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| Agenda Item | 15.       |
| Report No   | CLH 13/18 |

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Care, Learning and Housing

**Date:** 30 May 2018

**Report Title:** National Improvement Framework – Progress Update

**Report By:** Director of Care and Learning

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the progress being made by Highland schools in the delivery of the National Improvement Framework.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to comment on the progress being made in the delivery of the National Improvement Framework.

### 3. Background

#### 3.1 National Context

In 2017 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan is the definitive plan for the delivery of educational outcomes across Scotland. It brings together improvement activity from both the national delivery plan and the curriculum for excellence implementation plan, and also includes improvement actions on parental and family engagement.

3.2 The government sets out its vision for education in Scotland in the NIF, for:

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

3.3 Scottish education needs to deliver both **excellence** in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering **equity** so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.

#### 3.4 Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan was designed to help deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity; galvanising efforts and aligning our collective improvement activities across all partners in the education system to address our key priorities. The key priorities are:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

3.5 Everyone working in Scottish education should be clear about how they can contribute to addressing these priorities. Local authority and school improvement plans have been asked to reflect these priorities and ensure the clear line of sight between local and national expectations. Schools can also have further improvement priorities at school level based on local needs and self-evaluation.

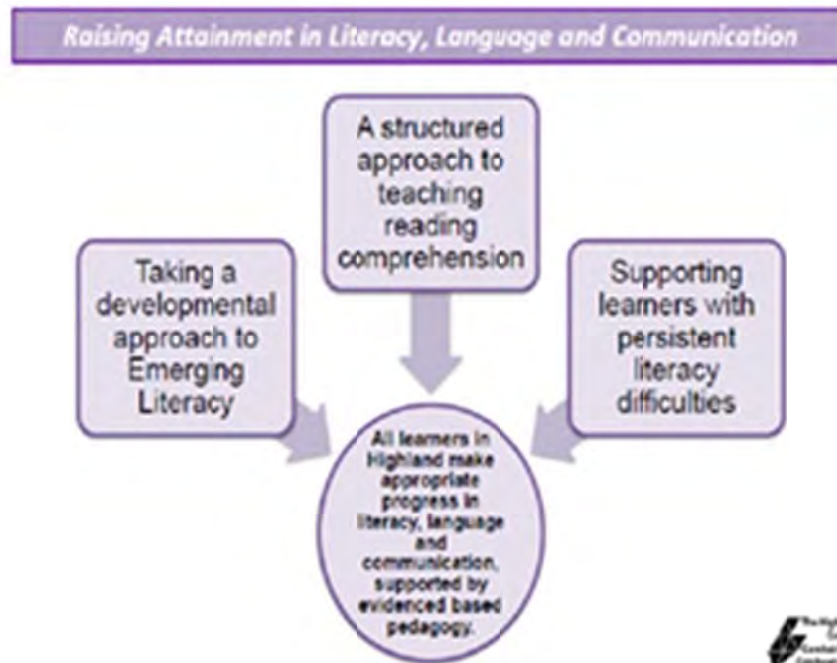
3.6 The authority improvement plan for session 2017-2018 set out the agenda for Highland schools to begin move towards the delivery of the NIF priorities. Good work already happening in schools.

3.7 The Scottish Government expects much improvement to be taken forward by Regional Collaboratives, and the draft Regional Improvement Plan is a separate

report to this meeting of the Committee.

#### 4. Work to Improve the Performance in Literacy

##### 4.1 There are three key drivers for Raising Attainment in Literacy, Language and Communication



##### 4.2 The Emerging Literacy Initiative – May 2018 update

Practitioners are supported through:

- resources which are developed by education and health practitioners for use in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and schools to support children's foundational literacy skills
- training which has been developed by education and health practitioners, delivered locally and accessed by practitioners in ELC settings and schools
- local networks of practice which enable collaboration between education practitioners in schools, developing professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

##### 4.3 As of April 2018, 153 out of 173 of Highland primary and special schools have had at least one practitioner attend the whole day introduction training and/or the Emerging Literacy networks.

##### 4.4 Training

In schools whole-day Emerging Literacy training is delivered in term 4 ahead of the new academic session and at the beginning of term 1. In ELC settings training is delivered by Early Years Education Support Officers throughout the academic session. There are also online training modules available on the Highland Literacy Blog.

