
PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – QUINTILE 1 REVIEW

Director – Education & Lifelong Learning

Education Sub-Committee

24 May 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of the approach taken by the Quality Improvement Team within Scottish Borders Council to provide support and challenge to 10 key schools to ensure a relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap and seeks approval for the plan of action for session 2023/24.**
- 1.2 The Scottish Attainment Challenge and Scottish Borders Quality Improvement Framework underpin the approach to raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 1.3 Data highlighted 10 schools for inclusion in a customised review programme, which involves a focused visit from a Quality Improvement Team to identify and share strengths and good practice, while identifying areas for improvement which are agreed with the school and captured in an action plan.
- 1.4 Across the reviews, a number of common areas for improvement were identified and these will be included in ongoing quality improvement plans.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Education Sub-Committee:

- a) Notes the approach taken by the Quality Improvement Team to provide support and challenge to 10 key schools to ensure a relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap; and**
- b) Approves the following actions for the next school session:**
 - i. To review school progress with individual recommendations within 12 months of the review date;**
 - ii. Hold 'Sharing Effective Practice' sessions for all schools;**
 - iii. Agree bespoke support plans for each of the 10 schools to ensure the poverty related attainment gap continues to narrow and close; and**

- iv. Consider how we can make best use of the Strategic Equity Fund to further reduce the impact of poverty on the outcomes of children and young people.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Background

- a) The Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas in order to close the equity gap. It was launched in February 2015 to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority to this issue. It is underpinned by **The National Improvement Framework**, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- b) In March 2022, Scottish Government produced a revised Framework for Recovery and Accelerating progress. This was designed to support Local Authorities and school leaders to refocus their efforts post Covid on closing the poverty related attainment gap in Scotland.
- c) In the Scottish Borders there was a significant gap between the attainment of those living in areas of high deprivation (Quintile 1) and those in areas of low deprivation (Quintile 5).
- d) The Quality Improvement Team identified 10 schools in the Scottish Borders (3 High Schools and 7 Primary Schools) who contributed to the lower level of attainment in Quintile 1.
- e) The Team worked closely with Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and Headteachers to prepare a programme of school review to provide support and challenge for each of the 10 schools.

3.2 Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (The Scottish Attainment Challenge)

The renewed framework has been developed to support the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It highlights a renewed commitment to mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes and to tackle the poverty related attainment gap. It sets out high expectations, including annual ambitious locally identified stretch aims, to ensure that significant progress is being made post Covid 19 pandemic to achieve the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

3.3 Scottish Borders Council Quality Improvement Framework

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016, The Standard's in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 (amended to include the National Improvement Framework) place direct responsibility on Local Authorities to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided by the schools managed by it. The Quality Improvement Team has a relentless focus on supporting and challenging continuous improvement in schools and settings to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people. Through our existing quality assurances process we designed a bespoke approach to drive improved outcomes for children affected by poverty in our Local Authority. Part of this approach was to devise a customised review programme for our schools who had children and young people in the most deprived areas of our Local Authority.

4 REPORT FROM LOCAL AUTHORITY QUINTILE 1 REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 Identification of schools and approach

- a) Using available data the following schools were identified to be involved in this targeted process:
 - Galashiels Academy
 - Hawick High School
 - Selkirk High School
 - Burnfoot Community School
 - Langlee Primary School
 - Philiphaugh Primary School
 - Trinity Primary School
 - Wilton Primary School
 - Stirches Primary School
 - Drumlanrig Primary School
- b) The framework for the process was based on guidance which articulated high quality self-evaluation for equity. The features of highly effective practice are based on the following measures being in place to support improved outcomes:
 - i. Strong Leadership
 - ii. High Quality Learning and Teaching
 - iii. Engagement with families and communities
- c) The review process involved a whole day engagement at each school, observing lessons, scrutinising data, engaging with pupils, parents/carers and staff, examining impact interventions and of budget allocation and spend to close the gap and reviewing approaches with the community to improve outcomes. The review teams were comprised of Chief Education Officer, Quality Improvement Manager and Officers, Attainment Advisers, Inclusion and Equity Lead, Educational Psychologists, colleague Headteachers (from within SBC and other Local Authorities) and members of the Early Years Improvement Team. This approach allowed the development of a strong sense of empowerment and also provided a platform for sharing effective practice across a number of sectors and schools.
- d) The briefing paper which is shared at the outset of a review is included at Appendix 1.
- e) Each review followed the same general principles, however, the Lead Officer worked in close collaboration with each Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the approach aligned to our #OneTeam core principles and was not an imposed process on schools and Headteachers by Local Authority Officers.
- f) Following the review, a report was written by the Lead Officer outlining strengths identified and suggested areas for improvement for each school, this report was shared with the Headteacher and then with the wider review team.
- g) The review process was evaluated at the half way stage, taking on board feedback from schools and review team members and minor adjustments were made to improve the processes.
- h) General strengths highlighted across all schools have included:
 - i. Leaders have set out a strong and purposeful plan to promote equity and close the poverty related attainment gap.
 - ii. Early Years Centres provide an exceptional offering to families to address the socio-economic circumstances of the

- community and offers a wide range of universal and targeted support.
- iii. Data informed practice in EYC and ELC leading to more equitable and appropriately planned interventions.
 - iv. Strong strategic approach to building leadership capacity of practitioners by setting clear expectations for attainment meetings, which ensures staff accountability for knowing children as learners and progressing next steps in their learning and development (also recently introduced to ELC).
 - v. Good staff knowledge and understanding of the impact of barriers to learning and interventions used to improve health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.
- i) General areas for improvement identified were as follows:
- i. Enhance communication/engagement between school and parents/carers and families regarding how to support their children's learning and on progress of their learning.
 - ii. Meaningfully involve children and young people, families and communities in decision making regarding pupil equity funding planned spend, perhaps through participatory budgeting.
 - iii. Track wider achievement and identify Quintile 1 children who are not engaging in extra-curricular activities in order to identify any potential barriers and address these if appropriate.
 - iv. Refresh curriculum rationale at BGE to develop a 3 – 15 cluster approach
 - v. Develop consistency of practice across the learning community by ensuring all partners follow agreed intervention procedures, to identify intended outcomes, deliver on agreed outcomes and evaluate impact together.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

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

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a significant gap in the attainment levels achieved by those from the least deprived areas and those who live in the most deprived areas of the Borders. If this gap is not addressed the life chances of children and young people impacted by poverty will be reduced. The implementation of this programme of review identifies areas where areas for improvement can be addressed to mitigate this risk.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

A full Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and is included as Appendix 3

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

Following completion of the Sustainable Development Goals, there are two goals which are supported:

1. *Goal 4* - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all potential. This goal is supported as the Quintile 1 School reviews aim to support and challenge schools and settings with regards to reducing the poverty related attainment gap and promoting equity, ensuring barriers to school attendance and learning are identified and tackled.
2. *Goal 10* - Reduce inequalities within and among countries. This goal is supported as the Quintile 1 School reviews aim to support and challenge schools with regards to effective use of additional funding streams such as Attainment Scotland Funding, ensuring impactful and targeted use of resource in order to reduce the poverty related attainment gap.

5.5 **Climate Change**

There are no climate change implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

Not applicable.

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 the Scheme of Delegation which need to be made following the recommendations of 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 and any comments received will need to be incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Lesley Munro

Director – Education & Lifelong Learning

Author(s)

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Background Papers:

Guidance Note for Quintile 1 Reviews

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

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