

SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE: PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February 2015 to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority to improving outcomes for children and young people, with a specific focus on raising attainment and closing the poverty gap. The Attainment challenge is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- 1.2 Education Services presented a report to Community Services Committee in March 2016, to provide the Committee with information on the statutory intention of the Scottish Government in introducing the new National Framework and outline some of its provisions. It noted the publication of the first Interim Framework Report and provided an outline for Committee of some of the actions that Education Services were taking to address the new statutory duties.
- 1.3 The Scottish Attainment Challenge focuses on, and accelerates targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland. It is also intended to support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

The £750m Attainment Scotland Fund supports a targeted initiative focused on supporting pupils in the local authorities of Scotland with the highest concentrations of deprivation. The nine Challenge Authorities are currently Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. The Fund initially focused on primary schools and targets improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A number of primary schools, out with the Challenge Authorities, with significant proportions of their pupils living in deprived areas are also benefiting. These schools have been identified on the basis of supporting a significant proportion of pupils and families from communities which are facing some of the greatest challenges across Scotland. The scope of the Programme was also extended to support up to 133 secondary schools across Scotland. One school in Argyll and Bute, Rosneath Primary, receives funding from the Attainment challenge allocations

- 1.5 On 1 February 2017 the share each school will receive from the Scottish Government's £120 million Pupil Equity Funding was announced. With funding provided through the Attainment Scotland Fund and allocated directly to schools, targeted at those children most affected by the poverty related attainment gap.
- 1.6 The Scottish Attainment Challenge is about achieving equity in educational outcomes. Equity can be achieved by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 1.7 This paper provides the Committee with information on the recently announced Scottish Government Pupil Equity Funding, introduced as a core element of the Scottish Attainment Challenge which will distribute £120 million Pupil Equity Funding to schools across Scotland. A number of schools within Argyll and Bute have been identified to receive funding for the specific purpose of raising attainment and closing the equality gap. The paper also provides an outline for Committee of some of the actions that Education Services are taking to ensure adherence to specific grant requirements associated with the Pupil Equity Funding. The paper further outlines action which is being taken to support schools in delivering the requirements of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. (Appendix 1 provides an overview of the funding allocations for Argyll and Bute Schools eligible to receive Pupil equity Funding.
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1.8 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the Scottish Government's Pupil Equity Funding announcement;
- b) Note the provision of strategic guidance at Scottish Government and Authority levels to support the implementation of the Pupil Equity Funding, and
- c) Request the Executive Director of Community Service to bring a progress update on the implementation programme by schools to a future meeting of the Committee.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge in February 2015 to bring a greater sense of urgency and priority to improving outcomes for children and young people, with a specific focus on raising attainment and closing the poverty gap. The Attainment challenge is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.
- 2.2 Education Services presented a report to Community Services Committee in March 2016 to provide the Committee with information on the statutory intention of the Scottish Government in introducing the new National Framework and outline some of its provisions. It noted the publication of the first Interim Framework Report and provided an outline for Committee of some of the actions that Education Services were taking to address the new statutory duties.
- 2.3 The Scottish Attainment Challenge focuses on, and accelerates targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland. It is also intended to support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.
- 2.4 The £750m Attainment Scotland Fund, a targeted initiative focused on supporting pupils in the local authorities of Scotland with the highest concentrations of deprivation. The nine Challenge Authorities are currently Glasgow, Dundee, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. The Fund initially focused on primary schools, targeting improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A number of primary schools, out with the Challenge Authorities, with significant proportions of their pupils living in deprived areas are also benefiting. These schools were identified on the basis of supporting a significant proportion of pupils and families from communities facing some of the greatest challenges across Scotland. The scope of the Programme was later extended to support up to 133 secondary schools across Scotland.

On 1 February 2017 the share each school will receive from the Scottish Government's £120 million Pupil Equity Funding was announced. With funding provided through the Attainment Scotland Fund and allocated directly to

schools, targeted at those children most affected by the poverty related attainment gap.

