



Appendix A -National Improvement Framework Plan – Progress of Actions



RAISING ATTAINMENT

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Quality improvement visits are currently being undertaken in trios. This approach enables senior leaders to learn from and challenge each other. Preparations for return inspections have presented an opportunity for further collaboration at school leadership level with some experienced head teachers helping to quality assure key documentation for colleagues.


There is currently a shortfall in quality applicants for **middle leadership** positions, especially at the secondary stage. Plans are currently being progressed to use the expertise of our senior leaders to develop a coaching and mentoring programme for those with potential to be effective middle leaders.

Recruitment for Early Learning and Childcare settings and required contractual changes have been a key focus over the last few months. **The Stepping into Leadership programme** was designed and delivered to those aspiring to take Senior positions to drive more consistent practice and further enhance our workforce planning. To date there have been 39 participants and 27 have moved into senior roles. Furthermore, 41 of our Senior Early Years Practitioners and Early Years Practitioners are currently undertaking the BA in Childhood Practice via University of Aberdeen.

The Safer Schools App has been made available to all families, pupils and staff across Aberdeen City schools. The app was launched city wide on June 3rd, with codes to access the app issued to parents, pupils and staff.

Feedback from schools has highlighted a need to focus on how technology is used by children and young people. Parents, through our city-wide parent forum, have welcomed the app and the information made available to them.

Safer Schools helps the entire school community to better protect themselves in the Digital World, through delivering contemporary and relevant safeguarding information to teachers, pupils, parents and carers.



In addition to the resources available in the app, there are a range of resources available for teachers and parents, which address issues relating to positive use of technology. Feedback will be sought from all user groups to learn from their experience of using the app and to identify next steps.


Our **professional learning offer** continues to be delivered through synchronous and asynchronous means, via live webinars and self-directed activities embedded in Sways.

As part of our focus on developing leadership at all levels, we have 38 middle leaders embarking on a new pioneering leadership programme with Drew from Drummond International and Sarah from Sarah Philp Coaching from October – May 2022. This professional learning offering recognises the role and importance of middle leaders in nurturing people and supporting improvement across Aberdeen City.

Work with Joyce Matthews this session offers an opportunity for professional learning leads in schools and senior leaders to develop skills in the design processes and facilitation of andragogy.

Our city-wide work with Osiris continues this session with the theme of 'Challenge', supporting our colleagues in school to consider the importance of high challenge in learning and how to ensure all learners are appropriately challenged. Work for senior leaders and the central team will also focus on maximising the impact of Career Long Professional Learning on learning and teaching.

All probationer teachers have engaged with the Local Authority professional learning programme. Themes include the General Teaching Council for Scotland Professional Standards, Supporting all Learners, Building Relationships and Parental Engagement. Probationers have also engaged in 2 out of 6 sessions with the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy to date, with a focus on building resilience and professional values. A Columba peer network has also been established to ensure that those connections and networks between new teachers continue to grow.



Post-probation, there are 96 teachers engaged with the Winning Scotland, Limitless Learning programme. The programme has been developed to support early phase teachers disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting them to apply a growth mindset approach in their classroom, developing their own practice as well as supporting all pupils to engage in learning. The programme will continue with the current cohort until April 2022.


The central team have resumed delivery of **Stronger Families** sessions for parents and carers. The first input took place on 27th September and explored the topic of sleep. Over 100 families benefited from the session and evaluations were positive.

Work continues to refresh the **parent learning hub**; the support and wellbeing pages have now been updated. The second phase is underway seeking views of parents to enhance the learning at home content and co design new sections based on their feedback.

SEEMis is now being used to gather all **tracking** data in Primary and we are moving tracking arrangements for the secondary broad general education over to the system currently . Officers and head teachers are working with colleagues in Data and Insight to create a Power BI to display data gathered. Once this is created, we will have consistent tracking across Broad General Education .

The **tracking of groups** around attendance and exclusions is now established. This tracking will help determine the extent to which policies and procedures are supporting all groups and will help us become more sophisticated in our approach to quality improvement.

Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSO) are based in a number of city schools. The practitioners are developing a website to support moderation at school and authority level. The site will provide training materials to allow moderation against; national standards, peer teacher judgement and the opportunity to ask for support from a bank of trained QAMSOs. The exemplification of a level section will be available to all staff across the service from October 2021.



The refreshed **Additional Support Needs & Outreach Service** management arrangements have been implemented with the appointment of a Head Teacher and a Senior Leadership Team. This change is helping to ensure that we have a more agile system able to respond to changing children/young people and family needs. Following the publication of the national vision for children and young people with additional support needs, work is ongoing to establish this for the ASN & Outreach Service. Similarly, the Service is focusing on sharing practice and expertise between teams with the view of engendering consistency across learning, teaching and assessment practices. This is being supported by an ongoing focus on the use of data to evidence judgements, self-evaluation, and service improvement. The Service is also in the process of establishing a website and a parents'/carers' steering group. A full report on this area is due before Committee in January 2022.

4 schools have now begun to engage with the **Wood Foundation** as part of the Excellerate Programme. We look forward to seeing how this impacts on practice over the coming months. Oracy work, in collaboration with Cambridge University has already been rolled out to participating schools and plans are progressing to make this invaluable professional learning available to the remaining secondary schools.



CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP



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The Closing the Gap group have developed a **Framework for Equity**. The framework was published in August and is based on current best practice and research to help schools consider their approaches to the closing of the gap agenda. The framework aligns to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the stretch outcomes identified for children and young people.

All curricular **costs of the school day** have been removed for session 2021/22 and work is on-going to consider other costs of the school day. This will ensure that we deliver a fully accessible curriculum to all. **Music Instruction** is now free for all children and young people and available across the city.

Work has progressed to use **live data** to help inform improvement. Live data is currently used to help monitor the impact of the National Improvement Framework Plan. Work is underway to pull live data into **school profiles** to support this way of working at individual school level.

1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare was made available to all eligible children from August 2021. Work is underway to evaluate the delivery of the ELC expansion programme. This evaluation will be presented to Committee in January 2022.


The ELC Links Hub opened in August 2021 and will provide 1140 hour of ELC to 90 children aged between 2 and 5 years. In addition to the provision of universal ELC the setting will also support our preventative agenda and offer early intervention to families including those who self-identify as being in need of additional support. Family support is a key element of the ELC Expansion programme; adopting a whole family approach to wellbeing at a universal level. To this end, The Links Hub has been designed to support family learning to create welcoming and inviting spaces for families and children. To assist children and families who would benefit from early intervention and wrap around support by multi agencies, twenty percent of the available places will be reserved to support families in need, referred to as Priority ELC places. Applications will be linked to the single request for assistance process and reviewed throughout the year. The service is currently supporting 13 children who have recently arrived from Afghanistan.



As a result of the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, evacuation of families from the country and the **Government-sponsored Afghan Resettlement Scheme**; 33 Afghan families, a total of 137 men, women and children have arrived in Aberdeen since 18th September and are being temporarily accommodated in 3 hotels in the city centre. This number includes 13 children eligible for ELC provision, 29 primary school aged and 20 secondary aged youngsters. The Council has joined public and third sector partners in meeting families' immediate needs whilst working with government to identify more settled accommodation in the UK. Education staff have been visiting each of the hotels to introduce the education system to families and begin to get to know the children and young people. From 28th September the primary and secondary aged started to attend bespoke EAL provisions at Sunnybank School and St Machar Academy to begin to introduce them to school life. As their permanent addresses are identified the children and young people will move to the local schools for where they live.

Research shows that poor communication skills are closely linked with social disadvantage. **Talk Boost and Early Talk Boost** are targeted interventions for children with delayed language which help to boost their language skills and narrow the gap between them and their peers. Differentiated for children between the ages of 3-10 years, the programme aims to accelerate children's progress in language and communication by an average of six months, after a nine-week intervention. A programme of training for teachers, early years practitioners and Pupil Support Assistants is delivered by a pair of trainers with speech and language therapy and education backgrounds and trained staff then deliver the programme in their schools or ELC settings. The Talk Boost approach supports children to work in groups to develop their speech, language and communication and will boost not only those core skills, but also support their social interactions with other children. The programme is aimed at those children with language delay rather than those with specific speech and language difficulties, which require the ongoing support of a speech and language therapist.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) are working with the first cohort of 5 ELC settings, using a coaching approach to embed the key messages within the **Ready, Steady 2** guidance. Digital training sessions have been developed covering 6 core areas of practice with 2-year olds. These digital sessions can be accessed by any ELC setting within Aberdeen and are being promoted through the EPS Digital Hub and through the Early Years Locality Leads.




