children.
- Provide a more unified school management style and ensure good staff morale.
- Clarify exactly what is meant by rotating head teachers and other staff.
- Promote a city-wide culture of learning.

2.10 As a next step, Children and Families will evaluate its progress towards delivering the vision, highlighting areas of current strength and weakness. Officers will produce an implementation plan based on the work in Appendix 2.

2.11 The vision has been revised in line with the points expressed in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9. It will be shared with a range of key stakeholders, including the Consultative Committee with Parents, Staff and Trade Unions and an action plan that identifies what can be implemented quickly and what will require more time will be produced. The vision will also need to articulate with schools' own planning processes (School Quality Improvement Plans) and with the Children and Families Service Plan. It is recommended that this is taken forward by an officer working group, including representation from schools, and that the finalised action plan is agreed at the Education, Children and Families Executive Committee in October 2013.

3. Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

3.1 Approve the vision;

3.2 Ask officers to report back in October 2013 with an implementation plan based on work in Appendix 2 and an analysis of current strengths and weaknesses.

Gillian Tee

Director of Children and Families

Links

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Coalition pledges | <p>P1. Increase support for vulnerable children, including help for families so that fewer go into care</p> <p>P2 Hold the maximum P1 class size at 25 and seek to reduce class sizes in line with Scottish Government recommendations</p> <p>P3. Rebuild Portobello High School and continue progress on all other planned school developments, while providing adequate investment in the fabric of all schools</p> <p>P4. Draw up a long-term strategic plan to tackle both over-crowding and under use in schools</p> <p>P5. Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum</p> <p>P6. Establish city-wide co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents</p> <p>P7. Further develop the Edinburgh Guarantee to improve work prospects for school leavers</p> |
| Council outcomes | <p>CO1. Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed</p> <p>CO2. Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities</p> <p>CO3. Our children and young people at risk, or with a disability, have improved life chances</p> <p>CO6. Our children's and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality</p> |
| Single Outcome Agreement | <p>SO3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential</p> |
| Appendices | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Vision for Schools Headline Statement2. Vision for Schools in Edinburgh3. Vision for Schools in Edinburgh Consultations – Summary of responses4. Vision for Schools – Policy Development and Review Subcommittee – Small group feedback |

Appendix 1

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Vision for Schools in Edinburgh

Our vision is for all children and young people to enjoy their childhood and achieve their potential.

Our ambition is for all children and young people in Edinburgh to:

- Have the best start in life
- Be physically and emotionally healthy
- Be successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities; and,
- Leave school into a positive destination well prepared for work, leisure, family life and lifelong learning.

Best Start in Life

We are determined to ensure that all children have the best start in life. All children in Edinburgh will have access to high quality early years provision including early learning, affordable childcare and family support from the age of three (or from birth in the case of vulnerable children).

Healthy Children

Physical and emotional health are recognised as essential for enjoyable and successful lives. All our children and young people will have access to regular and high quality sport, physical activity and outdoor learning at all stages, and support with mental health and wellbeing, and with healthy lifestyle choices.

Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Effective Contributors, Responsible Citizens

Schools in Edinburgh already provide a high quality education for their pupils in which all children are encouraged to achieve their potential. Attainment at Highers and Advanced Highers is in the top quartile for Scotland. We will improve further from 'good' to 'excellent', and continue to value wider achievement as key to a fully rounded education. There is full support for Curriculum for Excellence and its potential to make a real difference to outcomes for all children and young people in Edinburgh.

Improved Life Chances for Children in Need

We are determined to reduce inequalities and provide high quality, appropriate support for all children and young people who need extra help, as soon as it is needed and for as long as it is needed. We are determined to improve the attainment of the lowest achieving children in Edinburgh and ensure that the attainment gap between highest and lowest achieving pupils is narrowed.

Schools in Challenging Circumstances

We will maximise our support for schools in challenging circumstances enabling them to develop innovative and creative multi-agency approaches towards improving outcomes.

