

AGENDA ITEM NO 7

REPORT NO 75/17

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 21 FEBRUARY 2017

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 formal consultation undertaken in relation to the pilot of an acting Campus Headship of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary Schools.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) On the basis of information available, debate and agree that either:
 - (a) the Shared Headship of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School is extended until 30 June 2017 until more parental views can be sought, or
 - (b) the Shared Headship of Webster's High School and Southmuir primary school is confirmed as a permanent appointment.

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 677 pupils. Southmuir Primary School currently has 213 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 and Learning Directorate were aware of successful all-through schools in other local authorities and agreed that this would be worth exploring further in Angus. An all-through school is a school which caters for children aged 2 to 18 years. Given the physical location of both buildings it was felt that Webster's High and Southmuir Primary School might provide an opportunity for the development of a shared campus model. In comparison with similar establishments nationally, this would still be considered as a relatively medium sized campus with an overall pupil number of approximately 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 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 also held at this time. 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. A 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 working with a Campus Head Teacher. In addition to the substantive Principal Primary Teacher at Southmuir, a temporary additional Principal Teacher post was established in order to establish 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. The outcomes of this informal consultation was reported to Children and Learning Committee in May 2016 (report 203/16). It was recognised that whilst the feedback at this time was generally positive, it was too early to determine the success of the Campus arrangement and it was agreed to extend the pilot and conduct a more formal evaluation in September 2016.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 A formal consultation was undertaken in September 2016. This consultation with staff, pupils and parents aimed to establish whether or not to develop plans for transition from the acting Campus Headship to a permanent all-through campus. This formal consultation consisted of:
- Survey Monkey Questionnaires for all parents and staff of Southmuir Primary School and Webster's High School
 - Survey Monkey Questionnaire for P6-S1 children and young people
 - Semi-structured interviews with Depute Head Teacher, Southmuir Primary School and Depute Head Teachers, Webster's High School
 - Focus groups with young people from Webster's High from each year group
 - Focus groups with children from Southmuir Primary school, from each year group
 - Consultative discussions with Parent Council representatives from Webster High School and Southmuir Primary School

4.2 Parental Views

Feedback from the parent groups from both schools was in the main, very positive. They reported major improvements in communication and they appreciated the welcoming ethos the acting Campus Head Teacher had established in the primary school. Parents identified transition arrangements as an opportunity to further improve support for all pupils at key points in their learning. It was also felt that cross-sector staff collaboration was a strength arising from the shared campus model. In addition, they felt the sharing of expertise enriched pupils' learning experiences with a variety of staff. It was highlighted that the Acting Head teacher brought a wealth of experience, drive and enthusiasm to the role. This has impacted positively on the wider life of the school. Parent representatives at the meeting were positive about the shared campus model and expressed their wish for this to continue on a permanent basis. This however contrasted with the parental survey monkey questionnaire which indicated that the majority of responding parents were not in favour of the shared campus approach. Overall, 60% of parents who responded were not in favour of the shared campus model continuing on a permanent basis. It should be noted that 27 families responded to the survey from a possible total of 921.

4.3 Feedback from Children and Young People

Feedback from the young people at Webster's High School was positive. They all understood the concept of a shared campus 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.

4.4 The children 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 had improved. They appreciated the increasing opportunities that they had been given to work with teachers from the secondary school. For example, in Modern Languages, Science and in Maths. Children also valued the additional opportunities for extra-curricular clubs that joint-campus working had facilitated with current clubs in place for basketball, rugby and football. They spoke favourably about the acting Campus Head Teacher and Primary Depute Head Teacher.

4.5 The Survey Monkey questionnaire for children and young people supported the views of the focus groups with 76% of respondents in favour of the shared campus model continuing on a permanent basis. 136 children and young people responded to the survey.

4.6 Staff Views

55 members of staff from across both schools responded to the staff Survey Monkey questionnaire. The total number of staff across both schools is 156. 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 collegiate working had begun in relation to standards across stages in mathematics. 67% of staff rated leadership as 'good' or 'very good.' However a number of staff felt that the shared campus arrangements were having a negative impact. Comments highlighted pressures on the Head teacher's time and availability across the shared campus. Overall, 67% of staff who responded were not in favour of the shared campus model continuing on a permanent basis.

4.7 The Depute Head Teachers (DHTs) of both schools have felt very well supported by the Head Teacher and felt that the shared campus model to date has been very successful. They felt that one of the biggest challenges was the demand placed on the Head teacher's time across the shared campus. They acknowledged the Head teacher's commitment to balance this and devote time on a needs basis, over the past year. The DHTs also felt that there has been a marked improvement on behaviour in terms of a more positive ethos in Southmuir, largely as a result of the direct impact that the Head Teacher has had in working with pupils, parents and staff. DHTs also felt that transition arrangements had been further improved with a particular focus on children and young people with additional support needs. The primary Depute has appreciated the support given to primary classes by secondary teachers and

recognises the potential for improved cross-sector working. The DHTs are very supportive of this model being continued.

- 4.8 The acting Campus Head Teacher has been very proactive and invested time in getting to know staff and children 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 potential for improving curricular transition from primary to secondary and in teaching teams from both sectors working together to improve the learning experiences 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.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is recognised that the pilot of this Campus approach was a new approach in Angus. It is also acknowledged that there are a range of views in response to a change of this significance. The children and young people of Webster's High School and Southmuir Primary School are largely in favour of making the joint campus a permanent arrangement. Staff and parents who responded to the survey, are less optimistic about this change although the data gathered from both groups was small. There is therefore no clear shared view about the future of the Campus Headship.

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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