



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: EDUCATION NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK
REPORT AND PLAN**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the annual National Improvement Framework plan return which is submitted to the Scottish Government by the end of September.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

(i) Scrutinises and notes the contents of the Moray Self-evaluation document progress report; and

(ii) Agrees the annual National Improvement Plan (NIF) and Stretch Aims return be submitted to Scottish Government by 30 September 2023.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education was launched in January 2016. The framework supports the Scottish Government Ambition to achieve excellence and equity for every child in Scotland and guides on the Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) agenda. It places a legal duty on local authorities to actively address the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.2 The Framework is underpinned by a series of planning and reporting duties designed to support transparency and accountability. These legal duties have been integrated into the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 through amendments contained in Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act

2016. The Scottish Government produces annual advice in December to provide the focus for the NIF for the following year. Prior to December 2021 there were 4 key priorities for action however the 2022 NIF has been updated with the following 5 priorities:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people; and
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

3.3 The Scottish Government has published statutory guidance to support education authorities to carry out the legal responsibilities. The statutory guidance clarifies how the 2000 Act has been amended through the 2016 Act in order to:

- impose duties on education authorities to enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage;
- impose a duty to secure improvement in the quality of school education with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the NIF; and
- impose duties in relation to annual planning and reporting; and annual school improvement planning.

3.4 Local Authorities must produce a NIF work plan on an annual basis which is then submitted to Scottish Ministers. The purpose of the plan is to outline key actions that the Local Authority will take to address the excellence and equity agenda. The Education Strategic Plan 2020-23 provided a vision for the Education department and for associated officers within Education Resources and Communities. Although the key priority areas do not exactly match the NIF priorities, there were clear links and associated actions within the service plan, cross referenced throughout. Officer workplans were reviewed annually with progress monitored by the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Committee on a quarterly basis. This plan has now been reviewed and service priorities for the academic session 2023/24 established as reported to Committee on 7 June 2023 (Para 9 of the minute refers).

3.5 Head Teachers of schools are also expected to produce an Annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) which takes forward developments at a local level. These plans are informed by the NIF, the appropriate Local Authority strategic plans (Corporate Plan, Moray Children's Services Plan, and Education Strategic Plan etc). They are submitted to the Head of Education by 30 June each year and are subject to scrutiny by the Moray Quality Improvement Team. All Moray SIPs are aligned with the NIF and local priorities and feedback is provided from the central Quality Improvement Team.

3.6 The NIF plan is expected to be in place by the end of September this year.

- 3.7 In Moray, Officers and Head Teachers have continued to lead positively as the system continues to deal with the impact of national lockdowns and the pandemic. Literacy and Numeracy have been key drivers for improvement with progress reported regularly to Committee. The wellbeing of staff and pupils continues to pose a challenge for the service along with a growing identification of Additional Support Needs (ASN). Changes in senior leadership within Education in June 2023 resulted in a temporary move of the ASN Service to the Head of Education who will lead the ASN Review moving forwards.
- 3.8 Once again in Session 2022/23, staffing issues across nurseries and schools initiated exigencies of the service with central staff redeployed on several occasions. This along with staff absence, hindered progress in some areas of improvement however the self-evaluation document attached (**Appendix 1**) gives detail of a number of strategies developed and or updated during the course of the year.
- 3.9 The Moray Education NIF Progress Report Self-evaluation in **Appendix 1**, gives a fair and balanced overview of the Education Service and the improvement journey over the course of the last year and in particular showcases through photographic evidence, the work ongoing across the system. Of particular note is the key successes evident and the spotlight on individual schools of note. As the Moray Education plan 20-23 is signed off the document contains extensive self-evaluation evidence to support progress along with an assessment of whether the work is complete, will continue or are retired.
- 3.10 As part of the requirements of reporting within the Scottish Attainment Challenge, an end of year report for the Care-Experienced Children and Young People (CEC&YP) Funding is included. Positive progress has been made with a virtual Head Teacher appointed towards the end of the session, providing further capacity to track, monitor and support our CEC&YP as well as fulfilling Education's commitment to the Promise.
- 3.11 As part of the framework for recovery and accelerating progress as published by the Scottish Government in March 2022, Stretch Aims were set for key attainment and wellbeing measures. The self-evaluation document provides information on progress and the NIF Plan 2023-24 (**Appendix 2**) includes a review of the aims for the coming session. Progress is being made across a number of indicators and they will continue to be a priority in the coming year.
- 3.11 In February 2023, the service were involved in a Collaborative Improvement Visit through shared work with Education Scotland and the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES). The aim of the visit was for Moray to share a 'wicked' issue or an area currently progressing with the view to this being scrutinised by those involved as well as support the improvement journey. The service identified work ongoing regarding curricular offer in the senior phase linked with raising attainment. The report is included in **Appendix 1** (pages 53-57).

3.12 As a result of the Collaborative Improvement Visit, the scope of which was wider than the original area identified, the service completed the review of Education priorities across the system. Key areas identified were:

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Curriculum
- Empowered leadership and
- ASN Review with this moving to the core Education service

3.13 At the penultimate strategic meeting of the session, leaders across the service, working with the central team agreed the following:

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment – all teachers to be provided with the book Power Up Your Pedagogy and all schools to create a programme within collegiate time and or at in-service days to improve learning and teaching across Moray

3.14 The final strategic meeting of the session was used to create a new strategic approach to school improvement with the creation of a Curriculum Strategy Group and Moray Improvement Groups (MIGs) where system leaders will be empowered to lead strategic work over the course of the session. To support empowerment and leadership, time for leading will be provided, adding capacity in the system.

3.15 Progress will be reported to Committee during normal processes.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

This report was informed by the priorities within the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan and in particular to Our People, Our Place and Our Future and A Growing and Diverse Economy and Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Education Act and Standards in Scotland's Schools Act have been adhered to.

(c) Financial implications

The cost of all improvement actions are undertaken within schools existing budgets and through the central Education budget. Any additional funding has been through Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocations as well as any additional Covid-19 grants received.

(d) Risk Implications

Covid-19 absence continues to impact on service and service delivery which could have a negative impact on progress throughout the session. Vacancies in key strategic roles will also have an impact. Lack of progression in recruiting additional Research and Information Officer to support Education's plan to explore Power BI to improve data access,

and reporting. Potential risk that even with the planned work, the Council does not close the poverty related attainment gap.

(e) Staffing Implications

Staff absence, including those in leadership roles, has an impact on the ability to improve service offer.

(f) Property

There are no property issues arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The National Improvement Framework is aimed at reducing inequalities.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

The Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Head of Financial Services, Head of HR, ICT and OD, Quality Improvement Manager, the Business Support Team Manager and the Democratic Services Manager, have been consulted on this report and agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Committee is asked to review the evidence provided in the NIF return documents, acknowledge the continued impact of the pandemic and agree the submission to Scottish Government due by the end of September 2023.

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross, Head of Education

Background Papers: [National Improvement Framework](#)

Ref: SPMAN