

Vision of the future for Castlebrae Community High School



An action plan to improve outcomes for pupils and boost numbers at Castlebrae Community High School has been approved by the City of Edinburgh Council.

A progress report for the school was discussed at the Education, Children and Families Committee today (Tuesday 10 December).

It highlighted the positive developments made at the Craigmillar School in the past nine months and made a number of recommendations to take the school forward.

The report was finalised after a Castlebrae Working Group was set up consisting of senior education officers, community representatives, teachers, councillors and a panel of education experts from across Scotland.

Their key recommendations include:

- the creation of a Castlebrae Learning Community to strengthen links between the high school and cluster primary schools
- developing an East of Edinburgh hub with the aim of delivering a city wide Centre of Excellence for Science when the new school opens in 2020
- appointing a permanent head teacher

Head teacher Derek Curran said: “We want the school to be a centre of excellence in its community and first choice for parents and carers when they start choosing a secondary school

for their children.

“We are developing our ambitions to help young people overcome some of the challenges they face in life and help them gain the highest levels of achievement and success.

“It’s important we provide quality learning experiences in a supportive and caring environment and make every student’s experience unique – one which is tailored to individual student’s needs so they can achieve their full potential.

“There are rich resources available in Craigmillar and we will work in partnership with parents and the wider community to draw on these to ensure the education we deliver is challenging, stimulating and fully prepares young people for life and work.”

Councillor Cathy Fullerton, Vice-Convener of Education and Chair of the Castlebrae Working Group, said: “I’m delighted that the recommendations in this report have been approved by committee today. An immense amount of hard work has gone into today’s report which sets out a clear vision for the future of the school.

“The efforts of everyone on the working group, from the panel of experts to the community representatives, should be applauded and shows just what can be achieved when everyone works together towards a common goal.

“I’m convinced there is now a brighter future on the horizon for both the school and the community it serves.”

Keir Bloomer, former Chief Executive of Clackmannanshire Council and author of the report Vision for School Reform, was one of the panel of experts who advised the working group.

He said: “I was delighted to be asked to be on the panel of ‘experts’ to offer opinions on how to guarantee the future of the school. We reached very similar conclusions that urgent

and far-reaching action is needed if Castlebrae is to be able to offer a good quality of education.

“There is a need for much greater continuity from primary to secondary and we felt that the group of schools should be drawn much closer together, possibly under new leadership arrangements. The physical condition of the premises also needs to be improved.

“Creating a positive future for Castlebrae will be an uphill struggle but it can be done and the ‘experts’ wish those involved every success.”