

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 17 MAY 2016

CAMPUS HEADSHIP OF WEBSTER'S HIGH SCHOOL AND SOUTHUIR PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report summarises the outcomes of a recent informal consultation undertaken in relation to the pilot of an acting Campus Headship of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) approve the proposal to extend the acting Campus Headship of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School into school session 2015/16 on a temporary basis
- (ii) approve the proposal to undertake a full formal consultation in September and October 2016 with staff, pupils and parents on whether or not to develop plans for transition from the acting Campus Headship to a permanent all-through campus.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit
- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School are both situated in a shared plot in the south west area of Kirriemuir. Webster's High School currently has 714 pupils. Southmuir PS currently has 210 pupils.
- 3.2 Webster's High School has had two Head Teachers within the past ten year period. Southmuir Primary School has had three substantive Head Teachers and three Acting Head Teachers in post during this period.
- 3.3 In September 2015, the substantive Head Teacher, who had been in post at Southmuir Primary School for two years, successfully secured a Head Teacher post with another local authority. This meant that there would be another change of leadership for Southmuir Primary School. If the post had been advertised externally at this time then another Acting Head Teacher would also have had to be appointed for a period of approximately three months. At the same time, the Depute Head teacher at Southmuir Primary School left as she had secured a Head Teacher post elsewhere and would therefore have not been in a position to take on the Acting Head Teacher role.
- 3.4 The change in school leadership has influenced progress the school has made in relation to taking forward Curriculum for Excellence, raising attainment and ensuring effective provision for children with additional support needs.

- 3.5 Discussions were held with the outgoing Head Teacher at Southmuir Primary School and the current Head Teacher at Webster's High School about ways in which enhanced stability could be brought to the leadership of Southmuir Primary School. The Children & Learning Directorate were aware of successful all-through schools in other local authorities and felt this would be worth exploring further for Angus. An all-through school is a school which caters for children aged 2 -18 years. Given the physical location of both buildings it was felt that Webster's and Southmuir might provide an opportunity for the development of a shared campus model. This would still be considered as a relatively medium sized campus with an overall pupil number of approx. 924 pupils
- 3.6 In September 2015, meetings were held with the staff of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School to share the proposal to appoint the current Head Teacher of Webster's High School as the acting Campus Head Teacher of both schools on an acting basis as a pilot project.
- 3.7 Meetings were also held at this time with the Parent Councils of both schools and an open evening for all parents of both schools was held in September 2015. The meeting was attended by approximately 35 parents from Southmuir Primary School and one parent from Webster's High School.
- 3.8 The Head Teacher at Webster's High School took on the temporary additional role of Acting Head Teacher at Southmuir Primary School in October 2015 and continues in that acting Campus Headship role to date. She is supported by three secondary Depute Head Teachers in Webster's High School and a Depute Headteacher in Southmuir PS. The new Depute Head Teacher was appointed to Southmuir and took up post in November 2015. The post of Depute Head Teacher at Southmuir was job sized to ensure that the salary offered reflected the enhanced operational management role of the Depute with a Shared Head Teacher. In addition to the substantive Principal Teacher, a temporary additional Principal Teacher post was established in Southmuir to secure a strong management team.
- 3.9 An informal consultation with focus groups of parents, staff and pupils took place in March 2016 to gather views on the Shared Headship approach. Informal Interviews were also held with the acting Campus Head Teacher and Depute Head Teachers.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Feedback from the parent groups from both schools was positive overall. The strengths they perceived included major improvements in communication and they appreciated the welcoming ethos the acting Campus Head Teacher had established in the primary school. A range of opportunities were identified and these included extended work experience opportunities for pupils from Webster's High School and smoother transition from P7-S1 for all pupils. Some of the Southmuir parents had slight concerns that a secondary Head Teacher would not have the specialist knowledge needed to lead a primary school. Overall, it was felt that it was too early to determine how beneficial the acting campus leadership role was.
- 4.2 Feedback from the young people at Webster's High School was very positive. They all understood the concept of an all-through school and were in favour of the campus approach for their own school and Southmuir. They were appreciative of the opportunities this had offered some of them to work in the primary school. They reported that they had felt no negative impact in relation to the campus approach.
- 4.3 The pupils at Southmuir reported that they were clear about the difference in roles between the acting Campus Head Teacher and the Depute Head Teacher. They reported that the school had a good ethos and that behaviour had improved. They also felt that lunchtimes were calmer and communication was improved. They appreciated the new opportunities they had been given to work with teachers from the secondary school on modern languages. They spoke very favourably about the acting Campus Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher.
- 4.4 Staff at Webster's High School perceived that there was improved access to primary staff through the acting Campus Head Teacher and noted that good collegial working had begun in relation to standards across stages in mathematics. There was enthusiasm for the 3-18 campus approach and they felt that although links were already stronger, there was great potential in this being further developed for staff and pupils. They remarked that they felt the

presence of the Head Teacher within the secondary school had decreased and that they would like more time to plan thoroughly for the new 3-18 way of working.

- 4.5 The primary staff acknowledged the very good work of the Depute Head Teacher and expressed satisfaction with the improved methods of sharing resources and expertise between the primary and secondary schools. They reported that they perceived the campus approach so far to still be two distinct schools working with one Head Teacher and the unique identity of the primary school had been maintained. They had some concerns about the more strategic role of the acting Campus Head Teacher and the demands this placed on the Depute Head Teacher. It was felt unanimously amongst the staff team that it was too early to evaluate the success of this approach.
- 4.6 The Depute Head Teachers of both schools have felt very well supported by the Head Teacher. The primary Depute has fully appreciated the support given to primary classes by secondary teachers and recognises the potential for improved cross sectoral working. They are very supportive of this model being continued.
- 4.7 The acting Campus Head Teacher has been very proactive and invested time in getting to know staff and pupils in the primary sector. She has established good working relationships with both Parent Councils. She is keen to progress the model and develop a joint senior management team instead of leading two distinct teams as at present. She appreciates the enormous potential for improving curricular transition from primary to secondary and in teaching teams from both sectors working together to improve the learning for all young people. There was recognition of the time demands of the campus headship role and some innovative ideas were generated about how to improve this.
- 4.8 Overall, feedback from all groups consulted was positive and forward thinking but it was agreed that it was too early to determine how successful the acting Campus Headship approach was. As a result of this, proposals are outlined below on plans to extend the temporary deployment of the acting Campus Head Teacher and to undertake a fuller and more formal consultation exercise.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The acting Campus Headship of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School should be extended into school session 2016/17 on a temporary basis
- 5.2 A fuller more formal evaluation of the acting Campus Headship should be held between September and October 2016 with staff, pupils and parents on whether or not to develop plans for transition from the acting Campus Headship to a permanent Campus Headship. The findings of this evaluation would be analysed in November 2016 and reported to the Children and Learning Committee in December 2016.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The management structures within the acting Campus Headship model results in an overall saving of £5214. This has been calculated as follows:
- Non-filling of the vacant Head Teacher post (primary) – saving of £53187
 - Resizing of acting Campus Head Teacher salary - spend of £7482
 - Resizing of Depute Head Teacher post (primary) - spend of £1500
 - Establishment of an additional Acting Principal Teacher post (primary) - spend of £3228
 - Deployment of an additional class teacher (primary) - spend of £35763

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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