Work has begun on an evaluation of **Out of School Care**. Part 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires Local Authorities to consult regularly with parents and carers about the provision of day care for school aged children. The Out of School Care Survey was shared with parents and carers, across all Primary Schools, ASN Schools, Parent Councils, Out of School Care services and social media platforms via an online survey. The survey responses give us a positive platform from which to further engage with parents and carers as School Age Childcare policy develops nationally. A report on the findings of the survey has been shared with parents and carers, providers and Elected Members. As part of our ongoing commitment to School Age Childcare in the city and our engagement with key stakeholders, the next phase of our evaluation activity will be to engage with children and young people. We will undertake this between October and December 2021. We will then develop an action plan at the end of the consultation process in early 2022.

Work has begun on auditing what is currently in use within **literacy and numeracy** with a view to creating a clear framework outlining successful approaches for schools. This will be supported by the roll out of oracy training as part of our partnership with The Wood Foundation.

Considerable work has been undertaken in preparation for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare including the universal availability of Parents as Early Education Partners (**PEEP**) in all ELC settings. The Peep Learning Together Programme (LTP), will enable staff to deliver it effectively to support the families that they work with. The LTP is an evidence-based programme that helps parents and carers to support their young children's development by valuing and building on the play and learning opportunities in everyday life. To date almost 100 practitioners have been trained to deliver the programme with a further 30 expected to complete the course by December 2021.

Partnership forum guidance has been refreshed to guide the use of effective partnership use of the Education Recovery Funding. The approach will gather live data to enable effective evaluation of our approach to recovery.

The Educational Psychology Service Digital Hub has seen an increase in site traffic on our parental pages. The service are currently planning how to gather parental views on the most useful topics to include with the aim of increasing return visits to the site. Work is also progressing to ensure that education staff directly inform content to support learner and staff wellbeing.



A number of **parent volunteers** are supporting the delivery of Bikeability and provision of football in schools. Collaborative work with Sport Aberdeen has enabled the service to resume safely and in keeping with the mitigations in place in schools.


MCR Pathways is now embedded in 6 academies across the city with the Pathways Co-ordinators part of the integral partnership working within the school and involved in discussions re planning for positive destinations with a key focus on those young people with experience of care.

All head teachers have engaged in professional learning on **The Promise**, the **UNCRC** and **Angela Morgan's review of additional support for learning**. School improvement plans contain appropriate reference to these critical policy documents and staff in schools and ELC provision are being guided to plan for their successful implementation.

The new **Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme** provides funding for children attending eligible ELC settings, for 2 hours or more per day, to receive milk (or a specified alternative) and a healthy snack (a portion of fruit or vegetables) every day they attend. Aberdeen City Council is administering this scheme, on behalf of the Scottish Government. We are encouraging all ELC settings to register and provide the benefit to children in their care and allocate and monitor the funding locally. To date, 139 Early Learning and Childcare providers have registered to participate in the new Scheme and have received their first payments. 54 Local Authority ELC settings and 85 External ELC providers. There is a rolling registration so more providers can register throughout the year if they wish to participate in the Scheme.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING



All of our schools were provided with an introductory presentation about the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** which was delivered in-school by school staff at the start of the new term. This was followed by a more detailed set of CLPL resources which schools will make use of over the school session. These resources will support a consistent and robust understanding about children's rights, the professional obligations that relate to this and the anticipated ramifications of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.