School Leavers

We will ensure that all of our young people receive an education that meets the future needs of our communities, society and economy and prepares them for work, leisure, family life and lifelong learning. We will continue to increase the number of school leavers in positive destination.

Schools at the Heart of their Communities

Schools provide a focal point for community life. We will encourage local parents to choose to send their children to their local school. We will develop schools as a community resource for a range of valuable local services, including, where appropriate, childcare, adult learning, youth work, and sports and leisure activities.

Leadership

We will ensure that all of our schools have strong and effective leaders who are improving outcomes for children and young people. We will strengthen our support for leadership at all levels through a comprehensive programme of leadership development and collaboration.

Professional Development

Staff are valued as our most important resource, and investment in their development is a key priority. Opportunities for development will include sharing and experiencing good practice within Edinburgh and elsewhere.

Parental and Pupil Engagement

Strong parental and pupil engagement in our education service is key to improving outcomes for children. Parents, pupils and communities will be fully involved in shaping and developing learning and decisions affecting the life of their school.

Resources

The challenge is for the Council to make the best use of its resources to achieve its vision for schools. This will include ensuring that school buildings are fit for purpose, with ICT resources which meet the needs of all learners and users.

Appendix 2

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Vision for Schools in Edinburgh

Our vision is for all children and young people to enjoy their childhood and achieve their potential

Our ambition is for all children and young people in Edinburgh to:

- have the best start in life;
- be physically and emotionally healthy;
- be successful learners, confident individuals, and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities; and
- leave school into a positive destination well prepared for work, leisure, family life and lifelong learning.

Best Start in Life

We have high quality early years provision in Edinburgh delivered through a combination of nursery schools, nursery classes, partner providers and Child and Family Centres. This will continue to be one of our highest priorities and we are determined to strengthen our provision further so that all children have access to early learning & childcare and family support from the age of three and vulnerable children have this from birth.

The Government's recent commitment to extend early learning and childcare to 600 hours per child per year will significantly strengthen early years provision for all young children and their families. The Capital Coalition has made a commitment to increasing affordable childcare through the development of Childcare Co-operatives. In addition to this, we recognise the need to strengthen support pre-birth and in early years for vulnerable children and families. The Government's commitment to early learning and child care for vulnerable 2 year olds and the Early Years Change Fund provide a real opportunity to do this.

We want to strengthen support for children in early years. This will be achieved by:

- developing more early years services linked to schools e.g. more schools to have a nursery or playgroup;
- developing integrated learning and childcare so parents have access to nursery education and wrap around childcare all year round;
- increasing the availability of affordable childcare, e.g. through the development of Childcare Co-operatives;
- early identification and support for children and families who need extra help;
- support for parents e.g. PEEP groups, Incredible Years, Mellow Parenting;
- strengthening health services particularly health visiting services;
- targeting support to areas of greatest need;
- improving support for early language and literacy; and
- effective transition from early years to school including nursery staff working in Primary 1 and vice versa.

Successful Learners. Confident Individuals. Effective Contributors. Responsible Citizens

Schools in Edinburgh already provide a high quality education for their pupils. Educational attainment at Highers and Advanced Highers is in the top quartile for Scotland. This is an especially impressive achievement given the high level of pupils in the independent sector at secondary level. We are ambitious for our educational service and for our pupils. We are determined to improve further from 'good' to 'excellent'. We will also develop our focus on wider achievement in schools, ensuring that it has a much higher profile and that its hugely important contribution to young people's learning and development is recognized and acknowledged.