- 2.5 This paper provides the Committee with information on the intention of the Scottish Government, as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge to disperse the £120 million Pupil Equity Funding to a number of schools within Argyll and Bute for the specific purpose of raising attainment and closing the gap. It also provides an outline for Committee of some of the actions that Education Services are taking forward to address the specific grant requirements associated with the funding.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the Scottish Government's Pupil Equity Funding announcement;
- b) Note the provision of strategic guidance at Scottish Government and Authority levels to support the implementation of the Pupil Equity Funding, and
- c) Request the Executive Director of Community Service to bring a progress update on the implementation programme by schools to a future meeting of the Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The First Minister has reinforced the Scottish Government's commitment to continually improve Scottish Education and close the attainment gap through the provision of £120 million funding, ring fenced specifically for the delivery of the Governments Policy to improve education and close the attainment gap. Now titled "Pupil Equity Funding" this funding is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Scottish Government has committed to this funding as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme from 2017-18. With an anticipated commitment for funding over the next three years. The Pupil Equity Funding forms part of the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 4.2 National guidance (at this stage draft guidance) provided by Scottish Government is intended to help schools plan how they will most effectively invest their Pupil Equity Funding allocation to improve the educational outcomes of children affected by poverty. Argyll and Bute will issue complementary guidance about how the funding will operate locally. Within the national guidance a core set of key principles are outlined to be observed by schools, Education Authorities and Scottish Government. These are:
- Head Teachers must have access to the full amount of the allocated Pupil Equity Funding;

- The Pupil Equity Funding must enable schools to deliver activities, interventions or resources which are clearly additional to those which were already planned;
- Head Teachers should work in partnership with each other, and their local authority, to agree the use of the funding. Schools must take account of the statutory responsibilities of the authority to deliver educational improvement, secure best value, and the authority's role as employer. Local Guidance will set out more detail on how this will operate;
- The operation of the Pupil Equity Funding should articulate as closely to existing planning and reporting procedures as possible – e.g. through School Improvement Planning and Standards and Qualities reports;
- Parents and carers, children and young people and other key stakeholders should be involved in the planning process;
- Funding must provide targeted support for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential. Although the Pupil Equity Funding is allocated on the basis of free school meal eligibility, Head Teachers can use their professional judgement to bring additional children in to the targeted interventions;
- Head Teachers must base their use of the funding on a clear contextual analysis which identifies the poverty related attainment gap in their schools and plans must be grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at raising attainment for children affected by poverty, and
- Schools must have plans in place at the outset to evaluate the impact of the funding.

4.3 **Funding levels:** Publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools will receive £1,200 in 2017-18 for each child in Primary 1 to S3, or equivalent, who are eligible and registered for free school meals.

4.4 **Funding allocation and criterion:** Pupil Equity Funding will be allocated to schools on the basis of the estimated number of children and young people in P1-S3 registered for free school meals under the national eligibility criteria.

In 2017/18 the funding allocation used by Scottish Government has been calculated using the most recently available Healthy Living Survey and Pupil Census data and will be based on:

- The estimated number of P1-P3 pupils who would be registered for free school meals using the national eligibility criteria. This will be done by taking the figures for 2014/15 and then applying those to the 2016 school rolls for P1 to P3.
- The estimated number of P4-P7 and S1-3 pupils who are registered for free school meals.
- The estimated number of special school pupils in the P1-S3 age range registered for free school meals.

4.5 At this stage Scottish Government has confirmed that the approach to estimating free school meal registrations will be kept under review as

Government seeks to improve the quality of data for identifying children living in households affected by poverty.

- 4.6 Funding for 2017/18 will be paid by the Government to the Authority by means of ring-fenced grant which will clearly indicate the amounts to be allocated directly to each school, with a requirement for the Council will be to confirm arrangements in place for distribution to school level.

Spending criteria: within the guidance there is an explicit message that all funding allocated to schools should be used for the purpose of delivering focused activities and interventions that will lead to improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

- 4.7 Although the funding is allocated to schools on the basis of free school meal eligibility, Head Teachers will have the discretion to make decisions about which children and young people would benefit most from any particular intervention, whilst keeping a clear focus on delivering equity. Family learning opportunities can also be considered as potential interventions, as can interventions that impact on transitions between school stages.
- 4.8 A framework, "Interventions for Equity" has been developed to support the planning and implementing of interventions to meet the needs of children and young people affected by poverty in order to close the attainment gap. With specific examples cited to act as a stimulus for wider reflection of what would suit the local context of each individual school.

