



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 26 MAY 2021**

**SUBJECT: MORAY EDUCATION COVID-19 REMOTE LEARNING SCHOOL
SURVEY ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the findings of the Moray Education Covid-19 2021 Remote Learning surveys completed by Moray Primary and Secondary schools and outline core recommendations moving forwards from survey findings and analysis, informing Education contingency planning and strategy.
- 1.2 To update Committee on progress in meeting core recommendations resulting from Moray Education Covid-19 Remote Learning Surveys undertaken and analysed following previous lockdown in March to June 2020.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **scrutinises and notes the report;**
- (ii) **considers the Digital Innovation Strategy for Education which will be presented to Committee in August 2021; and**
- (iii) **agrees that a further paper on Parental Engagement/Family Learning be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Covid-19 led to the first lockdown of Moray schools in March 2020 to June 2020 (term 2, session 2019/2020). As a result, schools and officers at

Headquarters worked together in establishing new ways of working across the local authority and schools. Contingency plans were put in place, including planning for remote learning and its delivery and use of online digital platforms through GLOW as our core interface was embraced.

- 3.2 From the start of Term 3 in January 2021, a further period of lockdown commenced following the announcement by Scotland's First Minister on 19 December 2020 of a lockdown across Scotland due to impact of Covid-19.
- 3.3 On initial lockdown in March 2020, the majority of Moray schools provided paper-based resources with most embracing new digital platforms in a reactive manner, including adoption of Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom. Staff and wider school communities undertook considerable virtual training in online platforms, their functionality and use for learning and teaching. Once established, all schools continued to refine learning and teaching delivery methods, reviewing what was in place and streamlining arrangements for remote learning and teaching extending beyond online solutions to paper based packs and resources.
- 3.4 In January 2021, online learning and Remote Learning approaches were re-established alongside childcare provision for critical key workers and identified vulnerable children and Additional Support Needs (ASN) pupils across all of the schools in Moray. Using experiences and intelligence from previous lockdown in 2020, schools were better equipped in terms of established Remote Learning practices based on prior lockdown experiences, mixing Remote Learning approaches in order to maximise learner experiences including live teaching, digital approaches and paper-based activities/resources. This followed feedback from school and wider local authority lockdown surveys from key stakeholder groups in March 2020:
 - Learners
 - Parent/Carers
 - Schools (representing school community)
- 3.5 The Moray Schools' Survey (**Appendix 1**) was live and completed by all schools during the months of March and April 2021. Designed to elicit responses from schools - having gathered their own intelligence from children and young people, families and staff on Remote Learning experiences – this survey was designed to inform future contingency planning in event of further disruption to our Moray Education system and any further move to Remote Learning with core questions focused on:
 - Learning platforms in use and learner engagement
 - Learner participation
 - Staff confidence in use of online digital platforms for learning and teaching
 - Approaches adopted in support of Remote Learning
 - Mechanisms and communication methods in use to support learner wellbeing
 - Learner progress in learning
 - Level of support in Remote Learning from home

- Further support accessed for building confidence in Remote Learning delivery
- Methods of contact and communication with parents
- What worked well with remote learning
- What could have made remote learning better
- Further support required moving forwards (including any other comments)

3.6 Following compilation of survey analysis reports attached in **Appendix 1**, core recommendations are identified as a result of feedback received from all 53 operational Moray schools (45 Primary Schools; 8 Secondary Schools).

3.7 Positive findings emerging from the Moray Schools' Survey on Remote Learning experiences during January to March 2021 are identified as follows:

- Commitment of staff and schools across Moray to plan, deliver, assess and feed back on a wide range of Remote Learning activities including research based activities, online learning, paper based learning activities/resources and live learning extending to wider curriculum areas beyond literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing
- More positive engagement and participation in Remote Learning overall across most Primary and the majority of Secondary school stages
- Positive learner progress overall during lockdown in Primary schools and Senior Phase in Secondary schools
- Refined approaches by schools to appraise online learning platforms available and identify core learning platforms for use in schools, including measured approach to wider learning platform use
- Notable adoption of Microsoft Teams across our schools as a core platform for learning, with further use of Google Classroom
- Equity in approach to learning activities set, mindful of digital connectivity and access for children and families, mixing paper-based resources with online learning
- Extended approaches to differentiation in planned learning activities to meet the learning needs of a wide range of learners
- Effective communication channels and improved approaches to ensuring wellbeing check-ins with children and families throughout lockdown
- Strengthened digital literacy among pupils, staff and parents where appropriate, with notable increase in digital confidence among support staff
- Commitment of staff to undertake professional learning and in particular, professional learning activities in relation to digital skills development
- Level of sufficient support at home provided to children and young people in their Remote Learning activities overall
- Positive use of wider supports available for strengthening Remote Learning delivery including Education Scotland National e-learning offer, Moray Learning Technologists, GTCS, and in-school digital champions
- Positive engagement and communication with harder to reach families using a variety of communication methods across a number of schools
- Provision of virtual playgrounds/chat opportunities supported by digital platforms for social interaction and wider wellbeing

3.8 Extensive progress has been made across core recommendations identified through lockdown 2020 surveys and these are outlined in the Remote Learning Survey Report attached (**Appendix 1**). Ongoing recommendations under continued development include further digital learning support for parents and continued focus on digital connectivity and ICT access, underway through the Education ICT Strategy group.

