Covid IIA Meeting: Lessons Learned 11 January 2022

Positive Impact	
Theme	**Comment**
Working from home	Easier drop offs and pick-ups.
Learning at home	Grandparents used as teachers to improve learning. Children really benefitted from the time they did spend with their teachers.
Communication	In general communication throughout from the Head and the school was excellent. Very good and open communication with school in very challenging times.
Technology	Schools got a real boost to their technology investment e.g. iPads and roll out of Teams. Kids are a whizz on Teams.
Parent Consultations	Formal parents' evenings (later in the year) were much smoother and easier than in-person. On-line parent consultations gave options for more parents to join that might not be able to attend in person. On-line attendance is higher.
Increased knowledge/understanding	Got to see how creative and passionate the Teaching Assistants are. We had insight into the curriculum in more depth / detail. Have a better understanding of which level of learning our children are at having to teach them ourselves. Improved IT skills (for all the family).
Support for families	Speed of support for disadvantaged families, e.g. food parcels supported by the Council. Some teachers really went 'above and beyond' to develop resources and offer feedback on the work that was submitted as well as contend with own personal circumstances. Level of support HT put in place at the start of lockdown.
Resulting change	Homework is much better organised than before.

Negative Impact		
Theme	Comment	Possible Solutions
Equality	It was a real postcode lottery in terms of what the kids were getting depending on what school your kids went to.	Ideally there would be something national

		launched for lessons, curriculum, etc. Schools could have helped each other.
	Definitely different experiences across different schools. If we compare our experience to that in other local authorities Edinburgh did really poorly. Borders invested in 121 devices a few years ago. Many LAs did proper live lessons and lots of interaction. We got a poor service. Communication standards between the various schools felt extremely inconsistent (different schools doing things differently). We learnt of proactive, support provided by some schools & teachers who put enormous effort into their home-learning curriculum, where other schools and teachers did very little. A co-ordinated effort across the entire council seemed lacking. It appears schools were left to their own devices and some didn't do well. The loss of extracurricular activities has been very sad and increased existing equalities in terms of access to these types of activities.	I believe a centralised team; co-ordinating effort would have closed the gap in the support seen and helped keep the standard of education consistent.
Technology	Parents and families who don't have appropriate digital equipment in the home nor access to it. Learning at home would have been much easier if all children could use the same platform. S1 pupils had to navigate 15 different Teams channels - one for each subject - all organised differently. Bit of a challenge! Technology was varied and access patchy. Not many videos from teachers or live classes, also noticeable especially at high school. We can't have a leading online learning system being discarded due to legacy IT approaches. We are 2 years on! Tech should have been addressed. Not working-doesn't wash!	We have huge amounts of resources on Glow & some great sharing good practice strategies, but Edinburgh isn't maximising use. We could have fundraised to address this if need be.
Learning at home	Giving the print outs and assuming we all had printers was not great as meant we couldn't do a lot of tasks. Burden was high on parents. Tension was high, a very negative experience overall. Kids were anxious and upset at the lockdown and didn't want to learn - no grandparents etc to help either and both working full time. I think expectations needed to be managed on what we	More time with children on Zoom with their teachers each day. We need to put in place plans for dealing with periods of isolation, year groups being sent home, blended learning being needed. A variety of

	could achieve and would have liked some more support after to try and recover a bit. Learning grids don't assist with how to present the info. Took longer to create the activity than to complete it. School did not think outside the box. Parents couldn't manage at home. Very little given from our school. My children did not see their teachers online for the first lockdown. No interaction with the teachers at all. Whereas other schools provided this a few times a day where the kids could see their teachers and their classmates. We were left alone. My children were extremely bored by the learning provided especially in the first lockdown and their willingness and engagement became less and less. It was worksheet based with barely any feedback. There was some improvement with more face to face interaction with second lockdown. However, the hangover is very little motivation for learning. I think what wasn't understood in the well-being focus was that getting behind in your work adds to the stress! Being told not to worry when to hand work in isn't actually helpful as the pile just gets higher.	contingency plans needs to be in place.
Pupils with additional support needs	Very little for kids with additional needs. All work set was at 1 level and nothing specific for individual kids. Parents had to work out what to do. Kids who need the most individual help have fallen further behind.	
Secondary exam support	Exam level students had no buddy groups. Needed less work, more teaching to test. Different departments having different styles was confusing.	
Parental engagement	What happens now/next to get parents back into school. Attitude from schools - felt quite defensive! Minimal contact with teachers (even now school is in-person) means little rapport built with them and less of an insight into how my children are getting on. It has been really difficult for parents, particularly S1 and S2 parents who haven't even been inside the school. Covid seems an easy excuse to not move forward or find creative ways to link parents back in with pupil activities, and indeed, in	Identifying what has been lost as a result of the distance which has been enforced between parents and the school environment and teachers. Need to urgently build the relationship between parents and school - we have zero relationship with my kids' teachers, don't

