

**EDUCATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held on 10 January 2019 at 1.15 pm in Antrim

PRESENT Rev R Herron (Chair)

Rev A Adams	Mr G Lundy
Ms Á Andrews	Mr N McCausland
Mr D Cargo	Dr A McMorrان
Mr G Doran	Dr I McMorris
Dr M Dynan	Mr O McMullan
Mrs S Kelly	Mr R Pollock
Sir Gerry Loughran	Miss R Rainey

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr J Collings, Ms S Long, Mr M Baker, Mrs P Cooney, Mr J Unsworth, Mrs K Scott, Ms L McCall and for part of the meeting Mrs D Allen, Mrs R Bell, Ms C Currie and Mr R McGreevy.

Mrs G McGrath, Director of Education, CCMS.

Ms A Campbell attended in her role as Board Room Apprentice.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr J Craig, Mrs M Culbert and Ms S O'Connor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the requirement to declare interests, as appropriate, during the course of the meeting.

3. COUNCIL FOR CATHOLIC CONTROLLED SCHOOLS (CCMS)

The Chair welcomed Mrs G McGrath to the meeting.

Mrs McGrath apologised on Mr G Campbell's behalf for his inability to attend the meeting.

Mrs McGrath provided an overview** of the background to CCMS, its statutory role, and its organisation structure. She said that CCMS was the employing authority for approximately 6,500 teachers (including principals) in 450 Catholic maintained nursery, primary and post primary schools. She said that the organisation had been recently re-structured to provide for three multi-disciplinary teams to work across the region. In response to the Chair, she advised that there were five statutory Diocesan Education Committees which had a consultative and advisory role. Terms of reference for the Diocesan Education Committees were being revised.

Mrs McGrath said that CCMS had held 11 engagement events with principals in 2018 to discuss challenges facing schools and to re-establish relationships and understanding of roles and responsibilities. The events had been highly positive and CCMS had undertaken to further explore the challenges identified by principals at the engagement events through work streams. The work streams were: Early Years, SEN provision, ethos, social media, workload and wellbeing, recruitment and need, teaching principals, and financial concerns. Position papers, to include recommendations, would be drawn up based on evidence from principals and would be forwarded to DE. Mrs McGrath said that principals served on the work streams.

Mrs McGrath paid tribute to EA colleagues for the excellent working relationship with CCMS.

Members raised various queries on the role of CCMS and the work streams. Mrs McGrath responded as follows:

- All work of CCMS reflected the ethos of the 450 faith based schools.
- CCMS considered that the key to raising standards in schools was the strength of a school's leadership and management. Its main focus was therefore on leadership and management. Mrs McGrath drew attention to the very good performance outcomes for Catholic maintained schools. She also expressed concerns relating to performance indicators relating to FSM and underachievement in boys.
- Not all Catholic schools fell within the remit of CCMS, for example voluntary grammar schools and a number of non-selective grammar schools.
- Working relationships between CCMS and EA colleagues were almost seamless and helped to ensure there was no duplication of work. CCMS and EA had a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities to support schools. Clear protocols were in place for post inspection work. Work was continuing to provide clarity around the role of the CCMS Education Officer and the EA School Improvement Professional.
- CCMS was working with EA and the ETI on continual professional development.
- CCMS did not provide training to schools. Training fell within the remit of EA. CCMS was currently reviewing supports for Boards of Governors outside the scope of EA.
- CCMS had responsibility for 33 nursery schools and a large number of nursery units. CCMS was confident in its nursery school provision as evidenced by inspection outcomes and the Chief Inspector's Report. The work stream on Early Years would seek to raise awareness of the challenges facing this sector.
- The paper on SEN provision would be shared with EA for information and support as EA had responsibility for this area. The paper would focus on Early Years and early intervention, with the need for appropriate investment, and was calling on improved working relationships between Health and Education.
- The teaching appointments scheme for CCMS and EA was different. CCMS was currently piloting a new competency based scheme.
- With regards to financial management of schools, CCMS had identified three categories of support: schools within budget; schools with no recovery plan (which included area planning considerations); and schools in challenging situations and receiving support.
- CCMS engaged fully to support shared education where possible. It was currently involved in five shared campuses. CCMS and EA were working together on their respective roles and joint responsibilities in respect of shared campuses.
- CCMS was working with EA to consider the potential of the DE Circular on faith based schools.
- While CCMS had a good working relationship with the Controlled Schools' Support Council, their work did not overlap.
- Each work stream had clear terms of reference. Membership of the work streams could be found on the CCMS website.
- It was anticipated that the position papers would receive final approval by the CCMS Council in the Autumn. Thereafter, the papers would be posted on the CCMS website.

