

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	6 September 2018
REPORT TITLE	School Improvement Plans and the work of the Regional Improvement Collaborative
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/18/113
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with a summary of the improvement activity proposed in School Improvement Plans and highlight how these plans dovetail with the work of the Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 2.1 note the content of School Improvement Plans for 2018/2019;
- 2.2 note how School Improvement Plans will be partially supported by the Regional Improvement Collaborative; and
- 2.3 note the participation of Aberdeen City Council staff in the workstreams of the Regional Improvement Collaborative.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are many factors which influence school improvement planning including national advice and guidance, local planning and the needs of the communities served by the individual schools.

3.2 NATIONAL INFLUENCES

3.2.1 The Proposed Education (Scotland) Bill

A series of reforms may be legislated for in an Education (Scotland) Bill. The reforms aim to empower schools to effectively lead the delivery of excellence and equity in their school community.

3.2.2 The reforms set out how the newly established Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC) will promote and support improvement by setting expectations of close collaboration and partnership working between schools and associated services. It is proposed that The RICs will provide consistent, high quality support and improvement services in collaboration with each Local Authority.

3.2.3 The Scottish Government has decided to not legislate for these changes at this time although reserve the right to revisit this decision in time.

3.2.4 It is anticipated that finalised regional plans will be resubmitted to The Scottish Government at the end of September 2018 following a period of consultation with key stakeholders.

3.3 Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000

The need for school improvement planning was first legislated for in 2000. The legislation was amended in 2017 to reflect the National Improvement Framework, in particular the need to break cycles of deprivation and to effectively engage with families when developing plans. The review reaffirmed that school improvement plans continue to be informed by the authority's annual plan, should reflect the local authority strategy for parental involvement but be developed and driven by school communities to ensure that plans reflect local circumstance.

3.4 The National Improvement Framework

All Local Authorities have a duty to work to achieve excellence and equity as stipulated in the National Improvement Framework. This results in all schools planning to:

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

All funding allocated to schools through either Pupil Equity Funding or Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding (SAC) must also be aligned to the four priorities of the National Improvement Framework.

3.5 How Good is Our School Fourth Edition (HGIOS?4)

The suite of quality indicators in the HGIOS?4 documents outline that effective improvement planning is a continuous process of considering what is working well and what needs to improve. Several key principles guide the development of plans including:

- Effective collaboration with parents and carers, community partners and the Associated School Groups to develop and evaluate the impact of plans;
- Taking an evidence-based approach, including careful analysis of data on children and young people's progress in order to plan;

- The need to focus on a small number of key priorities which can be implemented as part of the collegiate working time agreement and aim to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy; and
- Reflect the local and national context including the NIF priorities.

3.6 ABERDEEN CITY INFLUENCES

3.6.1 Aberdeen Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Associated Integrated Children's Services Plan and Locality Plans

3.6.2 Aberdeen City Council and partners have developed a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) to drive partnership work to improve outcomes for the citizens of Aberdeen. The LOIP has identified the themes of Economy, People and Place.

3.6.3 Under each theme are key priority areas. Delivery of these priorities is overseen by partnership groups. Although education makes a contribution to many of the partnership groups, the service significantly contributes to the Integrated Children's Services Board (ICS Board). The ICS Board leads on delivery of the theme 'Children are our Future'.

3.6.4 The 'Children are our Future' theme has 3 primary drivers:

- children are safe and responsible.
- children are getting the best start in life.
- children are respected, included and achieving.

3.6.5 In addition, Locality Plans have been developed to guide work to improve outcomes across the three Priority Areas. Locality Improvement priorities easily link with the NIF priorities and include:

- Increasing the number of positive destination and employability;
- Improving health and wellbeing;
- Increasing provision of Early Learning and Childcare';
- Reducing the attainment gap; and
- Improving levels of literacy.

3.6.6 Local Authority guidance on school improvement planning has taken account of these important influences. This guidance was presented to and endorsed by The Education Operational Delivery Committee in April 2018 (see appendix 1).

3.7 Partnership Forums

3.7.1 Partnership Forums were established from August 2017 and comprise all partners working across an Associated Schools Group. The Partnership Forums provide a 'bottom up' approach to improvement in keeping with the LOIP and can bring efficiencies when shared improvement priorities are addressed collaboratively across the local partnership. The Forums are governed by the Integrated Children's Services Board.

