

Cross Party Group on Dyslexia

Minutes of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on Dyslexia held in the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 5th June 2013.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Margaret Mitchell MSP welcomed members to the meeting. She emphasised the importance of the forthcoming Education Scotland Review of Dyslexia and welcomed Ken McAra from Education Scotland who was the lead civil servant undertaking the review.

Attendees

Margaret Mitchell MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP, Martin Davies, Margaret Crombie, Jay Kirkland, Mike Gibson, Cathy Mcgee, Colin Spivey, Linda McCaig, Megan McCaig, David Jones, Rosemary Bowe, Bill Sadler, Liz Tangney, Fran Ranaldi, Mary Jane Bird, Elspeth Dow, Jan Halfpenny, Hamish Hunter

2. Apologies

Mairi McIntosh, Susan Agnew, Elaine Smith MSP, Claudia Beamish, Pamela Deponio, Genda Hannah, Jim Connelly, Nicola Whitfield MSP, Diane Smith

3. Minutes of previous meeting held on Wednesday 24th April 2013

The minutes were approved. Proposed by Cathy Mcgee and seconded by Hamish Hunter

4. Business arising from previous minute

There were no matters arising from the previous minute.

5. Presentation

Ken McAra from Education Scotland gave a presentation of the proposed review of dyslexia across Scottish local authority schools.

He provided information on the rationale and parameters of the review which would provide an update to the HMIE Report 'Education for learners with dyslexia' published in 2008.

The review would include visits by Education Scotland Area Link Officers to a range of schools across Scotland. In addition meetings had been arranged with a number of interested parties including Dyslexia Scotland and focus groups were being organised with parents. He was delighted to have the opportunity to hear the views of the Cross Party Group.

The information gathering phase of the review would take place between April and October 2013 with the final report by Easter 2014.

The key areas covered would include primary, secondary and special education provision and initial teacher training.

Margaret Mitchell MSP thanked Ken for a comprehensive outline of the review and invited members of the Cross Party Group to make comment or ask specific questions.

6. General Discussion

Concerns were raised about the timetable for the review given the variety of interested parties who could contribute and the depth of the issues particularly within a number of local authorities.

It was noted that independent schools would not be included in the review and this was felt by some members to be a gap and a request was made for these schools to have access to the pro-forma so they could contribute.

Questions were raised about benchmarking the findings and it was suggested that current developments by SOLACE and COSLA around benchmarking could include support for dyslexia.

Ken extended an invitation to branches to contact their local link officer.

There was concern that Higher and Further Education were not included as they had a significant contribution to make.

A request was made by a school pupil for the review to consider the scale of the problem in schools and specifically asked that given the low numbers of

pupils identified with dyslexia in the Schools Census in her local authority area that he ensures her own local authority was included in the review visits.

Ken recognised the importance of getting the views of pupils and ensured the group that these would be taken into account.

Margaret Mitchell thanked the members for their comments and Ken for the positive responses he had provided.

7. Date of Next Meeting: Proposed Wednesday 2nd October, to be confirmed