

# Seminar/Briefing Record

Midlothian Council  
Tuesday 13 February 2018



## Seminar – Creating a World-Class Education System - Examination Attainment 2017

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday 5 December 2017	11:00	Council Chambers, Midlothian House

### Present:

Councillor Muirhead (Chair)	Vic Bourne (Religious Representative)
Councillor Alexander	
Councillor Baird	
Councillor Cassidy	
Councillor Lay Douglas	
Councillor Hackett	
Councillor Imrie	
Councillor Milligan	
Councillor McCall	
Councillor Smail	
Councillor Winchester	

## **1 Introduction and Apologies**

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Apologies for Absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Curran, Johnstone, Montgomery, Parry and Russell.

Councillor Muirhead welcomed the attendees and advised that Grace Vickers would lead the presentation supported by the six Secondary Head Teachers.

## **2 Declarations of interest**

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No declarations of interest were received.

## **3 Seminar**

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### **(a) Background**

By way of background, reference was made to the report entitled “Creating a World Class Education System –Attainment and Achievement 2017” which would be submitted to the Council meeting on Tuesday 19 December 2017.

### **(b) Purpose of the Seminar**

Grace Vickers explained that the purpose of the Seminar was to provide Members with an update on the current position with regard to attainment and achievement within Midlothian Schools in 2016/17. To this end each of the Secondary Head Teachers would provide a brief overview of the attainment and achievement pertaining to their school. Thereafter an opportunity would be given for elected Members to ask questions on what they had heard.

### **(c) Presentation**

Thereafter the Seminar received a presentation from Grace Vickers which highlighted the following:-

- Attainment in level 4 Literacy and Numeracy showed a positive improvement from 74.4% in 2011 to 87.8 % in 2016, an improvement of 14.4%.
- Attainment was 1.2% higher than the virtual comparator leavers group.
- Attainment in level 5 Literacy and Numeracy showed a positive improvement from 45.7% in 2011 to 63.31% in 2016 an improvement of 17.6%.
- Attainment was higher than the virtual comparator leavers group.
- Outcomes for the bottom 30% of learners showed a three year improvement trend for Literacy and Numeracy at level 4 for the 30% most deprived learners by the end of S4. Attainment in 2016 was now above both the virtual and the national average. Attainment at this level in 2016 was 8.07% higher than the previous year. For level 5, there was a three year improvement trend for Literacy and Numeracy by the end of S4. Attainment in 2016 was now above both the virtual and the national

average with attainment at level 5 in 2016 being more than double the percentage achieved in 2014.

**The local measures for literacy and numeracy showed the following key strengths:**

- Positive four year trend across all measures
- S4 Literacy and Numeracy at level 4: this was the highest recorded level achieved with 0.1% improvement on the previous year and a 14.74% improvement (2013-2017)
- S4 Literacy and Numeracy at level 5: this was the highest recorded level achieved with a 1.4% improvement on the previous year and 35.4% improvement (2013-2017)
- S5 Literacy and Numeracy at level 4: this was the highest recorded level achieved with a 1.8% improvement on the previous year and 14.7% improvement (2013-2017)
- S5 Literacy and Numeracy at level 5: this was our highest recorded level achieved with a 9.8% improvement on the previous year and 21.6% improvement (2013-2017)
- S6 Literacy and Numeracy at level 4: this showed a drop of 0.18% on the previous year but 11% improvement (2013-2017)
- S6 Literacy and Numeracy at level 5: this showed a drop of 2.6% on the previous year but 12.1% improvement (2013-2017)

**What steps were being taken in order to continuously improve literacy and numeracy.**

- Bring literacy and numeracy at levels 4 and 5 in line with national measures for all school leavers.
- Continue to support moderation practice in secondary schools to develop appropriate teacher judgements as part of holistic assessment within the broad general phase of education (BGE - S1-3).
- Continue to support moderation practice in secondary schools to develop appropriate teacher judgements as part of holistic assessment at the transition point from P7 into S1.
- Continue to focus on evidence based approaches to targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy that have a high effect size.
- Continue to use relevant SIMD and other data to ensure that we close the poverty related gaps in attainment in literacy and numeracy.

