Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Scottish Attainment Challenge: 2015-20 Impact report

Local authority report
Moray

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Contents

Section 1: Context of Scottish Attainment Challenge

Section 2: Approach used

Section 3: Transformational changes: cultural and systemic

Section 4: Improvement in outcomes for children and young people

Section 5: Specific funding streams

Section 6: Lessons learned and future priorities

Section 7: Case Studies

Section 8: Glossary & Appendix

Executive Summary

The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in February 2015 to help the Scottish Government achieve its vision of delivering excellence and equity in education. Moray Council has been part of the SAC since 2016/2017 and receives funding through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund. Moray has received £4,308,920 over the last 3 years across these various funding streams.

This report highlights the impact of SAC funding for the children and young people of Moray; in particular, those most affected by poverty. Key strengths include:

- The local authority (LA) has embarked on an extensive programme of events to support staff in using data effectively to inform school improvement. Robust interrogation by the central team has ensured that the majority of schools have improved knowledge and application of data. The education department have developed a highly effective tracker that is used to support schools in tracking of wellbeing, attainment and achievement. This effective tool facilitates reviews of interventions (including PEF) for sufficiency and impact. The LA are supporting staff to consider interventions and analysis of attendance data at school level; this informs universal and targeted interventions to help understand the poverty related attainment gap. This had led to self-reporting of greater practitioner confidence in data use and handling;
- The number of incidents of exclusion has significantly decreased over the past three years in both primary and secondary schools. Effective professional learning in whole school restorative approaches has taken place. In almost all schools, staff and pupils demonstrate respectful behaviour and positive relationships. Staff care about the wellbeing of pupils and pupils feel listened to and valued. This has resulted in self reporting of improved ethos and culture which has resulted in positive behaviour approaches adopted in most schools;
- There is an improving trend in the combined literacy and numeracy attainment for primary children. The LA are using PEF funding to provide targeted interventions to improve reading, writing and numeracy to close the poverty related attainment gap.

The local authority has identified the following areas for continued development:

- Schools will continue to explore opportunities for joint PEF collaboration across Associated Schools Groups or with local comparator schools. Headteachers will continue to look outwards to other local authorities and schools in order to share/identify interesting practice which has led to improvements. Learning will be shared and celebrated across Moray;
- Continue to develop and capture robust attainment information that will provide the local narrative to support PEF planning. Implementing the Moray PEF Planning Cycle as a further revised approach may ensure that additional baseline and impact data is captured, which will inform future practice.
- The LA will continue to develop and embed approaches to underpin wellbeing, including reviewing pastoral care and wellbeing classrooms. Moray Council is working towards a “Supporting all Learners” strategy to address equity.

Section 1 Context of Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Government's ambition is for Scotland to be the best place in which to grow up. To achieve this, it is essential to raise attainment and reduce educational inequity for all of Scotland's children and young people. Attainment is the measurable progress made by children and young people as they advance through, and beyond, school. However, there continues to be a gap between the progress made between those living in Scotland's least and most deprived areas. The First Minister launched SAC in February 2015 to bring these issues to the fore and provide a greater sense of urgency and priority to address them across the education system.

SAC funding has been available to local authorities and schools to support this vision since 2015. Various funding streams have been available throughout this period. As evidence and understanding evolved, different needs and supports were highlighted:

- Challenge Authority Funding (available to seven authorities from 2015 and an additional two authorities since 2016/17).
- Schools Programme Funding (available to 57 primary schools since 2015 and to another 28 secondary schools since 2016/17). There are now 72 schools in the Schools Programme (as a result of some becoming part of the Challenge Authorities programmes, some mergers and one school closure).
- Pupil Equity Funding (available to almost all schools in Scotland since 2016/17).
- Care Experienced Funding (available to local authorities since 2018/19).

Outcomes

Reducing educational inequity and closing the poverty- related attainment gap is a long term strategy which aims to impact on societal culture and thinking. Consequently a logic model was developed to allow the SAC Programme to recognise and measure short and medium term outcomes towards achieving the long term goals. This report will look at the outcomes achieved with reference to the logic model and how this information can be used to informing next steps.

Moray's context

Moray Council is the eighth largest council by land area in Scotland. In June 2019, the population of Moray was 86,870 (25th out of 32 Scottish local authorities). Moray is a Scottish Attainment Challenge Universal programme local authority. There are 45 primary schools and 8 secondary schools located across Moray. Children with additional support needs receive the support they require within mainstream schools. In 2019 38% of pupils were recognised as having additional support needs, which is slightly higher than the national average. Previously Moray had no Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 1, however, school profiles have notably changed from last year with families now living in decile 1. One datazone now has 90 primary aged pupils in SIMD decile 1 which indicates that an increasing number of children and young people are living in poverty within Moray. This is particularly the case for some relatively remote communities in the area. Moray have attainment gaps in the upper deciles, specifically decile 7 where 25% of their cohort resides. 9.8% of pupils are registered for free school meals (FSM) in the 2019 session. 53 out of the 54 Moray schools received PEF ranging from £1,200 to £109,200 per school.