3.8 SCHOOL COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

3.8.1 Using Data to Determine Need

Colleagues in schools have accessed a range of professional learning to support their effective use of data to realise improvement and as a result have established a clear articulation of the attainment related poverty gap. The interpretation and how the gap is measured is consistent across both schools and central officers. This will support more efficient and robust reporting of progress.

3.8.2 A series of Improvement Events over 2017/2018, including training events across Associated School Groups, has enabled all schools and PEF Champions to identify 'the poverty related attainment gap' in their establishment down to individual pupil level.

3.8.3 A wide range of data is available through the Management Information System used in schools (SEEMiS) as well as from web-based standardised assessments.

3.8.4 Schools also benefit from digital benchmarking tools to enable them to compare performance up to S3 with virtual comparators and with other schools across the region.

3.8.5 Teacher judgement remains one of the most significant pieces of key evidence to support improvement and all schools across Aberdeen City have been working to improve the quality of moderation practices over the past year.

3.9 Local Authority Guidance and Support

Guidance for schools is refreshed on a yearly basis to take account of national advice and guidance, local priorities and learning from the previous year. The guidance supports schools to submit a Standards and Quality Report and Improvement Plan in a consistent format.

3.10 Schools Evaluating Quality to Establish Improvement Priorities

Identification of areas for school improvement begins with effective self-evaluation. This process involves schools using a range of data and intelligence to establish a baseline of performance.

3.10.1 It is important that the Local Authority has confidence in the quality of these baselines of performance. The quality assurance model previously used across Aberdeen City schools focussed only on QI 3.2 (Raising Attainment and Achievement). The approach was reviewed in April 2017 to provide an increased number of visits covering each of the core quality indicators which are:

- QI 1.3 Leadership of Change
- QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
- QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

3.10.2 More regular Quality Assurance visits have enabled the Local Authority to offer higher levels of challenge and support to schools and to develop a platform to

validate the schools' own self-evaluation. These changes have had a positive impact on Local Authority and school confidence in the validity of the gradings awarded through self-evaluation.

3.10.3 Primary School self-evaluation gradings have reduced over the year as primary staff have an increased understanding of national expectations, secondary gradings remain largely the same as in session 2017/2018. In 2017/18, the average QI grading of Good or better in primary schools is 2% lower than in 2016/17. Overall, there has been a 1% decline in the average QI grading in primary schools.

3.10.4 In 2017/18, 75% of secondary schools reported an average QI grading of Good. This is an 8% increase from 2016/17. Although some have individual QI gradings of Very Good, no secondary has an average grading of Very Good or better for 2017/18. This was also the case in 2016/17. Overall in secondary, the average QI score is the same as it was in 2016/17.

3.11 Identifying Areas for Improvement

Careful analysis of city and school performance data by head teachers and the central team led to the collaborative identification of a number of key themes to be prioritised for improvement where appropriate to local need. These are:

- Increased collaboration across schools and ASGs to promote improvement;
- Utilisation of Improvement methodology to support the leadership of change;
- Improvements in numeracy;
- Improvements in Early Years Literacy;
- Further development of Curriculum Design and Rationale;
- Targeted Closing of the Poverty Related Gap and measurement of progress;
- Positively responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences; and
- Improving the quality of Learner Pathways

3.11.1 These themes will guide the work of the central team and have influenced which of the Northern Alliance workstreams the Local Authority intend to engage with.

3.11.2 Schools have used local data to determine which of these agreed priorities should feature in individual improvement plans to ensure that each individual school plan is based on local need.

3.12 The Quality of School Improvement Plans Submitted

Schools have submitted plans in keeping with the local guidance and central officers have noted a significant improvement in the quality of planning. Schools have better identified 'the gap' and have detailed appropriate outcomes and measures to support improvement. The exemplification provided to schools is enclosed in Appendix 2.

3.12.1 Improvement Plans evidence that Professional Learning events held over 2017/2018 have instilled more careful consideration of outcomes and measures in line with the ACC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure that improvement is effectively targeted, measured and reported.

