

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 20 September 2016

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Update on Meadowpark - the Communication Provision at Knox Academy

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the development of Meadowpark, the new Communication Provision at Knox Academy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note progress regarding the development of Meadowpark, following approval at Cabinet on 9 June 2015.

3 BACKGROUND

Update on the new Communication Provision – Meadowpark

3.1 Access to accommodation

All areas and facilities currently required are open and accessible to staff and pupils. Pupils and staff are enjoying making use of the extensive specialist facilities e.g. Sensory Room; Activities Room; Life Skills flat; Therapy Room and Food Court. The opening of the facility is already having a positive impact on the pupils attending the Communication Provision. A date for the official opening is still to be identified.

3.2 Current Developments

The Depute Head Teacher and her team have already established their vision and priorities for this exemplary provision which it is hoped will also be of benefit to other children and young people in the local and wider community in the future.

Current developments include:

- Staff training for mainstream staff in Knox Academy delivered in conjunction with the Educational Psychology Service.

- Extensive Career-Long Professional Learning programme for Meadowpark staff.
- Partnership working with a number of agencies including Speech and Language Therapy; Occupational Therapy; Physiotherapy; Music Therapy; Muirfield Riding Therapy; Educational Psychology; KeyComm and Petting Dogs.
- Links with local amenities including retailers; The John Gray Centre and Aubigny Sports Centre.
- Professional links with other specialist provisions including Braidburn Special School; Kaimes Special School; Ross High ASN Base and The Cove at Dunbar Primary School.
- Parents, pupils and partners continue to be consulted on matters relating to individual pupils as well as wider issues.
- The staff team is ensuring that the curriculum for pupils takes account of their individual needs. Tracking and monitoring systems are in place to ensure optimal outcomes.
- Senior pupils have been recruited as volunteers to assist the Meadowpark pupils in a variety of ways. This will be extended as pupil numbers increase.

3.3 Pupil Numbers

Six pupils are currently enrolled at Meadowpark. This number will rise over time as pupils move through from The Cove and our primary schools. It is anticipated that when the building work is completed, Meadowpark will attract interest from other authorities and agencies wishing to place pupils in the provision. Work is underway to prepare information about the facilities and provision offered at Meadowpark. This will be shared with neighbouring authorities along with an invitation to visit.

3.4 Buildings work

The contract for the renovation work was awarded to Clark Contracts. Work started in July 2015 and was scheduled to be completed on 15 July 2016 after substantial delays to the programme. Whilst the Council have taken partial possession of the building to allow occupation by the school, the works at the time of writing this report are still not fully complete. The outstanding works currently in progress will not impact on the operations of the facilities. The Head Teacher is being kept fully informed of developments.

3.5 Future Developments

3.5.1 Buildings and outdoor space

- The remaining 2 classrooms (currently mothballed) will require to be upgraded as the pupil roll increases.

- Transport and drop off arrangements should also be reviewed as pupil numbers increase.
- Limited work has been undertaken to provide a safe outdoor space for pupils. Further developments are required. Currently funding sources are being investigated by the Depute Head Teacher with assistance from the local elected member and Chair of the Knox Parent School Partnership.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – The additional works will result in a substantial overspend on the contract of approximately £250K. The anticipated Final Account is in the region of £1,410,000. It should be noted however that a large portion of the over spend is attributed to unforeseen maintenance issues and will be funded from the maintenance budget. The Council’s Design Team are endeavouring, through meetings with the contractor, to limit the final costs.

6.2 Personnel – The teaching team is in place and a senior facilities assistant is currently being recruited. Temporary cleaning arrangements have been made.

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Education Committee Report entitled “Update on the Communication Provision” – Knox Academy dated 8 March 2016.

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