

Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A delivery plan for Scotland

Report by Grace Vickers, Head of Education

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to introduce the Scottish Government's *Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: a delivery plan for Scotland* to Cabinet. This report draws particular attention to the Scottish Government consultation called *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review* which was launched on 13 September 2016 and closes on 6 January 2017. The report outlines the arrangements for the proposed local consultation period for Midlothian in order to ensure that we (i) raise the profile of the ongoing review; (ii) seek the views of our local stakeholders; and (iii) prepare a co-ordinated Midlothian response to the ongoing consultation. In order to achieve this, the report asks Cabinet to approve the following four recommendations:

- To co-ordinate a series of consultation events in Midlothian in order to raise the profile and to seek the views of our local stakeholders on the Scottish Government consultation called *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review*
<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review>
- To present a seminar to elected members at the end of November 2016 outlining the outcome of the Midlothian Consultation on the Education Governance Review.
- To present the final Midlothian consultation response to Council in December 2016.
- To note the on-going work in Midlothian to reduce inequalities and the strategic intent to create a World-Class Education System through Excellence and Equity.

A full copy of the Scottish Government's delivery plan is included as Appendix A and a copy of the Education Governance Review is included as Appendix B.

2. Background

The delivery plan for Education, published by the Scottish Government on 28 June 2016, is presented in four main sections:

- A relentless focus on closing the attainment gap.
- A curriculum which delivers for children and teachers.
- Empowering our teachers, headteachers, practitioners, parents, communities, children and young people.
- A clear focus on improvement.

The rationale for the delivery plan is to address the significant challenges which face Scottish Education. The delivery plan acknowledges it is still the case that where a child is from, where they live and their family circumstances still have a disproportionate impact on their chance of success. The delivery plan highlights that “despite some progress over the last decade, a pupil from the 20 per cent least deprived areas of Scotland is almost twice as likely as one from the 20 per cent most deprived areas to leave school with a qualification at SCQF 6 or better” (2016: 3). In addition, the 2015 OECD review of Curriculum for Excellence highlighted that the current assessment arrangements do not provide sufficiently robust information across the system to support both policy and improvement. The Scottish Government state that “while teachers have worked hard to introduce Curriculum for Excellence successfully, it has brought with it unnecessary-and unintended-workload demands and pressures. If we are to focus on improving outcomes for our children, it is vital these issues are dealt with. This will require strong and decisive action by Education Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, local authorities and schools” (2016: 3).

Each section of the delivery plan includes an overview of the ambition and a series of 86 actions in total that the Scottish Government will implement in order to deliver the overall ambition. This Cabinet report will deal in detail with each part of the delivery plan in sections 2.1-2.4 below. Within section 2.3 I also draw attention to the ongoing Education Governance Review launched on 13 September 2016 which closes on 6 January 2017 and the proposed consultation process in order to ensure the submission of a co-ordinated Midlothian response to this consultation.

2.1 A relentless focus on closing the attainment gap

We welcome the commitment to a relentless focus on closing the attainment gap. The Single Midlothian Plan is committed to reducing inequalities and *Closing the gap* was the theme for education in Midlothian in 2015/16. In 2016/17 the theme for the Education Service is *Closing the Gap through Excellence and Equity* which is at the core of our ambition to create a world-class education system in Midlothian.

The delivery plan outlines 16 main actions that the Scottish Government will do to deliver on closing the attainment gap.

2.2 A curriculum which delivers for children and teachers

The ambition of the delivery plan for the Curriculum is to ensure that “each and every child develops a broad range of skills and attributes and gains the qualifications to have choices and be successful in life. If we are to achieve this goal, our teachers need to be clear about what is expected of them, and have the time and space to do their job. This requires us to take action on a number of fronts” (2016: 7). The delivery plan calls for a clearer and simpler approach where the curriculum is de-cluttered and unnecessary bureaucracy tackled.

The delivery plan outlines 15 main actions that the Scottish Government will do to ensure that the curriculum delivers for children and teachers.

