

EDUCATION LEADERS' FORUM

NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PAPER BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Introduction

1. The primary purpose of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) is to improve the quality and consistency of data and to extend understanding of what works to drive improvements for children and young people across all parts of the Scottish education system.

2. The annual NIF and Improvement Plan provides a single, definitive document, that explains how we will secure educational improvement. It sets out the vision and priorities that everyone needs to be working towards, as well as the improvement activity that needs to be undertaken to deliver those key priorities. This complements the ongoing delivery of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), which remains at the heart of the Scottish education system.

3. We published the 2018 NIF and Improvement Plan on 12 December last year. We have a statutory duty under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 to review the Framework and publish a plan on an annual basis. As part of the review, we have to provide education authorities, teachers, pupils and parents with the opportunity to express their views, and to have regard to any such views.

4. This paper sets out proposals for the broad structure and focus of the NIF and Improvement Plan 2019.

Structure

5. Following the consultation process last year, the general consensus was that significant change to the content of the NIF would not be welcome. Consultees felt that the NIF priorities were still relevant, with the professional associations, COSLA and other local authority representatives adding that continuity would support ongoing improvement planning and reporting. Those consulted were also broadly content with the drivers of improvement.

6. While retaining the NIF priorities and drivers of improvement, the structure of the NIF and Improvement Plan was changed in 2018 to set out more clearly, in an Annex, the evidence that would be gathered, and the improvement activity that would be undertaken, over the course of the year.

7. We are proposing that the structure of the 2019 NIF and Improvement Plan should remain broadly the same as that agreed in 2018. However, we do need to consider whether there should be any changes to the NIF priorities and drivers, taking into account the importance of retaining continuity in order to support improvement planning.

FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION

8. Retaining the existing priorities and drivers, would not prevent a broadening of the focus of the NIF if that was seen to be helpful. For example, at the moment there is only limited information on areas such as early learning and childcare, and health and wellbeing, in terms of improvement activity under each NIF driver. For the 2019 NIF, we think there should be more focus on these issues, in order to stress the coherent and continuous nature of the Scottish education system from 3-18, and the importance of health and wellbeing in the wider NIF priorities.

9. In addition, we will use the recommendations from the ICEA's first report to inform the 2019 Improvement Plan. In particular, we will ensure that the specific improvement activity in the NIF and Improvement Plan places greater emphasis on continuing to enhance the effective delivery of CfE, and the importance of the 4 capacities.

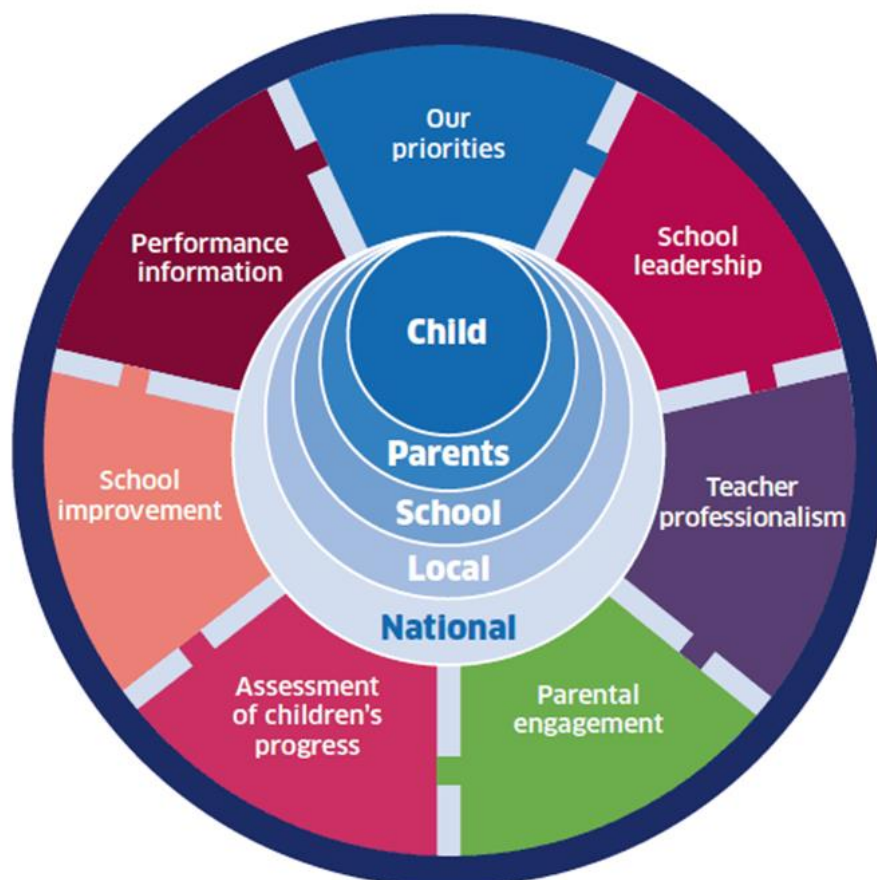
10. The current NIF vision, priorities and drivers are set out below:

NIF Vision

- Excellence through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed.
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap

NIF Priorities

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

NIF Drivers of Improvement**NIF Evidence Dashboard**

11. Since the launch of the NIF in January 2016, we have published an accompanying NIF Evidence Report. The purpose of the Evidence Report is to bring together a wide range of evidence that provides a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of whether improvement is being made. To date, the NIF Evidence Report has been produced as a hard copy document, accompanied by a web conversion. This type of format limits the scope and level of detail in which the evidence can be presented or utilised.

12. In order to provide all stakeholders with much more informative evidence, we are planning to replace the current NIF Evidence Report with a new online NIF Evidence Dashboard, starting in December 2018. The NIF Evidence Dashboard will still present the same national information as currently included in the Evidence Report. However, the key advantage of migrating towards using an online Evidence Dashboard is that all stakeholders will be able to interact with the evidence available and (where evidence permits) to drill further down into the evidence.

13. For example, users will be able to investigate whether improvement in the key NIF priority measures (e.g. achievement of CfE levels, school leaver qualifications, participation measure, etc.) is happening not only at a national level (as is possible to

ascertain at the moment using the NIF Evidence Report), but also at a local authority level, both in terms of whether trends show an improvement over time as well as whether the poverty-related attainment gap is closing.

14. This proposal is in line with our intention to be transparent and open with evidence, to highlight whether improvement is happening, and to inform where further improvement activity is required.

15. The Forum is asked to consider:

- **Whether there should be any changes to the NIF priorities and/or the drivers of improvement.**
- **What further improvement activities for 2019 are needed and how can they be measured?**
- **Are there gaps in the evidence to help us to understand what is working?**
- **Should there be more information on early learning and childcare and health and wellbeing in the NIF?**
- **What more can we do to ensure CfE, and the importance of the 4 capacities, is encapsulated in the NIF?**
- **The benefits and drawbacks of a more interactive online NIF Evidence Dashboard.**

Scottish Government
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