

The Highland Council
Education, Children and Adults Services Committee
18 March 2016

Agenda Item	15.
Report No	ECAS 42/16

National Improvement Framework for Education

Report by Director of Care & Learning

Summary

This report introduces members to the National Improvement Framework (NIF). It sets out the initial work that has begun in Highland to deliver the priorities set out within the Framework and updates Members on Scottish Attainment Challenge within Highland, and on ongoing links with other northern authorities.

1. Background

1.1 What is the National Improvement Framework?

1.1.1 The National Improvement Framework for Scottish education is a strategy to help children achieve their full potential as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The Framework sets out how evidence is gathered to inform action, making sure that we are all focused on improving standards for our children and in our schools.

1.1.2 It builds on an established record of improvement

- Getting It Right for Every Child
- High quality Early Learning and Childcare
- Curriculum for Excellence
- Scotland's Schools for the Future
- National Youth Work Strategy
- Youth Employment Strategy
- Teaching Scotland's Future

1.1.3 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities are:

- To improve attainment for all, particularly in **Literacy** and **Numeracy**.
- To **close the attainment gap** between the most and least disadvantaged young people.
- To improve young people's **health** and **wellbeing**.
- To improve **employability skills** and **sustained positive leaver destinations** for all young people.

1.1.4 These priorities may change over time, depending on what the evidence is suggesting on the success that has been achieved.

1.2 International research suggests there are six areas for the delivery of improvement:

1.3 **School Leadership**

1.3.1 What is it? The quality and impact of leadership within schools and at all levels – including members of staff.

1.3.2 What evidence will be gathered?

- Through school inspection, percentage of schools graded as “good” or better for leadership of change.
- Number of new Head Teachers who meet the standard for Headship, and numbers of experienced Head Teachers who continue to meet Standard for Leadership and Management.
- Local authority self-evaluation reports on leadership of change.

1.4 **Teacher professionalism**

1.4.1 What is it? Teacher professionalism demonstrates the overall quality of the teaching workforce and the impact of their professional learning on young people’s progress and achievement.

1.4.2 What evidence will be gathered?

- Increase the range of quality professional learning at SCQF Level 11 (Masters) and the level of engagement amongst teachers.
- Percentage of teachers in local authority and independent schools, within the annual cohort, having their professional learning successfully signed off by GTCS.
- Information from the GTCS on teacher induction and teacher views on teaching literacy and numeracy, health and wellbeing and opportunities for professional learning.
- Through school inspection and local authority self-evaluation reports, effectiveness of moderation of teacher judgement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy.

1.5 **Parental Engagement**

1.5.1 What is it? Parental engagement focuses on ways in which parents, families and professionals work together to support young people’s learning.

1.5.2 What evidence will be gathered?

- From local authority self-evaluation reports, percentage of schools which work with partners to develop and offer family learning programmes.
- Pre-inspection questionnaires.
- Evidence on the impact of parents and the Parent Council in helping schools to improve.

1.6 **Assessment of children’s progress**

1.6.1 What is it? Achievement of young people’s progress includes a range of evidence on what young people learn and achieve throughout their school career. This includes Curriculum for Excellence levels, skills, qualifications and other awards.

1.6.2 What evidence will be gathered?

- The percentage of children achieving curriculum levels in literacy and numeracy at P1, P4, P7 and S3 by school, local authority and nationally.
- Data from a range of surveys on health and wellbeing showing changes over time.
- Senior phase qualifications and awards data.
- The percentage of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations.
- Through external review of careers information, advice and guidance services, percentages of these services graded as 'good' or better.

1.7 School improvement

1.7.1 What is it? The overall quality of education provided by each school and its effectiveness in delivering further improvement.

1.7.2 What evidence will be gathered?

- Through school inspection, percentage of schools graded as 'good' or better for learning, teaching and assessment.
- Through school inspection, percentage of schools graded 'good' or better for raising attainment and achievement.
- Level of attendance and number of exclusions per school.
- The number of schools who report positive findings in its school self-evaluation on raising attainment and achievement, and progress with the priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.
- Local authority self-evaluation reports on raising attainment and achievement and progress with the priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework.

1.8 Performance information

1.8.1 What is it? All of the information and data we need to get a full picture of how well education is improving. It will require the gathering together and analyse the data collected from each of the other areas.

1.8.2 What evidence will be gathered?

- Data from each of the other areas.
- Progress towards achieving the priorities set within the Framework, drawing on all the evidence gathered.

