

2020 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan

Summary Document

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The NIF sets out the vision and priorities for Scottish education that have been agreed across the system, and the national improvement activity that needs to be undertaken to help deliver those key priorities. This complements the ongoing implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), Getting It Right for Every Child, and Developing the Young Workforce, which are the three supporting pillars of the Scottish education system.

Our vision for education in Scotland

- 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; and
- Achieving equity: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

We want to develop with our partners an empowered and collaborative system, where everyone's contribution is heard and valued, and improving children and young people's outcomes is at the heart of everything we do.

Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

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

What we are achieving

We have been listening carefully to all those involved in the Scottish education system to ensure that we are working in partnership with them when developing the improvement activity set out in this year's NIF and Improvement Plan.

Delivering improvement

The latest Achievement of CfE Level data shows that more than 80% of children in P1 are achieving the expected level in numeracy, reading and listening and talking, with just under 80% achieving that level in writing. Similarly, around 80% of children in P4 and P7 achieved the expected level in reading and around 85% in listening and talking, with over 70% achieving the level in writing and numeracy. Attainment among the most disadvantaged children and young people rose in numeracy at all stages, and in reading and writing at P1, P4 and P7. The attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged has narrowed on most indicators. For example,

the gap in P1 literacy has closed by 1 percentage point – it is almost 2 percentage points for P7 literacy.

We have seen an increase in entries and pass rates across National 5, with the total number of passes up 3.4% and the pass rate increasing by 0.7 percentage points. There has been a fall in Higher pass rates, which are down 2.0 percentage points. However, this was still a strong set of results, with three-quarters of candidates attaining a pass at Higher grades A-C. Over 54,000 skills based awards and achievements were certificated by August 2019 (up from 24,849 in 2012).

There is also encouraging evidence that outcomes for children and young people are improving year-on-year, and that the proportion of young people in the most deprived areas getting one or more qualifications at SCQF level 6 (Highers and vocational qualifications) is increasing faster than those in the least deprived areas. In addition, 88% of school leavers in the most deprived areas were in a positive follow up destination in March 2019, compared with 83% in 2014.

An empowered and collaborative system

During 2020 local authorities and learning communities will work together to further develop a culture of empowerment and collaboration in their area.

Supported by national funding and the restructuring of Education Scotland's support through a new regional delivery model, Scotland's six Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) continue to strengthen regional capacity for collaboration and educational improvement. The Headteachers' Charter was published as an agreed draft in February 2019, and supports a culture of empowerment that enables all professionals to contribute to the agenda of improvement.

The support and opportunities available for school leaders to develop their leadership skills and collaborate for improvement will continue to grow in 2020. Education Scotland will further enhance the leadership support package for aspiring and existing school leaders. Aspiring headteachers will be supported to develop their leadership potential by the local authority and through national development programmes such as Into Headship. There will be new opportunities for teachers to develop leadership skills through Education Scotland leadership programmes.

Improving the voice of young people

Learner engagement is a key principle which lies at the heart of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. A number of steps were taken as part of the Year of Young People 2018 in order to further improve and support the voice of young people in schools. This included the creation of a Scottish Learner Panel, which delivered its [first report in September 2019](#), as well as new [guidance](#) on learner participation from Education Scotland. We will continue to support a renewed focus on learner voice and participation through our [school empowerment reforms](#) as well as a range of improvement and support activity from Education Scotland.

Excellence and equity

The second interim evaluation of the £750m Attainment Scotland Fund showed that 88% of headteachers had already seen improvements in relation to closing the poverty related attainment gap as a result of their interventions, and nearly all

headteachers (95%) expected to see further improvements over the next five years. The interim evaluation also suggests that the equity agenda has become embedded in schools' practice and ethos.

The Scottish Government has committed to extend the funding beyond the end of this Parliamentary term. To further enhance the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland will continue to work in partnership with local authorities, schools and other key stakeholders to facilitate, broker and support improvement action over the next 18 months and beyond.

Health and wellbeing

Since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, our approach to behaviour in schools has adapted and evolved to meet the needs of all children and young people. Our schools are places that promote positive relationships and behaviour, underpinned by strong school ethos and cultures based on the values of respect, inclusion and responsibility.

In recognition of the importance and value of embedding effective mental wellbeing practice within the curriculum and schools, we are supporting our teachers to deliver relevant, engaging learning that will develop and strengthen the resilience of our young people. We are also providing a significant package of funding to support local authorities to provide young people with access to counsellors in every secondary school in Scotland.

The Scottish Government also recognises the importance of personal and social education (PSE) in providing the foundation for successful learning. The recommendations of the Review of Personal and Social Education, published in January 2019, set out our plan to strengthen and enhance existing provision and support consistency in delivery. All of the recommendations of the review of PSE will be delivered by March 2021.

We also plan to introduce a new Health and Wellbeing Census, covering children from late primary through to secondary schools, starting in the 2019/20 academic year.

Early learning and childcare (ELC)

The Scottish Government is making an unprecedented investment in ELC that will strengthen outcomes for children by the time they reach school starting age, with sustained impact well into their later learning journey.

From August 2020, funded ELC will almost double from 600 to 1,140 hours per year for all 3 and 4 year olds, and for eligible two year olds.

As part of the ELC expansion, there is a strong focus on protecting and strengthening the quality of provision. The Scottish Government has also introduced a new National Standard that all funded providers will be required to meet from August 2020, a key element of which is a requirement to achieve good or better in all four Care Inspectorate evaluation themes. In addition to the expansion in funded hours, a targeted earlier ELC offer is available to around a quarter of two year olds. This offer applies to: children in care (looked after, kinship, guardianship); those in

families receiving certain, no or very low income benefits; and children in families receiving support through an asylum claim. The 2019 Programme for Government confirmed that eligibility would also be extended to children whose parents are care-experienced from August 2020.

