

## SCOTTISH NATIONAL STANDARDISED ASSESSMENTS

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This paper provides the Committee with information on the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) being introduced by the Scottish Government in all schools from August 2017. Education Authorities are required to carry out the statutory duty to secure improvement in quality of education, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities in the NIF (section 3D of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000).
- 1.2 The assessments will provide an additional source of nationally consistent evidence for teachers to use when assessing children's progress.
- 1.3 The data generated by Scottish National Standardised Assessment will be owned by Local Authorities and will provide establishments the opportunity to analyse children and young people's progression in a variety of ways.
- 1.4 This report outlines the actions, undertaken and planned, by Education Service to ensure effective implementation of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments to support educational improvement for all children and young people within Argyll and Bute.

### 1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the requirement for Education Services in taking forward the programme on the Scottish National Standardised Assessment implementation, and
- b) Endorse the actions that Education Service have undertaken and plan to undertake to prepare for the compliant and effective implementation of the Scottish Government Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education was launched by the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, in January 2016. The purpose of the Framework is to drive improvement for children, with a clear focus on raising attainment for all, and closing the attainment gap, so that every child and young person can achieve their full potential.
- 2.2 The National Improvement Framework sets out four key priorities that everyone in Scottish Education needs to be working towards:
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
  - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
  - 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.

*“Everyone working in Scottish Education should be clear about what they are seeking to achieve in making their contribution to addressing these priorities. There may be further improvement priorities at school level, based on local needs and self-evaluation.”* National Improvement Framework, January 2016

The priorities may change over time, depending on what the evidence is telling us. Indeed, we expect them to change, as issues are addressed successfully and new priorities emerge.

- 2.3 A variety of data will be gathered at key stages of children's progress to assess their progress as learners.

Teacher professional judgement (TPJ) is informed by a wide range of evidence of children's progress from across the full school year. The National Standardised Assessments are one further source of evidence for teachers to consider when reaching their professional judgements.

2.4 This paper provides Community Services Committee with information on Scottish Standardised National Assessments and, importantly the actions that Education Services have and plan to undertake to respond to the requirements of Scottish Government and secure educational improvement for all children and young people within Argyll and Bute.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the requirement for Education Services in taking forward the programme on the Scottish National Standardised Assessment implementation, and
- b) Endorse the actions that Education Service have undertaken and plan to undertake to prepare for the compliant and effective implementation of the Scottish Government Scottish National Standardised Assessments.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 In June 2016, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney MSP, launched the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education which sets out how everyone will secure educational improvement. The Framework will see new and better information gathered throughout primary and early secondary school years to support individual children's progress and to identify where improvement is needed. The data will be used to identify how well or otherwise individuals and groups of children and young people are progressing.

4.2 The evidence that will be gathered includes:

- Data on SQA awards will tell us about the success of young people from the most and least disadvantaged backgrounds in gaining important qualifications for learning, life and work;
- The number of young people who go on to and sustain further education, employment or training will tell us about how successful young people are when they leave school, and
- The quality of careers information, advice and guidance will tell us what support young people are being given to help inform their choices around those positive destinations.

4.3 However, there is a need to look wider than just qualifications and to look earlier than just the senior phase. The Scottish Government have been looking at children's progress at key stages of the broad general education through the teacher professional judgement (TPJ) survey in 2016 where teachers were asked to submit information on whether or not children had achieved the relevant Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy in P1, P4, P7 and S3.

	Early Level	First Level	Second Level	Third Level
Expected level	P1	P4	P7	S3

Teachers are best placed to know how the children in their classes are doing, so teacher professional judgements will be the key measure of children's progress in literacy and numeracy and will be informed by a wide range of evidence of children's progress from across the full school year. That data will be published annually at school, local authority and national levels.

- 4.4 The new Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) being introduced are one further source of evidence for teachers to consider when reaching their professional judgements.

