
EDUCATION STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Report by Director Education and Lifelong Learning

EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEE

24th October 2024

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 2022-2023 and to note the improvement priorities for session 2023 - 24.**
- 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 2022/23 Standards and Quality Report provides a high level summary of the performance of schools in line with the Education Service Improvement Plan. It notes attainment and achievement across all aspects of service delivery.
- 1.3 The Standard & Quality Report is an evaluation of academic session 2022/23 and draws on a range of data/information to support its conclusion.(Appendix A)
- 1.4 The Improvement Plan is a statement of our objectives for academic session 2023-24 (Appendix B). This Plan has a strong focus on raising attainment for all and accelerated progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap as well as our continuing drive to promote positive relationships and inclusive practice in all our educational settings. 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 2022 - 23' (Appendix A) and 'Education Improvement Plan 2023 - 24' (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 2022-23

- 4.1 Our Standards and Quality Report 2022-23 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) in collaboration with the quality improvement team last session, seen Berwickshire and Hawick High schools being signed off as having made good progress towards the identified areas for improvement.
 - b) Her Majesty's Inspector of Education (HMIE) visited seven schools during last session and three primary schools for thematic reviews. 72% of the four Quality Indicators were graded as Good or above.
 - c) Improvements in attainment: Galashiels Academy, Earlston HS and Peebles HS improved their performance in 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 from 2021 and at 1+ and 3+ qualifications at SCQF Level 6. Hawick High School has their best every attainment of leavers achieving 5 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5 who live in Quintile 1.
 - d) We made progress in achieving our stretch aims in the Broad General Education. Schools improved in combine literacy and numeracy in P1,4 and 7; improved Quintile 1 combined Literacy levels; improved combined literacy and numeracy levels for Quintile 1 in S3 and narrowed the poverty related attainment gap at all stages.
 - e) Improved attendance in primary and secondary schools at 91.4% form 2021 and for those in Quintile 1.

- f) West Linton PS successfully achieved the national Digital Skills Award, this award programme aims to promote, recognise and encourage a whole school approach to the use of digital technologies. Broomlands PS have been recognised as a 'Centre 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.

5 EDUCATION SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023 - 24

- 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 Improvement Plan remain consistent to ensure continuous improvement across all sectors, they are as follows:
 - a) Priority 1: Develop high quality learning, teaching and assessment that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement for all in our schools and settings.
 - b) Priority 2: Develop inclusive practice with a focus on universal and targeted provision in all schools and settings.
- 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.

- 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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Background Papers: N/A

Previous Minute Reference: N/A

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