
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE REVIEW – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Report by Service Director Children and Young People

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

22 December 2016

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 **In 2015 a Report entitled “Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective” highlighted the many strengths in the Scottish education system. It also highlighted some of the challenges facing schools in achieving the vision of excellence and equity for all children and young people. A number of recommendations were made:**

- a) Be rigorous about the gaps to be closed and pursue relentlessly “closing the gap” and “raising the bar” simultaneously.**
- b) Ensure a consolidated and evidence-informed strategic approach to equity policies.**
- c) Develop metrics that do justice to the full range of CfE capacities informing a bold understanding of quality and equity.**
- d) Create a new narrative for the *Curriculum for Excellence*.**
- e) Strengthen the professional leadership of CfE and the “middle”.**
- f) Simplify and clarify core guidance, including in the definitions of what constitutes the *Curriculum for Excellence*.**
- g) Focus on the quality of implementation of CfE in schools and communities, and make this an evaluation priority.**
- h) Develop targeted, networked, evaluated innovation in secondary schools learning environments to enhance engagement.**

- i) Develop a coherent strategy for building teacher and leadership social capital.**
- j) Develop an integrating framework for assessment and evaluation that encompasses all system levels.**
- k) Strike a more even balance between the formative focus of assessment and developing a robust evidence base on learning outcomes and progression.**
- l) Strengthen evaluation and research, including independent knowledge creation.**

1.2 In response to some of these recommendations, the Scottish Government set out to seek the views from stakeholders on a range of matters.

1.3 This report contains the proposed consultation response from Scottish Borders Council to the Scottish Government's document 'Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities To Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education – A Governance Review'.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council approves the consultation response from Scottish Borders Council regarding the Education Governance Review as detailed in Appendix 2.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In September 2016, the Scottish Government published a document entitled 'Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities To Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education – A Governance Review' (Appendix 1). This paper sets out, through a consultation process, the opportunity for all stakeholders to consider how each part of the education system supports the vision of excellence and equity.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government, whilst recognising the many strengths in the Scottish education system, believes that there are some challenges and barriers impacting upon the performance of schools.
- 3.3 The governance review seeks views on how the multi-levels of governance, ie Scottish Government, local government, national agencies and other bodies, are leading and supporting the delivery of education. The review also asks how funding can be made fairer and how teachers, support staff and school leaders can be best supported and empowered to improve the education and life chances of the children they educate and nurture.
- 3.4 The governance review is part of the Scottish Government's wider commitment to the reform of public services. The review states that the 'best people to decide the future of our communities are the people who live in those communities'. The Council in the attached response makes it very clear that Scottish Borders Council is currently delivering very good outcomes for our children and young people and Officers believe that many of the existing arrangements for governance and decision making should remain with Scottish Borders Council and the staff in its schools.
- 3.5 The Scottish Borders Council response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 2.

4 PROPOSED SBC RESPONSE

- 4.1 In the Scottish Borders response to the Governance Review, the key strengths of Scottish Education are highlighted as follows:
- a) The recognition that delivering the Curriculum is best achieved by taking account of Scotland's varied geographies, degrees of rurality and different educational needs.
 - b) The provision of local democratic accountability for delivery of primary and secondary schools, early learning and childcare.
 - c) The strong partnership working that exists through community planning partners (public bodies, voluntary bodies, communities and businesses), supporting the delivery of services that improve outcomes for children and young people.

- d) The decision making and interventions taking place at local level to quality assure school performance resulting in improving trends in pupil examination performance, a wider range of pupil achievements, increasing participation and improved inclusion indicator performance in recent years.
- e) The richness and diversity of the learning experiences in the local community embedded within the curriculum which are part of the history, the traditions and the culture of our communities; these learning experiences are part of the broader wellbeing of communities and enrich heritage, belonging and bring a sense of identity to our children and young people as these aspects are celebrated and included as part of the school curriculum. Our children and young people through their learning also bring a great deal to the lives of communities.

4.2 The success of the Scottish Borders approach to schools education is clearly evidenced by:

- a) The success in education achievements in terms of educational qualifications over a long period of time.
- b) The sustained and very high positive destination rates for young people leaving school going on to Higher or Further Education, training and employment opportunities.
- c) The early years, specialist education, and social and health services developed for children, young people and adults.
- d) The building programmes of new secondary schools at Earlston, Duns, Eyemouth, and most recently at Kelso High School and new primary schools at Kingsland, Peebles, Broomlands, Kelso, Clovenfords, Denholm and Newlands.

4.3 Scottish Borders Council in the response makes the case that the success of current governance arrangements and the uniqueness of the Scottish Borders should result in the maintenance of the Borders as an education region in its own right. The response also recognises the importance of ensuring that governance arrangements create as much time as possible for practitioners to focus on the work they do every day in educating and nurturing children and young people. The Council believes in empowering communities, parents, staff and young people to make decisions about education in partnership with the systems of support and connectedness that exist within the Council and the wider partnerships of services for children and young people.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs to the Council associated with the agreeing of the recommendations in this Report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There are no economic, social or environmental impacts arising as a result of this report.

5.3 Equalities

It is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications as a result of this report.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic, social or environmental impacts arising as a result of this report.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no anticipated impacts on carbon emissions as a result of this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

The Council's response takes account of delivering education in rural areas.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation arising as a result of this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 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)

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Background Papers: Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective

Previous Minute Reference:

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

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