The Scottish Government has been clear that National Standardised Assessments will not be high stakes testing, or a national testing regime. Results won't determine any key future outcomes for children. There will be no pass or fail. Children won't be expected to revise or prepare for assessments, other than by undertaking routine classroom activities.

Instead, the assessments are about diagnostic assessment - providing teachers with information about how a child is progressing in their learning, and helping them to tailor future learning and teaching to the needs of the individual child.

The National Standardised Assessments will replace the various standardised assessments that are already being used by teachers across Scotland, with one, nationally consistent set of assessments, aligned to Curriculum for Excellence.

- 4.5 The National Standardised Assessments will:

- Report progress in skills for reading, writing and numeracy;
- Assess pupils in primaries 1, 4, 7 and secondary 3;
- Provide individual, diagnostic reports on each pupil's progress which will supply information to identify strengths and individual learning needs;
- Be online; (but with provision for alternative formats if necessary);
- Be adaptive; (become easier or more difficult dependent of the answer of the pupil);
- Provide standardised scores;
- Be suitable for the Scottish school education system and aligned with Curriculum for Excellence;

- Be inclusive (will be equitable and allow all pupils to be fairly assessed, no matter their background, experience, additional support needs or level of ability), and
- Ensure the time taken by a pupil to take an Assessment in either literacy or numeracy will be minimised and no more than 50 minutes.

4.6 In preparation for the implementation of the Standardised National Assessments the Education Service has:

- In partnership with IT ensured that devices on the education network meet the minimum requirements and have the necessary software installed to allow the correct connectivity;
- Worked with the Scottish Government to undertake a network test from within a school to ensure the authentication portal works as expected;
- Worked with the Scottish Government to test the functionality of an assessment, in a school, replicating how assessments will be administered;
- Raised awareness of the Scottish Standardised Assessment implementation through Head Teachers meetings in session 2016/17;
- Liaised with SCHOLAR (training provider) to agree a training and professional development programme appropriate for Argyll and Bute, and
- Participated in training delivered to Central Education Team members by Scottish Government staff.

4.7 In preparation for the implementation of the Standardised National Assessments the Education Service will in session 2017/18:

- Make a decision on how pupils access the assessment portal- either using existing user names and passwords through GLOW or directly to the portal using newly created usernames and passwords;
- Ensure Head Teachers are given an overview of Standardised National Assessments at the September 2017 Head Teacher meeting;
- Facilitate the Scottish Government to deliver training to Head Teachers at the November Head Teacher meeting;
- Offer staff a training webinar in December;
- Facilitate face to face training sessions for staff in Inveraray, Oban, Helensburgh, Dunoon, Islay and Lochgilphead in February and May 2018, and
- Offer support to staff in schools through the Digital Learning Team and Education Officer school visits.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Education Service will continue to plan for effective implementation of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments that supports educational improvement for all children and young people within Argyll and Bute. The focus on raising attainment will be supported by consideration and analysis of a comprehensive range of evidence and data, both nationally and locally. Clear actions are planned to continue to progress this work.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy The National Improvement Framework supports the management and delivery of National Standardised Assessment. The framework also supports delivery on SOA Outcomes 1 and 3 and contributes to the aspiration of the revised Education Vision and Strategy, “*Our Children Their Future*”.
- 6.2 Financial Potential resource implications arising from the introduction of the National Standardised Assessments. Specifically around the training, application of standardised assessments and collation of data, additional reporting at class, school and authority level.
- 6.3 Legal As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing placing further duties on Argyll and Bute Council.
- 6.4 HR There are potential workload issues for teaching staff that should be considered within school working time agreements.
- 6.5 Equalities One of the two main tenets of the Scottish Government’s vision for Education is to address educational inequalities. There is no current evidence base that standardised assessments leads to a reduction in inequalities and can only be viewed as one element that contributes to professional teacher judgement and assessment.
- 6.6 Risk There is a potential reputational risk for the Council if there is failure to secure improvements/close the attainment gap for children and young people.
- 6.7 Customer Service None.

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