3.9 Key areas for further review and development in Moray identified through this 2021 Remote Learning Survey are noted below:

- While positive overall, variability in learner participation in Primary stages P1 and P4 is noted in particular across Primary schools with some wider variability within other stages
- While encouraging overall, variability in learner participation in Secondary S2-S4 is further noted across the Secondary schools with identifiable drop in S4 participation in some of our Secondary schools
- Concerns around learner progress in S3 in a number of Secondary schools
- Engagement to Participation transfer rate is of note and requires investigation for reasons behind drop in participation from engagement, noted across a number of schools within P4-P6 and S2-S4 in particular
- Connectivity issues and access to ICT devices remains a concern in a number of schools, including school bandwidth and other device/network related issues (noting that work is advanced and underway with Moray Council ICT department to address these issues including review of legacy devices, roll-out of over 300 additional devices and addressing bandwidth issues with installation of an additional central link, nearing completion)
- Access to devices for children and families, particularly in multi-child households with shared devices with continued approaches to digital inclusion at local authority level aiming to address this
- Restricted parental engagement in a number of families, leading to lower than desired engagement and participation (noting positive engagement also of a number of families, including those harder to reach in a number of schools and less so in others)
- Parental expectations around Remote Learning exceeding what can be delivered in actuality, based on time available, technology and the distant nature of teaching and learning activities delivered during lockdown
- Workload implications associated with Remote Learning linked to planning, differentiation, delivery, assessment and feedback with online learning platforms available at any time heightening expectations of staff availability and access for learners
- Issues of sustaining engagement and motivation of learners in Remote Learning, due to reduced face-to-face interaction and opportunities for natural dialogue with concerns raised by a number of schools around mental health and wellbeing implications for learners and lack of action at times on feedback provided on learning
- Parental digital skills restricting technology support available at home for learners – particularly those in lower stages Primary school – potentially impacting on Remote Learning access and engagement/participation

3.10 As a result of extensive intelligence gathered through this survey, the following recommendations follow as next steps to be taken forward by schools and Moray Education through key working groups and strategies:

- Review reasons behind lower than desired engagement and participation levels – including engagement to participation transfer rates – in individual schools and identified stages to address any emerging attainment gaps and reduce impact of similar non-engagement in the event of future disruption to our school system
- Continue to progress current work at local authority level in line with National guidance on digital connectivity, access and devices to ensuring equity of digital device access for all learners
- Continue to investigate reasons behind technology, bandwidth and ICT infrastructure issues within schools in order to enable seamless approaches to online learning between home and school for learners and staff
- Further develop parental engagement and family learning through the potential of online learning platforms and integrate within review of Moray Parental Engagement/Family Learning Strategy
- Continue to strengthen staff digital skills development through professional learning opportunities, addressing workload issues addressed through a clear framework for staff on expectations around Remote Learning and its delivery in partnership with LNCT
- In the event of any future disruption to the Education system, ensure clear communication messages are distributed through local authority and school communication channels (e.g. social media, websites) to clarify what Remote Learning is/is not to support parental expectations and protect staff from any notable workload pressures
- Provide opportunities for parental digital skills development at local authority and school level through appropriate learning opportunities and resources
- Extend staff confidence in digital delivery and live teaching through extended opportunities to try out these approaches – potential for extending use of online platforms for home learning
- Extend knowledge of learning and teaching approaches available in support of Remote Learning, building understanding of quality Remote Learning experiences through appropriate Quality Assurance self-evaluation frameworks
- Further roll-out resources in support of “Our Moray Standard for Learning and Teaching” in order for practitioners to transfer established good practice in the classroom to the online environment

3.11 Core recommendations arising from the survey will be used to further inform key activities and contingency planning moving forwards, including work underway in respect of the Digital Innovation Strategy for Education and planned future development work around “Our Moray Standard for Remote Learning and Teaching” and Quality Assurance frameworks for Remote Learning. This also forms part of work identified as part of the Moray Education Strategic Plan 2020-2023 moving forwards.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan with particular regard to providing a sustainable education service aiming for excellence in line with council values of ambitious, improving and responsive. With regards to the LOIP, through raising aspirations, focus relates to building a better future for our children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across our schools; supporting ambitious and confident children, able to reach their full potential.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

(c) Financial implications

Dependent upon the investigative work being undertaken by ICT Technicians across the school estate, there may be further investment required to support the use of digital technology following retiral of identified legacy ICT hardware and software.

(d) Risk Implications

Further review of digital infrastructure across the school establishments is required in order to support roll-out of any future Digital Innovation Strategy for Education.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on survey findings and recommendations arising from responses received.

(h) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, ICT Manager (Infrastructure), Acting Information Systems Manager, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That Committee scrutinises and notes the contents of this report and key findings and;

5.2 Considers recommendations arising from survey analysis and report findings, including plans for addressing areas for further development

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager

Background Papers:

Moray Covid-19 Schools' Survey 2021 (**Appendix 1**)

[Moray Covid-19 Learner Survey 2020](#)

[Moray Covid-19 Parent/Carer Survey 2020](#)

[Moray Covid-19 Schools Surveys 2020](#)

[Moray Covid-19 Surveys 2020 – Key Recommendations Mapping](#)

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