

REPORT BY POLICY LEAD FOR EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING & STRATEGIC IT SERVICES

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This is my second report as Policy Lead for Education, Lifelong Learning and Strategic IT Services, and covers the period from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

**2. SCHOOLS**

2.1 Visiting Schools

I have continued my programme of visiting our schools to meet Head teachers, see our policies in practice and make sure I am fully aware of the specific challenges and opportunities that individual schools are dealing with. Since my last report I have visited:

Ardishaig Primary; Campbeltown Grammar; Castlehill Primary; Dalmally Primary; Drumlemble Primary; Furnace Primary; Garelochhead Primary; Hermitage Primary; Kilcreggan Primary; John Logie Baird Primary; Minard Primary; Park Primary; Rhuanahaorine Primary; Rosneath Primary; Strachur Primary; Tarbert Academy

These visits help to keep me informed on implementation of policy, our ongoing capital improvement programme and see how our very diverse schools operate.

2.2 **Physical Education**

**PE – 2 hours**

There is increasing progress across all Argyll and Bute schools in achieving the recommended two hour of physical education (PE):

- In the 2012 Healthy Living Survey 83% of Primary Schools were achieving 2 hours of PE a week and 100% of Secondary Schools were achieving the target.
- In the 2013 Healthy Living Survey 87% of Primary Schools were achieving 2 hours PE a week and 100% of Secondary Schools were achieving the target.

In the 2014 Healthy Living Survey 98% of Primary Schools were achieving 2 hours PE a week and 100% of Secondary Schools were achieving the target

Following the initial results of the 2012 Healthy Living Survey a comprehensive Continuing Professional Development programme was put into place working with schools to assist in further developing and improving the quality of PE programmes. This included:

- Curriculum Development in schools (mainly primary) working with teachers and their classes, exemplifying good practice, introducing Significant Aspects of Learning (SAOL) – planning and assessment round that;
- Twilight training sessions in PE, that offered practical sessions on dance, gymnastics – using Education Scotland PE Development Officers. Introduction to Better Movers and Thinkers (BMT– new concepts);
- Probationers – delivering on PE at probationers conference, followed by visits to schools to work in conjunction with them and their class and observed lesson to identify next steps in learning in PE;
- Peripatetic PE teachers 2 day conference to update staff/introduce new concepts and a

specific conference for teachers obtaining the Post Graduate Certificate (PGC) in Primary PE;

- Secondary PT's – SAOL and assessment in core PE (in conjunction with Education Scotland);

Disability inclusion training in the following areas: Rosneath Peninsula, North Lorn and South Kintyre delivered by Sports Scotland Disability sport.

### 2.3 **School Sports Awards**

A number of Argyll and Bute schools participated in the recent pilot programme for New Schools Sports Awards alongside schools from East Lothian and North Lanarkshire Councils. In these awards which brought together PE and Personal Achievement 4 schools achieved gold awards – Arinagour Primary, Salen Primary, Park Primary and Campbeltown Grammar, with a further 12 schools achieving silver awards and 11 schools recognised at bronze award level.

### 2.4 **iCycle**

While visiting Rosneath Primary School in June I was fortunate enough to be able to see pupils being assessed for their iCycle award. The iCycle programme was developed by the Council in conjunction with North Ayrshire Council as the national resources were not felt to be appropriate for use in rural areas. The iCycle website, which features film clips and links to the Curriculum for Excellence, is proving popular with trainers and teachers. iCycle recently won the Scottish Rural Parliament Award for Transport and Infrastructure, a Bronze Award in the Council's Excellence Awards and was shortlisted for a Scottish Transport Award earlier in the year

### 2.5 **Maintenance of School Estate**

In May I opened the new extension at Hermitage Primary. This project involved the creation of new classrooms and activity space as well as upgrading the playground at a total cost of £770,000. This was one of the larger projects undertaken as part of the service development section of the education capital programme. Regular updates on the education capital programme come to the Policy and Resources Committee.

When I visited Campbeltown Grammar in May I was able to see for myself just why the Council needs to invest in building the planned new replacement school. The development of a modern, fully equipped secondary school will support future generations of children to learn and realise their potential in Kintyre.

### 2.6 **Eco Schools**

Schools in Argyll and Bute continue to be actively involved in developments of Outdoor Learning. Some examples of the work taking currently taking place include:

- Dunoon Primary Gardening Club who grew potatoes and delivered them to the local health food shop to be sold
- As part of Forest Schools Kilmartin Primary cooked some porridge on an open fire
- Strath of Appin Primary School's picnic took the form of a Harvest lunch this work was part of The One Planet Picnic. It is designed to raise awareness of where food comes from, and how it is produced

Currently 10 schools are involved in Food for Thought Project with Education Scotland – Castlehill, Dalintober, Campbeltown Grammar, Hermitage Primary, Parklands, Lochgilphead Joint Campus, Strachur, Tighnabruich and Toward. his work is linked closely with promoting health eating and the growing of food.

