

Parent Council Liaison Meeting via MS Teams

Tuesday 7th February 2023 – 6.30pm – 8pm

1.	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies	Steven Quinn
<p>The meeting was chaired by Steven Quinn (SQ), Director of Children’s Services.</p> <p>In attendance was Julie Calder (JC), Head of Service (Early Years & Broad General Education), Children’s Services, Julie Paterson (JP), Development Officer (Literacy), Children’s Services, Maurice Gilligan (MG), Promise Lead Officer, Children’s Services, Linda Butler, Service Planning and Policy Development Manager (Children’s Services), Chief Executive’s Service and Joanne Cloney, Assistant Planning and Policy Development Officer, Chief Executive’s Service.</p> <p>18 Parent Council Representatives via MS Teams attended the meeting.</p> <p>Minutes taken by Joanne Cloney, Chief Executive’s Service.</p>		
2.	ACEL data update	Julie Calder
<p>Julie Calder (JC) delivered a presentation (Appendix 1) in relation to the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Return 2021/22, which was published in December 2022. The data collection is based on pupils in P1, P4, P7 & S3 and measures the percentage of pupils that have achieved the ‘expected’ CFE levels in the literacy organisers (listening & talking, reading, writing) and numeracy.</p> <p>Key points to note:</p> <p>The Achievement of a CfE Level data for 2021-22 has demonstrated that there has been some recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic which negatively impacted pupil attainment, particularly for those living in most deprived areas.</p> <p>Attainment in listening and talking remains higher than other curricular areas and P1 attainment continues to outperform other stages.</p> <p>Despite increases in attainment nationally, Renfrewshire continues to perform in line with or above national figures at all stages and in all curricular areas.</p> <p>Renfrewshire is also in line with or above national figures across all SIMD quintiles. The size of the attainment gap between quintile 1 and quintile 5 is slightly larger than national figures for numeracy, however this is due to higher attainment for pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas in Renfrewshire.</p> <p>Attainment gaps have closed in comparison to 2020-21 but remain slightly wider than pre-pandemic.</p> <p>The attainment of all groups has been impacted by the pandemic, with those in deprivation facing bigger drops in attainment, hence increasing attainment gaps. However, progress is being made in most areas to reduce the attainment gaps which grew in 20/21 because of the pandemic.</p>		

Schools and the Central Education Team will continue to use a range of strategies and intervention to ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve the best they can. SQ reiterated that Renfrewshire are in a strong position as we consistently outperform national level, but Children's Services will continue to strive to improve on the current position.

Question: Is it correct that the P4s were more affected on a critical stage during the Pandemic?

JC confirmed that data is used to inform how we can improve attainment for all children and young people. Writing continues to be a priority and is a this is a feature of school improvement plans and the Renfrewshire Education Improvement Plan.

Question: Does it not show there has been issues with writing since 2018-19, especially with S3. Should we be saying it is due to pandemic? Why has this not been a focus until now?

JC confirmed this is an area previously identified and has been a focus; data is used every year to populate the Service's priorities. Julie Paterson's (JP) presentation on 'Talk for Writing' will demonstrate how we have been making progress in this area.

3.	Supporting Learning at Home - Talk for Writing / Dolly Parton Foundation	Julie Paterson
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Julie Paterson (JP) delivered a presentation (Appendix 2) on Supporting Literacy Learning at Home. Topics covered include the challenges faced by children with writing, the introduction of 'Talk for Writing' and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Talk for Writing builds on approaches that schools already have. It is an evidence-based approach, multi-sensory to writing developed by Pie Corbett and is based on the principles of how children learn. It enables children to imitate the language they need for topics orally and to learn and analyse a text before writing their own versions. It supports children to develop their skills as speakers, listeners, readers, writers, and thinkers. The children are taken on a journey from imitation to innovation to independent application.

This programme clearly aligns to the evidence base for raising attainment in writing, can be tailored to suit the needs and dynamics of individual schools and has a proven record of raising attainment nationally and internationally. It is currently adopted within 34 early years establishments, 43 primary schools, 9 secondary schools and 2 ASN schools in Renfrewshire.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting programme devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere. Each month, enrolled children in Renfrewshire aged from two to five years, receive a high quality, age-appropriate book in the post, free of charge. The books are carefully selected, and full of variety. They include traditional stories and rhymes, books by beloved authors and illustrators, non-fiction content, and newly published titles.

Renfrewshire have offered a universal programme of Imagination Library for almost 2 years in addition to our programme for care experienced and looked after children. Over 5000 children have received books to date, and it is anticipated by this summer, over 100,000 books will have been distributed to children in Renfrewshire. Combined with our other book gifting programmes, this equates to a child having the equivalent of a personal library containing 53 books by the time they reach the end of P3.

