

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTE of MEETING of the
EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE held in
Council Chamber and via Microsoft
Teams on Wednesday, 24 May 2023 at
10:00am

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- Present: - Councillors L. Douglas (Chair), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, A. Orr,
N. Richards, E. Robson, S. Scott, A. Smart, F. Sinclair, Pam Rigby (Youth
Engagement Worker).
- Apologies:- A. Hood, M. Docherty (Religious Representatives); N. York, C.
Clements, (Teacher Representatives); B. Birchall, G. Scott (Pupil
Representatives).
- In Attendance: - Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Chief Education Officer,
Equity and Inclusion Lead Officer, Senior Lead Officers – Education (C.
Brown), Democratic Services Officer (F.Henderson).

1. **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which included members of the Sub-Committee and those watching via the Live Stream, and outlined how the meeting would be conducted.

2. **MINUTE**

The Minute of the Meeting held on 2 March 2023 had been circulated.

DECISION

AGREED the Minute for signature by the Chairman.

3. **PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT – QUINTILE 1 REVIEW**

- 3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, which provided 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 which sought approval for the plan of action for session 2023/24. Mr Scott Watson, Quality and Inclusion Lead Officer and Mr Jamie Bryson, Headteacher – Selkirk High School presented the report and answered members questions.
- 3.2 The report explained that the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Scottish Borders Quality Improvement Framework underpinned the approach to raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap. Data highlighted 10 schools for inclusion in a customised review programme, which involved a focused visit from a Quality Improvement Team to identify and share strengths and good practice, while identifying areas for improvement which were agreed with the school and captured in

an action plan. Across the reviews, a number of common areas for improvement were identified and these would be included in ongoing quality improvement plans.

- 3.3 The report further explained that the Scottish Attainment Challenge, launched in February 2015, aimed to raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas in order to close the equity gap and to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority to the issue. It was underpinned by [The National Improvement Framework](#), Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). In March 2022, Scottish Government produced a revised Framework for Recovery and Accelerating progress, designed to support Local Authorities and school leaders to refocus their efforts post Covid on closing the poverty related attainment gap in Scotland. 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) and 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. 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. In response to a question with regard to the progress on recommendation (b) (iv), Mr Watson advised that the consultation period was underway and would bring a report back with the progress. In response to a further question in terms of engagement with Families, Mr Bryson advised that engaging with Families was not easy but work was ongoing to work with Families and extra curriculum activities were the curriculum with 90 plus pupils at Selkirk High who followed a bespoke curriculum programme. Mr Watson highlighted the complexities of the system and offered a briefing session for Councillors.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED 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) **APPROVED the following actions for the next school session:**
- i. **to review school progress with individual recommendations within 12 months of the review date;**
 - ii. **to hold ‘Sharing Effective Practice’ sessions for all schools;**
 - iii. **to agree bespoke support plans for each of the 10 schools to ensure the poverty related attainment gap continues to narrow and close; and**
 - iv. **to consider how to make best use of the Strategic Equity Fund to further reduce the impact of poverty on the outcomes of children and young people.**

4. RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, which sought approval of the revised Respectful Relationships and Anti - Bullying Policy and the accompanying documents to support the Policy. The report explained that The Respectful Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy sat within a suite of policies and guidance documents within the Inclusion Policy and framework for Scottish Borders. The Policy supported with work for all learning

establishments to have a positive ethos and environment, which was inclusive and reduced the number of incidents of bullying behaviour. However, if bullying behaviour did occur, the Policy aimed to address it in a consistent way. The Policy and supporting documents had been created through a 'community of practice' involving all stakeholders between November 2022 and March 2023. Mrs Christine Brown, Senior Lead Officer and Ms Yvonne Wilson, Health and Wellbeing Support Officer (Schools) presented the report and answered members questions. In terms of timescale, it was reported that there would be engagement with every school improvement plan and the policy would be in place by the new term in August 2023.

DECISION

- (a) **APPROVED the Respectful Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy contained in Appendix 1, to this Minute in the Minute book.**
- (b) **AGREED to:-**
 - (i) **support the implementation and communication plan for the Policy and supporting documents.**
 - (ii) **the Policy and supporting documents being reviewed and updated in 2026.**

5. DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP – MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning which sought approval of the first in a new series of guidance documents for schools under the theme of Digital Citizenship and would to include Cyber Resilience, Internet Safety and curriculum areas such as technology and health and wellbeing. This guidance focuses on supporting the safe use of mobile technology in schools. Mobile technology was an integral part of the lives of children and young people across the Borders and Scotland, with many bringing their own mobile phone devices into school. It was important that schools were empowered and confident in ensuring the safe and responsible use of all devices in school. The guidance responded to the need for an overarching framework to achieve consistency in schools' approaches and decision making and provide a clear framework, while empowering schools and clusters to develop an approach which responded to their local context. The guidance recognised that children and young people need to learn about digital citizenship as part of developing the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and the fundamental importance and impact of Inspire Learning was recognised throughout and would be rolled out across all schools with appropriate support for the implementation. All schools would be expected to share their plans to implement the guidance with pupils, parents and other key stakeholders.

DECISION

AGREED to:-

- (a) **approve the implementation of the Responsible Use of Mobile Technology Guidance.**
- (b) **the expectation that each school would share plans for implementation in their own setting with key stakeholders.**

Meeting concluded at 12 noon.