Aberdeen City Council continues to be the only local authority in Scotland who holds 'Associate' partnership status within UNICEF UK's **Rights Respecting Schools Award** (RRSA) programme. This status is reflective of our continued commitment to the programme and the high levels of engagement with it on the part of our schools. Recent data tells us that 77% of our schools are actively engaged in the award (including special schools). Of these, 9 schools are at registration stage, 22 have obtained the Bronze award, 9 have achieved Silver award status and 7 have successfully achieved the highest level of the award at Gold.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) continue to deliver a range of professional learning to schools. **Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)** training is now on its second cohort. There are 16 schools and 23 staff involved in Cohort 2. Evaluations for cohort 1 were positive, and EPS review and planning data reinforces this regarding the impact for children and young people receiving support from trained ELSAs.

EPS continue to expand their **Emotion Coaching** across the city, with a model of digital training and coaching to support implementation in schools. An online training course? for parents, accessed via the EPS Digital Hub, will be available early next term. Evaluations continue to be positive, and schools involved begin to shift their focus to positive and emotionally responsive relationships.

Seasons for Growth (S4G) provided a universal loss and change programme during the pandemic, which was offered by the EPS across the city. Training as a S4G companion, and 'reconnector' sessions continue to be offered on an ongoing basis.

EPS continues its offer of coaching to support the **development and wellbeing** across the city, to either individuals or groups of school staff. Evaluations continue to be positive from those engaged in these programmes.



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We have undertaken initial Training with a focus on **Compassionate and Connected Communities** to build a sustainable model of support across our City, using nurturing approaches to meet the needs of learners and build community resilience and strength. This has been part of a train the trainer model with nearly 60 trained staff to roll this out as part of the wider training for schools.

This training has already included staff from the FitLike Hubs, Educational Psychology and School Nursing and we are beginning to receive positive feedback on the impact with school teams as this is taken forward.

Our monthly **parent newsletter** provides updates to parents and carers in relation to the Local Authority National Improvement Framework Plan. It also provides a platform to share practice and highlight key supports for children and families. We have positive engagement with this and see between 12,000 and 15,000 individuals engaging with this on a monthly basis.

Almost all city schools are now working with **SHINE** (Scottish Health Improvement Network) to review wellbeing needs of learners P6-S6. This quality data will help schools to drive appropriate wellbeing supports. We continue to consider our approaches in relation to gathering data for our younger children and schools are continuing to engage with a variety of health and wellbeing frameworks to gather this.

A **PEPAS** (Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport) Group has been established to help develop closer partnership working in relation to meeting the physical needs of learners. 4 meetings have taken place with subgroups established to focus on shared gathering and use of data to help improve outcomes for children and young people, shared communication about targeted work and collaborative approaches to use of facilities and resource. There has also been key discussion about the sharing of practice and development of further partnership work linked to the **Peace Fields Project**, working collaboratively to support a child led Peace Pledge across Aberdeen City.



A Pilot of DBI (**Distress Brief Intervention**) in partnership with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and Penumbra) has been implemented in 4 Secondary Schools. We are beginning to see the positive impact this is having on individuals, but it is still early days.


We are considering the work of our **LIAM** (Let's Introduce Anxiety Management) training and how this can also support the progression of wellbeing interventions in place for our children and young people. Partnership working with Fit Like Aberdeen and School Nursing Services will help us broaden the supports in place and increase the levels of delivery for our young people.

Nearly 100 members of Education staff have registered to undertake the University of **Aberdeen Counselling Skills Course** over the coming year or two years, programme choice dependent. A tender for fully trained **counsellors** in schools has been developed and is in the process of being approved so that we can proceed with this vital piece of work to ensure an equitable offer of counselling for all secondary schools and primary pupils aged 10 and above.

The **Health & Wellbeing working group** have developed a website to support the delivery of health and wellbeing. This site focuses on learning themes related to the wellbeing indicators and signposts to activities and relevant materials for delivery including specific guidance on substance misuse and food nutrition. The draft has been shared with school staff for comment and is anticipated to be launched fully before Christmas.