3.13 Links with the Data

A review of School Improvement Plans evidences that the improvement work planned in schools accurately reflects both local circumstance and the key areas for improvement across Aberdeen City. Schools have focussed attention on:

- Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare
- Increased collaboration across schools and ASGs
- Improvement Methodology
- Numeracy
- Early Years' Literacy
- Curriculum Design and Rationale (continued)
- Closing the Poverty Related Gap – Measures and Outcomes
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Learner Pathways

3.13.1 These themes have been built into the ACC National Improvement Framework Plan for 2018/2019.

3.14 Support Available through the Northern Alliance

The Regional Improvement Plan is wide ranging and comprises 12 workstreams. The workstreams are:

- Emerging Literacy – led James Cook, Highland
- Maths Attainment & Numeracy – led by Dave Clark, Aberdeenshire
- Systems Improvement and Leadership Development – led by Vince Docherty, Aberdeenshire
- Early Years and Child Care Programme – led by Craig Clement, Aberdeenshire
- Performance / Data Sharing – led by Reyna Stewart, Aberdeen City
- Children's Service Planning – led by Ian Kyle, Highland
- Poverty / Closing the Gap – led by Helen Budge, Shetland
- Future Delivery / Models – led by Peter Diamond, Orkney
- IT Transformation – led by Bernard Chisholm, Western Isles
- Equalities – led by TBD, Aberdeen City
- Community Learning & Development – led by Avril Nicol, Aberdeenshire

3.14.1 Aberdeen City schools are directly engaging with the following workstreams:

- Emerging Literacy – lead James Cook, Highland.
- Maths Attainment & Numeracy – lead: Dave Clark, Aberdeenshire.
- Equalities is more of a 'bottom up' workstream.

3.14.2 More broadly, in terms of sharing good practice amongst officers, ACC is involved in the following workstreams:

- Early Years and Child Care Programme
- Performance / Data Sharing
- Children's Service Planning
- Community Learning & Development

3.15 The Quality Assuring Implementation

The Central Education Team have reviewed ways of working to make better use of resource to support improvement and plan to work more collaboratively across services to support improvement. This more joined up approach will provide an opportunity to upskill staff in each of the Quality Indicators and ensure that those with specialist expertise drive improvement.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets and with support from funding allocated through either Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) - £ 635,000 or Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) funding-£2,845,000. Please note there was also a carry forward of £1,600,000 from session 17/18.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Standards in Scotland Schools Etc Act 2000 imposes a duty upon the Education Authority to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in schools and to exercise their functions in relation to the provision of school education with a view to raising standards of education and with a view to achieving the strategic priorities set out in the National Improvement Framework. The work undertaken to date and being undertaken satisfies these legal duties.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource to realise the improvements outlined in the plan.	L	Coordinate all work around the NIF Plan to make best use of available resource.
Legal	Failure to deliver on legal duties detailed under the Standards in Scotland's School Etc Act 2000.	L	Implementation of the Plan will satisfy these legal duties
Employee	Risk of employees feeling overwhelmed by the many changes in education.	L	Coordinate all changes in the NIF Plan to focus improvement activity.
Customer	Minimal impact on children and young people	L	Promotion of data literacy to support colleagues to effectively identify and address 'the gap'
Environment	No risks identified		
Technology	No risks identified		

Reputational	Loss of reputation through a failure to address the excellence and equity agenda	M	Closely monitor and quality assure progress to take action where necessary
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7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	The Plan will ensure that children and young people are fully accessing education and more likely to contribute to the economy.
Prosperous People	The Plan will impact positively on all children and young people, but particularly those who are adversely affected by poverty.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	The Plan promotes an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that personalised support is available to them.
Organisational Design	The Plan ensures the best use of resource in the system.
Governance	The impact of the Plan is overseen by Chief Officers and by the Education Operations Committee.
Workforce	The Policy ensures that colleagues in schools have clarity around their roles and responsibilities.
Process Design	Monitoring arrangements ensure that any vulnerabilities in the system are quickly addressed.
Partnerships and Alliances	The Policy makes use of wider partnership support when appropriate.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	<i>Required</i>
Privacy Impact Assessment	<i>Required</i>

Children's Rights Impact
Assessment/Duty of Due
Regard

Applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – School Improvement Influences
Appendix 2 – SQUIP guidance

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