The Chair thanked Mrs McGrath for her presentation and Mrs McGrath withdrew from the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2018

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Dr McMorris, the Committee agreed the minutes* (E/1/19/4) of the meeting held on 8 November 2018.

Mr Lundy left the meeting temporarily at 2.17 pm.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 GOVERNOR TRAINING PROGRAMME (4.1)

Mr Unsworth advised that officers were working towards providing additional training courses across the region in areas of demand. Venues were also being reviewed.

Mr Lundy re-entered the meeting at 2.19 pm.

A Member said that she was aware that some schools were using particular software which was not supported by the EA network. She queried the support available for Governors to address this issue. Officers advised that schools should not be accessing material that was not properly checked and not supported by the EA network. Issues did arise for Boards of Governors around indemnification should schools use such software. It was the role of the principal to advise Boards of Governors on such matters. In addition, the EA website provided wide ranging information for Governors including a dedicated email address where Governors could direct queries or issues to EA for response. Mr Collings undertook to follow up on this issue.

A Member said that the Membership and Teaching Appointments Committee had discussed the challenges around the provision of Governor training in light of reconstitution of Boards of Governors. The Committee had expressed particular concern at arrangements to ensure the delivery of appropriate recruitment and selection training to Governors. It had therefore asked officers to review approaches to training across the region. Mr Collings said that officers were working on different approaches to Governor training, including the use of EA TV. Mr Unsworth said that Mr Comer would attend a future meeting to update Members on progress on Governor training.

Action: *Follow up on the issue of schools using software which is not supported by the EA network; Mr Comer to attend a future meeting to update Members on progress on Governor training.*

5.2 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL LEADERS (4.2)

Mr Unsworth said that work on the new school leadership competencies framework, commissioned by DE, was expected to be complete by the end of the current academic year. It was anticipated therefore that a report on that framework could be presented to the Committee in the Autumn.

In response to a Member's query, Mr Unsworth advised that wide ranging views were being discussed by the working group. A number of principals served on the working group and this representation was proving beneficial.

5.3 GOVERNOR TRAINING PROGRAMME - EVALUATION REPORT FOR 2017/18 (6.1)

Mrs Scott said that she had reviewed the evaluation provided by Governors following previous area planning training courses. The feedback had highlighted an issue which related to a lack of understanding around the application of the objectives set out within the Sustainable Schools' Policy. Mrs Scott said that future training programmes on area planning would be adapted to provide clarity to Governors on this particular issue.

5.4 IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION - LEARNING LEADERS' SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19 AND BURSARIES (6.2)

Mr Baker said that a progress report on the IM Education Learning Leaders' Support Programme would be presented to the Committee at its March meeting. He said that

officers were engaging with ETI and GTCNI to support the process of developing programmes which were focused on school improvement outcomes and which would align with the requirements of the Learning Leaders' Strategy.

Mr Baker said that he was engaging with the Head of Equality and Human Rights and DE officials on the query that consideration should be given to supporting parallel schemes for other cultural traditions. A paper on this issue would be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration at its March meeting.

6. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

6.1 ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Chair extended the Committee's congratulations to Mrs Scott on her appointment as Acting Director of Education.

6.2 LEARNING LEADERS' TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CONFERENCES

Mrs Cooney said that a pilot Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) Sharing of Practice conference had been delivered in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, in partnership with key stakeholders, in June 2018. The model of delivery for the conference had been peer and school-led learning underpinned by an element of action research. It involved a commitment for schools to engage in sustained learning before, during and after the conference. Mrs Cooney said that, building on the learning from the pilot delivery model, further TPL conferences were being held in the current academic year and would provide opportunities for school leaders to consider the implications of the Learning Leaders' Strategy in developing teachers as accomplished learning leaders in their schools. Members were invited to attend the TPL conferences.

Action: Provide dates and venues of upcoming TPL conferences to Members.

6.3 RISK REGISTER

The Chair reported that a Directorate Risk Register would be presented to the Committee at its March meeting.

7. EDUCATION DIRECTORATE FINANCE REPORT

Mr Baker presented the finance report* (E/1/19/7) which provided an overview of core funding as at 30 November 2018. In general all budget lines were forecast to be within budget for 2018/19. He said that the recruitment of the 17 School Improvement Professionals was expected to commence in the first quarter of 2019/20.