In Midlothian we have already taken significant steps to reduce unnecessary workload demands including two MNCT agreements in May 2015 on reporting and Planning within the BGE (Primary) and Professional Practice Paper 67 – Guidance on Strategic Priorities and Improvement Planning. In addition, in November 2015, the Midlothian response to the National Improvement Framework was presented to Council and in May 2016 the Educational Attainment report sought Council approval to move from a system of Developing, Consolidating and Secure to the simplified term ‘achieving a level’. There is also significant work ongoing to support

assessment and moderation including the new Primary 1 teachers network aimed at closing the reading and writing gap by the end of P1.

With reference to STEM, Digital Skills, languages and DYW, Midlothian is in the process of developing a Centres of Excellence model which was introduced to Council at the Shawfair Seminar which was held at the end of November 2015. We are planning a Centre of Excellence in Digital Skills for the new Newbattle High School and we are in the process of a pre-consultation on the A701 where the concept of a Centre for Excellence in STEM has been provided as one of the possible options for consideration. In terms of languages we are continuing to roll out 1+2 languages across all of our primary schools and the DYW Board, formed last year, has made significant progress developing high-quality work related learning and vocational qualifications and this has had a significant impact which has been demonstrated when comparing last year with this year where Midlothian has secured a 3% improvement in sustained leavers' destinations for school leavers and a 4.8% improvement in SLDR Participation Measures (16-19 yr olds) in Midlothian.

2.3 Empowering our teachers, headteachers, practitioners, parents, communities, children and young people

The delivery plan states that the Scottish Government is “committed to a publicly owned and run, comprehensive education system in Scotland – a mutual system, not a market system-which supports every child to achieve. High-performing education systems across the world are characterized by high levels of professional autonomy and collaboration. It is important therefore that decisions for individual children are made as close to those children as possible and we must see more decisions about the life of schools driven by schools themselves” (2016: 10).

The delivery plan also states that we know that the quality of teaching and school leadership are the two most important factors together with parents who are fully involved in their child's learning and the Scottish Government seek to empower teachers and headteachers by providing them with the responsibilities and resource to make the best decisions for our children and young people and at the same time ensuring that “the overall funding for education is transparent and protected” (2016: 10). In addition, the delivery plan states that the Scottish Government will work to ensure that parents are support to play an active role in their child's learning, and that parents and communities play a bigger role in the “day-to-day lives of schools. Parents and teachers in particular will become key decision makers” (2016: 10).

In Midlothian, we are very ambitious for our children and young people and the strategic intent to create a World-Class Education System through Excellence and Equity is based on international research. The rationale for our strategy is based on the 2007 McKinsey report which states that: “the capacity of countries – both the world's most advanced economies as well those experiencing rapid development – to compete in the global knowledge economy increasingly depends on whether they can meet a fast-growing demand for **high-level skills**. This, in turn, **hinges on significant improvements in the quality of schooling outcomes and a more equitable distribution in learning opportunities**” (McKinsey; 2007: Foreword). In addition, the *Uplifting Leadership Programme* is based on the research by Hargreaves, Boyle and Harris (2014) and this programme is being implemented this school session for Head Teachers, Depute Head Teachers and Principal Teachers because we are critically aware of the importance of developing Leadership and practitioner networks to share best practice at every level.

In addition, our on-going commitment to Visible Learning places excellence in learning and teaching at the core of our daily work and Midlothian will host, together with Osiris Educational and the GTCs, the first ever Scottish Visible Learning Conference in November at Murrayfield where practitioners will experience the work of Professor John Hattie first hand and will be able to participate in practitioner led workshops which will focus on sharing excellent practice in Learning and Teaching.

The delivery plan outlines 9 main actions that the Scottish Government will do to empower our teachers, headteachers, practitioners, parents, communities, children and young people.

On 22 August, the Scottish Government launched the consultation on the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000:

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-performance-unit/statutory-guidance> This consultation runs until 11 November and seeks views on draft statutory guidance in relation to a series of amendments to the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 ("the 2000 Act") made by Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 and the draft statutory guidance has been developed to support those who will have responsibility for various duties in relation to the NIF; reducing inequalities of outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage; and planning and reporting duties at school and education authority levels.