There is full support for Curriculum for Excellence and its potential to make a real difference to outcomes for children and young people in Scotland. We recognize that it needs time to become consolidated and we need to ensure consistent and effective implementation in a way that secures:

- high quality teaching and learning in every classroom;
- a broad and balanced education;
- high standards of educational attainment which are internationally competitive; a strong focus on recognizing and placing higher value on children's wider achievements;
- strengthening support for literacy and numeracy; and
- effective progression and transition from early years through school to post school
- educational outcomes which equip young people for lifelong learning and work

This will be achieved by:

- increasing confidence of parents and staff in CfE, including effective arrangements for reporting at all stages, arrangements for profiling at P7 and S3, and new national qualifications;
- improving arrangements for effective transition and progression;
- strengthening arrangements for self-evaluation, including monitoring quality of teaching;
- national benchmarks to assess progress in improving outcomes for children, particularly at primary and lower secondary and especially for literacy and numeracy and including 'added value' measures;
- ensuring a shared understanding of standards through effective arrangements for assessment, moderation and reporting to parents;
- strengthening support for staff so there are opportunities for sharing standards and good practice;
- considering delivery of Advanced Higher consortia arrangements, including use of technologies, shared campus model, involvement of universities;
- investing in opportunities for wider achievement including Active Schools, music, sports, outdoor education;
- holding the maximum P1 class size at 25 and seeking to reduce class sizes in line with government recommended actions; and
- improving engagement and communication with parents about Curriculum for Excellence.

Healthy Children

Physical and emotional health are recognized as essential for enjoyable and successful lives. All of our children and young people will have access to regular and high quality sport, physical activity and outdoor learning at all stages, and support with mental health and wellbeing, and with healthy lifestyle choices.

Improved Life Chances for Children in Need

We will further develop this priority and continue to raise the attainment of the lowest achieving 20% of pupils and narrow the attainment gap between the highest and lowest achieving children. We recognise the important role of special schools. We also want to strengthen support for children with additional support needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs, within mainstream schools. We want to reduce the need for children to be excluded from school and reduce the number of children who are absent from schools. We are determined to achieve this whilst ensuring that all children and young people are supported to achieve their potential.

This will be achieved by:

- strengthening support for children and families from pre-birth through childhood, e.g. including Family Nurse Partnership, Prepare, parenting;
- implementing CFE with the focus on personalised learning and skills for life;
- implementing Getting it Right for Every Child with its focus on early identification and intervention, single assessment, single plan and lead professional;
- strengthening the role of lead professional and key worker ensuring sufficient time for continuity of support and effective relationships between lead professional and child and family;
- ensuring that staff have the necessary skills to engage with pupils with emotional and behavioural needs including whole staff training;
- whole system prioritisation to tackle the issue of drug and alcohol misuse in parents and young people;
- strengthening support for children with emotional and behavioural needs in schools e.g. Audit hours, behaviour support teachers, in-school learning units, learning support assistants, nurture programmes, Improving Relationships programme, Growing Confidence, Rights Respecting Schools, Place 2 Be, solution focussed/restorative approaches;
- strengthening joint agency support for schools to meet children's needs e.g. support services working effectively around each school cluster so that each cluster has a social worker, youth worker, school nurse, health worker, welfare officer, psychologist, active schools co-ordinator, and police officers etc
- developing a directory of services in each cluster;
- ensuring a whole Council and joint agency approach to tackle poverty and inequalities in areas of deprivation e.g. Total Place initiative;
- protecting children from the adverse impact of benefits reform;
- strengthening multi-agency arrangement to improve school attendance including appropriate use of prosecution;
- developing more effective partnerships with health, housing, social work, voluntary sector;

- strengthening support for looked after children;
- increasing support for vulnerable children, including help for families so that fewer need to go into care;
- strengthening engagement with and support for parents, especially those who are hardly reached e.g. home school link workers; and
- targeting resources to children and schools in areas of greatest need, including strengthening support for positive action schools.

Schools in Challenging Circumstances

We are determined to maximise our support for schools in challenging circumstances by:

- targeting additional resources to those schools and communities;
- implementing a Total Place approach so that all partners work together more effectively to improve outcomes for children and young people;
- managing school catchment areas to secure, as far as possible, comprehensive schools
- trial all year provision in areas of the city e.g. through summer/holiday provision including community based activities;
- trialling all year provision in areas of the city and
- trialling family/ vertical groupings in schools as a method of supporting positive behaviour and learning.