Head Teachers may work at an individual school and local community level or collegiately in wider school clusters and beyond at local authority level to address common interests. Interventions should be considered within the context of the school planning cycle and must be targeted towards closing the poverty related attainment gap. Where appropriate, funding should articulate with existing Scottish Attainment Challenge School and Challenge Authority improvement plans.

Evidence shows that some children and young people from equalities groups are disproportionately affected by deprivation and can therefore face significant additional barriers to learning. Education authorities have responsibilities to actively address inequality. In this context, Head Teachers should promote equity by taking into account equality groups when planning support and interventions. Funding should not be used in ways that stigmatises children and young people or their parents.

- 4.9 **Partnership working to improve outcomes for pupils:** The guidance confirms the role of parents and communities in improving outcomes for children and young people. Specifically noting parents and the local community as valuable sources of support and partnership. In many contexts schools may be able to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people by working with a range of bodies such as parent groups; parent councils; other local authority services; third sector organisations (including youth work, family learning organisations); other educational sectors; and/or centres of expertise. Understanding the needs of children and young people should help to identify appropriate areas for collaboration.

- 4.10 **Staffing and recruitment and retention:** Where schools identify the need to recruit additional staff for an appropriate intervention or activity, they will be required to work closely with the Authority (as the employer) to ensure that the job remits and specifications are clearly tied to the aims of the intervention. In doing so, Head Teachers will also be required to take full account of the Authority HR policies and procedures. Importantly, any additional teachers recruited utilising the Pupil Equity Funding will be excluded from the authority's contribution to the national teacher numbers and / or ratio commitment. Given the time limited nature of the funding, a significant concern is the avoidance of ongoing liabilities or redundancy costs that are unfunded.
- 4.11 **Procurement:** the purchase of resources, equipment or services must comply with existing local authority procurement procedures. This will be particularly important when buying ICT resources (see below) or, for example, services from third sector partners. Schools will be required to liaise with the authority finance team to ensure compliance with procurement policies and legislation.
- 4.12 **ICT:** Pupil Equity Funding can be used to procure digital technologies, including hardware and software, when its allocation and use is particularly focused on supporting children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential. The Scottish Government provides access to a range of national procurement frameworks for the purchase of digital technology products and devices, including a range of desktops, laptops and tablets. The frameworks offer a direct route to market and significant savings against RRP.

To prevent issues arising with compatibility and connectivity, schools seeking to purchase digital technology will be required to do so in close consultation with the Council IT Service. Simply providing more technology does not result in improved outcomes for learners. Therefore, any deployment of technology in an educational setting should be undertaken in line with the objectives of the national Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy.

- 4.13 Support for schools to assist them in planning the use of their allocated pupil Equity Funding has been confirmed by Scottish Government and includes:
- A framework of evidenced and proven educational interventions and strategies to help tackle the poverty related attainment gap. The framework can be used by all partners and should help to inform the decisions schools make. The structure and content is confirmed as being dynamic, with a commitment to continue to evolve the framework as an integral part of the National Improvement Hub, where a wide range of improvement, self-evaluation and research materials are available and where practice exemplars can be shared. Other research summaries and intervention examples will be incorporated as these become available;
 - Materials will be developed further in the coming months as the Scottish Government works with the Education Endowment Foundation to develop a Scottish specific version of their Teaching and Learning toolkit;
 - A series of regional events aimed at school leaders took place in February 2017, with Scottish Government supporting locally organised events where possible;
 - Attainment Advisors to provide advice on a regional basis;

- A dedicated Scottish Attainment Challenge community on Glow where all educators will have online discussions, ask questions, post responses, exchange ideas, access additional resource materials and share examples of practice. In addition, this secure community will be used to host regular discussions about the interventions and strategies being developed through the Pupil Equity Funding;
- Access to collaboration and communication tools on Glow including Yammer, Sharepoint, Blogs and Glow TV. These tools provide great opportunities for joint working and for sharing materials across all involved in the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with the ability to control visibility where required, and
- School Improvement Planning guidance to be provided through the National Improvement Framework.

