

---

## **NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

**Report by Service Director Children and Young People**

---

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**18 October 2016**

---

#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report proposes to update Members on the new Strategic Policy and to raise Members' awareness of the change in national policy to assessing and reporting children's progress.**
- 1.2 Raising attainment and achievement has been a key priority locally and nationally for a number of years. In 2016 a significant shift of emphasis occurred when the "National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education" was published. This document sets out a clear vision for both excellence and equity in Scottish Education. It also included the introduction of national assessment and reporting of attainment levels for primary aged children. This report outlines how Scottish Borders Council is taking forward the practice set out in the *National Improvement Framework*.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Committee:-**
  - (a) Note the contents of the *National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education*.**
  - (b) Agree a communication is sent to all parents about the *National Improvement Framework*, including the changes taking place regarding the assessment and reporting of children's progress.**
  - (c) Note the levels of achievement in schools across the Scottish Borders in respect of Reading, Writing and Numeracy as per the *National Improvement Framework*.**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Raising attainment and achievement has been a key priority locally and nationally for a number of years. In 2016 a significant shift of emphasis occurred with the publication of "National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education" (Appendix 1). This document addresses the need, identified by the OECD, for an integrated framework for assessment and evaluation at all system levels. It sets out a clear vision for both excellence and equity in Scottish Education and focuses on the following key priorities:
- (a) Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
  - (b) Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.
  - (c) Improvement in children and young people's health and well-being.
  - (d) Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

- 3.2 In our schools in the Scottish Borders our Directorate Business Plans and School Improvement Plans continue to build on the positive work already underway regarding these priorities and ensure that strategic action planning supports the development of the key drivers for improvement, namely:

- (a) School leadership
- (b) Teacher professionalism
- (c) Parental engagement
- (d) Assessment of children's progress
- (e) School improvement
- (f) Performance information

#### 3.3 Assessment of Children's Progress

There will be significant changes in the assessment of children's progress in school session 2016-2017, which will be reported nationally.

- (a) In 2015 Scottish Borders Council reported on the percentage of children achieving curriculum levels in literacy and numeracy in Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and S3 at school level. In 2016 schools were required to submit this information at individual pupil level.
- (b) Teachers across the Scottish Borders use their professional judgement to determine the level of achievement of a child in reading, writing, listening/talking and numeracy at Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and S3. These judgements are informed by teachers' day to day assessments and observations, class tests and standardised assessments. There is also an expectation that schools are moderated within and across schools to maximise the dependability of these judgements. It has also been identified that

there is a need for moderation across the country. Scottish Borders Council will be working with Edinburgh City Council, East Lothian Council, Midlothian Council and West Lothian Council on building moderation practice across our Councils.

- (c) There is an improving picture in attainment in schools in the Scottish Borders. The table below reports the levels of achievement in 2015 and 2016.

SBC	Reading %		Writing %		Numeracy %	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Early Level by end of P1	77	85.6	79	81.6	79	85.5
1st Level by end of P4	74	80.5	68	74.5	72	75.2
2nd Level by end of P7	74	78.2	64	73.0	66	73.1
3 <sup>rd</sup> Level by the end of S3	89	96.0	86	95.3	83	93.3

As teachers' confidence grows with increased participation in moderation practice and working with the recently published national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy, teachers professional judgement will become increasing more dependable and pupils will benefit from improved understanding of standards. In Session 2016-2017 training for teachers in developing dependable assessment tasks and moderating judgements will be available.

It is important to note that local and national moderation will take a few years to embed before a robust assessment of attainment is evidenced.

### 3.4 Reporting of Children's Progress

- (a) School level attainment information is expected to be made available to all parents across Scotland via Parentzone before the end of 2016. Decisions have still to be made as to how small school information will be represented, to prevent the identification of an individual pupil's achievement.
- (b) School level information has not been provided until decisions are made nationally as to how small schools will be reported. A national moderation of all Council results has not yet been finalised. It is proposed that Scottish Borders Council will share school level attainment levels in advance of national publication.

### 3.5 Introduction of National Standardised Assessments

In parallel, the Scottish Government is in the process of procuring a new set of national standardised assessments for children in literacy and numeracy at Primary 1, Primary 4, Primary 7 and S3 level. These assessments will be piloted in selected schools across the country during Session 2016-2017 and will be fully implemented in 2017-2018. Scottish Borders Council have been fully participating in all preparatory work.

### 3.6 Communication to Parents

It is the intention of Scottish Government to make school level attainment data available to parents via Parentzone in December 2016. Given this significant change to reporting at school level, it is important that parents receive this information about their schools in the context of the wider National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education. The Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Chief Officer Education will develop a communication for parents to ensure Headteachers provide a consistent message across schools.

## **4 IMPLICATIONS**

### 4.1 **Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report. It is expected that the costs of national assessments will be paid for by the Scottish Government or funding will be provided.

### 4.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

There could be reputational risk for individual schools that evidence lower levels of performance in the national assessments. This risk will be mitigated by developing an understanding of the standards within and across school as well as across local authorities ensuring that teachers' judgement is robust.

### 4.3 **Equalities**

It is anticipated that there are no adverse impacts due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

### 4.4 **Acting Sustainably**

There are no adverse economic, social or environmental effects in implementing the *National Improvement Framework*.

### 4.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

### 4.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

#### 4.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

### **5 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

#### **Approved by**

**Donna Manson**

**Service Director Children and Young People Signature .....**

#### **Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Michelle Strong	Chief Education Officer
Liz Wharton	Senior Lead Officer (Assessment)

**Background Papers:** Benchmarks for Numeracy and Mathematics (Education Scotland – August 2016)  
Benchmarks for Literacy and English (Education Scotland – August 2016)

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education, Scottish Government 2016

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Liz Wharton can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA.