
STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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 progress made by the Education Service and schools during 2021-22 and to note the improvement priorities for session 2022-23.**
- 1.2 The Standard in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 places a responsibility on Local Authorities to provide schooling for children and to ensure continuous improvement of the education system. The 2021/22 Standards and Quality Report provides a high level summary of the performance of schools in line with the Education Service Improvement Plan. It notes but attainment and achievement across all aspects of service delivery.
- 1.3 The Standard & Quality Report is an evaluation of academic session 2021-22 and draws on a range of data/information to support its conclusion (Appendix A). This report acknowledges the ongoing challenges faced by schools as a result of COVID-19, but also highlights a number of successes and achievements across all sectors.
- 1.4 The Improvement Plan is a statement of our objectives for academic session 2022-23 (Appendix B). This Plan has a strong focus on raising attainment for all and accelerated progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap. It is also important to note the inclusion of Inspire Learning as a key driver for improvement in schools.
- 1.5 Both documents evidence a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people in the Borders and their families.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Education Sub Committee approve both Reports, namely 'Standards & Quality Report 2021-22' (Appendix A) and 'Education Improvement Plan 2022-23' (Appendix B).**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Standard in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 places a responsibility on Local Authorities to provide schooling for children and to ensure continuous improvement of the education system.
- 3.2 In 2006, an amendment to legislation placed a responsibility on Local Authorities to prepare and publish an annual report setting out:
- (a) The steps taken to reduce inequalities of outcomes for pupils.
 - (b) The steps taken to comply with the duties imposed on it by legislation and Scottish Government recommendations.
 - (c) A statement of improvement objectives.

4 STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2021/22

- 4.1 Our Standards and Quality Report 2021-22 evaluates the first full school session post the COVID 19 pandemic. The report is set out under the following headings:
- 1) Everyone Attaining
 - 2) Everyone Achieving
 - 3) Excellent Experiences
- 4.2 Amid the challenges, there is considerable progress and notable achievements in Scottish Borders Council including:
- a) Positive feedback from national scrutiny, Her Majesty's Inspector of Education (HMIE) made a return visit to three of our school last session, with each one being signed off as having made good progress towards the identified areas for improvement.
 - b) Improvements in attainment – in the first year of formal examinations since 2019, Eyemouth HS, Galashiels Academy, Hawick HS, Kelso HS, Jedburgh GC and Selkirk HS achieved their best ever performance in 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 since 2019. There was also a 13% increase in young people achieving 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 who live in Quintile 1.
 - c) The launch of 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. The strategy sets out the short, medium and long term outcomes and roles and responsibilities of education staff to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty.
 - d) Hawick, Kelso and Selkirk High Schools successfully achieved the national Digital Skills Award, this awards programme aims to promote, recognise and encourage a whole school approach to the use of digital technologies. Kelso and Selkirk High Schools have been recognised as

'Centres of innovation, leadership, and educational excellence' This internationally acclaimed accreditation has been awarded to both schools in recognition of the way they are using technology to deliver learning to young people through our Inspire Learning Programme.

- e) Service level evaluations were carried out in a number of key areas. These evaluations were led by Head teachers and gathered a range of evidence from across schools and settings. Two of these (Inclusion and Professional Learning) identified significant strengths but also highlighted areas for improvement for session 2022-23.
- 4.3 Progress against the three key areas for 2021-22 is evaluated fully in Appendix A. The report clearly identifies areas for improvement and highlights next steps for the service. These areas are evident in the Improvement Plan for 2022/23.

5 IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022/23

- 5.1 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
- 5.2 The plan for session 2022-23 continues the key themes of Recovery, Equity and Innovation and has been prepared to address accelerated improvement in schools and settings following the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge. In June 2021 the OECD published their findings and recommendations for curriculum review and reform, we are committed to ensuring our schools develop a curriculum which reflects not only these findings but the wider national agendas of No One Left behind, UNCRC, Learning for Sustainability and The Promise.
- 5.3 The Education and Lifelong Learning service priorities for session 2022-23 Improvement Plan remain consistent to ensure continuous improvement across all sectors, they are as follows:
- a) To raise attainment by ensuring high quality learning, teaching and assessment across all Schools and Settings
 - b) To raise attainment through improved inclusion, equity and wellbeing for all Children and Young People
- 5.4 The main drivers from the revised National Improvement Framework which underpin our plan are the development of teacher and practitioner professionalism, school and early learning and childcare improvement, curriculum and assessment and performance information. Each of these drivers will support capacity building in our schools and settings and

ensure a positive journey towards a full recovery post COVID.

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 The full Education Improvement Plan is contained in Appendix B.
- 5.7 The information contained within this report and appendices is also made available on the SBC website. This can be accessed at www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

There are no risks associated with this Report.

6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

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

6.4 UN Sustainability Goals

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposals contained in this report.

6.5 Climate Change

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

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 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 have been consulted and any comments received will be reported at the Sub Education Committee Meeting.

Approved by

Lesley Munro

Director Education and Lifelong Learning

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