	allowing children opportunities within schools to have 'normal' activities. It feels like the Council doesn't appreciate the importance of that relationship between parents and teacher - for us it has meant a delayed speech therapy referral, lack of awareness of some school things that were causing behavioural issues which then got worse. Very real issues. I now longer know what my child's classroom set up looked like etc.	know anything about their environment, feel really sad about what we're missing in these important years - ***much more than the education has been lost.***
Covid/lockdown	Lockdown was really hard for us, having 3 kids ,different ages and especially the youngest needed lots of support ,and without a printer!!! Wouldn't have coped with teaching too without being furloughed. Lockdown 1 went more or less okay but lockdown 2 not so well and my child was completely demotivated and hated Teams and online learning. When my kids were off with Covid recently, no work was sent home through Teams or email for them to keep up with the class. I'd expect some processes to be in place for class teachers to send work out to those pupils who want it.	
Keyworker criteria	Different provisions appeared to have different criteria for key workers.	
After lockdown/ return to school	Feel like the children went backwards when they went back. Almost made us think home schooling would be better full time! I found that I had to be quite 'hands on' with my children - they quickly lost motivation when set home-learning and when they weren't actively engaging with a teacher in a Teams call. It was very difficult to supervise my boys as both my husband and I were trying to work. They did not make as much progress as they would have done in the classroom, and this will have to be compensated for going forward. It created a whole different category of learning attainment gaps! Our schools are still using the reason now that they're taking a softly softly approach in not giving them homework etc now, to not overload them. Feel like we're all slipping behind. There could be centralised resources provided across Scotland for those who have had to shield or isolate. There needs to be parallel teaching provided online and face to face.	Make schools safer by looking at air filtration units in classrooms. The international evidence is that many other countries use these units to good effect, and they reduce Covid in the air and dramatically reduces transmission. Opening a window is not enough. Also, CO2 monitors in every classroom is needed.

	My child had to self-isolate a few times - she ended up missing everything! And obviously, teachers shouldn't be teaching in class & into homes at the same time but then what? Absolutely agree re where the current focus should be - on the experience of parents / children now and the difficulty connecting with the schools. Not being able to visit as we did pre lockdown really limits the extent to which my child can communicate her experience to me. Reducing transmission.	
Use of council buildings	A blended model using other council buildings could have been used. Would like much more creativity - use different space, activities and also open up the libraries maybe.	
School decision making	The issue is council timings for all these reviews - does that mean another school year passes? Because the headteachers are tied by council policy. I feel like the school's hands are tied by the council. Council is basically 'computer says no.' CEC "risk assessment" needs reappraised in relation to potential harms being done to children by effectively alienating their parents and carers from participating or even just witnessing their education.	
Family events	No sports events and other large gatherings are allowed- This has been very frustrating for our families.	Use of playground or nearby park for parents to watch a song or a school play occasionally. Really think this would help children and their esteem/ mental health- which I believe is the most important aspect of their learning during this global pandemic.
School communication	When we emailed the primary teacher the headteacher told us not to do that because it should be routed through him or other deputy staff - CRAZY bottleneck getting involved with EVERY parent contact with EVERY teacher. Council pulled back and parents were abandoned. No communication of digital plan.	Should have had a mechanism in place- parents could have added value to home learning.

	Blame culture: lack of ownership.	
	No means of raising concerns.	