



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2015
SHIMNA INTEGRATED COLLEGE, NEWCASTLE

Present:

Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Nelson McCausland MLA
Robin Newton MLA
Seán Rogers MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Jonathan Craig MLA
Maeve McLaughlin MLA
Sandra Overend MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 10.27am.

1. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process – further response from the Department - written briefing

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of the Committee's inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the School Improvement Process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department:

- clarifying again the Committee's position in respect of the extension of the Formal Intervention Process;
- setting out again its views on the use of one word descriptors in inspection reports; and
- recommending that research be undertaken on both the alignment between inspection and improvement in other jurisdictions and alternative governance options for ETI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC) to confirm the reported revision to its position in respect of the ETI Complaints Procedure.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) seeking an update on inspection practices for Irish Medium schools since the publication of the Committee's report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF) and the Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People (NICCY) asking that they co-ordinate a response from school councils in respect of the views of school pupils on school inspection and improvement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland (GTCNI) to determine whether it is to make suggestions for revisions to post-inspection questionnaires and also suggesting that it undertakes a further study of teachers' / principals' perceptions of school inspection/improvement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission Assembly Research and the Assembly Education Service to seek the views of school children in respect of the school inspection and improvement process.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.37am.

2. Apologies

Apologies indicated above.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Committee Stage of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Bill

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee Stage of the SEND Bill has now commenced.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the call for evidence to other stakeholders including the Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) - Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance network.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commission Assembly Research to produce a further briefing paper on: related SEN legislation; the role and nature of the SEN and Disability Tribunal; the Equality Commission's Code of Practice; the timescales for statements etc.; post-16 SEN arrangements; and the differences between the relevant DE proposals in 2012 and the SEND Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Department; Assembly Research; and the Children's Law Centre to brief on the SEND Bill at the start of formal evidence-taking on 13 May 2015. The Committee also agreed to invite CiNI to give oral evidence on 20 May 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking the Delegated Powers Memorandum and the Equality Screening information for the SEND Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committees for Health, Social Services and Public Safety; Justice; and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister seeking their views on the SEND Bill.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Committee for Employment and Learning seeking sight of any relevant information obtained from its ongoing inquiry into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Education, Employment and Training for those with Learning Disabilities.

3.2 Peace IV – Shared Education

The Chairperson advised Members of commentary in recent written questions which indicated that the Peace IV Shared Education funding is to be targeted at the 24% of schools not currently involved in sharing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on Peace IV Shared Education funding.

3.3 Delivering Social Change (DSC) – Literacy & Numeracy

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Department had previously advised that DSC Nurture Units support was to be extended from June 2015 to March 2016. The Department also appeared to indicate that, despite positive feedback, the Literacy and Numeracy DSC project was only to be funded until the end of 2014-15.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity on the funding period for this DSC project which was originally to be 3 (not 2) years and suggesting that consideration be given to a DSC STEM in primary schools programme.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 3 and 4 March 2015.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

The Committee considered responses from the Western Education and Library Board and the South Eastern Education and Library Board regarding the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add these responses to its inquiry report and to publish them on the Committee's inquiry webpage.

The Committee also noted a copy of the recently published ETI report on the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy. The Committee noted that the Department is to brief on this subject on 29 April 2015 at the end of the inquiry.

6. Department of Education: Disposal / Retention Schedule Employee Records

The Committee noted a document setting out the Department of Education's schedule for the retention and disposal of employee records.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this schedule.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking that it explain the timescales for the retention of records in particular those relating to asbestos exposure and that it provide detail of the costs associated with record retention.

7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Sir Robert Salisbury

The witness joined the meeting at 10.53am.

Sir Robert Salisbury briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11.45am Trevor Lunn left the meeting.

12.06pm Seán Rogers left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5), continued to hear evidence.

12.09pm Seán Rogers returned to the meeting and the Committee regained its decision-making quorum.

12.15pm Robin Newton left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5), continued to hear evidence.

12.20pm Robin Newton returned to the meeting and the Committee regained its decision-making quorum.

The witness left the meeting at 12.25pm.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

8.2 The Committee noted an invitation from Sentinus for Members to attend the Sentinus 'Smart Technology' Celebration Day on Wednesday 25 March 2015 at the Ramada Hotel, Shaw's Bridge from 1.15pm – 2.15pm.

8.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister relating to research on food poverty.

8.4 The Committee noted a letter of thanks to the Chairperson from the principal of Strandtown Primary School.

8.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Chairperson enclosing a letter from Mr Billy Young from the Association for Quality Education Limited.

8.6 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries regarding the 2014-15 January Monitoring Round.

8.7 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries regarding the 2015-16 Final Budget Settlement.

8.8 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to Committee queries regarding the progress of the establishment of the Education Authority.

8.9 The Committee noted an invitation from Stranmillis University College to hold a Committee for Education meeting in the college.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a Committee meeting in Stranmillis University College during the current Assembly session.

8.10 The Committee noted an invitation from Tor Bank School to attend a Celebration of Shared Education on Thursday 26 March 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members would attend this event, diaries permitting.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 18 March 2015 at 10.00am in Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.30pm.

Michelle McIlveen
Chairperson, Committee for Education
18 March 2015