##### 4.5 Local Emerging Literacy Networks

In the 2017/2018 session there have been ten local networks of practice:

- Mid – (1) Dingwall and (2) Invergordon

- North – (3) Golspie and (4) Thurso
- South – (5) Aviemore, (6) Smithton and (7) Inverness
- West – (8) Fort William, (9) Portree and (10) Ullapool

4.6 The Portree network also has the facility for practitioners from locations such as Muck and Tongue to access the network remotely using Google Meet.

4.7 The 2017/2018 networks have been designed to support teachers and school senior managers in taking a whole-school approach to Emerging Literacy. 93 out of 173 of Highland primary and special schools have consistently engaged through the Emerging Literacy networks this session.

4.8 Evidence of Impact and Outcomes

The Northern Alliance has published a number of update reports during the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic sessions. The recent [interim report in March 2018](#) detailed the:

- progress children have made across the Northern Alliance in their foundational literacy skills
- impact on professional learning for education practitioners
- comparison between Curriculum for Excellence Achievement of a Level teacher judgement data for Highland schools who were part of the Emerging Literacy network during the 2016/2017 session, with schools who were not part of the Emerging Literacy networks in 2016/2017.

4.9 **Scottish Attainment Challenge – Literacy Development Officer May 2018 update**

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Literacy Officer has worked with the five primary schools (Bishop Eden, Coulhill, Merkinch, Milton and Newton Park) and one secondary school (Wick High School) with SAC funding in Highland through the following areas of development:

- supporting schools in book-banding reading schemes to support progression and breadth within reading
- supporting schools in using diagnostic assessment tools to identify children's strengths and areas of development
- supporting schools in analysing their data to support the planning of learning, teaching and assessment universally and with targeted groups
- creating tools to support the planning for learning, teaching and assessment of reading, including the monitoring and tracking of ongoing progress of learners
- creating and delivering career long professional learning resources in comprehension skills.
- a focus on the learning, teaching and assessment of the tools for reading e.g. phonics, spelling, phonological awareness
- targeted interventions provided by the literacy PSAs.

4.10 This work is further informing practice. Through using the assessments and monitoring and tracking tools, practitioners have reported that they have an increased confidence in understanding how children are progressing in their literacy skills through the CfE Levels. The assessment tools identified areas of development which have helped inform the responsive area of development in comprehension skills. In general, the learners were able to read the text but not comprehend what was read. The data suggested the need to look at how schools taught comprehension, specifically retelling, summarising, inference and vocabulary.

#### 4.11 Comprehension Development

The key area of development, following baseline assessments, has been around teacher instruction of comprehension skills. The SAC Literacy Officer has undertaken research into the development of comprehension skills and has created/ delivered training to support classroom teachers in developing comprehension skills in the classroom. The comprehension training including seven sessions with class teachers throughout the year, each session providing an opportunity for reflection with colleagues, and develop new learning which was practised in the classroom between sessions.

4.12 The comprehension training has been developed using texts (including film clips) which promote accessibility and inclusion for all, placing the core focus on the comprehension skills which have been developed.

4.13 Feedback from teachers tells us that:

- children who find reading challenging are able to infer and question sometimes at a higher level than their peers.
- learners are using the strategies across the curriculum independently
- engagement of pupils has been very high across all ability levels
- the pedagogy utilising the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model is highly effective.

#### 4.14 PEF Literacy Development – Update May 2018

The table below summarises the PEF work undertaken around literacy within schools/ASGs in Session 2017 – 2018.

| Name of School            | PEF Literacy Focus   |
|---------------------------|--|
| Hilton of Cadboll Primary | LDO and ASN Teacher assessed PEF pupils. PEF Literacy groups set up. LDO trained PSAs to run PEF Literacy groups aimed at developing Phonics and Vocabulary.   |
| Crown Primary             | Crown Primary was asked to trial the Highland Council 'Comprehension' training in session 2017-18. HT was keen to measure the impact of this training on PEF pupils.<br><br>LDO delivered 6 inset sessions on comprehension. LDO has also developed a 'How to' Teaching Reading guide to support staff development and assessment of pupils. |
| Lochardil Primary         | PEF pupils reading levels assessed using YARC assessment. PEF Reading Intervention groups set up. LDO delivered training to PSA and provided suitable materials/activities for sessions. LDO also delivered 3 inset sessions on comprehension strategies and analysis of PEF data.   |
| Lairg/Rosehall Primary    | PSA reading levels assessed using YARC. LDO delivered training to PSA and provided suitable materials/activities for sessions. LDO and PSA met regularly throughout year to reflect on progress and make modifications to support.   |
| Millbank Primary          | PEF pupils assessed at start of the year using reading age test  |