School Leavers

We are determined to ensure that all young people in Edinburgh leave school into positive and sustained destinations in education, employment or training. We need to do more to ensure that education meets society's future needs e.g. economic development, skills for lifelong learning, future patterns of employment, and skills required by employers. A high priority will be to develop stronger links with Further and Higher Education and with employers, business and industry.

This will be achieved by:

- ensuring effective partnership working, particularly in the senior phase, including engagement with further and higher education, community learning and development and employers;
- leadership and resources at a Government and Council level to ensure that school leavers are prioritised for opportunities in further and higher education, employment and training;
- closer links between employers, colleges, universities and schools;
- learning from examples of good practice e.g. Edinburgh Guarantee;
- employers encouraged to support school leavers through jobs, internships, apprenticeships, work experience, mentoring;
- ensuring support for 16+ learning choices are more embedded within schools and across partner organisations; and
- improved information for young people about the opportunities available and for employers about how they can help.

Schools at the heart of their communities

Schools have a key role to play at the heart of their communities. There is significant potential to:

- develop all schools as community schools providing learning opportunities and

- services for their community;
 - develop and strengthen school clusters as the hubs for the delivery of a range of support services and partnership working (link police officers, social workers, youth work, adult education, parenting, family support, health services, active schools etc);
 - provide resources to clusters through DSM to encourage more partnership working;
 - open up school facilities and resources for the benefit of their communities (playing fields, sport and leisure facilities, adult education), extend after hours provision and ensure that all schools are welcoming places;
 - strengthen links between home and school e.g. family link workers, support for parents to achieve qualifications;
 - review arrangements and funding for school lets so that they are more affordable for community groups; and
 - strengthen community capacity building e.g. Time Bank initiative in West Edinburgh;
 - strengthen links between schools and local employers.
- Promote a city-wide culture of learning

Leadership

Strong and effective leadership of schools is key to achieving our vision for schools and improving outcomes for our young people. We already have strong leadership of our schools but there is more that we can do to support our leaders further:

This will be achieved by:

- leadership based on partnership between senior officers centrally and head teachers as senior officers in their communities;
- Investing in effective recruitment and high quality, inspiring professional development;
- ensuring strong networks of support and challenge across schools, including opportunities for staff to move between schools;
- ensuring that leaders have access to work shadowing, coaching and mentoring including external mentors;
- strengthening succession planning for Heads and Deputies;
- ensuring regular and effective appraisals;
- strengthening the self-evaluation in schools based on good practice already in place across the Authority;
- building the capacity of school leaders at all levels; and
- ensuring that management structures support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence
- Developing a more unified school management style
- ensuring opportunities for rewarding staff for wider leadership roles;
- ensuring flexibility and career progression opportunities for all staff in schools e.g. learning support assistants, business managers.

Professional Development

Staff are our most important resource and investment in their development is key. We want to strengthen support for development of staff including:

- rotation of head teachers and of other staff as a voluntary opportunity to experience practice in different settings ;

- increased opportunities for all staff to move between schools to support wider professional development;
- exploring greater use of external and non-teacher trained professionals alongside teachers bringing in a range of talent, skills and support;
- high quality professional development backed by research;
- improving initial training so failing students are not allowed to progress to probation, and implementing further measures to deal with 'failing' teachers;
- increased opportunities for learning between schools e.g. sharing good practice and developing innovative practice; and
- secondment of staff to work in each other's schools and at the centre.

Parental and Pupil Engagement

We recognise that strong parental and pupil engagement in the life of the school has significant benefits in terms of the quality of education that we provide. We would like to strengthen parental and pupil engagement in schools.

This will be achieved by:

- regular feedback from parents and pupils;
- good quality information for parents and pupils;
- parental and pupil engagement in decision making at school, local and authority level;
- parents encouraged to share their skills with pupils, e.g. skills for work, knowledge about employment ; and
- strengthening arrangements for hardly reached parents and raising their ambitions for their children.

Resources

Everyone understands that resources are constrained. The challenge is for the Council to make the best use of its resources in order to achieve its vision for schools.