In addition, on 13 September, the Scottish Government launched the consultation on the Governance Review for Education to enable a wide range of stakeholders to share their view on how Education in Scotland is run, including who should take decisions in relation to the education of children and young people, and how funding can be made fairer. The consultation also asks about the support teachers and practitioners need to do their jobs well and how this can be improved. Further information on the national consultation can be located by clicking on the following link:

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review>. This consultation runs until 6th January 2017 and Midlothian will co-ordinate a series of local events with stakeholders including pupils and staff in schools and across the council, parent council chairs and the CPP in order to (i) raise the profile of the Governance Review outlining what this means for Midlothian and (ii) seek the views of our stakeholders in order to help formulate the Midlothian response to the review. It is intended that the collated results be presented to Council in the form of a seminar with elected members at the end of November prior to the final consultation report being presented to Council in December 2016.

Finally, running concurrently with these two consultations is the National Parent Forum of Scotland's review into the impact, successes and failings of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 and surrounding framework on involving and engaging parents. More information on this review can be located at the following link:

http://www.npfs.org.uk/call_educ_org/

2.4 A clear focus on improvement

This section of the delivery plan focuses on the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and a report was presented to Midlothian Council in November 2015. In Midlothian, the key drivers from the NIF and the new *How Good is Our School 4* have been integrated into the *Uplifting Leadership Programme* to ensure that we deliver a holistic approach to closing the gap which also helps tackle bureaucracy as we move forward.

In August 2016, the Scottish Government produced additional draft statutory guidance on chapter 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000) following the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act earlier in 2016 in order to bring this section in line with the new National Improvement Framework (NIF) . Further information on the new can be found at the following link: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/08/5386/4>

The delivery plan outlines 5 main actions that the Scottish Government will do to deliver a clear focus on improvement.

Five actions are identified under the driver *School Leadership*; seven actions are identified under the driver *teacher professionalism*; eight actions are identified under the driver *Parental Engagement*; eight actions are identified under the driver *Assessing Childrens' Progress*; six actions are identified under the driver *School Improvement*; and twelve actions are identified under the driver *Performance Information*.

3. Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The resource to deliver the pace of change within the delivery plan will be challenging. We have already experienced an increased resource demand through the number of on-going consultations, response to a number of requests for data and data checking exercises for the upload of pupil level data. In addition, at very short notice each local authority were expected to participate in a CfE workload review at the beginning of term and ADES sought an extension to enable local authorities to verify and provide further evidence to reports where local authority performance was being evaluated in terms of their approaches to reducing workload demands and tackling bureaucracy.

The most significant resource implications of the delivery plan are contained within section 3: Empowering our teachers, headteachers, practitioners, parents, communities, children and young people. In September, the results of the Financial Review of the Early Learning and Childcare sector were published and this review explored the expenditure on funded childcare to enable us to better predict the cost implications of different delivery models as we move towards the forthcoming expansion to 1140 hours by 2020. In addition, the launch of the Governance Review on 11 September alongside the Programme for Government will examine the system changes required to deliver the Scottish Government's commitments to empower schools, decentralise management and the support through the encouragement of school clusters and creation of new educational regions and will implement any proposals arising from the Governance and Parental Involvement reviews at the earliest opportunity. In particular the Scottish Government will support the development and expansion of school clusters and increased regional working **throughout 2017-18**.

Alongside the Governance review, the Scottish Government will begin to develop proposals for a fair and transparent national funding formula immediately and will listen to the views of teachers, parents, system leaders, local authorities and communities through the Governance Review. Building on the responses to this review the Scottish Government will consult on proposals for a funding formula in **March 2017**. This will build on the approach being adopted for the Scottish Attainment Challenge, where £100 million will go direct to headteachers from **April 2017**. The ongoing growth of Gaelic Medium Education in schools through the implementation of new rights for parents and by providing more resources for teachers and learners, by **February 2017** will also have resource implications for Midlothian and there is ongoing dialogue with ADES to explore the best method to deliver this aim.

