

Education Equity Strategy 2021 - 2026

Report by Director Education and Lifelong Learning

EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE

10 November 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education Sub Committee of the development of the Education Equity Strategy.**
- 1.2 The Education Equity Strategy was developed in session 2021-22 with the vision of increasing excellence, accelerating progress and embedding equity in schools to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people.
- 1.3 The strategy sets out the short, medium and long term outcomes and roles and responsibilities of education staff and partners to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.
- 1.4 The strategy outlines the actions required to accelerate progress in reducing the poverty related attainment gap and maximise the potential of the Attainment Scotland Fund (Pupil Equity Funding, Strategic Equity Funding, Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding) until end of session 2025-26.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education Sub Committee approve the Education Equity Strategy (Appendix A)**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Outcomes for looked after children and care leavers is a key focus of the Councils Corporate Parenting Strategy. Part 9 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 specifies Corporate Parenting duties and responsibilities which apply to all looked after children and care leavers in Scottish Borders Council. We are committed to working with statutory and non-statutory partners to assist them in identifying creative and innovative ideas to enable them to address their Corporate Parenting duties.
- 3.2 Reducing inequalities and the poverty related attainment gap are a key focus of the Council Plan, Anti-Poverty Strategy and Education Improvement Plan. The launch of the Equity Strategy and the establishment of an Equity Strategic Board, both key drivers for closing the poverty related attainment gap, are fundamental as we continue to accelerate progress and embed equity in our school and settings.
- 3.3 The Cabinet Secretary set out in the Scottish Parliament on 23 November 2021 her plans for the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), developed in close consultation with local government and agreed by COSLA Leaders. This next phase of the SAC builds on the evidence set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland [5 year report](#) on progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, the [Equity Audit](#), the [Audit Scotland report](#) on educational outcomes, and the [OECD review](#).
- 3.4 In summary, the SAC refresh national plans are that, with the support of £1 billion over this parliamentary term, the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme, from 2022/23, will see:
 - a) a broader recognition of children and young people's achievements and attainment,
 - b) continued empowerment of school leaders through Pupil Equity Funding,
 - c) a clearer and funded strategic role for all local authorities,
 - d) funding for Pupil Equity Funding and local authorities confirmed over 4 years to enable long term planning
 - e) continued support for care experienced children and young people, and
 - f) a clear framework to support recovery and accelerate progress, led by Education Scotland but with clear responsibilities for all parts of the education system which will enable a clearer line of sight right through the system on the impact of local approaches.
- 3.5 Following the refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in March 2022, local authorities are required to submit stretch aims which are shared annually with the Scottish Government as part of statutory plans and reports. Specific 'core' stretch aims are to be submitted for improving outcomes for all while closing the poverty-related attainment gap, these should be both ambitious and achievable within local contexts. In the development of the stretch aims for Scottish Borders, data and evidence have been interrogated and forensically analysed longitudinally to explore averages, trends and patterns of progress over a 5 year period. Data was considered and benchmarked against national and virtual comparator measures, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There

has been consultation and collaboration with headteachers, quality and improvement and data analysis services, Education Scotland, the regional improvement collaborative and other local authorities. Our local authority stretch aims are included in the Education Improvement Plan 2022-23.

- 3.6 The National Improvement Framework requires each local authority to prepare and publish annual plans describing the steps they will take to cover the four strategic priorities:
- 1) Improvement in attainment, particularly numeracy and literacy
 - 2) Closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
 - 3) Improvement in children's health and wellbeing
 - 4) Improvement in employability skills and positive school leaver destinations for young people

4 Education Equity Strategy

4.1 Rationale

The Equity Strategy had been developed to ensure increased excellence, accelerated progress and embedded equity in our schools and settings to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people (CECYP).