There has been significant investment in the school estate over the last decade but there are still schools where there are concerns about the condition or suitability of the building. The Council needs to invest in its school buildings to ensure that, over time, all schools come up to the standards of the best. We will rebuild Portobello, James Gillespie's and Boroughmuir High Schools and continue progress on all other planned school developments while providing adequate investment in the fabric of all schools.

Despite the rising primary roll and the pressure in some primary schools across the city, there are still almost 5,000 empty school places across the primary estate. We will draw up a long-term strategic plan to tackle both overcrowding and under use in schools. There is a need to promote "local schools for local pupils" so that increasingly parents want to send their child to their local school. Parental expectation needs to be managed as it is clear there will be fewer places in schools for non catchment children in future.

The Council has invested £5m in the ICT refresh for schools. This now needs to be implemented in a way that makes maximum use of this investment and moves Edinburgh schools to the forefront of technological development including:

- ICT infrastructure which is secure and reliable
- more accessible VLE
- strategy in place for support for 1 to 1 technology

- arrangements for sharing best practice
- addressing issues regarding SEEMIS and GLOW
- development of a strategy for post 2016.

In order to make the best use of resources, we will:

- ensure maximum flexibility for Head Teachers to deploy resources to needs
- maintain business support for schools so that Head Teachers and teachers are able to focus on leadership and teaching & learning;
- improve the use of technology for business support e.g. SEEMIS, pupil tracking arrangements, financial systems; and
- strengthen and simplify support arrangements for Head Teachers including HR, property services and ICT.

Appendix 3

Vision for Schools in Edinburgh Consultation Summary of Responses

Participation in the Consultation

Responses were received from:

- 10 Parent Councils
- 10 school staff groups
- 3 pupil/student councils
- 6 neighbourhood parent groups
- Consultative Committee with Parents
- Children and Families senior managers
- NHS Lothian
- Planning and Performance staff
- Adult Education Programme Team, Community Learning and Development
- Lothian Association of Youth Clubs

In addition, there were 44 responses to the online survey, with:

- 10 from individual members of staff
- 2 on behalf of partner agencies
- 1 on behalf of a community group
- 30 from individuals

The four key consultation questions were:

- What do you like about the vision?
- Is there anything missing or that you would like to change?
- What do you think should be the priorities for schools for the next five years?
- How do we turn the vision into reality?

In addition, respondents to the online survey were asked for their general reaction to the vision and to comment on the content under each of the vision's headings. They were asked if the heading itself should be included, whether they felt the ways in which this part of the vision will be achieved were appropriate and whether they would add or remove anything from this part of the vision. The response to these questions is summarised on page 3 of this document.

In total, the responses run to more than 100 pages of primarily qualitative feedback covering an extremely wide range of points. This short summary represents an initial attempt to identify key and recurring themes in the feedback. The full source documents are available to elected members on request.

Key themes

Several key themes emerge from an analysis of the feedback:

- **Budget** – the concern that is expressed most often in relation to achieving the vision concerns the overall budget situation. Respondents wondered how the vision could be realised in the context of budget constraints. Some thought many of the ideas outlined would require new money and others feared cutbacks in other areas to achieve ideas set out in the vision.