When I visited Rhuanahaorine Primary the school had just recently received their second Green

Flag as part of the Eco Schools programme. 53 of our schools now hold Green Flag Status. In addition, 12 schools are involved in the Adventure Learning Programme designed to enhance a joined up approach to outdoor learning

## 2.7 ICT in Schools

Schools across the authority continue to make good progress in the use of ICT across learning. Key projects include: development of Computer Science, App Development and Robotics disciplines in interdisciplinary contexts in schools.

### ***Primary School - Engagement and Achievement***

Over the last year the Argyll and Bute Learning Technologies Team have been providing additional, exciting, computer science related learning opportunities for young people at primary level. The project aim is to capture the imagination of young people, to showcase what can be created and inspire learners to develop their skills and knowledge through the use of technology. Over 50 primary schools have been supported to engage them in computer programming related projects. Pupils are demonstrating increasing enthusiasm and passion in learning and technology. 97% of the young people have fully engaged with activities such as Kodu and have shown a real desire to learn the basics of computer programming.

Argyll and Bute, and specifically Cardross Primary School, gained National recognition at the recent National Kodu Cup, where they became the first Scottish school to be invited to the UK finals in July 2014. Cardross pupils competed against 11 other schools from across the UK at Microsoft's HQ in Reading and won the Judges Award. Microsoft said "*...the quality of the 160 games that were entered into the competition was outstanding and your games were voted the best by our judging panel.*"

### ***Secondary School – Raising Attainment***

A Pilot project - Using Tablet Technology to Support Raising Attainment in English and Maths – Hermitage Academy, has been established. The project aims to raise attainment by transforming pedagogical approaches to Maths/English in the senior phase of the school curriculum (S4 –S6). It should also improve and modernise the overall quality of IT resources available for pupils in their learning, provide high quality digital interactive content accessible to other students in Argyll and Bute (potentially Nationally) and assist staff in constructing increasingly flexible curriculum course materials to meet the range and diversity of learning styles.

In addition the use of tablet devices and digital authoring software aims to: provide long term savings in the use of paper printed materials; provide pupils with the insight to further develop digital skills necessary for joining a competitive digital workforce; strengthen home - school partnerships and enhance the image of Argyll and Bute Education Service as sector-leading nationally and globally. Pupil devices were introduced to the entire 4th year cohort at the end of October.

### ***Lync***

The Lync Pilot project at Tarbert Academy is now well underway. At the recent Secondary Headteacher meeting, school staff provided a full demonstration on the usage, value and impact of Lync across a range of school functions and activities. A planned, formal evaluation will now be conducted to contribute to the development of a full business case for Lync roll-out across all authority schools.

### **3 OTHER EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING UPDATES**

#### **3.1 Head teacher meetings**

In May I attended both the Primary Head Teachers' Meeting and the Secondary Head Teachers' Meeting. These meetings covered topics such as Attendance Monitoring (sickness absence costs the Council significant sums of money but positive steps have been made in relation to teacher absence) and the updated Anti-bullying policy.

At the Secondary Head Teachers' meeting there were discussions around the new qualifications and how each school was managing the implementation of this final phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It was also highlighted that the appeals process for SQA exams has been significantly revised. There are now two options available for appeal. The first is an exceptional circumstances consideration which can be asked for in advance of results being published, for example if a pupil has been ill. Once results have been published there is a post results service available which will allow for either a clerical check or a marking check to be made – this service will not allow for a re-marking of the paper and if the grade is not changed as a result there will be a charge for the service

In September I spoke briefly to newly appointed Head Teachers at a meeting in Inveraray. These meetings offer new Head Teachers the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of the policies and procedures of the Education Service. During the two day event the newly appointed head Teachers covered a variety of topics including finance, personnel, child protection, leadership, and also gave time to network with colleagues.