- 4.2 The strategy sets out the short, medium and long term outcomes and roles and responsibilities of education staff and partners to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.
- 4.3 The strategy coordinates the Attainment Scotland Funding streams; Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) and CECYP Funding to ensure maximum impact.
- 4.4 The Equity Strategy is presented in a 'Logic Model' format which includes the high level messages and outcomes of the strategy. This model is used to ensure consistency with Education Scotland documentation related to the [Scottish Attainment Challenge \(SAC\)](#). The individual actions are included in a working 'RACI model' outlining the roles of those responsible, accountable, consulted and informed of the strategy.
- 4.5 An Equity Strategic Board has been established as a result of the Equity Strategy. The board ensures strategic governance of the Attainment Scotland Funding streams and has representation from headteachers, social work and education colleagues in the central team.
- 4.6 **Logic Model**
The 'Inputs' to the Equity Strategy are:
- a) Funding – Attainment Scotland Fund; Pupil Equity Fund, Strategic Equity Fund, SAC Schools Programme, Care Experienced Fund
 - b) Staff – Equity and Inclusion Lead officer/ Virtual School Headteacher
 - c) Policy – Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) guidelines and related documents
- 4.7 Support and Collaboration in the Equity Strategy includes:
- a) Local Authority
 - i. Equity Strategic Board

- ii. Performance and Improvement Team (Quality Improvement Officers)
- iii. Headteachers, senior school leaders, equity leads in schools and settings
- iv. Data Performance Team
- v. Finance
- vi. Education Practitioners (Teachers, Pupil Support Assistants etc)
- vii. Care experience and child protection coordinators in schools and settings
- viii. Equalities Forum
- ix. Community Learning and Development
- x. Children and Families Social work
- xi. The Promise Team/Champions Board
- xii. Corporate Parenting Operations Group
- xiii. Placement Overview Group
- xiv. Anti-poverty/cost of living crisis ops group
- xv. Elected Members
- b) Partners and Agencies
 - i. Skills Development Scotland
 - ii. Borders College
 - iii. NHS
 - iv. Community Partners
 - v. Youth Borders
 - vi. Tertiary Sector
- c) Regional and National
 - i. Regional Improvement Collaborative: South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)
 - ii. CELCIS – Centre for Excellence for Children’s Care and Protection
 - iii. Education Scotland

4.8 Data required for the Equity Strategy includes

- a) Attainment
 - i. ACEL (Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence Level)
 - ii. Insight (Secondary Schools)
 - iii. SNSA (Scottish National Standardised Assessment)
 - iv. NIF (National Improvement Framework)
 - v. Seemis
- b) Attendance and exclusions
- c) SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- d) Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index
- e) Local Government Benchmarking Framework
- f) Community/contextual
- g) Care experienced (Mosaic, SDS, Scottish Government, CELCIS)

4.9 Activities expected through the Equity Strategy

- a) There will be a system wide focus on improving leadership at all levels.
This will include high quality learning and teaching at school/setting level and collaboration with families and communities
- b) Quality assurance calendar or school visits and reviews
- c) Diarised data reviews to measure progress against outcomes
- d) Collaborative planning and reviews with attainment advisor
- e) Plan and deliver professional learning sessions
- f) Communications plan
- g) Destinations workshops with SDS

- h) Regular attendance at relevant meetings and groups
- i) Regular monitoring and tracking procedures
- j) Internal and external reporting through statutory reports

4.10 Short Term Outcomes (2021/22)

- a) Increase and improve communications regarding Attainment Scotland Fund both in the local authority and beyond
- b) Increase strategic governance of Attainment Scotland Fund in line with Scottish Attainment Challenge Refresh and development of local authority and school Stretch Aims
- c) Increase confidence and build capacity in understanding equity and excellence with practitioners
- d) Increase confidence and knowledge in data literacy with senior leaders of initial identified schools
- e) Increase monitoring and tracking of care experienced children and young people regarding attendance, attainment and positive destinations
- f) Develop and implement initial use of Strategic Equity Funding