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|                               | <p>(Toe by Toe).</p> <p>PEF Reading Intervention groups set up and LDO delivered training to PSAs.</p> <p>LDO offered ongoing advice and support to PT in charge of PEF. Advice given surrounding suitable interventions, materials and training.</p>   |
| Smithton Primary              | <p>PEF pupils assessed at start of the year using YARC assessment.</p> <p>PEF Reading Intervention groups set up. LDO delivered training to PSAs.</p> <p>LDO is currently book banding the school library/reading schemes to link the PM Benchmark Reading assessment.</p>  |
| Central Primary               | <p>LDO has trained teaching staff and PSAs in Talk Boost.</p> <p>A number of pupils in P1, 2 and 3 have been assessed to determine suitability for Talk Boost.</p> <p>Talk Boost intervention will run for last 7 weeks of Term 4 to allow PSAs to trial the intervention.</p>  |
| Kinlochleven ASG              | <p>Kinlochleven ASG project aimed to develop a whole cluster 'ASG' approach to spelling and reading. They hoped to develop an understanding of how to support PEF pupils with persistent literacy difficulties. LDO led whole ASG inset sessions and also led separate primary, secondary and PSA focused training on the same areas.</p> |
| Applecross/Lochcarron Primary | <p>Specific advice/suggestions given as to supporting small number of pupils.</p> <p>In addition, LDO delivered training on Wraparound Spelling to teaching staff. LDO visited classes to team teach and a follow up feedback session has been arranged. LDO also delivered two Parents Information sessions.</p>                         |
| Kyle/Kyleakin Primary         | <p>LDO provided advice on buying suitable resources for reading development in the infant department.</p> <p>LDO arranged visit for PT to visit school in South area to observe 'Daily 5'.</p> <p>LDO and class teacher with responsibility for PEF conducted school literacy audit following new HT.</p>                                 |
| Obsdale Primary               | <p>Due to very high numbers of PEF pupils within Obsdale, in excess of 80%, HT opted for whole school development of 'Reading Comprehension'.</p>   |

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|   | LDO delivered training sessions to PSAs and 3 CAT sessions to teaching staff. LDO also offered advice on purchasing of literacy materials and book banding.  |
| Croy Primary  | PEF Reading Intervention groups set up. LDO delivered training to PSAs.  |
| South Lodge Primary                                   | LDO delivered training to PSAs who lead the literacy programme 'Success for All' PEF group. This is overseen by the HT.  |
| Teanassie, Tomnacross and Dochgarroch Cluster Primary | PEF pupils assessed at start of the year using YARC assessment.<br><br>PEF Reading Intervention groups set up. LDO delivered training to PSAs.<br><br>LDO and PSAs met throughout year to reflect on progress and make modifications to support. |
| Duncan Forbes Primary                                 | LDO delivered training to PSAs who deliver support to PEF pupils.<br><br>LDO delivered a number of inset sessions based on the Highland Literacy 'Wraparound' programmes.  |

#### 4.15 Dealing with Persistent Literacy Difficulties – Update May 2018

The approach for the development has been two-pronged:

1. Preventing difficulties from occurring through evidence based research leading to informed pedagogy.
2. Using a three wave model of intervention, developing and identifying existing screening and assessment tools to meet specific difficulties, and using a variety of strategies that are appropriate for meeting the individual needs.

#### 4.16 Wraparound

A number of Wraparound structures have been developed which look at current research and how this should affect our pedagogy. The resulting pedagogy wraps around the existing schemes and programmes in a school. This is to prevent schools from expecting new schemes to sort out problems. Rather the investment should be on upskilling staff and improving their pedagogy.