For more information and to register a child, please visit [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#)

SQ confirmed that Renfrewshire is leading the way in Scotland when it comes to getting books out to children because reading is crucial and must be supported and promoted at both home and in classrooms.

Question: When book authors visit schools, do they share with kids what their writing processes are and how they get inspiration for stories?

JP confirmed that the pandemic had a significant effect on visits to school, but these have been reintroduced and visits from local authors and writers have taken place, as well as some organised through the Scottish Book Trust. Visitors talk to the children about what it takes to be a writer and what makes a good story. In addition, many schools in Renfrewshire are participating in Paisley Book Festival which takes place 16-19 February, and more information can be found here: <https://paisleybookfest.com/>

4.	NIF / The Promise	Maurice Gilligan
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Maurice Gilligan (MG) delivered a presentation (Appendix 3) on The Promise.

The Promise is the outcome of Scotland's three-year Independent Care Review, where more than 5,500 care experienced children and adults took part, to transform the wellbeing of infants, children, young people, and adults. It is one of seven concluding reports published in 2020 and organisations, communities, and groups across the country have all pledged to **#KeepThePromise**.

Renfrewshire Council along with our partners are committed to delivering on The Promise to the care experienced community, that Scotland is "the best place in the world to grow up in" so that children are "loved, safe, and respected and realise their full potential".

This is a long-term change programme for the improvement of Scotland's "care" system and Renfrewshire are currently in year 3 of a 10-year plan (2020- 2030). There are clear route maps for specific priorities and outcomes and associated Change Programme, which identify shorter-term actions and involves partner agencies such as: community planning, HSCP, third and private sectors, police, and justice partners.

Topics covered within the presentation included: A right to an education, The Promise and Inclusive Practice - What does this mean for Practitioners, What does this mean for Schools and School Leaders, What does this mean at Local Authority service level? and School Improvement Planning: implications.

If you would like to find out more about The Promise and how you can get involved, please contact Maurice by email - maurice.gilligan@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

5.

AOCB

Steven Quinn

SQ advised that he had received questions in advance of the meeting that are pertinent to individual schools. He advised the meeting that he or officers will be in touch to answer these questions directly.

School Transport Meeting

Clare Douglas, Chair of Trinity Parent Council shared an update following her meeting with Laura Baillie in relation to this previously discussed subject.

Their discussions focussed on improving communication with parents and keeping the communication channels open in relation to routes and to ensure engagement ahead of schools returning for the new school year, particularly for those transitioning from P7 to S1, who may have never used school transport previously.

At the meeting, Laura Baillie explained the process of acquiring school transport including the tender process and consulting with SPT and demonstrated some of the challenges in this regard.

Clare confirmed that the communication channel with Laura Baillie remains open for further dialogue and meeting attendees can share questions or comments with her via her email - trinityhigh@renfrewshire.npfs.org.uk

SQ confirmed it is important that the Service receives feedback on important subjects such as this to make improvements and help shape future services.

Parking/Congestion at Schools

SQ received this as a topic for discussion, with a view to sharing ideas and strategies that have been implemented and made a difference to help ease this problem at schools in Renfrewshire.

Discussions took place on the location/easy access of schools and parental engagement/by-in being key to change. Unofficial or voluntary one-way systems, planters to stop through traffic, no driving zones and a walking bus are some strategies that have been implemented with reasonable success.

Budget

The Council will set the 2023/24 budget on Thursday 2 March 2023. The Council papers can be accessed via the Council website 1 week prior to the meeting. Focus is then directed to options/proposals for the 2024/25 budget, considering the well-publicised shortfall that all Local Authorities are facing in the foreseeable future. Education & Children's Services will put forward what is possible with the budget available.

Question – Will there be consultation? Getting parents on board when difficult decisions need to be made makes the process a little clearer and transparent.

The 2023/24 will be agreed at Council on Thursday 2 March 2023. In terms of future budgets, the Council will have mechanisms to engage and consult with communities.

Question – Are other Parent Council's and PTA's struggling to get parental involvement and support for events? Does anyone have any ideas how to gain much needed support, particularly across Secondary sector?

Several Chair's advised that they have merged the Parent Council and PTA for better engagement, confirming they only have a Parent Council. Another suggested that early engagement with new families such as P1s and S1s is crucial and setting out expectations for involvement and being flexible; not holding parents to every meeting or event may increase participation.

Question – Could school trips be affected by any future strike action by Teachers?

SQ confirmed that strike action has not affected any residential trips to date. Should there be any future strikes, Children's Services will do everything they can to mitigate any detrimental effects on school trips for both pupils and parents.

Closing Comments

Julie Calder acknowledged that meeting attendees have received a lot of information and suggested that to ensure meetings also provide the opportunity for Chairs to offer advice to one another and share practice, a short-term group could be created to look at the format of meetings moving forward. Contact Julie directly to be involved:
julie.calder@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Steven Quinn thanked everyone for their support and attendance.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25 April 2023