4.11 Medium Term Outcomes (2023/24)

- a) Continue to increase and improve communications regarding Attainment Scotland Fund both in the local authority and beyond
- b) Continue to embed strategic governance of Attainment Scotland Fund
- c) Improve understanding in writing outcomes and measures with headteachers to articulate improvement and demonstrate impact
- d) Increase excellence and reduce the poverty related attainment gap (Local authority stretch aims – provide support and challenge to enable schools to meet school stretch aims set for June 2023 and June 2024)
- e) Increase confidence and knowledge in data literacy with senior leaders and practitioners of Quintile 1/PEF schools through professional learning sessions and school engagements
- f) Implement new governance and increase quality of schools Pupil Equity Funding plans
- g) Continue and refine monitoring and tracking of care experienced children and young people's attendance, attainment and destinations.
- h) Implement mentoring pilot(s) for CECYP through CE Funding in collaboration with social work and partners to improve attendance, attainment, achievement and positive destinations.
- i) Monitor and track use of Strategic Equity Funding to ensure Impact
- j) Develop long term plans for use of Strategic Equity Funding and exit strategy

4.12 Long Term Outcomes (2024/25 – 2025/26)

- a) Embed communications regarding Attainment Scotland Fund both in the local authority and beyond
- b) Sustainability of the impact of Attainment Scotland Fund
- c) Continue to improve understanding in writing outcomes and measures with headteachers to articulate improvement and demonstrate impact
- d) Continue to increase excellence and reduce the poverty related attainment gap to exceed national and virtual comparators (Local authority stretch aims – provide support and challenge to enable schools to meet school stretch aims set for June 2025 and June 2026)

- e) Continue to increase confidence and knowledge in data literacy with senior leaders of Quintile 1/PEF schools through professional learning sessions and school engagements
- f) Increase attainment, positive leaver destinations, achievement and attendance of care experienced children and young people to exceed national and virtual comparators
- g) Monitor and track use of Strategic Equity Funding to ensure impact

4.13 Requirements for success

- a) Observations in schools
- b) Feedback from partners and to schools
- c) Continuous self-evaluation
- d) Data accessibility
- e) Shared ownership and systems approach
- f) Effective and efficient communication between internal and external partners
- g) Maximisation of funding and grants
- h) Opportunities to work and review in collaboration with partners
- i) Improved attainment data and positive leaver destinations
- j) Improved achievement data and access to opportunities
- k) Effective planning to continue existing approaches, adjusted as required to manage new/emerging challenges as a result of Covid-19 and do so within existing funding levels

4.14 The Vision of the Equity Strategy

- a) Using education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.
- b) Why - Regardless of background or socio economic status - all children and young people will have access to both tools and opportunities to reach or exceed their potential.
- c) How - The equity strategy will use the logic model to provide a coherent plan which will inform, support and challenge colleagues in SBC to achieve our vision in closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- d) What - Increase excellence, accelerate progress towards embedding equity by closing the poverty related attainment gap between the least and most disadvantaged.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report. Funding is received in the form of annual government grants through the Attainment Scotland Fund each financial year until end of year 2025-26

- a) Pupil Equity Funding - £1,923,695 annually until end of year 2025-26
- b) Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding - £149,450 in 2022/23 and similar funding annually until end of year 2025-26. (Funding is allocated annually at £1200 per looked after child between the ages of 5 - 15 in the local authority)
- c) Strategic Equity Funding

2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£225,440	£448,171	£670,901	£893,632

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There are no risks associated with this report although the risks of *not completing* the outcomes and actions in the Equity Strategy may be that the poverty related attainment gap continues to widen and care experienced children and young people will not experience improved outcomes.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) A Full Integrated Impact Assessment has been complete (appendix 3)
- (b) The IIA is required as The Equity Strategy aims to bring together a strategic approach from the education service and partners to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and improved outcomes for care experienced children and young people in Scottish Borders

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

- a) SDG 1- End poverty in all its forms everywhere – closing the poverty related attainment gap
- b) SDG 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all potential – interventions to close the poverty related attainment gap and improved outcomes for care experienced children and young people
- c) SDG 10 - Reduce inequalities within and among countries - Build capacity to identify and tackle poverty and exclusion, provide services in a non-discriminatory way, maximise funding to reduce the poverty related attainment gap

5.5 Climate Change

The checklist has been consulted and there are no significant effects identified or mitigations required in relation to climate change

5.6 Rural Proofing

The checklist has been consulted and there are no significant effects identified on rural proofing arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 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.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications, Chief Education Officer, Chief Officer for Children and Families, Service Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and

Headteachers have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

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