#### **3.2 COSLA Education, Children and Young People Executive Group**

Since my last report I have attended two COSLA Executive Group meetings. The meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May included the following items:

- (Public) Presentation by Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration; Permanence Planning for Looked after Children; WithScotland; Nominations to the General Teaching Council for Scotland; Language Learning 1+2 Approach
- (Private) Early Learning and Childcare for Two Year Olds; Free School Meals for P1-P3 Pupils; Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce; Draft Audit Scotland Report – School Education; Proposed School Capacity Guidance for Primary Schools; National Frameworks – Children's Residential Care Services and Foster Care; New Standards for Practitioners in Residential Child Care

The meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> September included the following items:

- (Public) Presentation from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists; Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce; Looked After Children Update; Educational Attainment
- (Private) Kinship Care Allowances; Education Bill; Capital Funding for Free School Meals and Early Learning and Childcare; Review of Early Years Workforce; Language Learning a 1+ 2 Approach; National Frameworks: Children's Residential Care Services and Foster Care

Papers for the items taken in public session are available on the COSLA website

### **3.3 Argyll College**

I have attended meetings of Argyll College Board on 16<sup>th</sup> June and 22<sup>nd</sup> September. At the meeting in June the Board had the opportunity to meet Clive Mulholland, the new Principal of the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI).

I had highlighted in my previous report that the Council and Argyll College were exploring the possibility of delivering a teaching qualification within Argyll and Bute. The Council have entered into a partnership with Argyll College and UHI to deliver a PGDE (Primary) based in the Oban Campus from August 2015. The students will also have the option of the course being provided for Gaelic Education. The course is designed by UHI and meets the criteria required for Initial Teacher Education. The course will be delivered by VC and face to face tutorials. Registration will be open from December 2014.

This is a great opportunity for Argyll-based students, who currently hold a degree and meet all the course requirements, to study and become a teacher without having to leave Argyll. It also provides support to the Council in recruitment of Primary Teachers both in Gaelic and Mainstream.

### **3.4 Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT)**

Work continues to be taken forward through the LNCT engaging both the teaching trade unions and staff representatives. Since my last update one further meeting has taken place, focussing predominantly on the implementation of the Professional Update for all teaching staff (re-accreditation for all teachers with the general teaching Council for Scotland). Engagement in the Professional Update process is a requirement of all Fully Registered Teachers. The Education Service has now received formal notification from GTCS that their Professional development programme meets the expected standard.

In keeping with the spirit of the LNCT, it was agreed at the most recent meeting that a formal evaluation of the implementation of professional update will be jointly conducted in the future. This will allow for all Head Teachers to have engaged in an agreed Professional Review and Development (PRD) meeting. In particular, teaching staff will now be required to demonstrate that they have: (1) completed an annual update of their individual contact information, (2) engaged in ongoing self-evaluation against appropriate GTCS Professional Standards, and (3) have maintained a reflective record of professional learning and associated evidence of impact on thinking and professional actions. These requirements will be discussed with a line manager as part of the PRD process.

## **4. STRATEGIC IT SERVICES**

Updates on developments in broadband/mobile coverage are available on the Council website: <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/superfast-broadband>

### **4.1 Broadband**

Commercial rollout of next generation broadband by BT delivered Argyll's first superfast broadband connections during May in parts of Helensburgh, since then additional properties have gone live in Oban and Cardross as a result of the commercial and public funded work. The number of premises connected is expected to increase quickly over the next six months to include the Ledaig and Taynuilt exchange areas. Work is also commencing in relation to the Balvicar, Connel, Dalmally and Kilmelford exchange areas which are expected to benefit from the superfast service during 2015.

Work continues on the backbone infrastructure which will extend next generation broadband across Argyll, during the summer specialist cable laying vessels were positioning the subsea cables which will form a vital part of this network, this work is expected to be completed by the end of November.

Community Broadband Scotland continue to work with local communities who are unlikely to benefit from the fibre rollout notably the Argyll Isles project which is currently going through a tendering exercise.

#### **4.2 Pathfinder North 2**

The SWAN contract was signed by Highland Council (on behalf of all Pathfinder North partners) on 27 October. This step forward was discussed at the Convention of the Highlands and Islands meeting in Inverness on 30 October and a press release issued. Currently work is focussed on enabling requirements and transition, particularly opportunities to transition early and make some savings

#### **4.3 Mobile Telephony**

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport have been reviewing the Mobile Infrastructure Project in light of issues arising with implementation elsewhere in the country. I attended a meeting in Helensburgh in October where it was confirmed that changes in criteria used to assess sites will result in changes to the locations proposed for Argyll and Bute. An update will be provided to members in due course.

The Scottish Government pilot on Coll has progressed as far as the build stage and they are currently waiting to connect into the mobile operators network on Mull. The new mast is expected to provide 4G coverage for the island.

A competition by Vodafone in relation to their Open Sure Signal product, which can provide a 3G mobile service, was highlighted to communities who were most likely to meet the criteria.

### **Appendix 1 – Broadband summary leaflet distributed at the Economic Summit**

**Aileen Morton**

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**7<sup>th</sup> November 2014**