

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

**Lifelong Learning Committee
6 November 2019**

**Scrutiny Committee
27 November 2019**

ATTAINMENT AND PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING UPDATE 2019

**Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No. 19/322)**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides a 2019 progress update on Attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap as well as use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). It presents information on a range of measures designed to both improve performance and monitor progress of improvements. It meets the requirements to report on the National Improvement Framework for education.

1. MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1. In 2017, Scottish Government published [statutory guidance](#) detailing new education authority duties. Education authorities are to demonstrate how they have delivered against the strategic priorities of the [National Improvement Framework](#) (NIF) for Education. Specifically, education authorities are required to publish annual plans and reports setting out the steps they have taken in pursuance of the NIF with particular reference to reducing inequalities of outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.
- 1.2. In addition, further guidance issued in 2018 requested that this reporting include information on the use and impact of [Pupil Equity Funding](#) within the education authority, which is allocated directly to schools, and is targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This report meets all these national reporting requirements.

2. ATTAINMENT UPDATE REPORT

- 2.1. The [Raising Attainment Strategy](#) was agreed by the Lifelong Learning Committee on 2 November 2016 ([Report No. 16/348 refers](#)). Supporting the strategy was an implementation plan organised around the four NIF priorities:
 - Improvement in attainment particularly in literacy and numeracy;
 - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged;
 - Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
 - Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

2.2. This report (provided as Appendix 1) provides information on progress towards each of these priorities. Key performance headlines that are reported include:

- In 2017/18 there was an improvement in the proportion of children meeting speech, language and communication milestones at age 27-30 months.
- Attainment across literacy and numeracy at P1, P4, P7 and S3 continues to rise steadily, based on teacher judgements of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels, and improvement of cohorts through these levels is steady. There are also early indications of closing the attainment gap at all stages. Writing and numeracy levels continue to be generally lower than for reading and listening/talking, especially for P4 and P7, and the poverty-related gaps more persistent, highlighting continuing priorities for the literacy and numeracy strategies that have been established across the authority.
- For school leavers, literacy and numeracy qualifications achieved are generally increasing across both SCQF levels 4 and 5. However, more recently this increase has fallen behind the virtual comparator (VC) especially at level 5 in numeracy, indicating the continued focus required. For those leaving school relatively early (after S4 or S5) and not attaining a Higher, an encouraging 69% achieved a vocational qualification.
- Senior phase attainment for leavers continues to be good. However poverty-related gaps are evident in all areas of attainment and leaver destination gaps remain but are narrowing slowly. It may be that narrowing of gaps in these areas will be seen over a longer time period, once the effects of improvements and interventions earlier in young peoples' lives (including PEF) become evident for school leavers.
- There are indications that educational outcomes for looked after children are improving, although these generally remain behind those of peers who are not looked after.
- Initial and follow-up school leaver destinations and 16-19 participation rates remain high or are increasing, remaining well above the national average.
- Exclusions from school increased slightly in 2018/19, especially at secondary. Overall attendance in secondary is slowly declining, especially amongst more deprived groups. In primary, attendance has increased slightly this year, although unauthorised parental holidays continue to present a challenge.
- Effective partnership takes place between schools, colleges, universities, employers and the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Board. A total of 475 business partnerships with schools were recorded in 2018/19.
- Participation in Active Schools activities has dipped somewhat in the latest full year, with staffing pressures cited.
- The overall uptake of School Meals is generally increasing at P1 to P3 where it is universally free, although it has fallen slightly in the P4-P7 stages in line with national trends.

2.3. Based on the progress to date, an updated raising attainment strategy for 2020-2023 is in development which will set out revised performance

measures and stretch aims. Where possible these have been reported in the attached Appendix 1 as the majority of the measures will carry over to inform the new strategy.

3. PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING (PEF)

Background

- 3.1. PEF is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has committed £750m to this funding as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme and PEF will continue to be invested in schools until the end of the current Parliamentary term.
- 3.2. PEF is allocated to schools on the basis of the estimated number of children and young people in P1-S3 registered for free school meals. Funding is allocated on the basis of £1200 for each child and must provide targeted support for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential.
- 3.3. Within the Scottish Attainment Challenge, funding was also made available in July 2018 to help improve the educational outcomes of care experienced children and young people. In 2018/19 an allocation of £154,400 was made to the Council.
- 3.4. Headteachers have full access to PEF funding and meet regularly with their Finance Officer to review spending. Although funding is allocated on the basis of eligibility described above, Headteachers are permitted to use their discretion in making decisions about which children and young people would benefit most from any particular intervention or approach, whilst keeping a clear focus on delivering equity.
- 3.5. There is an expectation that funding will focus on activities and interventions that will lead to improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. All schools develop a school improvement plan indicating PEF priorities.

2018/19 Allocation

- 3.6. In session 2018/19 schools were allocated £1,661,520 of funding, which was allocated to almost all of the 72 primary schools, all 10 secondary schools and one special school. Goodlyburn Primary was awarded the greatest PEF allocation of £102,000 and St John's Academy was awarded £117,360 in total. Full details of allocations and expenditure for 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years to the end of July 2019 are included in Appendix 2.
- 3.7. Five schools did not receive funding: Abernyte, Blairingone, Cleish, Fossoway and Logiealmond. Additional money was allocated through Perth and Kinross Closing the Gap funding for schools not in receipt of PEF funding or where receiving a small amount.

- 3.8. Including the carry forward of £720,281 from 2017-2018, a total of £2,197,124 was spent in funding in session 2018-2019, with £184,677 remaining. By the end of July 2019, 89% of 2018/19 PEF allocation had been spent (excluding the 2017/18 carry forward).