- **How the vision will translate into practice** – many respondents welcomed the overall scope and direction of the vision but wondered about what effect it will have in practice. Many respondents mention the need for action plans and success criteria to show how the vision will be implemented and what success will look like.
- The **importance of early years and early intervention** – respondents welcomed the inclusion of a ‘Best start in life’ heading and the general focus on early intervention although some felt that this needed to be highlighted more.
- The idea of **rotating head teachers** so that they serve no longer than five to seven years generated a significant response. Whilst some respondents felt this was a good idea and worth exploring, more felt that it would be problematic, both in terms of practical implementation and in terms of the benefits that it might bring against the difficulties it might create in terms of continuity and in terms of parental involvement in selecting senior school staff. Others felt the opportunity (but not the requirement) should be extended to other school staff.
- The **importance of parental engagement** was emphasised in many responses, with the need to communicate effectively with and engage all parents – including those who aren’t currently reached - as partners in learning. Pupil engagement was also mentioned in several responses, as was the importance of engaging with staff.
- The need to include more on **partnership working** was highlighted in several responses. Partnership and multi-agency working needs to be seen not just as something that can support schools to achieve their objectives, but as a genuinely collective approach where all agencies work together in the interests of getting it right for every child.
- The need to reference and express the vision for schools in the overall context of the **Children and Families and Children’s Partnership joint vision and strategic outcomes** was highlighted in some responses. Some felt that the vision needs to be wider than just schools and needs to embrace the range of children’s services and lifelong learning.
- The need to **consolidate Curriculum for Excellence** was highlighted in several responses, particularly from staff groups. Some felt that it needed support and time to develop and evolve and warned that this could be undermined by more initiatives. Some called for an ‘initiative-freeze’ to allow CfE to be embedded.
- Several respondents highlighted the need to **focus on wider achievement** in schools, with calls for academic and vocational equality, a broad and general education, and the need to profile and recognise wider achievement.
- The **importance of community engagement** was another key theme. Several respondents welcomed the commitment to place schools at the heart of their communities, commenting on the need to ensure that lets were affordable for community groups, that schools themselves are welcoming, that adult education and youth work are supported, hosted or provided by schools, that after hours provision is extended and that schools are seen as hubs for partnership working.
- The need to **improve ICT** in schools emerged as a strong theme, with calls for equipment and systems to be invested in and kept up to date.

- The focus on the **lowest achieving 20%** of pupils was supported by some respondents but more were concerned that this should not be at the expense of other pupils and that the focus should be on supporting all pupils to achieve their potential. The needs of high achieving pupils should not be overlooked.
- Whilst the commitment to strengthen support for **pupils with additional support needs** was welcomed by many, there were some concerns again that this should not be at the expense of other pupils.
- There was support for including a heading on **healthy children and young people**, including physical and mental health. Several responses highlighted the importance of physical and sports education and outdoor learning in general.
- Some welcomed the idea of increasing the use of **para professionals** although some expressed caution that this might lead to a ‘dumbing down’ of the educational experience for pupils with less well-qualified staff taking classes.
- Many respondents emphasised the importance of developing **links with further and higher education institutions** and of developing better **links with employers, businesses and industry**.
- The need to **improve the school estate** was highlighted in several responses, with references to the current state of some buildings, overcrowding and the condition of playgrounds.
- Some respondents welcomed the idea of **improving initial training** for teachers so that failing students are not allowed to progress to probation. Others raised the need to address the issue of ‘failing teachers’.

Finally there were some issues in relation to the presentation of the draft vision itself:

- **Language issues** - The phrase ‘para professional’, as well as the inclusion of a number of other specialised terms such as Total Place and several acronyms and abbreviations was seen by many as unhelpful. There was a suggestion to include a glossary of terms.
- Some responses highlighted a **lack of consistency** in the document – some sections are high level, whereas some are much more detailed and specific. Some people felt that it was unclear who the intended audience was for the vision.
- Whilst many respondents welcomed the **overall tone, direction and approach** of the vision, some felt that it was vague and woolly. Some expressed the view that there was a lack of visionary thinking.
- Some people felt that the vision is too wide-ranging with too many priorities.