#### 4.17 Wraparounds have been developed in:

- Spelling
- Reading
- Comprehension
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Writing

4.18 This year has been spent primarily researching current evidence-based research, developing the Wraparound Structures, delivering training (CPD and school-based), gathering feedback, and refining the Wraparounds. The refining is an ongoing process. A few schools carried out a small trial of the Wraparound Spelling. The results showed that in a 2.5 month period, the average improvement was 7 months. The greatest improvement was 2years 2 months and this was achieved by the lowest ability pupils, some with an identification of dyslexia. Larger trials will be embarked on next session once the refining process is at a more completed stage.

4.19 Some schools have used Wraparound Spelling without conducting a measured trial. They have reported anecdotal evidence of the Spelling pedagogy structure turning around and transforming the spelling abilities of their school/class and creating an expectant attitude of progress and change.

#### 4.20 Training

Training has been a large part of the task this year. All training has been offered in each of the four areas of Highland Region: North, South, West and Mid and has been delivered to Primary teachers and PSAs, Secondary Teachers and PSAs, and parents.

- Paired Reading (wave two) – Delivered at training events and delivered to P6/7 pupils in schools
- Cued spelling (wave two)
- Whole class shared reading (wave one)
- Precision teaching (wave three)
- Spelling – research into practice (universal – wave one to wave three differentiation)
- Phonics – research into practice (universal – wave one to wave three differentiation)
- Writing – research into practice (universal – wave one to wave three differentiation)
- Reading – research into practice (universal – wave one to wave three differentiation)
- Dyslexia (wave one to three)
- Persistent Literacy Difficulties (wave one to three)
- Drop in sessions for professional dialogue
- Teaching Literacy through the Subject areas in Secondary School (wave one to three)
- Fluency in reading (waves two and three)
- Literacy Leaders

#### 4.21 Literacy Leaders

72 Teachers and librarians across Highland have taken part in the Literacy Leader's training. Not all have completed the course: some because of cover issues, others because of weather conditions and some because they felt they could not commit to the number of days out of school and the time commitment required for creating portfolios and development work in their schools.

4.22 The aim of the four day course was to create a team of upskilled teachers who are able to drive forward change in their schools providing a sustainable model of development. The Educational Physiologist Literacy team are considering training the Year Two Literacy Leaders to deliver within their ASGs the training they normally provide in conjunction with me in Persistent Literacy Difficulties.



- 4.23 In Year one, we covered:
- The Literacy check list
  - Literacy audit
  - Planning for development
  - Spelling and reading – research into practice
  - Dyslexia: identification, testing and pedagogy
  - Review of the year
  - A solution focused approach to school development
  - Working with parents
  - A touch of psychology
- 4.24 Participants also were required to do one further day of literacy of their own choice. The aim for next year is to run a Year Two Literacy Leader's Training and a Second round of Year One training.
- 4.25 In discussion with other agencies the hope will be in the year 2 training, to train **First Responders in Literacy**. These would be practitioners who within their ASG have had training that enable them to advise others but also to know when to recommend more specialised input from other agencies.
- 4.26 The Literacy Leader year two training could include:
1. One day training by the Educational Psychology Literacy team in persistent literacy difficulties.
  2. One day training by the Speech and Language Therapy Team in Words up and Pre-teaching vocabulary.
  3. One day training by the English as an Additional Language team.
  4. One day training to equip the Literacy Leader Year Two teachers to facilitate the Literacy Leaders Year One training in the future.

This would ensure a sustainable model of development in future years.

- 4.27 Reviews, Feedback and impact  
Along with the trials for Wraparound Reading, course participants have been asked for a review. Reviews and feedback of training courses have generally been very positive. Emails and phone calls giving feedback are received regularly.
- 4.28 Next session, along with the Educational Psychology Literacy Team, it is planned to conduct larger trials in Wraparound Spelling, Reading Fluency and Wraparound Writing. The Educational Psychologist research assistant will be part of this task. School Days.
- 4.29 Many schools have asked for twilight training sessions. Others have requested whole day input. During whole days, a variety of activities take place:
- Working with parents
  - Modelling lessons in class
  - Training PSAs
  - Discussions with SMT
  - CAT sessions
- 4.30 Where a school requests after school input, they are encouraged to invite their ASG. Blocks of several days have been spent in remote areas where input could be given to several different schools as well as a number of twilights.

