

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee
3 November 2021

Scrutiny Committee
29 November 2021

ATTAINMENT AND PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING UPDATE 2021

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No. 21/201)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on progress made in Perth and Kinross to raise attainment and close the poverty-related attainment gap. It outlines the range of measures implemented to improve performance and monitor progress of improvements, including the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support children and young people. It meets the requirements to report on the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for education and on the expenditure and impact of the Pupil Equity Fund.

1. MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Scottish Government published [statutory guidance](#) in 2017 outlining the local education authority's duties regarding Standards in Scotland's Schools. Education authorities are required to demonstrate how they have delivered against the strategic priorities of the [National Improvement Framework](#) (NIF) for Education. The guidance promotes a reduction in inequalities in education experienced by children and young people as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. Education authorities are required to publish annual plans and reports setting out the measures they have taken in order to realise the NIF aims of achieving excellence and equity in education.
- 1.2 Subsequently, 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 of these national reporting requirements.
- 1.3 Issues associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic have impacted on all attainment and performance measures which makes year on year comparison of data problematic and at times impossible.

2. ATTAINMENT UPDATE REPORT

- 2.1 This report is an update on the initial year of [2020-23 Raising Attainment Strategy and Implementation Plan](#) and improvement actions contained in the Raising Attainment Implementation Plan 2021-22.

The strategy document outlines the approach within Perth & Kinross Council's (PKC) Education & Children's Services (ECS) in the pursuance of the current priorities of the NIF which are:

- 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 Appendix 1 provides information on progress made in 2020/21 towards each of the four NIF priorities. Key performance measures reported include:

Improvement in attainment particularly in literacy and numeracy

- The proportion of Primary 1s meeting developmental milestones before starting primary school has improved from 81% in 2019 to 82%.
- For primary pupils, achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels are somewhat lower in Primary 1 and Primary 4 than in the last year recorded (2019). Primary 7 attainment is similar to that seen previously.
- In literacy, school leavers' levels are similar to the virtual comparator (the short-term target) and approaching the stretch aims of 85% and 95% achieving at levels 4 and 5 respectively. In numeracy, further improvement is required to meet both of these aspirations.
- Overall leaver's attainment, as measured by tariff score, remains good and above virtual comparator, except for the lowest achieving 20% of leavers.

Closing the attainment gap between the most and the least disadvantaged

- The poverty-related gap has narrowed in terms of Primary 1s meeting developmental milestones.
- The poverty-related attainment gap for Primary 1 shows signs of a small narrowing over the last three recorded years, a slight widening at Primary 4 and is largely unchanged at Primary 7.
- The poverty-related attainment gap widened somewhat for the school leavers in 2020, considering both literacy and numeracy, and as measured using tariff points.
- Staying on rates for S4 pupils to S5 have increased to 88% and the equity gap for this measure has narrowed.
- Attainment of Looked After school leavers is above the virtual comparator in level 4 numeracy but remains behind in other measures.

Improvement in young people's health and wellbeing

- School attendance is higher than in previous years, and this area remains a focus for further, sustained improvement. Exclusion rates have declined significantly in secondary schools and are also lower in primary schools. More detailed information will be made available following publication of the national Health and Wellbeing census in 2020/21.

Improvement in employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people

- Positive destinations and participation in positive activities (16–19-year-olds) are down slightly from a rate of 96% to 94%, and COVID-19's impact on the wider economy and opportunities is seen here.
 - A greater proportion of leavers without Highers, achieved a vocational qualification in 2020.
 - Effective partnership takes place between schools, colleges, universities, employers and the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Board. A total of 529 business partnerships with schools were recorded in 2020/21, an increase of 30 on the previous session.
- 2.3 Based on the progress to date, the Raising Attainment Strategy 2020-2023 clearly sets out the revised performance measures and updated aspirational stretch aims. The ECS Approach within the strategy details the responsibilities for schools and the local authority. The Raising Attainment Board, made up of a range of ECS Officers and school leaders, provides the framework and mechanism that monitors and harnesses a wide range of improvement activity from across ECS and corporate work such as the PKC Child Poverty Action Group.
- 2.4 School closures, and subsequent remote learning, led to many changes in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years which had a serious impact upon performance data. These included two different SQA Certification models resulting from the cancellation of exams; non-collection of S3 and special school literacy and numeracy data by Scottish Government and the consequences of school closure and remote learning on attendance, exclusions and learning in general.

3. PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING (PEF) REPORT

Background

- 3.1 PEF forms part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme, which was launched in February 2015 and is currently in its sixth year. PEF is allocated directly from the Scottish Government to schools and is specifically targeted at closing the poverty-related attainment gap. A total of £147m nationally has been committed to this funding as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme for session 2021-2022.