Response to the online survey quantitative questions:

- 74% agreed that, ‘I think the content of the vision is about right’, while 26% disagreed

- 61% agreed that 'I think the vision will help to make a positive difference', while 32% disagreed.
- An average of 82% agreed that each heading should be included in the vision, with the highest score for Best Start in Life (88%) and the lowest for Leadership (76%)
- An average of 69% agreed that 'The ways in which this part of the vision will be achieved are appropriate' with the highest score again for Best Start in Life (77%) and the lowest for Leadership (63%)

Appendix 4

Education, Children & Families

Policy Development & Review Sub-Committee – April 2013

Vision for schools – small group feedback

| QUESTION 1: What do you think about the vision? |
|---|
| <p>Group 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covers all areas in schools• Prioritising within the vision• Mechanism for 360° evaluation• Visibility equality and head teachers• No enforcement of rotation HT intended• Opportunities for all staff to move around as part of professional development• Change possibilities over 7 years |
| <p>Group 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The fact we have a vision• Leadership; Schools in Community; Parent engagement• Provides a template that can inform the future work of the committee• Key vision statement is correct• Good communication tool for world outside Council |
| <p>Group 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensive, but no catchment reorganisation detail• Leadership – how much HTs are leaders/CPD• More participatory schools (staff, parents)• How to support more effectively• Overall good• Total place – multi-agency; parental involvement too• Heart of communities• Rotation of other staff seen as opportunity too – experience of other schools• Incentivise teachers – hard places |

QUESTION 2: Is there anything missing from the vision or anything you would change?

Group 1:

- Healthy Young People – New Heading
 - Healthy eating
 - Mental health
 - Physical activity
- Opportunities for further project (eg Suicide Awareness Project; Self Harming; Learning for Sustainability – Outdoor Learning; different types of IT Learning)
- How, where, when we teach children
- Look at best practice elsewhere
- Opportunities for system change in future
- The Education Campus
- Focus for different types of school
- Creativity to influence education
 - Across services
 - Curriculum timings, catchment changes
- Understand all schools in Edinburgh
- Enhance alumni

Group 2:

- How well does it articulate what schools will look like in 5/10 years time
- Has to develop over time
- Provides a framework
- Requires an action plan with key benchmarks
- How do we get the best teachers to where they are most needed? Can we make it easier for heads and teachers to move around?
- Management pool of HTs?

Group 3:

- More understanding of how HTs work – sharing good practice
- Too much paperwork (box ticking)
- More explicit about reducing bureaucracy
- Mix skills and experiences – older/younger staff
- Workforce development & HTs
- Shadowing opportunities – make more appealing; moving around is the norm
- Focus on outcomes for children – workforce second
- Misconception re social class and schools
- Sense of adventure in high schools supported by social mix
- Health and wellbeing needs to be included – health and safety for children as well teachers
- Huge impact of HTs
- Morale of classroom teacher key

QUESTION 3: Priorities for 5 years?

Group 1:

- Lowest achieving 2%
- Early years strategy – appropriate staffing
- Parental engagement strategy

Group 2:

- Define what the pinnacle of a HTs career? Working in a high performing school or developing a school in more challenging circumstances?
- How do we make our schools a more attractive option for parents sending their children to private schools?
- Identify where there are mutual interest with the private sector
- Early intervention and support that continues with the child throughout its school career. More individual learning
- Should there be more diversity within the school sector?
- More focus on early years, and how care and learning go together
- Do we have the right skills mix in schools that meets needs of all children

Group 3:

- Template for HTs – agreed common way of working, consulting – built on best practice
- Redress balance between paperwork and face to face – more time teaching and meetings
- Currently individual department, school etc plan mountain of it
- ‘Bonfire of processes’
- Tinkering – equality has not changed
 - Schools in deprived areas
 - Correlation
 - Priority – narrowing the gap
- ESOL for older pupils (not just in early primary school)
- Countering view that only some schools give good education

QUESTION 4: Turn vision into reality

Group 1:

- Basis for new service planning
- Operations plan – staff, children, parents, unions, elected members
- Creative indicators, measures
- Emphasis on qualitative

Group 2:

- The vision should inform a policy programme over the next 2 years
- A number of work streams should emerge from the priorities that can be developed
- The vision needs to be aspirational and set a picture of the future. Should be fixed but back up by work streams. The vision should describe what our schools will be like

Group 3:

- Into action
- Focus on 3 top things – equality, gap between deprived and better off ones
- More unified managements styles – morale/participation
- Review of processes
- Focus on quality of teaching & learning and don't direct away from