4.31 Schools who have taken up the offer of in-house training are:

- Invergordon Academy – training ASN teachers and PSAs x2
- Dingwall Academy – Teaching literacy through subject areas
- Culloden Academy – dyslexia and teaching literacy through subject areas.
- Milburn Academy – dyslexia and teaching literacy through subject areas.
- Dornoch Academy – dyslexia and spelling
- Balnain Primary – Staff development, working with parents and training P6/7 as Peer Paired Reading Partners
- Mulbuie Primary – Staff development in Whole class shared reading and working with a group of parents on literacy at home.
- North Kessock – working with parents on paired reading, training Peer Paired Reading Partners, staff development in spelling
- Scoraig and Badcaul – Staff development in Literacy
- Drummond – Spelling x2
- St Duthus – working with a group of parents in literacy, staff development in spelling
- Auldearn Primary – Staff development in spelling
- Mallaig ASG – staff development in spelling
- Broadford Primary – whole class shared reading and Peer Paired Reading Partners
- Portree Primary – staff development
- Rogart Primary and ASG – spelling
- Teanassie cluster – interventions for persistent literacy difficulties
- Beaully Primary – P6/7 Peer Paired Reading Partners and staff development in spelling and persistent literacy difficulties. X 2
- Kirkhill - P6/7 Peer Paired Reading Partners and staff development in spelling and persistent literacy difficulties. X 2
- Tore cluster - P6/7 Peer Paired Reading Partners and staff development in spelling and persistent literacy difficulties. X 2
- Balloch Primary – spelling
- Rosebank and Milbank – Spelling with teachers, PSAs and parents
- Culbokie Primary – Spelling with teachers, PSAs and parents
- Drakies Primary – Spelling with teachers and persistent literacy difficulties x2
- Macdiarmid and Knockbreck - P6/7 Peer Paired Reading Partners and staff development in spelling and persistent literacy difficulties
- Carbost and Struan - P6/7 Peer Paired Reading Partners and staff development in spelling and persistent literacy difficulties
- Dunvegan and Edinbane – Persistent Literacy Difficulties

- Plockton Primary – Writing
- Kinmylies Primary - P6/7 Peer Paired Reading Partners

4.32 Trainers for Read, Write and Fresh start were invited to Highland to training ASN teachers for P6/7 pupils and Secondary School in the Fresh Start intervention. Around 60 teachers attended the two day training and found it to be worthwhile. Further Fresh Start training will be considered for next session.

4.33 Communication with the Gaelic development group is ongoing in terms of training and resources

## **5. Work to Improve the Performance in Numeracy**

5.1 The overarching aim for maths and numeracy is to enable all young people to develop the numeracy skills they need to achieve success in life, learning and work, by continuing to raise attainment and confidence levels. This aim is to be achieved by building a shared understanding of how children progress in numeracy and of effective learning and teaching strategies.

5.2 This year's plan aimed to build on the previous two years' work of training and support based on the Highland Numeracy Strategy with the Highland Numeracy Progression as a core resource. The Highland Numeracy Progression is based on the Maths Recovery programme and New Zealand Maths. The content and strategies from these programmes are mapped onto Curriculum for Excellence Levels, with appropriate Experiences and Outcomes bundled, along with links to Benchmarks, making it suitable for a Scottish context. It is designed to be a guide for planning, a reference document and a key resource for teaching numeracy and maths.

5.3 Diagnostic assessments, trackers and resources have been developed to support the teaching approaches exemplified by the HNP. The Highland Numeracy Blog and Glow site were set up in order to make these accessible online, and to share good practice across Highland and beyond.

5.4 To continue to build on this work, four projects were identified for this year:

- Extend and enhance Highland Numeracy Strategies in Early Years Settings
- Extend and enhance Highland Numeracy Strategies in secondary schools
- Continue to promote effective learning and teaching in numeracy and maths across the BGE
- Support the development of effective assessment and moderation in numeracy and maths across the BGE

5.5 These projects aim to extend training and support into both Early Years and Secondary sectors in order to build consistency of approaches, provide more effective transitions for pupils and address gaps and learning support needs at all stages.