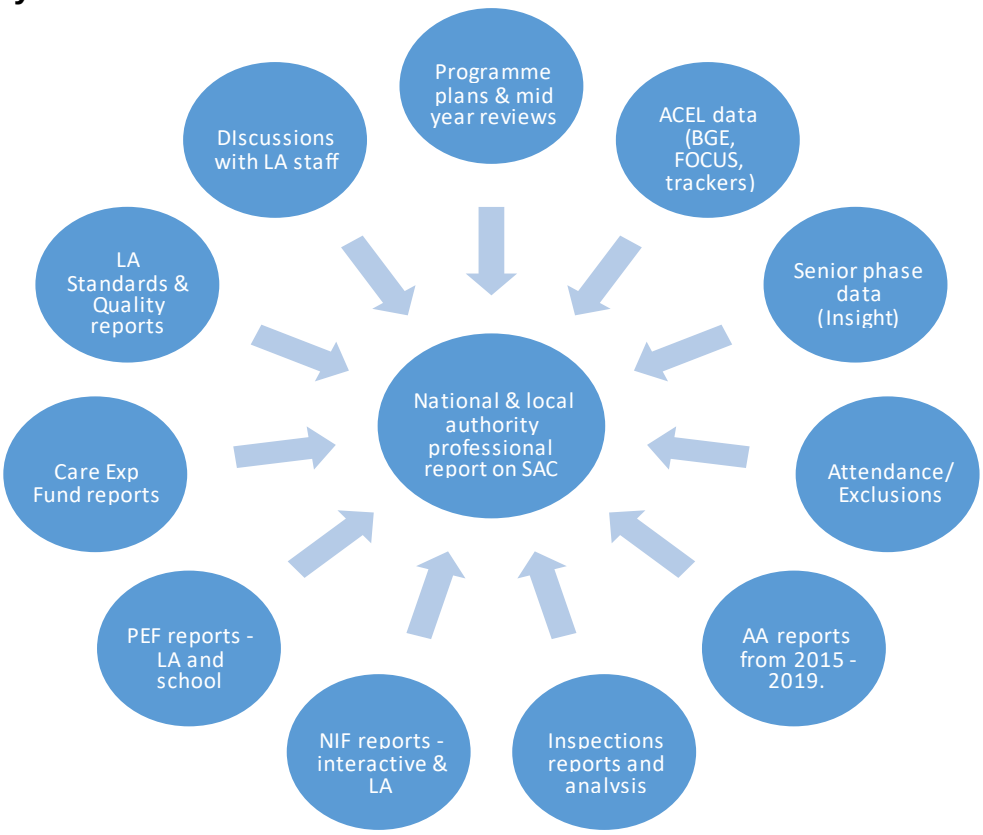
Section 2 Approach used

During the period of 19th October 2020 to 4th December 2020, Attainment Advisors worked alongside SAC local authority project leads to analyse data and evidence from their individual local authority regarding the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The purpose was to provide qualitative and quantitative answers to three high level questions regarding the impact of SAC within each local authority:

1. How has the implementation of the SAC impacted upon the culture and systems of local authorities to ensure those cultures and systems are equitable for children, young people and families affected by poverty?
2. How has the SAC positively impacted upon, or contributed to, educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty?
3. Which lessons have been learned and what are the future priorities for the SAC?

Each Attainment Advisor completed a professional report template providing detail and evidence to thirty-four questions. This provided further detail and evidence around each of these three high level questions. They utilised data from a variety of different sources to triangulate the analysis. Diagram 1 illustrates the range of data used. This report is the result of this analysis.

Diagram 1: Evidence used to collate the Local Authority professional reports on SAC by Attainment Advisors



Section 3 Transformational changes: cultural and systemic

3.1 Leadership

3.1.1: Strategic leadership:

The ethos and vision of the SAC Fund is reflected in many of Moray's strategic documents. This includes the Children's Services Plan where "reducing the impact of poverty" is a key aim. The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan states all staff are committed to "building a better future for our children and young people in Moray". Work is ongoing to ensure that School PEF Plans take account of the current Moray (Child) Poverty Action Plan and good practice from other local authorities. PEF interventions have been implemented within the six strategic areas from the Moray Schools and Curriculum Development Department Strategic Action Plan 2018-21. This informs all school improvement planning. This plan is currently under review following restructuring within the council and will take the form of a revised education plan moving forward from session 2020. A lead officer oversees the implementation of PEF as part of their wider lead role. This includes reviewing plans and evaluating impact of PEF and reporting to elected members. The completion of the annual statutory return and organisation of PEF information events also takes place. On inception of PEF in Moray, the Director of Education and Children's Services at that time led on the PEF strategy with responsibility moving to officer level following restructuring. The LA has developed local guidance and paperwork to support PEF planning. This is reviewed regularly.

3.1.2: Leadership skills

Through school support and challenge visits, data and interventions are reviewed for impact and planning. This includes PEF, as linked to the school improvement plans. LA officer intelligence is mapped with school self-evaluations to inform targeted areas for support. Focused CLPL sessions have been delivered which has included Moray Leadership and Management training and Education Scotland CLPL sessions. School leaders are supported to reflect on leadership of change, impact measurement and improvement. Although CLPL sessions delivered are not directly funded by PEF, the increased awareness generated by the SAC has been a contributing factor to the impact that this activity had. The AA continues to offer school visits to discuss data and to consider interventions and priorities. The aims of support sessions are to consider interventions and supports that are informed by data, to improve attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Support sessions are guided by teachers' needs. Themes have included outcomes and measures, alternative qualifications to recognise wider achievement and considering data over time. Headteachers, deputy headteachers and principal teachers have commented positively about support sessions and have asked for ongoing support in these areas.

3.2 Learning and teaching

3.2.1: Learning and teaching

Following cross-authority collaboration and working, the LA have developed Our Moray Standard for Learning and Teaching as a driver for raising attainment. This is in line with the refreshed Strategy for Raising Attainment in Moray. A suite of resources and toolkits have been created for reflection and school improvement in this area. Headteacher meetings, professional development sessions and school collegiate working have led to improvements in pedagogy and practice. In the recent NIF return for learning, teaching and assessment, 12 headteachers rated schools as very good, 19 were rated as good, and 22 as satisfactory. Assessment and moderation continues to be a LA focus; strengthening practitioner confidence in their professional judgments. This includes Inset activities devoted to moderation. As a result, teacher professional judgement has strengthened and in normal operating years, improvements have been witnessed year on year. Learning modules have been delivered by central officers and have been used to support practice development. Examples of this include play pedagogy collaboration with Early Years staff, considering planning and differentiation. Schools report positively on targeted support sessions that have been delivered. Although sessions delivered were not funded byt PEF, due to the SAC this has been a contributing factor to the impact that this training has had.