Finally, the Scottish Government believe that “legal responsibilities for delivering education and raising standards in our schools sit largely with education authorities, not with the schools and teachers that teach our children and young people every day. The Scottish Government intends to address this imbalance by extending to individual schools responsibilities that currently sit with local authorities and will introduce a new Education Bill in the second year of this Parliament. Building on the responses to the Governance and Parental Involvement reviews, a consultation on a Bill will be held early in 2017” (2016: 11). It is the position of ADES that Headteachers are officers of the Council and as such the current legal responsibilities for raising standards in schools is a shared responsibility as the role of the headteacher is a dual one – to lead and manage their school and to be an officer of the Council.

3.2 Risk

We welcome the relentless focus on closing the attainment gap in Education but we recognise that this requires a total Midlothian approach. Although the delivery plan clearly states in the opening ambition statement that in order to close the attainment gap “our efforts must also extend beyond the classroom and across our communities and wider public services if we are to succeed in our ambition” (2016: 4), the delivery plan then continues with a narrow focus on the school level leavers without recognition of the critical role that other services including the Community Planning Partnerships and the third sector play in supporting education to close the poverty related attainment gap.

The proposed changes to governance structures which will be consulted on early in 2017 is maybe challenging to Local Authorities as the delivery plan clearly states a commitment to regional working although there is little detail within the delivery plan to establish what this may look like. ADES is already committed to working together and sharing best practice on a regional basis and this way of working does not require the proposed legislative change suggested. Caution should also be applied to the reference of funding directly to schools with an enhanced role for central government related to the attainment challenge, the role of Education Scotland, standardised testing and the transparency of attainment data proposed to be published on a school by school basis on Parent Zone similar to what is in place at present for the Senior Phase qualifications through Insight. We need to question the role of the Local Authority in these changes.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

The ambition in the delivery plan is already clearly embedded in the Single Midlothian Plan – reducing inequalities. Last year the transformation project on Early Years was concluded in order to ensure that we have a strong foundation from which to plan for the delivery of 1140 hours by 2020. Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

GIRFEC 5: Our people will be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

To close the gap by improving 'attainment versus deprivation' and 'attainment for all' outcomes for children and young people.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

This report aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report seeks approval to commence a local consultation with key stakeholders in order to ensure a co-ordinated Midlothian response to the ongoing national consultation *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review*

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

The recommendations in this report should continue to promote equity of attainment for disadvantaged children and support the steps being taken towards narrowing the attainment gap by imposing duties on education authorities and the Scottish Ministers in relation to reducing pupils' inequalities of educational outcome together with a duty to report on progress.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no impacts arising directly from this report.

3.10 IT Issues

Ongoing dialogue is taking place with SEEMiS and Digital Services to ensure that we are on target for the ongoing data collection in line with the guidance on the National Improvement Framework.

4 Recommendations

Cabinet are requested to approve the following:

- To co-ordinate a series of consultation events in Midlothian in order to raise the profile and to seek the views of our local stakeholders on the Scottish Government consultation called *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review*
<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review>
- To present a seminar to elected members at the end of November 2016 outlining the outcome of the Midlothian Consultation on the Education Governance Review.
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Supporting Papers for on-going reviews in Scottish Education:

Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000):

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/pdfs/asp_20000006_en.pdf

Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000: Scottish

Government Consultation: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-performance-unit/statutory-guidance>

Education (Scotland) Act 2016:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/8/pdfs/asp_20160008_en.pdf

Updated guidance on Chapter 3 of the Standards in Scotland Schools Act, August

2016: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/08/5386/4>

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 by the National Parent Forum of Scotland: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/148166/0039411.pdf>

Financial Review of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland: the current landscape (Scottish Government; September 2016):

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00506148.pdf>

Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review>

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Declaration Box

Instructions: This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.

Title of Report: *Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A delivery plan for Scotland including the Education Governance Review: Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education*

Meeting Presented to: Cabinet, 11 October 2016

Author of Report: Dr Grace Vickers, Head of Education

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.*
- All risk implications have been addressed.*
- All other report implications have been addressed.*
- My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.

Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.