5.6 It was also important to continue to build on the previous work of the last two years. Feedback and evaluations of this work have shown evidence of impact on staff's confidence levels and greater understanding of progression, as well as higher levels of mental agility in children and therefore this project aims to build on these successes further with a wider range of schools and by extending capacity for support through building leadership and expertise across all areas of Highland.

5.7 Over session 17-18 development has focused on each of the four projects identified above:

5.8 Extend and enhance Highland Numeracy Strategies in early years settings

- A working group was set up with the development officer, Educational Psychologists and an Early Years Education Support Officer. Work here has focused on three areas for development for EYPs and teachers in early level:
  - What matters in numeracy and maths
  - What this looks like in observations of children's learning
  - The brain development that underpins mathematical learning
- This group aimed to build on current work with numeracy and also the strengths of the Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy work. While the existing Early Years training shows great feedback and provides excellent ideas and resources for "what to do" in terms of activities, it was felt that there was a need for greater clarity on what progression and tracking should look like in settings and the importance of "mathematising" settings so that maths and numeracy are promoted as part of everyday life.
- From ongoing discussions it was decided to develop a driver diagram using a similar structure to the Emerging Literacy approach which would provide clarity on progression, effective learning and ideas on creating a rich and meaningful learning environment to promote maths and numeracy across settings. This project is ongoing – initial drafts have been sent out for feedback and will be adapted in line with feedback before being trialled.

5.9 Extend and enhance Highland Numeracy Strategies in secondary schools

- Following feedback from last year's CPD training was adapted for 2017/2018 for secondary probationer teachers. A core day's training was given to the secondary maths probationers (an increase to six this year from one the previous year). For non-maths secondary probationers an online training package was developed and trialled rather than the morning session previously offered. A Yammer group was set up, with tasks spread through the year with the aim of promoting quality dialogue and sharing good practice on delivering numeracy across learning.
- There have also been rising levels of training and support requested from a number of secondary schools. These have largely concerned children struggling to cope with Third level maths and numeracy, and support has focused on identifying gaps and learning needs through use of the diagnostic assessments available. This has been supported by work with Educational Psychologists in developing the paper Persistent Difficulties with Numeracy. A range of training sessions for both teachers and support staff was developed and delivered with ongoing support.
- In addition, a workshop was developed for Head Teachers along with Educational Psychologists and was delivered at the Head Teacher Conferences in November 2017. Following on from initial feedback it was decided to offer a training session aimed at Learning Support staff in secondary schools for the Inset day on February 2018. Evaluations and

feedback from this will be used to inform further development on this project next year.

#### 5.10 Continue to promote effective learning and teaching in numeracy and maths across the BGE

- This project built on previous development by continuing the training sessions delivered in session 16-17. A greater numbers of schools have now engaged with Highland Numeracy, and this training and ongoing support takes up the majority of time and resources over the year. Training sessions are also available on the CPD calendar for Numeracy Progression which is regularly oversubscribed. This year optional twilight sessions have been offered to primary probationer teachers in each of the four areas in Highland, as well as the core training day from previous years. Student training is delivered twice yearly to DLite students. These promote the core principles of the Highland Numeracy approach, as well as national guidance and resources, such as Making Maths Count and the National Numeracy Hub.
- Parent engagement events are also supported, and these are now offered wherever schools engage with numeracy training. Training to PSAs has been made available on a flexible basis during the school day, based on Maths Recovery approaches to support practice in class as well as for intervention with individual pupils or small groups. There has been a high demand for this in primary schools, and it is aimed to promote and adapt this for secondary PSAs to further support the work going on the above project too.
- The Primary Enterprising Maths Competition was also held for the first time in Highland in conjunction with UHI and Aberdeen University, and proved a great way to promote enjoyment and teamwork in maths.
- The Highland Numeracy Blog and Glow site continue to be maintained and evolve according to feedback and sharing of resources both on a local and national level. This year this was also extended to Twitter. The work of the Making Maths Count group is regularly promoted, and a link set up to the National Numeracy Hub from the blog.