3.2.2 Understanding the challenges and impact of poverty

Schools work closely with children and families and collate local intelligence to inform support. Using knowledge of their local contexts, schools have delivered a range of interventions to support pupils living in poverty. This has included: providing breakfast clubs; delivering out of school activities and provision of resources to allow pupils to fully participate in activities. Schools undertake self-evaluation activities, including surveys and questionnaires, to gauge level of need which helps underpin understanding and planning. The AA has delivered career long professional learning to schools, focusing on poverty and equity, to support practitioner understanding. Monthly PEF drop-in clinics have been offered and will be offered as part of the 2021/2022 plan. Support sessions have focussed on the SAC, situational poverty, inwork poverty and profiling schools. Feedback from staff identified that they are now more aware of the issues in their local area which has helped inform planning. In response to digital poverty during COVID-19 Moray have provided 80 iPads, 1700 laptops, 130 Chromebooks and 30 Wi-Fi dongles to families to ensure that digital poverty was not a barrier to learning. This was as a result of Moray colleagues understanding the challenges faced by pupils and families living in poverty. To ensure that this is embedded into practice and a legacy is created, digital poverty will feature in Moray's wider digital strategy that is being developed.

3.3 Families and communities

3.3.1 Family engagement with educational establishments

Moray Parent Forum meets termly with representatives from across Moray parent councils. All parents/carers with children at a school are automatically members of the Parent Forum for their school. All schools within Moray consult with parents and all stakeholders to populate their school improvement plan, of which equity is a key theme. LA parent surveys are undertaken every 2 years. This supports and quantifies intelligence from parents. This has been supplemented most recently by the Moray COVID-19 parent survey. One school which was recently inspected by Education Scotland had their involvement in partnership working, including parents, highlighted as an area of good practice. Following the recent successful launch of Our Moray Standard for Learning and Teaching, the LA next steps are to revisit the draft Parental Engagement strategy. Developed in 2017, it was recognised that revision to the Learning and Teaching strategy was required. Schools continue to build on parental engagement strategies, extending to family learning opportunities. This has included open afternoons, shared learning events, back to the future parental engagement sessions, and other creative ways to engage parents and families in the life and work of the school. Through the wider parent forum, parent council and schools consult and engage with parents on their use of the SAC funding. To ensure that most schools are adopting this practice PEF clinics and revised PEF guidelines will reiterate the importance of this and share practice on how this can be successfully achieved.

3.3.2 Family learning .

Most primary schools within Moray have developed robust home/school diaries or homework books to effectively communicate with parents. Class blogs are used to allow parents to be involved in homework and as a means to strengthening the relationship between home and school. All schools within Moray have a school newsletter that can be accessed digitally or via the school, recognising digital poverty. Newsletters are issued regularly and keep parents up to date with significant school events. Less than half of schools within Moray offer monthly Family Learning opportunities for all pupils, where parents and carers join their children in learning in class. However progress reports are used in the majority of schools within Moray. They focus on the skills pupils are developing in line with CfE and the Moray Skills Framework. This is underpinned by parental engagement via open afternoons. During lockdown 1206 parents actively took part in a learning survey. Most parents were positive about home-school interactions, wellbeing check-ins and learning at home resources and delivery throughout COVID-19.

3.3.3 Other improvements in outcomes for families and communities

Due to the large number of military families that reside within Moray (second highest in Scotland) almost all schools with military families have developed bespoke Military Families' coffee mornings and wellbeing and participation events. Sessions offer practical and emotional support, advice and guidance to family members of serving military personnel. It is understood that additional social, emotional and mental wellbeing supports for pupils and families from Armed Forces families are required due to experiencing significant emotional life events.

Qualitative feedback from support groups have been very positive as it allows parents to connect with each other and their wider community. Monies received through SAC is being complimented via a grant from the Covenant Fund which will support schools with wellbeing interventions for this unique community. An example of successful SAC spend is the provision of healthy activities and cookery clubs during the summer holidays which encourages parental engagement. Home school link workers have accessed training and provided Seasons for Growth training, offering parent support groups and targeted 1:1 support. As a result of PEF interventions schools have reported a reduction of exclusions, increase in attendance and increase of parental engagement.

3.4 How we work as a system

3.4.1 Effective use of data for improvement

Considerable work has been undertaken through headteacher meetings, collaborative professional development sessions and training on data handling, analysis and intervention. This includes training on SNSA; BGE Benchmarking tool; Insight professional development and wider attainment data sessions. This had led to selfreporting of greater practitioner confidence in data use and handling. The LA continues to provide data sets to schools on key areas including attainment; achievement; attendance; exclusion; FSM; SIMD and other context/school related data. Robust interrogation by the central team has ensured that the majority of schools have improved knowledge and application of data. LA scrutiny and attainment visits make use of data sets provided and supported by the Research and Information team to ensure interventions for improvement are evidence. The education department have develop a highly effective tracker that is used to support schools in tracking of wellbeing, attainment and achievement. This effective tool facilitates reviews of interventions (including PEF) for sufficiency and impact. The Moray Tracker has a clear strategy framework and guidance supporting this cross-authority resource. Almost all schools are using this tool effectively. The AA has complimented this by providing headteachers with further support in data analysis. As a result of this, headteachers have reported greater understanding of data literacy which will support a more accurate identification of the poverty related attainment gap within their school. This has helped facilitate discussions regarding approaches that could be considered to address this gap.

3.4.2 Collaboration including partnership working

Commendably, partnerships with third sector organisations have developed within a few schools in Moray. The SAC principles have been used to engage and co-design interventions with national and grass roots organisations. An example of effective collaboration includes Children 1st working with primary schools to support vulnerable FSM families and pupils. Support is offered within and out with school to nurture and foster appropriate trusting relationships. The Children 1st project worker collaborates with key school staff; Headteachers report effective communication underpins this role and the workers have the skill set and ability to respond to emerging local need.