The ELC offer will also be characterised by a strong focus on outdoor learning.

Measuring the gap

At the moment, the evidence is that the gap is narrowing across the key measures which have been assessed since the 2018 NIF and Improvement Plan was published. Of the 11 key measures, six are showing a small narrowing of the gap, albeit due to a mixed underlying picture and to varying extents. For the other five measures, two are showing little change in the size of the gap; one measure is showing a small widening of the gap; one measure hasn't had any more up-to-date information made available in order to assess its progress; and one measure we cannot now compare directly over time, as there has been a change in the underlying process which has affected the reporting of this information.

The Six Drivers of Improvement

School Leadership – Improvement Priorities for 2020

A key focus will be to continue the work to support and encourage the empowerment of school leaders and school communities, and to create a culture of collaborative and system leadership.

The Headteachers' Charter and new national guidance on an empowered system will be finalised to support local areas in ensuring that decisions are made as close to the child or young person as possible, in a collaborative and collegiate way.

Support for the Into Headship Programme will form part of our ongoing commitment to fund professional learning for teachers, including at school leadership level. More school leaders will have the opportunity to develop values-based leadership by participating in Columba 1,400 Headteacher Leadership Academies.

The Independent Panel on Career Pathways reported to the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers early in 2019, and among its recommendations are the need to establish a lead teacher role, and a national model for sabbaticals for teachers. These will be taken forward over the next few years.

Teacher Professionalism – Improvement Priorities for 2020

In 2020, the Scottish Government will consider how the support and learning for probationer teachers can be strengthened to provide greater consistency towards achieving full professional registration with the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS).

Enhancements to the Teacher Leadership Programme include an additional regional contact day, twilight workshops a final 'sharing the learning summit' for those participating in the Supporting Teacher Leadership programme. The workshops and sessions will be monitored and evaluated to ensure both the content and concept are

useful for participants. The evaluation will be completed in time for the next cohort in August 2020.

Education Scotland will support professional learning priorities at regional as well as at national level.

Parental Engagement – Improvement Priorities for 2020

Key improvement activity in 2020 will be taken forward across 13 key goals as identified in the joint Scottish Government/COSLA [“Learning Together” National Action plan](#).

We intend asking all local authorities and grant-aided schools to undertake a Parental Involvement and Engagement Census in the 2020/21 academic year, and every two years thereafter.

There were a number of key actions that came out of the new census including the need to review and strengthen statutory guidance relating to the 2006 Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act, and to continue to refresh the content of the ParentZone Scotland website. In addition, Education Scotland will work with the RICs, local authorities, practitioners, early learning and childcare settings, schools, relevant partners and stakeholder groups during 2020/21 to help them further develop approaches to parental involvement, parental engagement, learning at home and family learning.

There will also be regular Learning Together National Network meetings to bring together practitioners, academics, researchers and policymakers who have been identified as ‘champions’ with a view to sharing good practice and expertise, making new connections and reviewing evidence of what is working well.

Assessment of Children’s Progress – Improvement Priorities for 2019

Improvement activities in the school years will continue to focus on the quality and consistency of data collections for attainment and health and wellbeing, as well as on ensuring that support for learning, teaching and assessment is provided to school leaders and practitioners through the RICs.

Data literacy amongst teaching professionals will also continue to remain a key focus over the coming year, and the use of the Insight Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool and the BGE Benchmarking Tool will provide the means for supporting this activity. The priority now is to allow these improvement tools and approaches to become embedded, and to avoid further changes which could increase workload for teachers.

An independent review of the SNSA at P1 was carried out in 2019 and made a number of recommendations for action, primarily for the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government has published a document [“National Standardised Assessment Improvement Activity Plan”](#) which summarises the action that the Scottish Government (working with key partners as appropriate) plans to take forward during the 2019/20 school session.

The Scottish Government has also commissioned an independent review of our Senior Phase to explore further how Curriculum for Excellence is being implemented for young people in S4-S6 across the country, and to identify any improvements that might be made.

We are mindful of the need for stability in the system after several years of change. The national qualifications themselves are not the focus of the review.

School Improvement – Improvement Priorities for 2020

We will be increasing the focus of our improvement activity in ELC. We have introduced a new National Standard that all funded providers will be required to meet from August 2020, a key element of which is a requirement to achieve good or better in all four Care Inspectorate evaluation themes.

We will also continue to focus on supporting leaders and practitioners, through regional working to further develop their skills to deliver professional learning for others, to drive innovation and improvement in learning and teaching, to use data to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap, and to continue to improve the capacity of staff to self-evaluate for improvement.

HM Inspectors of Education will publish a thematic inspection report focusing on highly effective practice in using assessment effectively to improve learning and teaching. The report will be published late January 2020.

Performance Information – Improvement Priorities for 2020

The diverse range of data being collected through the NIF has emphasised the importance of supporting practitioners to use data intelligently at all levels of the system to help drive improvement.

In the year ahead we will continue to administer the Challenge Authority, Schools Programme, Care Experienced Children and Young People and Pupil Equity funds as well as the National Programmes, supporting Schools, Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations to close the poverty related attainment gap with up to £182m from the Attainment Scotland Fund.

The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will continue to work in partnership with local authorities, schools and other key stakeholders to facilitate, broker and support action to maximise progress in reducing the poverty related attainment gap. A five point maximising progress plan has been jointly developed by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to facilitate this.

Conclusion

We will continue to create a culture of empowerment and collaboration to enable the teaching profession to work together and to use their skills, judgement and creativity in the way they think best to develop the high quality teaching practice, and effective pedagogy, that are crucial to securing better outcomes for children and young people. This is supported by the specific measures under each of the drivers to deliver improvements in Scottish education.



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