#### 5.11 Support the development of effective assessment and moderation in numeracy and maths across the BGE

- Throughout ongoing training and support the diagnostic assessments and tracking documents linked to the Highland Numeracy Progression are promoted, as well as national guidance from the Moderation Hub to ensure clear and consistent approaches to assessment, with the aim of gathering a range of quality evidence to be drawn on when making professional judgement on progress within and achievement of a level. In addition development is planned to produce a range of holistic assessments based across different maths organisers to show application, challenge and breadth of learning in all areas of maths as well as numeracy. This work aims to link with the ongoing Authority and national work taking place to develop skills and confidence in assessment and moderation.
- As well as these projects, development has also been done on the Highland Numeracy Progression based on the publication of the final National

Benchmarks. The updated version of the progression, which was adjusted and fully cross-referenced to the Benchmarks and was published in September 2017.

- Collaboration has also begun with the other authorities in the Northern Alliance.

## **6. Improvement in Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing**

6.1 Schools have been working across a range of initiatives to promote health and well-being:

- A Development Officer from PEF funding was appointed to support schools with their health and well-being projects.
- Online training resources shared with school staff on Mindfulness. A number of schools have been developing projects in this area. Working Group was set up to develop resource packs and twilights which can be rolled out to schools.
- Continue to update GLOW with shared practice and resources (throughout the year).
- Further training on Equality and Diversity has been delivered.
- Work has taken place with Inspiring Scotland and the third sector to deliver 10 week blocks of training on play (throughout year with PEF schools).
- CPD sessions around the wellbeing indicators have been delivered.
- High 5 training sessions ran throughout the year.
- Nurture continues to be a significant development area in primary schools. Some secondary schools are now beginning to look how this would work in their context.
- The Daily Mile project has continued in a number of schools
- Development officer delivered Active Play training to schools.
- Health & Wellbeing group set up on Yammer.

Highland Council's Equalities Improvement Group and LGBTI+ subgroup have published a series of lesson plans in December 2017 to support the development of Equality and Diversity across the curriculum.

## **7. Improvement in Employability Skills and Sustained, Positive School-leaver Destinations for all Young People**

7.1 Schools have been working across a range of initiatives to promote employability skills:

- All schools featured this in their School Improvement Plans.
- Schools have developed further pupil experience of skills for learning life and work.
- Schools identified where learners can develop skills important for the world of work in inter-disciplinary learning activities and curricular areas (Education Scotland advice on career education).
- Guidance from Education Scotland and SDS was disseminated to teachers

and practitioners on the updated my world of work.

- Guidance and support developed by Education Scotland and SDS was disseminated to teachers and practitioners to support young people in S3 to learn about finding, applying and getting a job.
- Schools have developed an inter-disciplinary topic at each Curriculum for Excellence level that develops enterprising skills and links to the world of work.
- SEEMIS is being used to capture and monitor the wider achievements of young people across Highland. Schools are developing systems to ensure the accreditation of wider achievement.
- A Transition Conference was held to highlight early, BGE and transition to senior phase. The main themes were wider achievement, academic and pastoral transition practices. Developing Young Work Force was the embedded theme throughout the whole conference.
- The Activity Agreement Team is now embedded in the Council's Employability Service and Strategic Skills Pipeline. The anticipated impact is an increase in referrals to the Youth Trainee Programme and other pipeline provision.
- Schools are developing wider achievement opportunities for pupils not engaging with learning, such as enterprise, work experience, work-related learning. Work has been carried out with DYW Group to create appropriate opportunities and events with support from SDS Career Coach & Youth Development Officers.
- SEEMIS training has been delivered to schools to highlight value in using risk matrix data to inform and identify pupils most at risk of not achieving a positive destination from S3 (ASN) and S4 all.
- Further work has taken place to ensure that 16+ SEEMIS pupil intentions, preferred occupations, and preferred routes are complete for all S4, S5, S6 pupils. Those schools that are below national or regional average (whichever is highest) have been targeted and supported with 16+ SEEMIS training & reporting.

## **8. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people**

- 8.1 All of this activity helps take forward the local and national commitment to close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people. In supporting schools towards the delivery of this priority, the following work requires to be taken on board from session 2017-18.
- 8.2 The Scottish government has set out a range of measures as benchmarks for schools and authorities to demonstrate positive progress in closing the attainment gap. A data analysis post will be funded in session 2018-19 to support school improvement in this area
- 8.3 Schools will be required to demonstrate that they have made best use of the raft of data that is available to them. Training has been provided by the quality improvement team throughout session 2017-18. This will continue in session 2018-19, including with regard to:
- Teacher judgements: further work is required to deliver improvement in this area.