Due to this role pupils and families are supported to foster positive attitudes and culture towards learning. An intended outcome of this funded role was to improve relationships between pupil, school and parent/carer, which has reportedly taken place. All secondary schools have embedded pathway planning meetings to support the needs of learners allowing for individual pathways to be created. Pathway planning adopts a multi-agency approach to develop flexible and bespoke packages for the most at-risk pupils. Collaboration is also taking place with e-Sgoil to offer pupils broader learning experiences. The AA is a member of the Moray Third Sector Interface and has delivered national and local SAC presentations to further highlight the role that the third sector, CLD and wider partners play in supporting the SAC.

Section 4 Improvement in outcomes for children and young people

4.1 Literacy & Numeracy

4.1.1 Literacy

Data for Broad General Education (BGE) attainment in literacy indicate a 4 year trend of improvement in attainment of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. There has been a significant reduction from 28% to 15% (-13%) in the poverty related attainment gap for literacy (P1, P4, P7 combined). No comparison can take place for fourth level due to data being suppressed, because of small numbers. Despite this positive trend, Moray are 5% below the national attainment averages at early level, 10% at first level; 7% at second level and 5% at third level. The majority of schools have used PEF funding to provide targeted interventions to improve reading and writing. There are a number of strengths within the LA and the use of the SAC Fund has contributed to this. Examples include: Effective writing intervention workshops. The majority of targeted pupils moved up 2/3 of a level. Evaluations from reading groups indicated that YARC reading ages against chronological reading ages improved for the majority of pupils. For a minority this remained the same. For a few pupils this had no impact. To address the attainment gap, the LA has developed robust plans to continue to embed improvements. Rigour of tracking/monitoring via attainment meetings will continue to take place. Work undertaken on moderation includes QAMSO inputs, attending Regional Improvement Collaborative moderation event and embedding the Moderation Strategy. The LA continue to progress moderation CLPL sessions which will upskill and build confidence in benchmarking.

4.1.2 Numeracy

Data for BGE attainment in numeracy indicates a 4-year trend of improvement in attainment of CfE levels. There has been a significant reduction in the poverty related attainment gap for numeracy at P1, P4, P7 combined . This gap has reduced over time from 21% to 13% (-8%). No comparison can take place for fourth level due to the data being suppressed, due to small numbers. Despite this positive trend Moray are 6% below the national attainment averages at early level; 11% at first level and 10% at second level. However, data evidences that the LA are 2% above the national average for numeracy at third level. Moray continue to evidence a commitment to closing the numeracy attainment gap: the majority of schools used PEF funding to provide interventions to improve numeracy attainment. An example of this is collaboration within an Associated School Group where a secondary mathematics teacher worked in partnership with primary schools to improve maths confidence. Qualitative feedback from pupils indicates increased confidence in numeracy and reduced anxiety transitioning to secondary school. Two maths conferences have taken place to increase staff confidence in applying new approaches and to share resources to help identify gaps.

Although the conferences were not directly funded by PEF, the increased awareness generated by the SAC has been a contributing factor to the impact that this activity had. Therefore, this was an unintended outcome for the SAC programme

4.2 Senior Phase

Achievement in literacy and numeracy for SCQF 4 and 5 has improved from previous years. This is broadly in line with national comparisons. The LA report at Higher level there is a 6% increase of achieving at least one Higher. This has been attributed to an effective and relentless focus on learner pathways. Improvement is noted for pupils in S5 and S6 attaining at least 3 Higher level passes, compared to 2019 data. There is a 3.09% poverty related attainment gap for senior phase SCQF 4 attainment which is 2.8% lower than the national average (5.89%). There is a 5.09% poverty related attainment gap for senior phase SCQF 5 attainment which is 12.02% lower than the national average (17.11%). There is a 16.67% poverty related attainment gap for senior phase SCQF 6 attainment which is 15.87% lower than the national average (32.54%). The proportion of young people in Moray who sustain an initial positive destination on leaving school has improved in recent years. The 2018/19 destinations for S4 leavers were particularly positive with 97% moving into a positive destination which is in line with national and virtual comparators.

In 2019 91.3% of 16-19 year olds participated in education, training or employment. This is -0.3% below the average national measure. This has decreased 0.1% when compared to the previous year. 2.9% of 16-19 year olds were identified as not participating which includes those who are both unemployed seeking and unemployed not seeking. 5.8% of 16-19 year olds were identified with an unconfirmed status. It may be that many of these individuals have taken up employment but it has not been possible to confirm this.

4.3 Achievement

Overall, across Moray young people's achievements are improving. There has been an improvement in the range of opportunities for personal achievement. This includes sporting, cultural and outdoor learning opportunities. A few schools use their PEF to support these initiatives within school. Leadership development opportunities via the Cadets, Boys Brigade and Girl Guides are also offered within Moray. Pupils are achieving accreditation for achievement via Dynamic Youth and Saltire Awards. A few schools have been involved in the John Muir Awards with 66 awards being granted to pupils to recognise achievement. A few programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award require further targeting of disadvantaged pupils. Moray is planning to address this to ensure that wider achievement opportunities are accessible to all. Most of the schools within Moray engage with UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools. 33 schools have achieved the Rights Respecting School Award at bronze, silver and gold accreditation. 33% of pupils accessed the Active Schools programme within Moray. Of which 34% accessed FSM.

This is a significant increase from previous years. All 53 primary and secondary schools in Moray established at least one link with a local sports club. Although these activities are not a direct causal link of PEF, the increased awareness generated by the SAC has been a contributing factor to the impact that this activity had. Therefore, this was an unintended outcome for the SAC programme.