Guidance and Planning

- 3.9. Updated Local PEF Guidance was issued to all schools, complementing Scottish Government National guidance. Four Headteacher Support Days were organised in May 2018 for senior school staff to access support from Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) in writing their School Improvement Plans and PEF Plans. When developing plans, Headteachers were encouraged to work collaboratively together and expected to include all members of the school community in the planning process.
- 3.10. School Improvement Framework Guidance was issued to schools and they were signposted to organisations which provide research-based interventions. These included the Education Endowment Fund (EEF), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), The National Improvement Hub and Education Scotland's Interventions for Equity.
- 3.11. The PEF planning format was structured to enable staff to consider:
- Gaps in attainment and the rationale for selecting particular cohorts of pupils.
 - Baseline data available, including the use of common key measures, eg attainment, achievement, attendance, exclusions, participation rates, parental engagement, leaver destinations.
 - Identifying appropriate strategies and interventions.
 - Opportunities to work in partnership with other schools within their Local Management Group (LMG) or beyond.
 - Opportunities to involve other agencies and third sector organisations.
 - The support they may need from staff at the centre.
 - The impact of interventions.
 - Reporting on progress made.

- 3.12. Schools provided PEF plans in June 2018 and Quality Improvement Officers carried out follow up discussions with Headteachers during Term One visits.

Interventions

- 3.13. School PEF plans outlined a focus on universal and targeted support in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing interventions. Around half of planned school interventions were universal across all learners and half were targeted for particular cohorts of children. Half of planned interventions were literacy based, a quarter on numeracy and a quarter targeted health and wellbeing.

- 3.14. A directory of Interventions was developed to support schools in considering appropriate interventions and the support available from the Educational Psychology (EPS) team in their implementation.
- 3.15. Some schools focused on parental engagement activities including family learning clubs, 'Nibble and Natter' sessions, parent learning sessions and digital learning. Other activities included the development support clubs and the development of library areas.
- 3.16. Some Local Management Groups (LMGs) worked in partnership to take forward universal approaches in all their schools.
- 3.17. Additional resources included employing skilled staff ranging from Early Childhood Practitioners (ECPs), to Depute Headteachers. These part-time additional hours were timetabled for each week where staff worked with individuals or groups of children. One of the main challenges faced by many schools was recruiting to such posts and it proved to be difficult to ensure that staff with PEF responsibilities were given the opportunity to fulfil their remits.
- 3.18. Other resources purchased included digital devices such as laptops and iPads, curriculum resources, classroom equipment and materials.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Impact

- 3.19. Whilst PEF goes directly to schools, the local authority is required to monitor and evaluate its use including reporting to the Scottish Government. Individual schools reported on the impact of PEF interventions within their annual Standard and Quality Reports.
- 3.20. The EPS team provided a range of support for schools with evaluation including training workshops on literacy and numeracy interventions and evaluation support around self-regulation.
- 3.21. During the summer term of 2019, case studies were developed involving 10 schools centred on PEF interventions where clear data on pupil progress was established. Other interventions gave more qualitative evidence to support understanding of the impact on attainment. These case studies will be shared with schools and used to engage staff in discussions about best practice and in identifying next steps.
- 3.22. Over the course of the year the School Improvement Team visited all schools, meeting with Senior Management Teams and staff to provide support and challenge in relation to raising attainment and closing the poverty related gap. Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor visited eight primary schools, seven secondary schools and Fairview school over the course of the year, along with the support from a QIO where appropriate.
- 3.23. The Analysis and Improvement Team provided support to schools and carried out several visits last session to help schools organise and understand their tracking and monitoring and evaluation data more effectively.

- 3.24. The School Improvement Team will continue to monitor the use of PEF allocations and track the progress that schools are making within their school improvement plans.

Next steps in Supporting Schools

- 3.25. PEF is providing schools with the opportunity to close poverty-related attainment gaps. Schools are supported in developing PEF plans, their choice of interventions and approaches to expenditure. A range of measures are planned throughout this academic session to further support schools in planning, spending and evaluating pupil equity funding:
- Refresh the school improvement approach to guide schools to a greater depth of understanding of school priorities, identification of gaps and actions. Plan the support that the teaching and analysis/improvement teams can offer to schools over the course of the year.
 - Further develop the Directory of Interventions to outline the range of approaches recommended to schools, with the intention of scaling the most effective strategies and interventions more widely across schools.
 - Support schools in making good links with other schools, professionals and third sector organisations through Local Management Group activities, Equity Network sessions and professional learning opportunities.
 - Offer Improvement Methodology workshops, along with Model for Improvement sessions. A refresher course on action research will be offered to schools who have previously participated.
 - Implement a system to enable schools to more effectively record the progress and impact of interventions and support on closing the poverty related gaps in numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The report outlines the ongoing activity and progress across Education and Children's Services to achieve the priorities of the National Improvement Framework, including use of Pupil Equity Funding to aid tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 4.2. While there are improvements being made in many areas, there remain some stubborn inequalities in outcomes for children and young people affected by deprivation. The activities described and the successes that can be seen are part of a long-term and sustained endeavour to achieve both excellence and equity in pre-school and school education.
- 4.3. It is recommended that the Lifelong Learning Committee:
- (i) Considers the contents of this report.
- 4.4. It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
- (i) Scrutinises and comments as appropriate on this report.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to objective No. (ii).

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to objective No. (ii).

- 1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Policy Framework in respect of the key policy area:

- Change and Improvement

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 N/A.

Workforce

- 2.2 N/A.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 N/A.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 This report has been considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. No further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 N/A.

3.5 N/A.

Risk

3.6 N/A.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 The report is developed in collaboration with Heads of Service, Managers and staff across ECS.

External

4.2 N/A.

5. Communication

5.1 N/A.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1: Attainment Update 2018 - 2019
Appendix 2: PEF Expenditure