

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a city skyline with a diagonal beam of light. The top-right quadrant depicts a stag's head with antlers. The bottom-left quadrant shows a three-masted sailing ship on wavy water. The bottom-right quadrant features a grizzly bear standing on a rocky outcrop. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. A banner at the bottom of the shield contains the motto "A NE FOR A".

## **Agenda Item 3**

### **Minute**

Draft

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held remotely on Thursday 24 March 2022 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Councillors:** Lorna Binnie  
Jim Blackwood  
David Grant  
John Patrick (convener)  
Depute Provost Ann Ritchie

**Officers:** Rhona Jay, Education Service Manager  
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services  
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager

**S40. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**S41. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

**S42. Minute**

**Decision**

**The minute of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 27 January 2022 was approved.**

**S43. Rolling Action Log**

A rolling action log detailing the status of actions which had yet to be completed was presented for consideration.

**Decision**

**The committee noted the Rolling Action Log**

#### **S44. Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Centre Progress Report**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services presenting the findings of Education Scotland's progress visit of Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Class.

The Inspection of Slamannan Primary School and Heathrigg Nursery was undertaken in January 2018 as part of Education Scotland's inspection programme.

Education Scotland published the report on 24th April 2018, which was in the form of a high level, parent friendly summary of the inspection findings. The report included evaluations of the key aspects of the work of the school measured against Quality Indicators. A number of strengths were noted as well as key actions for improvement.

During the visit inspectors noted 'Online videos, creative use of social media' when supporting children and families as they moved from the ELCC to the school. Members asked what mitigations were in place to ensure child's safety on these platforms. The Education Service Managers clarified that parental consent was sought prior to any posts online; in cases where permission was not granted, a child's identity was protected through distorting their face. In terms of mitigations, all technology and Apps were filtered and protected by the Council – all programmes used within schools were tailored and mitigated to the age group. Ms Jay assured committee that the firewalls utilised by the Council were powerful and kept children safe.

Members referred to a point raised in 2018 regarding children who were transitioning to high school as there was the intention to ensure their level of education was suitable for high school. They asked if work had been carried out. The Education Service Manager explained that since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Council had provided in-depth guidance to schools about the transition to high school – this was not specific to Slamannan Primary School. As part of the guidance, children who were below the hoped achieved level were to be supported and monitor their accelerated progress. Ms Jay would refer back to committee at a later meeting with specific information on children who attended Slamannan Primary School.

Following a question on how levels of attainment compared to other schools within the area, the Education Service Manager explained that Slamannan Primary School sat in the middle in terms of attainment within their cluster. This was also the case when comparing attainment across the Falkirk area. Ms Jay emphasised that this was an improvement as back in 2018, the school performed in the bottom quartile. She explained that literacy encompassed reading, writing, listening and talking and when focusing on each element, performance that needed the most work was reading.

In terms of how Pupil Equity Funding was utilised, investment was given to Support in Learning and Learning Engagement. Additional staffing was also given to the Centre which was scheduled to end in August 2022. The PEF

helped target learning groups, a great deal of money dedicated to community health and wellbeing and investment in reading and writing programmes.

The committee asked if any of the lessons learned through the process that Slamannan Primary School and Early Learning Childcare Class had been through could be shared with other schools. Ms Jay explained that there was a triage system with the ELCC team, Education Scotland Officer and Falkirk Council Officer which had been involved in self-assessments and had since proven to be successful. She highlighted the journey the ELCC had taken as there was a high turnover of staff as well as a movement in location, all of which could be valuable to share with other locations.

Members noted that 'practitioners have limited strategies to support children with barriers to learning and urgently require professional learning in a range of disorders' and asked what specialist training was available. The Education Service Manager explained there was a Staged Intervention Programme which provided staff with different levels of support as children's needs grow in complexity. With each stage of complexity, specialist training was available. Specific programmes were available depending on the needs presented such as Autism and social & emotional difficulties. Speech & Language Therapists were also utilised to ensure school environments were as communication friendly as possible.

The committee noted the improvements made by the school and staff, particularly during the difficult period of the pandemic, and commended all the work done so far.

## **Decision**

### **The Scrutiny Committee:-**

- (1) noted the progress which has been made, particularly in the Early Learning and Childcare Centre;**
- (2) noted that the Director of Children's Services staff will continue to work with the school to monitor progress towards meeting the identified areas for improvement; and**
- (3) requested a follow up report in the event that there is a further inspection in 18 months**

### **S45. Care Inspectorate Inspection Report and Action Plan – Bo'ness Public Primary School – Early Learning & Childcare Class**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Children's Services presenting the findings of the Care Inspectorate's Inspection of Bo'ness Public – Early Learning and Childcare Class (ELC Class) in November 2021, together with the establishment's action plan.

Included within the recommendations, staff were asked to be more proactive when supporting children to recognise their feelings and find solutions. The committee asked what specialist training was available to assist staff. The Education Service Manager explained that within the ELC settings, it would be Early Years Officers, Early Years Assistants and Senior Early Years Officers, and depending on the setting, Principal Early Years Officers. For these practitioners, a highly comprehensive programme of support and training is available – this included communication, observation and Early Years framework. Furthermore, bespoke training was available focusing on nurture and emotional intelligence. If a child presents difficulties at this stage, a Centre Team compiled of a partnership of different organisations worked together to establish an individual plan to aide the child.

Following a question on whether Bo'ness Primary School had the ability to expand their outdoor play area, Ms Jay stated that the building dated back to the Victorian era meaning that many annexes had been added on since and noted the concrete playground. Many modifications had been undertaken to improve the site and the Early Learning Childcare Centre was a result of such work. At the moment, there were no plans to expand the outdoor play area, but committee was assured it was safe and well laid out. She explained that the area was not restrictive and was placed on a flat area of ground.

## **Decision**

### **The Scrutiny Committee:-**

- (1) noted the findings of the Care Inspectorate's inspection of Bo'ness Public Primary School & Early Learning and Childcare Centre and associated action plan; and,**
- (2) noted that the Director of Children's Services will monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement contained in the inspection report; and**
- (3) requested a report on the outcome of the follow-up inspection in late 2022.**