The Committee noted the report. It also noted that finance reports would be presented to the Committee each month.

Ms Andrews left the meeting temporarily at 2.47 pm.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

SCHOOL DATA PROFILING FRAMEWORK

Mrs Cooney presented a paper* (E/1/19/8.1) on the development on the school data profiling framework. The framework was designed to be a central depository of wide ranging information of school data and would include, for example, context and basic information, curriculum, progression routes, school performance, inspection outcomes and history, leadership, priorities

for improvement and building capacity, area planning, finance, SEN, care and welfare. She said this information would allow EA to transform the data into actionable intelligence that would inform strategic decisions and also enable targeted focus to be given to individual schools.

Ms Andrews re-entered the meeting at 2.50 pm.

Mrs Cooney said that the strength of the concept was that the information provided within the framework by all EA's Directorates would allow for a multi-disciplinary approach to schools' issues and challenges. Information relating to performance indicators would be RAG rated to give visual sharp focus and enable individual school and system improvement programmes of support to be developed. She drew attention to the out-workings of the data profile within the Education Directorate by providing an outline of the number of schools identified as requiring support at primary and post primary level.

Mrs Bell, Ms Currie and Mr McGreevy outlined the benefits of the framework for their Directorates, schools and officers. The design of the framework had focused on school needs, it would be a timesaving tool for schools providing streamlined data and would support schools and Boards of Governors in self-evaluation. It would help to build up relationships between schools and EA officers. Officers would be able to support schools through a co-ordinated and consistent approach. It would reduce duplication of work across EA Directorates and allow officers to unlock data. Work would continue around quality assuring data and dashboards would be streamlined. Mr Collings said that the framework had been designed with school principal focus groups.

Members acknowledged the potential significant benefits of the framework for schools and officers, in particular it would allow for early identification of schools at risk and enable officers to put in place tailored intervention measures. Members raised queries on a number of issues. Mrs Cooney advised that information and data on each area could be accessible on the framework for the previous 3-5 years. The data could be used by schools to support them through the inspection process as ETI also work on legacy data and trends. Officers would populate the data on the framework and schools would only see information relating to their own school. In response to a Member's query, Mr Collings said that the framework did require initial investment. However, it was anticipated that the out-workings of the framework would result in real savings. For example, it had potential to monitor attendance on teaching and non-teaching staff.

Ms Andrews left the meeting at 3.33 pm.

A Member commented that the framework had potential to be a major transformational tool. Officers would be required to ensure that information on the framework was timely, relevant and appropriate at all stages.

Dr McMorran left the meeting at 3.35 pm and Rev Adams and Miss Rainey left at 3.36 pm.

9. AREA PLANNING

9.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 580 GLENCRAIG INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to establish a statutory nursery unit to provide 26 part-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/1/19/9.1) which set out the rationale in respect of the request to commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper. Mrs Scott highlighted resource implications for the proposed new nursery unit.

On the proposal of Mr Lundy, seconded by Dr McMorris, the Committee agreed to recommend that EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

9.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 581 CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to establish a statutory nursery unit to provide 26 part-time nursery places with effect from 1 September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/1/19/9.2) which set out the rationale in respect of the request to commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change and the summary paper. Mrs Scott highlighted resource implications for the proposed new nursery unit.

On the proposal of Mr McCausland, seconded by Mr Lundy, the Committee agreed to recommend that EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

9.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 574 CRAIGAVON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL - AMENDED CASE FOR CHANGE

Proposal to operate on a single site, 26-34 Lurgan Road, Portadown, with effect from 1 September 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

The Chair said that the Committee, at its meeting on 8 November 2018 had agreed to recommend, by majority agreement, that EA would commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal. He said that, following further engagement with community representatives, the Case for Change was amended to reflect more fully the discussions. Four options would now be consulted upon with EA's preferred option remaining *as before*. Mrs Scott said that as Members had raised concerns at the Committee meeting in November on the timing of the pre-publication consultation prior to Christmas, this consultation would now take place in the coming weeks.

A Member pointed out that three Members had recorded their opposition to the proposal at the November meeting and the three Members were still in opposition to the proposal. He asked officers to reflect on this particular case, ie where a position was agreed by the Committee and then the Committee was asked to note an amended Case for Change at a subsequent meeting. He said that, in light of the revision to the options, the potential existed for a new outcome which had not been previously considered by the Committee.