4.4 Wellbeing

In a recent wellbeing survey almost all pupils were able to speak about their rights with this being embedded across the curriculum. In most schools, children feel they are listened to and their opinions and ideas are acted upon. However, FSM pupils reported lower life satisfaction than those not eligible. Further, amongst secondary pupils 54% of FSM pupils had higher than average social, emotional and behavioural difficulties compared to non-FSM pupils. Moray colleagues have identified key areas of need and are developing a plan to address the wellbeing of FSM pupils. There are a number of effective PEF interventions that have been developed in Moray to address wellbeing for children and young people. Examples include:

- Extra-curricular clubs and activities to increase self-esteem, promote positive body image and increase pupil confidence;
- PEF support Homework Clubs to mitigate against poverty of experience and aspirational poverty;
- 'Chill and Spill' sessions to assist pupils with self-regulation;
- Nurture lunches that FSM pupils can access;
- Wellbeing interventions and 1:1 support delivered via Home School Link worker and teaching staff to provide nurture supports. This has included wellbeing walks;
- Employment of specialised staff, including Support Workers, Pupil Support Assistants and Family Support Workers to support the wellbeing of pupils and families.

A holistic model of interventions have been adopted which supports the wellbeing of pupils. This has included the majority of schools embedding family learning programmes, introducing breakfast clubs and soft-start transition activities to support pupil wellbeing.

4.5 Attendance & inclusion

4.5.1 Attendance

Attendance rates of pupils in Moray are higher than the national average for both primary and secondary pupils. The average attendance of FSM primary pupils in 18/19 is 92.1%, which is 2.9% less than the LA average. This indicates that, overall, FSM primary pupils had lower attendance rates compared to non-FSM pupils which aligns with the national narrative. Attendance of FSM pupils has marginally decreased by 0.9% from 16/17 to 18/19.

The average attendance of FSM BGE secondary pupils in 18/19 is 85.8%, which is 2.9% less than the LA average, indicating that, overall, FSM secondary pupils have marginally lower attendance rates compared to non-FSM pupils. This trend aligns with the national narrative. Attendance of FSM secondary has marginally decreased by 0.2% from 16/17 to 18/19. To continue to address the attendance gap of FSM v non FSM pupils the LA have established a multi-agency attendance group that are reviewing data that will help to highlight emerging trends and appropriate interventions to schools. The LA are upskilling schools in use of SEEMis to ensure accurate recordings take place. Interventions and analysis of attendance data at school level to inform universal and targeted interventions is also taking place to understand this gap. An example of appropriate use of PEF to address this includes the introduction of breakfast clubs and soft-start transition activities within primary/secondary schools. Qualitative data indicates increased readiness to learn and reduced late arrivals to school which has culminated in improved attendance for pupils accessing these interventions.

4.5.2 Inclusion:

In almost all schools, staff and pupils demonstrate respectful behaviour and positive relationships. Staff care about the wellbeing of pupils and pupils feel listened to and valued. The number of incidents of exclusion has decreased over the past three years (2016/17 to 2018/19) in both primary (-33%) and secondary schools (-37%). Effective professional learning in whole school restorative approaches has taken place. This has resulted in self reporting of improved ethos and culture which has resulted in positive behaviour approaches adopted in most schools. However despite this, the number of Violence and Aggression Reporting (VA) forms populated has increased in both primary (+88%) and secondary (+79%) schools. Therefore, although exclusions have shown a decreasing trend, data shows increasing reports of violence and aggression in primary and secondary sectors. However, consideration should be given to increased rigour in reporting and monitoring processes which could be attributed to the increase of VA forms. Further training in relational practice is being considered. School needs analysis is taking place to actively support staff to maintain the decreasing trend of exclusions and reduce the incidents of violence and aggression in schools. Schools are working with pupils on various alternative to exclusion programmes to ensure minimum disruption to their education. This is being supported by Education Psychologists who have developed a bespoke training programme Building Positive Relationships Training. The majority of schools are embracing this and embedding restorative and solution-orientated approaches. It is hoped that once approaches are embedded violence and aggression incidents will decrease.

4.6 Children and young people's voice

In a recent wellbeing survey, almost all pupils reported that they are included in the life and work of the school and are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their voice. Across Moray, almost all learners are included and feel involved in many aspects of the life of schools. Moray ranks 20 out of 32 local authorities in the 2019 annual participation measure.

In response to COVID-19, surveys were created and issued in order to gauge feedback and opinion from learners, parent/carers and the schools. This was designed to elicit responses from learners on their home learning experience and to inform future contingency planning. Feedback received from 1,873 Moray learners (16%) and 1,206 parents. Capturing pupils and families voice has equipped the LA to respond to emerging need as a result of COVID-19 and realigned their PEF spend to address this need.

4.7 Children and young people who have experienced care

Moray has significantly lower numbers of children looked after at home than the Scottish average. Looked After Children's school attendance and attainment rates are below their peers. Care experienced primary pupils have attendance rates of 92% which is 3% less than LA average. Care experienced secondary pupils have an attendance rate of 82.5% which is 9.4% less than the LA average. This indicates that, overall, care experienced pupils have lower attendance rates compared to non-care experience pupils. Attendance over time for both primary and secondary pupil has remained relatively unchanged. Exclusion rates are relatively low but there has been a recent increase. Male looked after children within Moray have an attendance rate of 87%, females is 88%. In 2018/2019 Moray had 29 school leavers that were looked after. Of these 72% were in a positive destination, which is in line with the national average. The percentage of care experienced school leavers by highest level of attainment achieved is 10% lower than the national average for 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 3 and level 4. Within the Corporate Parenting Strategy the LA has an education pillar which is addressing the improvement required. Moray is committed to delivering on the published promise and progressing the findings of the National Independent Care Review.