This includes an additional £20 million PEF premium which is being issued as a 15% uplift to previous allocations to schools.

This premium recognises the new and additional challenges faced by schools, children and young people as a result of COVID-19.

- 3.2 Over £215 million of targeted funding has been invested to help close the poverty related attainment gap in 2021-2022. This marks the first year of investment in an expanded £1billion Attainment Scotland Fund, which will be

provided over the new parliamentary term, after an investment of over £750 million in the previous parliamentary term.

- 3.3 The Scottish Attainment Challenge [Equity Audit](#) was carried out by the Scottish Government in January 2021 to further schools' understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures on children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The findings within the audit have helped inform local authority and school plans. Every council area in Scotland has received PEF and 97% of schools have been awarded funding this session. PEF is allocated to schools on the basis of the estimated number of registered free school meals in Primary 1 to Secondary 3, with £1200 allocated for each child and young person.
- 3.4 Headteachers have full access to PEF funding and meet regularly with their Finance Officer to review spending. Although funding is allocated based on 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. Headteachers work in partnership with other schools and their local authority, whilst planning improvements.
- 3.5 There is a continued expectation that funding will focus particularly on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and support the school's priorities in raising attainment. All schools develop a School Improvement Plan indicating PEF priorities, outlining planning for universal and targeted approaches.

2021/2022 Perth and Kinross Allocation

- 3.6 In session 2021/2022, PKC schools were allocated £2,037,808 of funding, which included a 15% Pupil Premium of £265,801. This was allocated to almost all (69 out of 70 primary schools), all 11 secondary schools and one special school.
- 3.7 In funding session 2020/21, a total of £1,594,184 was spent. A carry forward of £791,084 was taken into 2021/22. At the end of July 2021, 76% of the 2020/21 PEF allocation had been spent.

Guidance and Planning

- 3.8 Revised Local PEF Guidance was issued to all PKC schools in June 2020. This aligned closely with the Scottish Government's updated PEF National Guidance.

In recognition of the financial and other resource implications of maintaining critical provision for children and families at this time, guidance on Attainment Scotland Funding, including PEF, was relaxed in order that local authorities and Headteachers could support the education, support and care for children and young people during the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Decisions made by schools, however, were to remain consistent with the principle of equity in education.

Interventions

- 3.9 Schools concentrated on a range of approaches to enhance the universal provision and targeted interventions for children and young people, to support their reconnection with learning in school and address any gaps.
- 3.10 In 2020/21, PEF plans focused particularly on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Impact

- 3.11 PEF is allocated directly to primary and secondary schools within Perth and Kinross and 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 for 2020-2021.
- 3.12 During the course of 2020/21, the Raising Attainment Board worked to provide a sharper focus on the stretch aims detailed in the Raising Attainment Strategy. The Board will also monitor closely the impact of PEF expenditure and the impact of the identified interventions to close the poverty related gap.
- 3.13 The School Improvement Team provide support and challenge to schools in relation to raising attainment and closing the poverty related gap as part of their regular quality improvement work. Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor worked with identified Primary schools and Secondary schools to analyse data and identify appropriate strategies for closing the poverty related gap in more detail.
- 3.14 The Analysis and Improvement Team continued to provide support to schools with the Analysis Suite, including school data profiles, and carried out visits or remote support to help schools organise and understand their tracking and monitoring and evaluation data more effectively.

Next steps in Supporting Schools

- 3.15 To ensure that the use of PEF continues to be monitored and evaluated, Education Services will ensure that there is:
- Continued promotion of and support to schools in the delivery of evidence-based interventions to target aspects of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing;
 - Further development of the online Closing the Gap Planning Tool to support planning and tracking of individual pupil progress and monitoring of impact;
 - Implementation of a programme of training in Improvement Methodology to support with measuring and evaluating impact of interventions; and
 - Regular reporting and analysis of progress to the Raising Attainment Board.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The report outlines the continuous activity and progress across ECS to achieve the priorities of the NIF, including use of PEF to raise attainment and tackle closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 4.2 The poverty related gap remains a feature within our society, and this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has amplified existing inequalities in income and poverty. The activities described, and the successes outlined, are part of a long-term and sustained endeavor 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.

Authors

Name	Designation	Contact Details
David Macluskey	Service Manager (Secondary)	ECSCcommittee@pkc.gov.uk
Paul Davison	Corporate Research and Information Manager	01738 475000

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Sheena Devlin	Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)	21 October 2021

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

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 Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key Priority area:

- Learning and Achievement

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 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 was 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

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

Appendix 1 - Raising Attainment Strategy 2020-2023 - Attainment Update
2020/21

Appendix 2 - Pupil Equity Fund Update 2020-2021