Mrs Scott said that the Committee, at its November meeting, had been asked to consider whether EA should commence pre-publication consultation on the above proposal. She had explained at the November meeting the parameters of the policy framework which required EA to consult at the formative stage on options and, in particular, that further options coming forward would not be precluded from being considered as part of the consultation process. At that meeting, she had also set out the rationale for EA stating a preferred option. She emphasised that the amended Case for Change did not require the Committee to change the nature of its approval given on 8 November 2018.

The Chair said that the Committee's original decision to commence pre-publication consultation on the proposal remained. He also said that the minutes would record that the three Members were still in opposition to the proposal. The three Members were Mr D Cargo, Mr J Craig and Mr N McCausland.

The Committee noted the amended Case for Change* (E/1/19/9.3).

9.4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 571 ERGANAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Proposal to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter

Mrs Scott presented the papers* (E/1/1899.4) for publication and provided a summary of key areas for the Committee's consideration including that, in accordance with Article 14 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, EA had undertaken formal consultation with the Board of Governors and Trustees of schools which might be affected by the proposal.

Members considered the Case for Change. This included the rationale for the proposal, current sustainability of the school, the impact of the proposal on schools in the locality and responses received to the consultation.

Members received clarification on the capacity of schools in the locality to increase admission numbers and the associated processes to support parents in respect of a temporary solution and a longer term solution. A Member urged officers to ensure that parents were well supported through this process.

On the proposal of Dr McMorris, seconded by Mrs Kelly, the Committee agreed to publish the Development Proposal.

9.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL No 561 COLAISTE FEIRSTE

Proposal to establish a Key Stage 3 campus in North Belfast with an admissions number of 50 and enrolment number of 150, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter

The Chair reported that this development proposal had been withdrawn from the agenda.

10. JOINT DIRECTORATE REVIEW OF POST PRIMARY ADMISSIONS 2018

Mr Lundy declared an interest in Rainey Endowed School.

Mrs Allen said that an unprecedented number of children had remained unplaced after the post primary transfer process in 2018. At the conclusion of the 2018 post primary admissions procedure, DE and EA had commissioned a joint review of the process with a view to improving outcomes for the transfer process in 2019. The review had focused on key areas of predictability, ie information based on parental preferences, trends, and gender. She presented a report* (E/1/19/10) setting out a detailed analysis of the issues that had arisen during the 2018 post primary transfer process and the recommendations arising from the review. She said that it was intended that an internal EA Implementation Group would now be established to take forward an action plan, which would include timescales, to ensure that all recommendations contained in the report relating to EA were fully implemented. Officers would also be engaging with CCMS and GBA on the recommendations contained in the report.

Mrs Allen said that, with regard to demographics, there had been an additional 952 young people at post primary transfer stage in 2018. In 2019, this figure was expected to further rise to an additional 1300 young people and the spike in the demographics was expected to persist until 2024. She said that EA was developing an extensive communications plan (Annex C) to provide key messages and clear information to parents and schools on the 2019 post primary admissions process. The report also set out strategic solutions for the current year and for subsequent years.

Mrs Allen said that officers would be targeting engagement with schools with regard to additionality once the report had been considered by Members.

Mrs Allen said that applications were considered by post primary schools in early March. At this stage in the process, EA would be able to capture better information on pressure areas and this information would be shared with DE.

Mr Doran left the meeting at 3.57 pm.

Attention was given to the forecast of demand for 2019 at constituency level (Annex E). The Annex set out additionality for particular areas with the exception of North Down and Ards. Mrs Allen said that the Permanent Secretary was currently giving consideration to proposals for North Down and Ards. Members noted that responses from schools varied with regard to additionality. Mrs Allen highlighted issues impacting on particular schools, for example restrictions due to accommodation pressures.

Dr Dynan left the meeting at 4.09 pm.

Members received clarification around proposals for particular areas. They discussed arrangements for temporary variations for schools where it was anticipated that admission numbers would increase. A Member urged caution around increases in admissions being agreed by constituency area as in reality parental choice was the driving factor. He asked Area Planning officers to engage with DE officials on this issue and interrogate any anomalies.

Members discussed arrangements for Development Proposals which were currently being drafted by officers for future consideration by the Committee.

This report had also been considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee earlier in the week.

The Committee noted the report.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 14 February 2019.

The meeting ended at 4.22 pm.

CHAIRPERSON

DATE

* Paper issued with agenda

** Paper tabled