Section 5: Specific funding streams

5.1 Pupil Equity Funding

5.1.1 What worked well?

In 2019, 117 separate PEF interventions were delivered within the majority of schools (102 in primary schools and 15 in secondary schools). The majority of schools report improvements in quantitative and qualitative evidence. Most schools have worked on a range of universal and targeted interventions. Health & wellbeing, literacy and numeracy interventions have supported improvement in attainment for literacy and numeracy. The authority continues to make progress in raising attainment across most levels through improved approaches to tracking and monitoring. Most schools report their PEF plans are having a positive impact on pupils, with a minority of schools identifying an increase in attainment and attendance as a result of PEF interventions. Schools have continued to use PEF creatively in order to consider ways in which they can close the poverty related attainment gap. For the majority of head teachers, effective professional learning has improved their understanding of data in relation to identifying gaps for their respective schools. Almost all headteachers have accessed training delivered by the LA. Less than half of headteachers have accessed additional professional training delivered via the Regional Improvement Collaborative, Education Scotland and the AA. Headteachers have reported increased confidence and skills in data analysis.

5.1.2 Further developments

- Increased targeting of PEF is required to close the poverty related attainment gap. Schools should continue to explore opportunities for joint PEF collaboration across Associated Schools Groups or with local comparator schools;
- Continue to develop robust attainment information and develop digital literacy skills to identify gaps and to effectively plan learning which meets the needs of learners. Rigour of tracking and monitoring; CLPL sessions will take place with data coaching opportunities to embed this into practice. Implementing the Moray PEF Planning Cycle as a further revised approach may ensure that additional baseline data is captured, ensuring qualitative baseline data is gathered, prior to embarking on PEF interventions. Thereafter, colleagues will measure impact during interventions and once intervention has concluded to capture impact. Learning will be shared and celebrated across Moray;
- Ensure headteachers continue to look outwards to other local authorities and schools in order to share/identify where good practice is happening and have led to improvements. The LA will continue to collate and share interesting practice across Moray;

- The LA will explore and review how other Universal SAC authorities make use of limited funding, particularly those schools with very small PEF allocations, to ensure maximum impact.
- There will be a continued focus on attainment in P1 to P4. Teacher Professional Judgments continues to improve and strengthen through continued LA approaches to assessment and moderation. The LA are planning appropriate CLPL focussing on assessment within learning and teaching. This should ensure consistency and appropriate progression of a level and increase confidence in teacher professional judgement.

5.2 Care Experienced Fund for children and young people

5.2.1 What worked well?

During 2017 the LA asked Care Experienced Children what issues mattered most to them. From their feedback, the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group developed ten guarantees, intended to improve the care experience for all Children and Young People. This has driven forward three projects that the Care Experienced Fund has financed: Firstly, The Community of School Initiative was established to improve support, opportunity, aspiration and attainment for young people. Four foundations have been identified – Individual Support; Awareness and Understanding; Collective Opportunity and Transitions which have been successfully embedded. Secondly, the development of an advocacy support for a minority of children has been provided, with a focus on support and engagement with education in the context of COVID-19 recovery. Thirdly, The Mentoring Programme has supported a small number of care experienced young people. Referrals have been received from the majority of secondary schools. From this, majority of young people have been successful matched to volunteer mentors. The LA have successfully recruited 29 active mentors, with a further 12 accessing training. Feedback from young people evidences that this has been positive: 'I'm able to relax and I can say what I'm really thinking, it's given me confidence to speak to new people, I used to blank them but now I'm less mardy!' Participatory Budgeting (PB)- This project is piloting PB with a core group of young people who have created a list of items and supports that they say will make a difference to their achievement. No data on impact due to infancy of project.

5.2.2 Further developments:

Following the pilot of the PB project, the group plan to evaluate and roll out a programme that will encourage care experienced young people to positively engage with PB. The LA are clear that young people will be at the heart of the decision making process and will directly benefit from the funding.

5.3 National programmes

Cost of the School Day Moray Action Report (2019) indicates that partners have been supporting two associated school groups. Cost of the School Day have provided two members of staff that have engaged and consulted with children, young people and their families to capture their views and needs. Training and awareness for school communities has taken place. Anecdotal feedback suggests that this has increased pupil understanding and knowledge of barriers for children living on a low-income in school and potential solutions to these barriers. Due to the impact of COVID-19 there has been a significant delay in practitioners producing a draft report detailing their findings. Once completed this information will be presented to the senior leadership/management Teams (assisted by peer researchers in secondary schools) and recommendations will be discussed. It is envisaged that the school will receive a final version of the report that includes feedback. Most schools, pupils and families have reported that that engagement with the Cost of the School day to date has been positive.

Section 6 Lessons learned and future priorities

6.1 Lessons learned

6.1.1 Sustainability

Due to the temporary nature of staffing contracts, it has been challenging for the LA to evidence sustainability. As a Universal SAC authority, some schools receive limited PEF allocations resulting in some projects or initiatives not being able to continue into future sessions. As a small, rural LA, it is felt that there is a limited amount of expertise available locally for recruitment to short-term PEF posts and access to a range of National 3rd sector organisations. With a limited staffing pool and due to temporary nature of PEF posts, this has made recruitment challenging. Schools must be creative and innovative in their approach to providing interventions to support identified children and young people to overcome these barriers. Schools continue to make use of data for intervention and mapping approaches to capture impact. To ensure best value an economy of scale approach is adopted. A few schools have considered joint procurement approaches to increase reach and impact.

6.1.2 Lessons learned

- When planning PEF interventions to support the most deprived pupils, schools should ensure they maintain focus on the overarching aim of closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The importance of setting and capturing baseline data and the use of qualitative information gathered, prior to embarking on PEF interventions has been noted by some schools. Planned PEF clinics led by the AA in the next academic session will help to address this;
- The importance of applying research-based interventions into practice;
- Collaboration of Associated School Groups to ensure best use of funds available. Economies of scale will be considered in future PEF planning to maximise impact and increase reach. The AA will support schools that are commissioning services to ensure that impact returns reflect the school and LA needs. From this, good practice can be shared and replicated, if appropriate. A newly appointed procurement manager will help to facilitate this;
- The importance of having a consistent AA; Over the three years of PEF, the LA has had 4 different AAs and for a period of time no AA was in post;
- Ensuring mechanisms for sharing interesting practice on an ongoing basis needs to be more robust. The AA will work with a number of schools to develop interesting practice case studies that can be shared across Moray and nationally. This will help to share practice and celebrate success.