In addition, the Education Authority will also offer our own packages of support and detailed procedural guidance for schools to assist them plan how to use the funding effectively.

- 4.14 **Outcomes, impact and measurement:** At a school level, it is essential that teachers continue to make best use of the data they have access to locally to understand which children and young people would benefit from targeted support and to monitor and track learners' progress over time. Further guidance on the Broad General Education (BGE) assessment model issued by Education Scotland in November 2016 will be used by schools and the Education Authority.
- 4.15 **Accountability and reporting:** Head Teachers will be accountable to the Education Authority for the use of Pupil Equity Funding within their school. To ensure transparency, schools will be expected to incorporate details of their Pupil Equity Funding plans into existing reporting processes to their Parent Council and Forum, including in their School Improvement Plans and Standards and Quality Reports. Reports will be publicly available so that parents can understand what is happening in their school. Arrangements for publication will be confirmed by the local authority in due course.

School inspection and other review processes will be used where necessary to ensure schools use their funding appropriately. 'How Good Is Our School? 4' includes an evaluation on the six point scale of the school's success in raising attainment and achievement and ways in which they can demonstrate improvements to equity for all learners. In addition, the operation, use and effectiveness of the Pupil Equity Funding at closing the poverty related attainment gap at a local authority level will feed into other existing quality assurance processes, such as Audit Scotland's Shared Risk Assessment.

- 4.16 **Unspent funds;** the guidance received from Scottish Government confirms that in circumstances where schools are unable to spend their full allocation during the financial year, any underspent grant may be carried forward to the next financial year though it would be expected that it would normally be spent within the school year. In order to support this requirement Education Services will work with Finance colleagues to ensure the appropriate arrangements are

put in place to ensure schools liaise closely with to agree the necessary arrangements for carrying forward Pupil Equity Funding. In doing so, this will need to be considered separately from other funding within the devolved school management budget.

5.0 Pupil Equity Funding- Roles

- 5.1 In taking forward the expectations arising from the new Pupil Equity Fund it is reasonable to consider the requirements placed upon staff at both school and Education Service levels of the Council. A helpful starting position, arising from discussions between the Society of Chief Executive Officers (SOLACE), the Association of Directors of Education (ADES), Scottish Government and Education Scotland. At this stage the outline responsibilities have been set out as follows:

Key roles: Schools

- Develop and implement a plan for use of funding to make greatest impact. Taking into account national and local operational guidance;
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with other schools and partners, including consideration of Community Learning and Development (CLD), family learning and out of school activities;
- Consult with parents and children and young people on plans;
- Publish plans and progress reports;
- Develop measurement plans to ensure desired outcomes are achieved, and
- Report on progress through existing standards and qualities reporting.

Key roles: Local Authority

- Support for planning and reporting:
 - Facilitate collaborative approaches within and across school clusters
 - Support schools in their decision making.
- Operationally:
 - Ensure schools are aware of and are supported to comply with Human Resource (HR), Procurement and Finance processes
 - Provide support to schools in responding to HR, Procurement and Finance matters
 - Ensure schools are able to fully access the funding allocated to them from the pupil Equity Funding.
- Accountability:
 - Part of the normal Local Government processes – complying with the statutory responsibilities for school improvement, value for money and performance reporting
 - Ensuring a continued use of existing approaches to securing improvement with schools. For example: School Improvement Planning, guidance, support and review and preparation and publication of Standards and quality reporting mechanisms.

Key roles: National

- Confirming individual school funding allocations;

- Issue of grant funding notification to the local authority and processing of grant draw down from the Authority;
- Monitoring of progress:
 - School inspection and review processes;
 - Audit Scotland's Shared Risk Assessment process (SRA);
 - Sampling of School Improvement Plans/Standards and Quality reports.
- Support:
 - Through the work of Education Scotland Attainment Advisors /Area Lead Officers (ALOs);
 - Provision of a framework of interventions (as noted in section 4.9 of this report);
 - Scottish specific EEF learning and teaching toolkit.
- Provision of a range of networking and collaboration tools and events for the local authority and schools.