2. National Activity

2.1 The following activity is presently taking place across Scotland.

2.1.1 Assessing children's progress

- Development and piloting of new national standardised assessments
- Publication of advice and guidance on achievement of a CfE level in literacy and numeracy
- Increased moderation and support for teacher professional judgement
- Further work to develop evidence from early years activity and alignment with school years

2.1.2 Reporting arrangements

- Interim reporting arrangements for schools and local authorities

- Work with local authorities and parent organisations to improve the consistency of reporting to parents of children's progress
- Development of statutory guidance on reporting duties under Education (Scotland) Bill

2.1.3 **Performance information**

- Inclusion of Key Performance Indicators from Developing Young Workforce programme
- Consideration of a wider range of awards and achievements including those gained from Community Learning and Development

2.2 The following activity is planned for future years.

2.3 **2017**

2.3.1 **Assessing children's progress**

- Introduction of new national standardised assessments in school
- Introduction of more evidence on early years

2.3.2 **Reporting**

- New reporting duties under Education (Scotland) Bill
- First statutory Framework reporting for schools and local authorities

2.4 **2018**

2.4.1 **Assessing children's progress**

- Development of standardised assessments for Gaelic Medium Education
- Consideration of evidence of children's progress in other curricular areas

2.4.2 **Performance information**

- Dashboard for school, local authority and national use

3. **Highland activity**

3.1 The implementation of the National Improvement Framework in Highland will require a significant input of resource to ensure that we maximise the outcomes for our young people. However Highland is not beginning this journey from the beginning.

3.2 The six areas identified for the delivery of improvement have already been identified as areas of ongoing work in Highland. Accordingly, we have already put in place the right foundations to take forward work in the six areas which will deliver improvement.

3.3 **School Leadership**

3.3.1 Ten staff commenced the initial Headship training qualification in 2015/2016.

3.3.1 Session 2016/2017 will see the second cohort of staff applying for the Head Teacher qualification.

3.4 Teacher Professionalism

- 3.4.1 A strategic leadership group has been established. The group will develop a framework which will ensure professional development pathways for all staff to access. The framework will apply from student teachers right through to Head Teachers.
- 3.4.3 Highland has in place a process which allows teachers to have their professional learning signed off by the GTC.

3.5 Parental Engagement

- 3.5.1 Parent Council members from across Highland have come together to form the Highland Parent Forum Partnership.
- 3.5.2 The group is developing communication strategies which will allow parents to communicate across Highland.
- 3.5.3 The group meets with senior officers on a ten week cycle.
- 3.5.4 An action plan for 2016-17 will be produced, which will ensure greater involvement in Council policy development and school improvement.

3.6 Assessment of Children's Progress

- 3.6.1 Highland already carries out extensive work on the use of data. The system has been in place in schools for a number of years. The use of this data needs to be reviewed to ensure we deliver improved outcomes for young people.
- 3.6.2 Highland has also used standardised tests in primary schools for several sessions. It has been mainly used to confirm teacher judgements from internal school assessments.

3.7 School Improvement

- 3.7.1 The reduction in size of the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) has required a review of the improvement objectives.
- 3.7.2 The QIT will now operate as a central team which will provide schools with support and challenge.
- 3.7.3 In partnership with schools, the team will set out strategies to deliver on the improvement target set out in the NIF.

3.8 Performance Information

- 3.8.1 Highland already has systems in place for data collection. Further work needs to be carried out ensure the quality of the data.
- 3.8.2 Highland provided information to the national data collection team for session 2014-2015.

4. Scottish Attainment Challenge

4.1 Background Information

- 4.1.1 The long term outcome for the Scottish Attainment Challenge is to raise attainment in Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing for primary school children living in areas of disadvantage. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) has been used to identify areas across Scotland where deprivation is highest. At the moment, children in deciles 1 and 2, the highest levels, are being targeted for support.
- 4.1.2 This report details progress and next steps in the 5 Highland schools that have been identified as having over 70% of their pupils in SIMD deciles 1 and 2, and form part of the 57 targeted schools entitled to funding for four years, involving a full time Attainment Advisor to support improvement and raise attainment. These schools are: Bishop Eden and Merkinch (South Area), Coulhill and Milton (Mid Area), and South Primary in Wick (North Area).
- 4.1.3 The improvement themes outlined below are part of the authority's strategic improvement plan, which will address embedding, sharing and scaling up improvement strategies beyond the 5 schools.
- 4.1.4 Highland schools not already benefitting from Attainment Challenge funding have been able to apply for grants of up to £3000 for projects based on creativity and innovation in learning. We are awaiting funding decisions on the most recent school bids, but the first round saw successful bids being awarded to Hilton Primary for an emerging literacy project and Dornoch Academy for an employment training programme in food hygiene.