There is a staff wellbeing project being undertaken at Northfield Academy this session in collaboration with **SAMH** (Scottish Association for Mental Health). As part of this all staff and pupils will create a personal wellbeing plan. The aims of this project are an:


- Increased focus on and support for staff wellbeing
- Increased awareness in pupils of their own mental health and what keeps them well (this should lead to increased resilience)
- Creation of a school community where there is a common language and understanding of wellbeing and its importance
- Increased staff confidence in having conversations around wellbeing and signposting and/or referring to other support where relevant
- Smoother transitions for pupils to and from specialist services when they are required due to a degree of the 'baseline' work being already in place



A **Multi-agency peer support pilot** for staff continues after beginning in Term 4 of last session. Meetings are supported by counsellors (akin to group supervision, provided by Aberdeen Counselling and Information Services). We look forward to the learning from this pilot with potential for a further **group supervision pilot** in one of our secondary schools.



EMPLOYABILITY



Work is underway with Microsoft to explore the establishment of a '**Classroom of the Future**' to help identify how digital could help us improve the curriculum offering across the senior phase.

A skills framework has been developed to provide schools with a platform to support schools in the delivery of future skills. The framework will support a commonality of language used to define skills and ensure that there is a shared understanding between parents, pupils and staff. An initial draft was shared with school leaders for comment in September 2021 and a final version is anticipated in the coming weeks. Skills Development Scotland are working with a number of ASG's providing in depth and extended input to support the embedding of skills across networks.


4 schools (St Machar, Oldmachar, Bucksburn and Harlaw) are to participate in **Excellerate** with the Wood Foundation.

Work has begun to link the **NHS Youth Academy** with Northfield Academy to provide further opportunities for young people to access pathways into health and care.

Pathway planning approaches have been refreshed to take account of current priorities and resources available to schools. There are indications that this refresh is helping to improve transition planning and developing multiagency led transition projects which take account of skills .

Multi-agency transition guidance has been developed to ensure clarity on procedures to support planning for transitions within and between local authorities for our children and young people who are Looked After. These are being finalised to take account of our digital strategy and will be rolled out across the service. Working alongside schools and other key professionals, the Virtual school monitors key points of transitions including Early Years to P1, P6/7/S1 and each stage of the senior phase to support planning for positive destinations.

The Virtual School has provided input to key staff including the Educational Psychology Service / Quality Improvement Officers/Home School Liaison Officers/ Family Liaison Officers on the Promise to support an understanding of the role of **Corporate Parents**. An information session has also been delivered to 3rd year undergraduate Primary Teachers at Aberdeen University. Involvement of the Virtual School Head Teacher on the Corporate Parent Performance and Improvement group ensures Education are part of the multi-agency approach to delivering on the Promise across the partnership.



As the National Advisor to the Virtual School Network hosted by CELCIS, the Virtual School Head Teacher is involved in collaborating and sharing of good practice with oversight from Education Scotland and Scottish Government at a national level.

Work continues to embed **digital skills** in staff and pupils and explore opportunities to harness skill sets from across the partnership in order to improve the in school and extra-curricular offer. Gaelic Medium Education (GME) is piloting an extra-curricular offer to keep skills alive for learners who transition to local secondary schools. This will enable them to reengage with GME and undertake qualifications as part of the city campus offer.

The service are collaborating with colleagues in City Growth and Further and Higher Education to look at the **Logan Review** recommendations.

The service continues to work in partnership with others (Developing Young Workforce and Skills Development Scotland) to increase opportunities for young people to talk about their skills for life, learning and work. **Employer Schools Coordinators** are established in all secondary schools to support the work of schools and the City Growth work experience unit to **provide work related experiences** for young people.

The **ABZ works site** launched in September. The site continues to be developed based on growth areas and feedback. This provides an opportunity to work with families to fully explore how the pandemic and downturn has impacted on opportunities in order to highlight positive learning pathways in growth areas.

A project charter which seeks to increase the number of **young people with complex additional support needs** who enter a positive destination has been agreed and will be implemented over the coming months.

MCR Pathways is now embedded in 6 academies across the city.

Work to migrate to a web based, digital platform for all planning, approval and management of **educational visits**, sports fixtures and extracurricular activities is underway. Information has been collated and the platform has been developed but the launch has been delayed by 3 months due to issues with the providers terms and conditions, and insurance liability levels which are being resolved by the legal team. This is anticipated to fully launch in January 2022.