5.2 Education Services, in conjunction with schools, in responding to the Scottish Attainment Challenge are taking a number of steps to respond to the updated National expectations and ensure adherence to the revised statutory obligations placed on the Council. These include:

- In June 2016, Education Services participated in the Teacher Judgement Survey where the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels were gathered nationally for Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking and Numeracy at the stages of P1, P4, P7 and S3. The 2016 Evidence Report details the national picture of the percentage of P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils who are achieving the expected CfE Level relevant for their stage in Literacy and Numeracy (Appendix C);
- All local Authorities have direct access to a named Scottish Government Attainment Advisor who works collaboratively alongside local authority staff on agreed priorities which support the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Rosneath Primary School was identified through the Scottish Attainment Challenge initiative to receive targeted support to close the poverty related attainment gap. The Attainment Advisor assigned to Argyll and Bute has provided support and challenge to the Education Officer (Area), Headteacher and staff at the school to increase capacity within the school and identify strategies that will raise attainment in literacy;
- A range of learning and teaching approaches have been put in place and data has been generated to evidence improvement. Following analysis and evaluation of information gathered, successes will be shared with schools across the authority in order to inform best practice;
- Undertaken a revision of Authority Improvement Planning guidance for use by Education Officers, Head Teachers, school staff, pupils and parents;
- Appointed a team of Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officers (QAMSOs) from within the central team and education establishments. These officers are released from the Authority to attend National Improvement Framework workshops in Glasgow and Edinburgh on sharing standards of attainment. The knowledge gained at these meetings

by QAMSOs is used to inform the Education Service's strategy in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy and to ensure;

- Are currently rolling out a training programme that aims to have by June 2017 a dedicated Assessment Facilitator in every establishment. Assessment Facilitators build capacity in their establishments in order that teachers are confident in planning for improved attainment and making quality professional judgements on achieving Curriculum for Excellence levels. Facilitators are increasingly working collaboratively to bring cluster school staff together to share their understanding of standards expected in order that there is consistency across establishments;
- Ensured attendance at the range of National briefings and event hosted by Scottish Government and Education Scotland. Further ensuring relevant information is cascaded to schools;
- Disseminated a range of updates and supporting information to Head Teachers through the work of the JSC and LNCT, Head Teachers' meetings and regular education bulletins and briefings, and
- Have nominated a Lead Authority Officer for INSIGHT who will engage in training and development of the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool across all ten secondary school in the Authority.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Scottish Attainment Challenge focuses on, and accelerates targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland. It is also intended to support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 7.1 | Policy | The introduction of the Scottish Attainment Challenge: Pupil Equity Funding supports the central purpose of the Scottish Government and the delivery on the national outcomes. Supporting delivery on the SOA Outcomes 1 and 3. |
| 7.2 | Financial | Potential financial implications given the time limited nature of funding in ensuring the avoidance of ongoing liabilities or redundancy costs which are unfunded. |
| 7.3 | Legal | The council requires to meet their statutory duties as prescribed in the 'Standards in Scotland's etc., Act 2000'. |
| 7.4 | HR | Potential HR implications given the time limited nature of the funding in ensuring the avoidance of ongoing HR liabilities or redundancy costs which are unfunded. |
| 7.5 | Equalities | One of the two main tenets of the Scottish Government's vision for education is to address educational inequalities. |

This current approach from Scottish Government is aimed at reducing inequalities.

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| 7.6 | Risk | Potential reputational risk to the Council by failing to deliver the statutory requirements of the revisions arising within the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc., Act 2000. |
| 7.7 | Customer Service | The Scottish Attainment Challenge, Pupil Equity Funding is clear around expectations, particularly for parental involvement and engagement which should provide positive benefits in supporting their role in their children's education. |

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Further information sources:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi/schoolmeals/FreeSchoolMeals>

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/Interventions-for-Equity-framework.aspx>

www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/09/9494

Full school allocation list: <http://bit.ly/2kVgp7Q>