

**To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup>. April 2013**

**Report of: Scrutiny Panel – Educational Attainment**

**Title of Report: City Council Investment in Educational Attainment**

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To update committee on the work of the Scrutiny Panel on Educational Attainment

**Key decision? No**

**Scrutiny Lead Member: All Panel Members**

**Executive Lead member: Councillor Curran**

**Recommendations:**

- 1. To note and comment on the Panel work so far.**
- 2. To recommend continuation of the work of the Panel into the next programme.**

## **Introduction**

1. The committee set a Panel to consider the benefit being gained from the City Council's investment in primary education. This Panel consists of Councillors Clack, Campbell, Jones, Kennedy and Khan. This report outlines progress made by the Panel so far.

## **Background and Scoping**

2. The City Council in its 2012/2013 budget agreed a 4 year investment in City Primary Schools with the aim of supporting the raising of pupil attainment. This investment amounts to £350k for each of the coming 4 years and was driven by the poor outcomes from many of the Primary Schools in the City and the lack of progress towards improvement. The target for this investment is to raise standards in

Primary Schools to 10% above the national average benchmark for performance at Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) and KS2 (11 year olds).

3. In order to determine the best way of investing this money the City Council employed an Education Advisor, Anna Wright, to engage with key stakeholders in the City and County to identify their views on the key reasons for this underachievement and the best way of raising standards.
4. The results of this consultation led to the agreement that the City should tender 2 contracts to deliver:
  - A world class leadership programme for schools in our deprived areas.
  - A whole class literacy and numeracy programme to support teachers in the classroom.
5. The result of these tendering exercises was:
  - KRM were selected to deliver teaching support.
  - The Oxford Schools and University Consortium were chosen to deliver the leadership programme.
6. These programmes were offered to City Schools focusing on those schools facing the biggest challenges. A programme of seminars and face to face discussions were offered to allow schools to get the information they wanted in order to make the decision if this was the right thing for them. The results of this were very positive with most of the City's worst performing primaries taking on some part of the KRM programme and or the leadership programme. It is still early days with some schools having just started and others planning to start shortly.
7. The Panel considered what it might do to track progress and quickly came to the view that the only way to really see progression and results was to try to partner with one of the participating schools. A local school has agreed to host this partnership and the Panel made its first visit on the 27<sup>th</sup>. February.
8. The school is participating in the literacy programme provided by KRM and started training and implementation just after Christmas 2012. To guide the relationship the Panel have agreed the following lines of inquiry:
  - See the on the ground effect of KRM.
  - Understand the effects for children of all ability types.
  - Hear and see how the school copes with the cultural and professional challenges it throws up.
  - See how school inspectors respond.
  - Understand the targets set by the school management team and the part KRM plays in achieving these.

## Progress

9. The first visit in February allowed Panel Members to understand the school profile, its “journey” to date and ambitions for the future. In addition Members were able to observe the culture and teaching in the school and see “KRM lessons” in practice. Discussions with the Principal and her Management Team allowed members to see the early emerging progress, challenges and changes necessary to drive success.
10. This school along with many others is using many tools to improve outcomes and the KRM programme is only one of these. This of course will make it difficult to separate out the improvement due to KRM or any other tool used. It is likely that the KRM programme will have the most impact on phonics so Panel Members are considering making this their focus.
11. Panel Members will meet on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. March to plan their further visits to the school but early observations are positive.
12. In addition to the school partnership The Panel decided to consider school attendance. The KRM programme is self sustaining and has worked with or without active parental support at home. It does, however, require pupils to be at school to be able to engage. Information gathered by The Panel from the County Council on levels of authorised and unauthorised absence suggests there are some significant issues with City Primary Schools performing poorly against other schools in the County on attendance. The data showed some improvement around absenteeism overall but the unauthorised absence element gave cause for concern. The data collected covered a 3 year period up to the end of the 2011-212. The Panel have asked for any data available for the current academic year plus any national comparisons. When this is received The Panel hope to discuss issues with the County Council.
13. The Panel is focused and engaged and hope Committee will allow the work to continue into the next programme so a full year of the KRM programme can be observed.

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**List of background papers:**

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