6.2 Future priorities

SAC has informed part of the revised Moray Education Strategic Plan. This focuses on improving attainment, achievement and outcomes for all; which is underpinned by health and wellbeing with a strong focus on self-evaluation for self-improvement: Embedding the 'Raising Attainment Strategy' and Toolkits and applying 'Our Moray Standard for Learning and Teaching' (and resources) to support PEF implementation;

- Increase use of data, tracking and monitoring approaches. Improved data analysis to understand local narrative to support PEF planning;
- Leadership and professional development for all to support the 'Themes for Intervention for Equity';
- Continued development of the BGE curriculum in line with the refreshed Curriculum for Excellence narrative; with a focus on interdisciplinary learning;
- Development of approaches to underpin wellbeing. Reviewing of pastoral care and wellbeing classrooms. Moray are working towards a "Supporting all Learners" strategy to address equity;
- Review of approaches to self-evaluation for self-improvement, in line with our 'Moray Health Check' for improvement approaches.
- Actions that will be supported by the AA include lead officers and the AA planning professional development sessions on identified PEF themes. This will be supported by PEF drop in clinics that will explore school PEF plans and consider reach and impact. Further targeted planned approaches to identifying schools that will benefit from support from the AA will take place. Moray PEF Guidance will be revisited and Moray PEF planning cycle will be offered as part of the wider planning toolkit.

6.3 Other relevant information

It is recognised that there are low levels of FSM registration which impacts reach. However the LA have turned their attention to this via the Education Poverty Action Group where a multiagency action plan is being developed to tackle this. Despite this local effort, there are a number of wider, complex reasons why basing PEF allocation on FSM is not a true reflection of the prevalence of poverty within Moray. Rural poverty, situational poverty and in work poverty all contribute to this: Moray is a rural LA and as such, is impacted by wider issues including transportation, connectivity, employment and changing context of industry. Moray has the second lowest wage in Scotland. Child poverty rates are increasing within Moray with 1 child in 5 living in relative poverty. Despite these barrier Moray's teachers have demonstrated determination and creativity in planning PEF interventions. The LA continues to work with Northern Alliance partners, Education Scotland and wider LA colleagues to support improvement and performance. This has included tentative work with a central LA to share practice and initiate collaborative working on common themes.

Section 7

Case studies

Case Study 1 Evaluation of The Number Box pilot at New Elgin Primary School

Overview

The Number Box is a fun, multi-sensory teaching programme, designed to support the acquisition of maths skills. It can be used as support for children who need ongoing extra regular teaching. or to support small groups who are not yet able to work with abstract concepts. It can be used from Year 1 and can support pupils with dyslexia, (who find sequential, organisational and spatial skills challenging), pupils with receptive and expressive language difficulties, (who need support in understanding maths vocabulary), and pupils with dyscalculia, (who have difficulties understanding the concept of number). It is designed to be used by PSAs, within an ethos where children are enabled to say if they don't understand, and know it doesn't matter if we make mistakes. It is highly personalised - individual record booklets provide a record of progress over time and has a clear progression of skills. Early skills are practised in each session (to become automatic by over-learning). Children manage all the materials in the box, giving them a sense of ownership of their learning. How The Number Box is currently used Sessions are 1:1, are short (10-15 mins) and are regular (3- 4 days a week, on average). Four P1 pupils are using this resource, and one P4 pupil.

Baseline Assessment

A baseline assessment was carried out with each pupil, based on the resource's Targets/Progression of Skills.

Follow-up Assessment

Assessment has been ongoing, with achieved targets dated on individual Record of Achievements. Data collected indicates improvement across all base line measures for all children that have accessed this intervention. Targets were also reassessed in February to continue to assess and evaluate progress.

Feedback

Feedback from our two P1 teachers has been extremely positive, particularly the speed at which the children have learnt and retained new skills. The children have been able to transfer the skills they have developed to their learning in class. The children really enjoy working with The Number Box. *"I can do this now! I remember when I couldn't do my number 42". "The Number box is fun!"* The Number Box will now be used more widely across the school, to support children who need extra regular teaching of basic maths skills.

Case Study 2 Glenlivet Primary School-Development of Community Playpark

Overview

The school identified that they had a health and wellbeing gap, specifically, lack of opportunities that supported pupil health and wellbeing out with school time. Impact of this was evidenced within classroom via rural deprivation and social inclusion which is a reflection on the schools demographic: Therefore this was poverty of aspiration and poverty of experience gap. Consultation with pupils, families and the community, confirmed that there was a lack of outdoor play opportunities within the area. Consultation further highlighted that this was contributing to social isolation of pupils out with school time.

The Journey

Due to the rurality of the school's location and the pupil catchment area, the head teacher, pupils and families entered into a joint venture with the wider community and committed their PEF allocation to address this gap. Teachers met with pupils via the 'Glenlivet Go Getters' (pupil council), to explore how this would meet their needs. Research was undertaken which highlighted that play based approaches support the development of pupils via resilience, creativity, communication and skills for learning, ensuring that all children are able to successfully engage with learning. The suggestion is that this type of approach can support addressing the poverty related attainment gap and children are ready to learn, ensuring that development gaps are reduced (Education Scotland, 2019). The critical aspect of the schools 'research' was at a grass roots level via consultation and collaborative engagement with the pupils and understanding their needs to address equity.