The BGE Dashboard will go live in August 2018. This will support school improvement in this area.

- Early years development overviews.
- Risk Matrix data.
- Insight data.
- Attendance data.
- Exclusion data.
- Employment Intelligence data, which should be used to support the development of learner pathways.

8.4 The authority will work with Northern Alliance partners and Education Scotland, to better understand and articulate the impact of rural deprivation, and to evidence how we are making progress to address this.

8.5 Schools will be required to have robust self-evaluation procedures to ensure they have a clear picture of the areas of strength and areas for improvement for their school. All schools must be able to communicate to key stakeholders where their school attainment requires improvement. The quality improvement team will support schools in this process.

8.6 Schools improvement plans must be high quality document focused on making best use of the available resources and delivery positive outcomes. It is vital that regional, authority and schools all work together to make best use of the available resource in closing the attainment gap. The additional funding allocated to schools through PEF and SAC funding should support the relevant improvement plan and deliver positive outcomes. The authority will continue to issue guidance to schools on making best use of their PEF/SAC.

8.7 The Quality Improvement Team will support schools in achieving their key outcomes. During session 2017-18, a number of central posts were funded by schools to support their work in literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing. These posts will only continue if they meet the future requirements of the school improvement agenda.

8.8 There will also be a continuing focus on the following areas:

- Schools exclusions are below the national average, but we will look to reduce rates further.
- Our attendance levels are above the national average. We will look to raise attendance levels in our schools particular for those pupils identified through the risk matrix.
- Schools will be required to support the authority LAC project.
- Schools will be required to review the use of part-time timetables for pupils
- Schools will be required to support the reduction of pupils who achieve no formal qualification when they leave school.
- The delivery of high quality learning and teaching. The delivery of high quality



lessons with robust tracking and monitoring processes will support the narrowing of the attainment gap. The roll out of the ambitious 1 to 1 device strategy will increase the effectiveness of learning and teaching and pupil motivation and therefore improve the chances of closing the attainment gap.

- The development of high quality leadership training.
- Stronger curricular links across the ASG.
- Refreshing the Highland Practice Model, to ensure we are getting the maximum benefit for all of our young people.
- Equity of curricular provision for pupils across all schools is an important factor in closing the attainment gap. Learners pathways will be analysed on an annual basis to ensure schools are maximising provision for pupils. The development of online/blended learning will play a key role in supporting improvement. Strategic partnerships with the colleges and other authorities will also play an important role.
- We will invest focused support in a small number of key ASGs to ensure maximum benefit for pupils is being achieved for young people.
- The Northern Alliance will be at the heart of supporting the delivery of this improvement agenda in this area. Highland schools should reap the benefit of joint authority collaboration, sharing workload, making best use of resource and the benefits of sharing best practice.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan provides us with the ability to bring together a comprehensive data set on the education picture across Highland. However bringing the data together is not enough by itself. We need to ensure the data is used intelligently, consistently and coherently on a day to day basis to help us to deliver improvement across all levels in Highland.
- 9.2 Improving educational outcomes is a key priority across Highland. There is very good practice in our schools and many young people achieve their potential. Collaboration and effective action is vital to driving improvement in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and ensuring that all children and young people are able to reach their potential.
- 9.3 The delivery of the national improvement priorities is not a quick fix. Our understanding of what needs to be achieved will evolve over the coming years and will be informed by continued engagement at all levels. It is vital that we use the resources available to us forward in achieving our ambitious outcomes.

## **10. Implications**

- 10.1 There are no climate change/carbon clever implications.
- 10.2 Resource – It is important the resources available to schools are focused on delivering the NIF priorities.

- 10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – it is important that the implications of rural deprivation are taken into account.
- 10.4 Risk and Legal – There would be risk for the Council if these key policy commitments were not being addressed and delivered on. There is likely to be reference to these priorities within the new Education Bill.
- 10.5 Gaelic – It is important to ensure the Gaelic implications of the delivering the NIF are clearly thought through and addressed as part of our plans for Gaelic Medium Education.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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