

Independent report into schools closure now published

Last spring the outer skin of a wall at Oxbgangs Primary School fell off. Following that defects were found in 17 schools across the city which had either been built as part of a PPP deal or had been substantially refurbished under that scheme.

The schools were then closed, some till after the summer holidays. An independent report was then commissioned by the Chief Executive Andrew Kerr.



Professor John Cole CBE was appointed and he interviewed an exhaustive list of witnesses from parents to architects and all of those in between. His report has now been issued and he will present it to the council this afternoon in person.

The report is reproduced below but a warning as it is 270 pages long!

Professor John Cole CBE, will present his report to Council for 20 minutes after the budget meeting concludes this afternoon. He will then, together with Chief Executive Andrew Kerr, take questions from Councillors on the report for approximately 40 minutes.

The proceedings will be webcast live [here\(external link\)](#) following the conclusion of the Council Budget meeting.

He has found that :

- the collapse of the wall was due to poor construction and inadequate supervision;
- insufficient independent quality assurance and poor record keeping by the Council and ESP;
- ineffective quality assurance measures within the

- construction industry;
- the Council made the correct decision to close the 17 schools;
- the alternative education arrangements put in place for over 8,300 pupils was a 'remarkable feat';
- the issues identified in Edinburgh are likely to be more widespread

The council's Chief Executive will decide what action needs to be taken.

The council already began a full survey of all buildings which it owns. That will be completed this year and all buildings will be surveyed every five years thereafter.

Green Education spokesperson Cllr Melanie Main said of the failings exposed by the Cole Inquiry: "It is only by sheer luck that the 9 tonnes of masonry falling at Oxbgangs primary school in January 2016 did not result in the death or severe injury of school children.

"The inquiry report lays bare a catalogue of failings, starting with poor construction but followed by inadequate site supervision, woeful sign-off processes and barely-there contract management.

"There are huge lessons to be learned by the council, by the construction industry and by the Scottish Government so that children and young people can be guaranteed schools which are safe.

"But behind all of that is an even more fundamental question. It is the sheer complexity of PPP contracts, PFI, Scottish Futures Trust, whatever we label them, which heightens the risk of all of these failings. I believe it is time to cut the complexity, cut the layers of buck-passing responsibility and put public bodies directly in charge of public buildings."



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