Collaboration

Due to the small allocation of PEF, the school worked proactively to source and secure additional match funding to support this intervention via Paul's Hill Windfarm and The Glenlivet and Inveravon Community Association. This innovative approach to a limited PEF budget is evidence that schools can work creatively with their local communities to achieve targeted outcomes for their pupils.

Impact

The school's ACEL data from 2018 to 2019 has shown increased attainment across all areas. Although it is acknowledged that the community play park is not solely responsible for this increase; the outdoor play park is a wider reflection of the schools commitment to excellence and equity to all of their pupils through creative and innovative approaches to addressing the poverty related attainment gap. Teachers report: *"We have used the outdoor community play park to ensure that children are supported to be creative, innovative and investigative, which has developed stronger communication skills and opportunities to explore and develop resilience through outdoor play*". Pupils report: *"We would go home and stay indoors, now we have somewhere to play when we are not in school"*, P6 pupil. *"The play park has made me so much more confident"*, P7 Pupil.

Section 8

Glossary

Term/ acronym	Meaning
AA	Attainment Advisor
ACEL	Achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level
ASF	Attainment Scotland Fund
BGE	Broad General Education
CECYP	Care experienced children and young people
ES	Education Scotland
Insight	Insight is a benchmarking tool designed to help bring about improvements for learners in the Senior Phase (S4-S6). The system is updated twice annually, around September for attainment results and February for school leavers data.
LA	Local authority
PEF	Pupil Equity Funding
NIF	National Improvement Framework
RIC	Regional Improvement Collaborative
SAC	Scottish Attainment Challenge
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SNSA	Scottish National Standardised Assessments
SRA	Senior Regional Advisor
NIF	National Improvement Framework

Appendix

Scottish Attainment Challenge Logic Model

Inputs

Funding:
- PEF
- SP
- CA
- CECYP
- National Programmes

Support and Collaboration
- Attainment Advisers, Regional Teams and other ES SAC support
- RICs
- Improvement Advisors + NIF Advisors
- Teacher / school level expertise
- SAC policy team support
- SG Education Analytical services
- Local authorities
- Public services – health boards, social work etc
- 3rd sector networks / relationships
- Cross SG network/ experience
- Parents, carers and families)

Data:
- National improvement framework measures and associated tools
- School, LA and National Data sets
- Evaluation evidence

Resources:
- National Improvement Hub (NIH)
- Print / online materials aimed at parents, carers and families
- Frameworks / tools to measure / monitor progress
- Operational guidance supporting funding
- COVID recovery funding (not SAC specific)
- COVID documentation inc return to school guidance

Activites

Accelerating Progress activities:

Additional, focused support

Specific approaches which are making the biggest impact identified and systematic sharing of them increased

[including capacity to deliver blended learning model / recovery curriculum where required]

Data for improvement

Embed successful approaches in to the curriculum.

Increase our collective efforts to improve the health and wellbeing and progress of children living in poverty.

Additional focused support to mitigate against any widening of attainment gap and increased wellbeing needs caused by C-19

Flexibility in funding to allow changes to interventions/ approaches at local leveL though still consistent with SAC principles

Focused equity related CLPL to build confidence and capacity (across the system) to deliver the new blended learning model

ST OUTCOMES

1. Awareness of need for leadership at all levels focussing on improved learning, teaching and self-evaluation to help close the poverty related attainment gap
2. Readiness to collaborate across the system to achieve equity and excellence
3. Increased engagement (participation) in professional learning with a focus on reducing poverty related attainment gap
4. Increased focus on HWB, literacy and numeracy, balancing efforts to address learning with HWB needs which originated/developed during COVID, to improve outcomes for children and young people living in poverty
5. Awareness of range of approaches to achieve equity within their particular context and settings
6. A focus on increasing the engagement of parents, carers and families living in areas of deprivation with their child's and their own learning
7. Awareness of challenges and barriers to learning faced by children & young people and parents, carers & families living in poverty and how these have been impacted by C-19
8. Shared understanding and engagement with the Scottish Attainment Challenge
9. Knowledge and skills in using data and other evidence
10. Awareness of who the children and young people and their families are that are living in poverty

MT OUTCOMES

1. Improved leadership at all levels, fully committed to, and with an unrelenting focus on, closing the poverty related attainment gap
2. Increased evidence of collaboration across the education system (between schools, LAs, 3rd sector, other delivery partners and professionals e.g. social work) to deliver and evaluate approaches aimed at closing the poverty related attainment gap
3. Identification of intersections with other policy areas/OGDs and engagement with them to help deliver long term programme aim
4. CLPL opportunities focussed on equity are embedded throughout the education system , LA and schools
5. Higher quality learning, teaching and assessment, including digital/remote approaches, focussing on achieving equity for learners, across HWB, literacy and numeracy, with a particular focus on HWB during the recovery phase
6. Teachers are able to use data effectively to identify the needs of their learners and improve learning and teaching
7. Active engagement with and support for children and young people, parents, carers and families living in poverty to engage in learning
8. A culture and ethos that promotes high aspirations for all and improves equity is embedded across the whole school community
9. Increased use of research evidence / data to monitor the progress, effectiveness and sustainability of approaches
10. Increased use of data/ evidence to demonstrate an impact against the key NIF measures at a local level for children and young people

LT OUTCOMES

1. Embeded and sustained practices related to addressing the impact of poverty related attainment
2. All children and young people are achieving the expected or excellent educational outcome, regardless of their background
3. An Education system which is aspirational, inclusive in ethos, practice and approaches for all including teachers, parents and carers, children and young people
4. Closing of the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

Vision (to achieve aim)

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

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

Strategic Aim

Strategic Aim:

closing the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities.

Demonstrable progress during the lifetime of this Parliament and to substantially eliminate it in the next decade [set out in NIF 2018]

ES – purpose of SAC Strategic aim :

achieving equity in educational outcomes, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

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