

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

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

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- Present: - Councillors L. Douglas (Chair), J. Greenwell, C. Hamilton, A. Orr, N. Richards, C. Ramage, S. Scott, A. Smart, F. Sinclair, Pam Rigby (Youth Engagement Worker), M. Docherty (Religious Representatives); N); Eliza Bevan (Pupil Representative).
- Apologies:- A. Hood (Religious Representative); N. York, C. Clements, (Teacher Representatives and Daniel Newsam (Pupil Representative).
- 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. **ATTAINMENT RESULTS 2022/23**

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the purpose of which was to inform the Education Sub Committee of the progress schools were making in the Broad General Education for P1 to P7 and Senior Phase S4–6 Scottish Qualifications Examinations for session 2022-23. The report explained that the Academic session 2022-23 was the second year of ‘normal’ schooling across Scotland since the COVID-19. SQA examinations were delivered as expected with continued modifications to course assessments by SQA. The performance of almost all young people in 2023 remained in line with or above 2022 level Attainment trends.
- 2.2 The Broad General Education included children and young people from the ages 3 – 15. There were National Benchmark levels that most pupils in this phase of their education had to meet in Literacy and Numeracy. The achievement of these levels was based on teacher judgement, which were quality assured through moderation activities around teacher planning and pupil work. The National Benchmark levels were contained in the report and demonstrated the percentage of children who had achieved the National benchmark in Literacy and Numeracy for a particular level. The evidence was based on the judgement of the class teacher and the standard was moderated by other staff in the school, other schools within the cluster and a quality assurance process led by senior officers. In 2022-23 there was a clear demonstration

of improvement and a progression towards the Scottish Government's Stretch Aim of 85% of pupils attaining the appropriate levels and Borders schools continued to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and was reflected nationally.

- 2.3 In 2022-23 the majority of pupils in P1, P4 and P7 combined, achieved the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level of attainment in the Broad General Education as measured by teacher professional judgement of progress in reading, talking and listening, with most pupils attaining the expected level in numeracy and writing. The levels of attainment of pupils in the Broad General Education was improving and there was evidence of recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic, and in primaries 1,4 and 7 these had seen an increase for the second year running of pupils attaining the relevant benchmark.
- 2.4 For the Senior Phase, pupils had sat 14,000 exams across the Borders in May 2023, which remained in line with the previous years. The overall pass rate (A-C) for **S4** pupils at SCQF Level 5 remained in line with 2022 at 77,4% while 90.2% of S4 learners achieved an award at A-D. Examples of improvement in Quintile 1 attainment
- 2.5 Foundation Apprenticeships were available nationally at SCQF Levels 5 and 6 courses in a variety of subjects and these opportunities gave young people earlier exposure to the world of work, helping them develop the skills, experience and knowledge they'll need when they leave school. It's the chance to get a head start on their careers by gaining an industry-recognised qualification, work on real projects and broaden their career options and for employers, it's the chance to attract highly motivated and committed young people who are willing to learn, identify young people who are right for your business and ensure their organisation had people with the skills they need. For young people who left in May 2022, Scottish Borders remained in the top quartile nationally, with an increase from last year to 96.65 percent of young people achieving a positive and sustained destination. This was the highest for the last five years.
- 2.6 In response to a question about capturing other qualifications, Mrs Thomson confirmed that the figures included these. The monitoring of pupils with dyslexia and encouraging employers to employ them was raised and Mrs Thomson explained the measures in place, which included digital papers and the development of an app to a secure portal to allow ipads to be used in exams.

DECISION

AGREED to note progress that schools had made in maintaining and improving standards of attainment in the Broad General Education and Senior Phase in 2023.

3. **STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- 3.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, which provided an update on the progress made by the Education Service and schools during 2022-2023 and to note the improvement priorities for session 2023-24.
- 3.2 The Standard in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 placed 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 provided a high-level summary of the performance of schools in line with the Education Service Improvement Plan. It noted attainment and achievement across all aspects of service delivery.
- 3.3 The Standard & Quality Report was an evaluation of academic session 2022/23 and drew on a range of data/information to support its conclusion contained in (Appendix

A) to the report. The Improvement Plan was a statement of objectives for academic session 2023-24 and contained in (Appendix B) to the report. The Plan had a strong focus on raising attainment for all and accelerated progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap as well as our continuing to drive to promote positive relationships and inclusive practice in all educational settings. It was also important to note the inclusion of Inspire Learning as a key driver for improvement in schools. Both documents evidenced a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people in the Borders and their families.

- 3.4 The plan for session 2023-24 continued the key themes of Recovery, Equity and Innovation and had 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, SBC remained committed to ensuring all schools develop a curriculum which reflected not only these findings but the wider national agendas of No One Left behind, UNCRC, Learning for Sustainability and The Promise.

DECISION

AGREED to approve both Reports, namely 'Standards & Quality Report 2022 - 23' (Appendix A) and 'Education Improvement Plan 2023 - 24' (Appendix B).

Meeting concluded at 12 noon.