4.2 School progress and common themes for improvement

- 4.2.1 **Emerging Literacy** – 4 out of the 5 schools have been using the Emerging Literacy guidance and resources to pinpoint underdeveloped literacy skills in their pupils through various recommended activities. There has been a particular emphasis on developing phonological awareness. They have also developed the use of POLAAR (Primary One Literacy Assessment and Action Resource).
- 4.2.2 **Improved reading resources and literacy programmes** - Merkinch, Milton and Coulhill Primaries are updating their reading resources and are using the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to do this. Merkinch, Bishop Eden and Dalneigh (ASG) are working together to develop a literacy policy in their schools and to introduce North Lanarkshire Literacy Programme.
- 4.2.3 South Primary has appointed three PSAs to support reading practise and has purchased additional reading resources for the children to use when the school is merged with Pulteneytown Primary from August 2016. Plans are underway to run three parent workshops in the local community centre on early literacy.
- 4.2.4 **'Ways to Wellbeing'** - Milton Primary has worked closely with Educational Psychology colleagues and have developed 'Ways to Wellbeing', a multi-agency approach to building parental relationships and confidence with the

school.

- 4.2.5 **Nurture** - Coulhill Primary is in the process of developing a nurturing approach and will work with Bishop Eden's and Merkinch to do this in Year 2.

4.3 **Challenges**

- 4.3.1 The 5 schools have had to deal staffing challenges, with the ongoing challenge to sustain supply cover to support developmental activity. To address this and to make the most of the additional funding, the authority has, in discussion with the Attainment Advisor, created a strategic plan for raising attainment. This has still to be approved by the Scottish Government, and would involve appointing a literacy, numeracy and a wellbeing development officer for the 5 schools to assist with the identified developments. This would also facilitate the sharing of the Challenge Schools' good practice and improvement methodologies across their ASGs, and aid the authority strategy to scale this up in a wider context.
- 4.3.2 Schools are due to submit reports on this year's work and a plan until March 2017 by the end of May and the strategic plan will play a significant part in the wider development of the project in the next three years.

4.4 **Next steps**

- 4.4.1 Emerging Attainment Challenge Expectations include more in depth use of the National Improvement Framework and 'How Good is our School 4'. The Scottish Government is keen to see the impact of the work to date, and has linked this to 3 key drivers
- Leadership
 - Learning and Teaching
 - Working with Families and Communities
- 4.4.2 A conference for all the schools and authorities involved with the Scottish Attainment Challenge will take place in Glasgow on 9 June. There will be further conferences next year. Hilton Primary will showcase their work on Emerging Literacy as they have been awarded innovation funding to develop the talking part of literacy with the help of a Speech and Language therapist.

5. **Northern Alliance**

- 5.1 Highland Council has continued to collaborate on work with the other northern education authorities, as the Northern Alliance.
- 5.2 The Northern Alliance has confirmed its commitment to act as a leadership group and learning network, across all aspects of children's services, working within existing structures to provide learning networks for Directors, senior and other managers, and practitioners. This networking model is now being developed across Scotland, and is supported by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.
- 5.3 The Alliance has agreed to collaborate on four key aspects of the Attainment challenge: small schools, rural poverty and inequity, early literacy and early numeracy – and will develop a network of the attainment advisors across the

north. It is developing an action plan across these themes and is using additional attainment funding that has been secured from Government to take this forward. This includes a particular initiative around early literacy that will be led by Highland Council staff.

- 5.4 The Alliance will encourage networks of Head Teachers and officers with developmental and management roles. This will include a number of events over the next few months, as well as opportunities to collaborate across authority boundaries, for example: Orkney/Caithness; Lewis/Wester Ross; and Moray/Nairn.
- 5.5 A major event is being planned around equity and rural poverty, for Head Teachers and strategic colleagues, including across children's services. It is intended that this will lead to local satellite events.
- 5.6 The Alliance has also agreed to collaborate on an issue that is currently concerning schools and communities - knife carrying and knife crime.

6. Implications

- 6.1 There are no Legal, Equalities, Risk or Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications.
- 6.2 It is important to ensure that adequate resources are available to fully deliver the key national priorities around the National Improvement Framework. There is some additional funding from the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge, and as well as making best use of this within Highland, as we are sharing resources and new funding across the Northern Alliance.
- 6.3 It is important to ensure the Gaelic implications of delivering the National Improvement Framework are clearly thought through and addressed as part of our plans for Gaelic Medium Education, which will be the subject of a future report to Committee.
- 6.4 It is important that the implications of rural deprivation are taken into account in the delivery of the National Improvement Framework. The work of the Northern Alliance will help us address this.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the key priorities set out in this paper, and comment on and scrutinise the progress that is being made.

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