**The national measures for literacy and numeracy showed the following key strengths:**

- Total tariff scores for the lowest performing 20% of leavers' shows positive progression from 125pts in 2010/11 to 161pts in 2015/16, an improvement of 36pts. This is higher than the virtual comparator performance of 144pts.
- Total tariff scores for the middle performing 60% of leavers' shows positive progression from 636pts in 2010/11 to 802pts which is 18pts higher than the previous year. This is higher than the virtual comparator on 771pts.

- Total tariff scores for the highest performing 20% of leavers' shows positive progression from 1676pts in 2010/11 to 1890pts in 2015/16, an improvement of 114pts. This is above the virtual comparator on 1805pts.

**The national measures for attainment versus deprivation showed the following key strengths:**

- Midlothian performance was generally better than the virtual comparator for deciles 1 and 8 and lower than the virtual comparator for deciles 3, 4 and 9.
- Midlothian is in line with virtual comparator for most deciles by the end of S4 and 5 with the exception of SIMD 1 and 5.

**What was being done to continuously improve attainment versus deprivation measures.**

- Implement targeted interventions in order to improve outcomes in SIMD 1 and 5 by the end of S4, 5 and 6.
- Implement targeted pace and progression routes to improve SIMD 8, 9 and 10 by the end of S6. This will include a pilot research programme to look at factors affecting the progress and attitudes of learners within this SIMD in order to look at a variety of ways to improve their performance. It is known that 50% of the variance in learner outcomes is due to how learners behave and of they perceive themselves as successful learners so it is vital we tackle this aspect as well as teacher efficacy.
- Ensure that the curriculum at BGE level was allowing students to progress into and succeed within the senior phase in schools.
- Improving outcomes for looked after learners was a key priority for 2017/18. We are focussing on strategies to improve attendance. In addition the local authority and schools were working together to develop flexible learning pathways to ensure that there were tailor-made options for our most vulnerable learners building on the success of the approaches utilised to improve positive destinations.

**Positive destinations data showed the following key strengths**

- The percentage of school leavers entering a positive destination had improved from 85.2% in 2010/11 to 95.06% in 2015/16. This was the highest recorded positive destinations to date
- For the participation measures, Midlothian now ranks joint 4<sup>th</sup> place when compared with the 32 local authorities with 93.6% of school leavers now in a positive destination. This is the highest recorded figure that Midlothian has ever achieved with Midlothian school leaver destinations now 1.8% higher than the national average.

### **What would be done next in order to continuously improve positive destinations**

- There are relatively low numbers of leavers going into Higher Education. Therefore improving attainment by the end of S5 and 6 is important as stated in the next steps for improvement outlined in this report.
- An ambitious target of 96% has been set for initial destinations.

Thereafter the six Secondary Head Teachers expanded on the various successes and challenges with regard to attainment levels impacting on their own individual school as well celebrating the wider achievements in learning through technology; expressive arts and performances; health and wellbeing; outdoor learning; the duke of Edinburgh and partnership working.

#### **(d) Question and answer session**

The Head of Education and the Head Teachers responded with further clarification to questions raised by Councillors which included:

- Whilst recognising that the recruitment of teachers was a national problem, that the Council should continue to look at ways to assist with teacher recruitment
- That the progress of each school leaver was monitored in order to support and assist wherever possible in achieving a positive destination.
- The need to share examples of good practice throughout the Authority
- The importance being attached to Modern Languages, particularly in view of the potential impact of Brexit.

Councillor Muirhead thanked all those involved in what had proved to be a most informative and useful Seminar.

The meeting terminated at 1.10 pm